

Tidings of Zion

Conference of Restoration Elders

April-May-June 2018 Issue 123

**Restoration Branch Family Reunion &
Conference of Restoration Elders
June 24 to June 29, 2018**

ZION the BEAUTIFUL

And the Lord called his people,

Zion,

*because they were
of one heart and one mind,
and dwelt in righteousness;
and there were no poor
among them.*

**Center Place Restoration School (CPRS)
Waldo Avenue Restoration Branch**

The Tidings of Zion is published quarterly by the Conference of Restoration Elders. It is under the editorial responsibility of the Coordinating Council, Vim Horn, Chairman. It is sent to all who desire to receive it.
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.

THE CONFERENCE OF RESTORATION ELDERS FIRST SESSION WILL BEGIN, SUNDAY, JUNE 24, 2018 AT 2:00PM IN THE SANCTUARY AT CPRS/WALDO AVENUE RB. THE CRE WEBSITE eldersconference.org HAS ALL THE INFORMATION ABOUT THE CRE SESSIONS AND THE REUNION.

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Where Do YOU Place Your Trust?

By High Priest Paul J. Gage
Independence, Missouri



Proverbs 3:5 states, "Trust in the Lord with all of thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He will direct thy paths."

Yes, that is good, but where do YOU place your trust?

Psalms 141:8 reminds us, "But mine eyes are unto thee; in thee is my trust;..."

Yes, yes, but where do YOU place your trust?

Job 13:15 is re-assuring when it says, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him;..." Sure, we know Job had a really rough time, after God basically turned him over to Satan to do whatever he wanted, except take his life. Even after Job's wife told him to curse God and die, Job remained trustful in the Lord. Job passed the test, but where do YOU put your trust?

I Timothy 4:10 "For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those that believe."

Very good, brother Timothy, however, Dear Saints, where do YOU place your trust, when you or a loved one are suffering? Who do YOU trust when the doctor comes in with sad words? A contemporary Christian song, by Casting Crowns, called, "I will Praise You in this Storm", says, "I'll praise You in this storm and I will lift my hands. For You are who You are no matter

where I am; every tear I've cried, You hold me in Your hand; You never left my side and though my heart is torn, I will praise You in this storm. Do YOU trust HIM in the storm? Or only when the sun shines, when there is food on the table, money in the bank, and so forth.

The following words are from a message from the Lord given through Patriarch Henry Schaefer at the Center Stake Reunion July 31, 1971.

"I would encourage you to more intimately get acquainted with all that I, the Lord, your God, have revealed down through all ages and as they are recorded for you in the three sacred Scriptures of My Holy Church. For by doing so, you will establish a storehouse of knowledge out of which you can indeed prove to the world that the wisdom of Myself which I have entrusted and shared with you is so far greater than the wisdom of mankind.

So I would exhort you, Be not dismayed. This is no time to despair. For as the adversary is mustering his forces, be assured that I, the Lord your God am still superior to anything that the Satanic force can bring forth. And with Me at your side, you have the assurance that you are engaged in a winning cause because I, the Lord, your God, will never be defeated.

Go forward with a steadfast heart, trusting Me completely. I leave this assurance with you that I am the One who has created each one of you, and am also anxious to restore you to the son-ship, to the daughter-ship I have created as My children; and by doing so, you can indeed be the light of the world.

Be faithful unto the end; be true to your covenant; for I love you more than anyone can love you and desire to share not just abundant life with you here and now, but life even more abundant in that great beyond which shall last throughout eternity. Even so. Amen."

Do YOU want to be happy in Jesus?
TRUST AND OBEY!

Dear Saints,

The following six articles are intended to help each of us in our daily preparations for God's Kingdom to come on earth. The theme for the Restoration Branch Family Reunion and Conference of Restoration Elders to be held in Independence, Missouri June 24-29, 2018 is "Zion the Beautiful." The theme for each day is directly related to the main theme. The next five articles were taught, as classes, at a CRE Fall Gathering in 2007 and it was strongly felt that the substance of these articles will enhance our preparation for Zion. Brother Booth's article is also right on the mark of what it will take for us to decide that Zion must be more than a dream—that it, in fact, must become a reality, very soon and that we may be faithful participants. We earnestly encourage all Saints, as much as possible to prepare for and attend this reunion, especially those living close enough to Independence to be actively involved. All Restoration Branch priesthood, especially Melchisedec are also encouraged to support the Conference this year.

Building a Stronger Family

By Elder Jim Bailey
Independence, Missouri



By the end of the 20th century, divorce rates had risen more than 700% over the previous fifty years. The number of single parent families has mushroomed. Today it is approximately one in five. Most divorces will occur in the 2nd year of marriage.

In a survey, after twenty-five years of marriage, 84% say the main reason they could stay together is commitment. Only 16% said they stayed together,

hoping their mate would change. We are not getting better in our relationships in the home. We are getting worse.

The same tragedies are occurring throughout the church: Restoration, Community of Christ, Baptist, Nazarene. No one is immune. They are all dealing with these same problems. The destruction of our families must stop. Somewhere along the line, we must do a better job of getting our young people prepared for marriage. We need to train our men and women how to have a better home, and the children need to learn to do their part as well.

Here is a truism: In the home, whether it be the father or the mother, there must be a bond before there can be healthy confrontation. Bonding takes place when the whole family takes part in structured family worship, along with prayer, study, service and sacrifice. Bonding also takes place with shared experiences, even when things don't work out as planned. A family camping trip, for example, bonds a family, especially when it rains and the bugs are out and they have to work together to survive.

That is a portion, but let's go a step higher. If we share a common goal, there is a bond between us. One of the first things we do in family counseling is we ask, "What is your family goal?" We keep asking that question, not because they give a bad answer, but we are looking for a specific answer: to have a Christ-centered home.

When we all share the goal of a Christ-centered home, we have a glue that holds us together.

Respect and love need to be expressed and felt in order to hold the bond. When I feel you love me and you know that I love you, there is a bond that takes place that holds us together. Ephesians 5:33: "Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband." Ephesians 6:1-4: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And ye fathers provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Unconditional love creates a strong bond. When I know you love me and I love you, in spite of our weakness, there is a bond. There are times we think, "If they really knew me, they wouldn't love me." The bonding takes place, despite my weaknesses. I know you are there for me. We need to be willing to support each other in difficult times.

Family communication is extremely important to bonding. One day a week, the family should sit down in a family meeting to pray and share concerns. This should not be at mealtime. Mealtime should be reserved only for positive communication. Mealtime is for encouraging each other and sharing the good things from the day. One time a week, you need to be able to express concerns of your hearts. It could be a grievance, or it could be something positive. What is helpful when you have that kind of setting is that everyone knows there is a time to talk about things. A child might have a grievance that pops up in the middle of the week, and they can get really angry about it because there isn't a way to express it. Dad's at work; Mom's gone. Brother is off to sports practice, and there's no time to talk. If they know that Saturday morning at 10:00 we are going to have that time together, and they can express those feelings, it just kind of melts away. Then by the time you get to the meeting, it is not nearly as hard and they are not as hostile as they would have been if they would have expressed it in that first thirty seconds.

The Utah Mormons have a very unique idea. One evening a week, the family does things together. They call it family home evening. When the Utah Jazz was playing in semi-finals in the basketball tournament, the owner of the Utah Jazz wouldn't come and see his basketball team play in the semi-finals because it was family night and he needed to be home. We need that kind of commitment to our families to do things together.

One of the frustrations I see in the family, and it tears away at the bonding, is the feeling that I'm not as important as . . . your job, your priesthood, your hobbies. Wives, children, and even husbands get to feeling that way in their relationships. I'm not as important as . . . So when they see you making a sacrifice and saying you are the most important thing, *that* creates a bonding.

Shared experiences—eating together, praying together, getting away together—bring the family closer together.

A friend shared the following testimony: "My father was a pretty good athlete, but his parents never went to any of his games. When I was a teenager and I played sports too, he reflected on his experiences growing up. He decided he was not going to do what his father did, and so my father was one of my biggest fans. He passed away in 1969, and the significance of that is that I remember it now, over 40 years later. And what it said was that he cared."

There are lots of ways to send the message that I care about what you are doing and how you are feeling. Send the message that you are important to me. I love you, and I love you in spite of your mistakes. That is one of the glues that hold us together.

One author describes how he went camping in a popup camper, so it wasn't a lot of protection, but a storm came up, and it was an extremely violent storm. They were in the popup, and the popup was just swaying back and forth. Even the father thought they would not survive. But they did, and he said it was a real bonding experience. They laughed about it the next day and even ten years later. They shared a brush with death. That allowed them to bond. Even adversity can pull you together.

Bond before you confront. We have a lot of homes that haven't bonded. They haven't sent that message of unconditional love or haven't shared enough experiences. Bonding is an ongoing thing. We can't say we had that camping trip five years ago and had a wonderful experience and now we are bonded. It is a daily routine. You do it often; you do it constantly. You are always trying to find a way to send that message to create that bond. Then when you confront—when you lovingly confront—they listen, and they care. We all need to be confronted and prefer loving confrontation. As parents, we need to be confronted, even by our children. That is an acceptable thing to happen, and they may be right. I listen when my children come to me and ask, "*Is that getting us closer to our goal?*" That is all they have to say. The goal is to

have a Christ-centered home. My children came home from camp one year and said, "Dad, we have to take the TV out of the house. I was the one that had the problem. My children didn't have the problem. They were busy in band, choir, and school or church activities. It was all I could do to keep up with them. I was the one that had a problem. We did that until they graduated from high school, over five years. I'm not saying everyone must take the TV out of their house. That was me listening to my children confront me. They could do that because they loved me. I knew they were right, and we had bonded.

If you make a mistake, admit it to your children and say, "Please forgive me." That is important to the children. It shows that you care, love, and respect them enough to do that. There are no perfect parents; we are a work in progress. You may say, "I need to do a better job at that," or, "I knew some of this, but I've gotten lax about it and need to get back into some good habits." Relationships are something that take work.

Most of the emergency phone calls I get are from men. He comes home one day, the key doesn't work in the door, and his clothes are out on the lawn. He says, "I didn't even know we had a problem." And he really didn't know. Trying to reverse those kinds of situations are really difficult. Suddenly, that man is asking, "What have I done wrong? What's going on?" You know what the wife says, "I've been telling him, and he is not getting it. My needs are not being met, we are not bonding, he is not listening, he wants to do it his way and his way only, and what I say doesn't matter. His work is more important than me, his church is more important than me, and so and so on." The husband sits back and says, "I think I got it."

Rules without love create resentment and rebellion. Love without rules also creates resentment and rebellion. There are no perfect parents and no perfect children. Some children grow up to be terrific in spite of us and sometimes because of us. Just because you are imperfect doesn't mean you have played a major role in the destruction of your children. We are all out there doing the best that we can, but there are some things we can learn that will help us do better. Remember, if we have a lot of

rules and our children haven't bonded to us, if they don't feel the love, they will likely rebel.

A priesthood member said: "I had the fortune or misfortune of raising a strong-willed child. I had two children. One caught the vision and is very active. The other had nothing to do with the church because he never really caught the vision. He didn't want to apply himself to obeying any of the rules. He wanted to be a free spirit and do his own thing. It is extremely difficult raising a strong-willed boy. Both were raised in same home and given the same love. I think where this is going is the fact that my wife continually beats herself up by wondering what if she had done this or that. I have a sneaking suspicion that Lehi put as much work in on those two sons of his that went astray, or maybe more, than he did with Nephi. I think we ought to recognize that we should do the very best we can, but there are some that simply will not be a part of a family unit because of their own choices. They choose to be rebellious."

I have had a lot of phone calls over the years where the father wants to know how to deal with a rebellious teenage daughter. I am here to tell you most daughters will go through a stage, usually in early teenage years, where they become pretty hostile. The key to working through that is the father. The father has an immense roll to play in that transition from child to adult woman. Most men don't realize it.

We must have rules, and we must maintain order in the home. It is absolutely necessary. Chaotic homes will not be Zion homes. We must have rules, and we must confront. There must be the bond of unconditional love first. We need to recognize when that is shutting down. We need to see when there is conflict and chaos in the home. As leaders in the home, we must recognize when that is going on. The bonding and the confrontation are two separate events. The bonding is an ongoing process. The confrontation is as needed.

It is important to get a child that has shut down to open back up. You can sit down, and you can say, "You know, I saw you come into this world. You have a part of me in you and part of the rebellious nature I had, and I still have. Nothing

really changed until I gave my life to Christ, and because of my relationship with Christ, everything becomes new.” You can share your testimony, and you can talk to them. It may work and may not work, but the goal is to get that child to open back up again. You do it through love, but you still must have the rules.

Another thing I recommend is to redefine the boundaries as the children mature. Because of this maturity, they have taken on additional responsibilities and are showing themselves trustworthy. It’s time to expand the boundaries as they show their ability to handle it. Parents aren’t to be the evil taskmaster who never listens and never cares. We definitely want to send the message that we care and that we are listening.

Listening is another element of bonding. It is also a way to send the message “I love you, I care about you; you are important to me.” Now, that is a little harder for men than it is for women. Men usually like the abbreviated version “Let’s get to the bottom point,” “Is there a reason for this conversation?” “How long is this going to take?” We sometimes send the message in our body language. Instead of sending the message “You are the most important thing to me,” we are sending the message, “You are in my way.” Proverbs 18:12-13: “Before destruction the heart of man is haughty; and before honor is humility. He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.”

One man shared that when he was raising his children, he had the family conference. He took the keys to his car and put them on the table and said, “Here are the keys to communication. Whoever has them can share and then go around the table. You can say whatever you want; you won’t be punished for your opinions or ideas.” It worked great. He had one daughter that wouldn’t let go of the keys. He would have to tell her she had to pass them on. It was a time of expression that was beneficial for them as they grew older. A physical object, like a set of keys, keeps people from talking on top of each other.

I just wonder sometimes about all the activities we crowd into our lives—church meetings, sports, practices, etc. Everything is good, but by the time you do finally get home, nerves are stretched and

energy level is low. I’m not sure we do a service to church families by keeping people going in opposite directions all week. It is not bonding when we are going in different directions. We can have pretty full lives, but every family needs to know how much they can tolerate. Don’t overdo it on anything. You can see this in the atmosphere of the home, especially when you see people shutting down. Sit down and analyze when you have a weekly conversation, when you can express “I feel alone,” “I feel like the only one here,” “Nobody else cares.” That is an indication you are not bonding.

I am reminded of that scripture John 15:13: “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” When we see stress in a family relationship, we sometimes have to say we are going to give up an activity to relieve stress for the other person.

Let’s take a look at the more physical aspects of bonding. This is mainly about touching such as handshakes, hugs, pats on the back, and would include the romantic touching between a husband and wife. Touching is extremely important and should be used often.

Bonding involves the spiritual, emotional, and physical aspects of the relationship.

The following are highlights from questions and answers.

Q: One time we were working around the house together, and we would get a chance for talking about what we wanted to do or how we thought things should be done. It was really constructive. It was really advantageous. It allowed us to speak when we wanted to.

A: The communication is extremely important in holding that bonding together, as well as continuing to send the message “You are important to me.” You did a great job of bonding while performing family duties.

Q: We have a number of families that are trying to raise their family in an isolated situation. We have neighbors around us that we are concerned about our children interacting with. How do you handle a situation like that, when you are supposed to be reaching out but yet still have to be protective? You know what I mean?

A: The most important thing that we do is to protect our family. That is paramount. I will protect my family at all cost, to the point of even laying down my life. In order to do that, I have to protect what influences my children. And I want to make sure where ever I send them that my influence is stronger than anybody else, that my influence is stronger than the world's. Our goal is to send our saints into the world, to change the world. So, we are going to interact, and that will cause us to interact with some outside influence. You are impacted by it, and I am impacted by it a lot more than I care to admit. I hope and pray for the day that Zion will come and that Zionic influence will be greater than any other influence. We control much of the worldly influence by controlling whatever comes into the home. What comes into the home is music, radio, TV, and, yes, people. I'm less concerned about people than other influences that I just described. My children could handle people just fine. They were terrific at it. They could reach out and find that lonely person. They could be an influence, and as a parent, I was extremely proud of them. A lot of it had to do with the common goal that we shared, as we read the scriptures together, as we prayed together, and as we had family worship together. That created a bond that allowed them to go out. But I had to be careful. I had to watch for countenance change. I had to be observant. If their countenance changed, it was very likely that something or someone else was influencing them. Be aware of that, and you may have to pull them in. You may have to make some changes, and that is the loving confrontation that may have to take place. If the bonding is strong, it makes it easier to handle that.

If there is rebellion going on, is it because they just have a rebellious spirit, which is very possible, or is there something that I am doing or not doing? We should be constantly reviewing and self-analyzing. But what I don't want is people who really blame themselves because their child has gone astray. The goal is never shame.

Q: I believe there is a lot of really good information out there that we can access and should in regards of how to better do the job that we have been called to do. We have been commanded in our scriptures to read and

study all good books. There are people who have done a really decent job of taking a look at the family and are concerned about strengthening the family unit who have some good ideas and understanding. I think we ought to be familiar with their work and use it.

A: I totally agree. I have been doing this for twenty-five years. Back then, there were very few books and materials on marriage and families. Now there is a lot of material to help you to do marriage counseling. I search the web. I get into the Mormon web site, the Baptist, and all of them. There are agencies and organizations that are in this area, and I get information and material from them. And I find it helpful. I only search Christian sites, books, and people that have a common desire for our members to have Christ-centered homes. If anybody can help me do that, I'm listening.

Twenty-five years ago, we were working hard to mend broken marriages and families. We had about five couples that were counseling all the time. We sat down and said, "We have to do something different. We need to get ahead of this; we have got to get to these people before they get married." So we wrote a six month pre-marriage counseling course.

At the end of six months of marriage, we have the minister that married them, or the pre-marriage counselor, get back together with them and do what we call a "checkup" to find out how things are going. We have talked about doing a mentor family program for their first year of marriage. The newlyweds are paired with a mentor couple a few years older than they are. This couple can share the things they have experienced in their first few years of marriage. This gives them a foundation to build on. They learn how to handle different experiences without going through the experiences themselves. There are times when professional counseling is necessary. A wise counselor recognizes when the problems are more serious and beyond their ability to handle. Finding a Christian counseling organization is essential, one that is in line with our beliefs and does not suggest divorce as the answer. That is why I stipulate Christian counseling. Christian counseling is all about preventing divorce, all about saving the marriage. We have a

couple of organizations we use. But they are totally of like mind in saving the marriage. Our goal is to have a Christ-centered home, which results in saving the marriage.

Can there be anything more beautiful than young love? The answer is, yes, there is. It is the scene of an old man and old woman finishing their journey together on that path. Their hands are gnarled, but they still are clasped, and their faces are seamed but still radiant. Their hearts are physically bowed and tired but still strong with love and devotion to one another. Yes, there is a more beautiful thing than young love. It is old love. Nothing is more inspiring to a young couple than to see an old couple walking up to church, hand in hand, and to see the love that is expressed between those two. A marriage that has survived fifty or sixty years. And they look into each other's eyes and express love.

From Zig Ziglar, answering the question: "Did I marry the wrong person?": "I have no way of knowing or not, that you married the wrong person. But I do know many people have the wrong idea about marriage and what it takes to make that marriage happy and successful. I will be the first to admit it is possible that you did marry the wrong person. However, if you treat the wrong person like the right person, you could well end up having married the right person after all. On the other hand, if you marry the right person and treat that person wrong, you certainly will have ended up marrying the wrong person. I also know that it is far more important to be the right kind of person than to marry the right person. In short, whether you married the right or wrong person is primarily up to you."

Here is one from Billy Graham when asked his secret of love, being married 54 years to the same person. He said, "Ruth and I are happily incompatible."

Marriage and families are something we work on every day. The biggest mistake we can make is to take our marriages for granted and our families for granted. We have to work at it.

When Jesus is all we have,
We realize He is all we need.

Who Is My Neighbor?

By Elder Jack Hagensen
Independence, Missouri



Our relationship with our neighbor has been a central theme of the message of salvation as given through our Savior Jesus Christ as recorded in the sacred word contained in the Inspired Version of the Bible, Book of Mormon, and the latter day scriptures in the Doctrine and Covenants. It is a thrilling voyage through the word of God to see how our Savior's relationship with the children of men actually took place for their eternal welfare and salvation.

I had a personal experience that literally changed my relationship to everyone, whether they be member or nonmember. Paul Gage asked me to teach a Tuesday night class at his home. There were several young adults, some who had gone through tragic divorces which had affected them both emotionally and spiritually.

We decided to study *The Life and Ministry of Jesus* by F. Henry Edwards. In the third chapter, it relates to Jesus announcing his Messiah-ship in the synagogue as recorded in Luke 4:18-19: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and the recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised; To preach the acceptable year of the Lord." As I was reading "the acceptable year of the Lord," I asked the Lord, "What is the acceptable year of the Lord?" The immediate response was, "Everything you have just read."

I immediately understood. If we have been anointed with His Spirit, we will understand that our neighbor is the poor, the broken-hearted, those that are in captivity to sin or in prison, the blind, and those that have been bruised by Satan or the things of this world.

Then we turned to Isaiah 58:6-8: "Is not this the fast

that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rearward."

We can easily see in these verses the life and ministry of Jesus. It is a beautiful declaration of what we really need to be doing. We should be a people of ministry. Remember, the two greatest commandments are in Matthew 22:36-37: "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

Most of us are not certain how we love ourselves. However, when we have received Jesus Christ as our Savior and have confessed or repented of our sins, the door to our very soul has been opened as Jesus Christ and His Spirit enters in. The true love of Christ begins with rebirth and covenant-making. Love requires discipline, commitment, and complete surrender to His divine will in our lives. Love also bears fruit. If the branch is not attached to the vine, there is no fruit. The branch that is most heavily laden bows the lowest. As Christ's love increases, so does our love for our self and our neighbor.

A number of years ago, Seventy George Thomas and I were traveling from the Midwest to the West Coast, visiting the isolated saints along the way. We were entering into the town of Moses Lake in Washington State to visit the Arnold Rhodes family. George shared with me that he had been having wonderful experiences. He would ask the Lord, upon seeing new people, if that person was someone to whom he should witness. We had the Rhodes home address but needed to ask for directions. I walked into a restaurant, and behind the counter was a young lady. No one else was in the restaurant. In my mind, I asked the Lord, "Is this the one?" Immediately, I noticed her countenance was a look of worry. I said, "Is everything okay?" She shared how she was going through a great trial. After she was finished sharing, I took hold of her hand, and we had prayer together. Then I asked her if she knew the address where the

Rhodes family lived. The Rhodes family only lived a few blocks away, and she gave perfect directions to their home.

I asked the Lord one time, "What scripture really defines the celestial law?" Immediately, the response was quoted John 13:34-35: "A new commandment I give unto you. That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

That is when we really learn to love ourselves. When we lay down our lives as Christ laid down His life for us. When you are in love with God, you are in love with your neighbor. You see a different culture, you see a need, and you respond to it. Who is my neighbor? Where does he or she live? Our neighbor can be next door, at the grocery store, standing on the corner and begging for food, or people from every nation on earth. They can be anywhere.

I met a new neighbor in the Chicago airport while waiting for the next plane to take me to Cleveland for a missionary series in Kirtland. Laila, my wife, had prepared a nice lunch for me to take on the trip. I went to the McDonalds in the airport to buy a bottle of water. The clerk brought the water to me, and I had the money ready to pay. A young man sitting close to me said, "It has been paid for." I thanked him and shared with him what the Lord said about the cup of water in my name in Mark 9:3: "And whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink, in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, He shall not lose his reward." He shared that he was a Christian and knew about the cup of water. I thanked God for my new neighbor.

Evangelist Paul Fishel of Vancouver, Washington, stated, as he spoke under the influence of the Spirit, "That Zion will begin in a branch." I believe this to be true. It could be like starting a bonfire; it will spread and affect our relationship with our Lord, our relationship with His church, with priesthood, with each other, and with our neighbor. This is one of the dreams I have for every branch in the Restoration!

Because when love rules, there is dynamic power not of our own; it is His power. Love is power under His control, and we will see the most stony hearts converted. We will see branches mended that we never thought possible because we have been neighborly as we respond to His love.

Relationships in the Church

By The Publication Council

For proper relationships to exist within the body of Christ (the Church), there must be a knowledge of God's commandments and an eager willingness to comply with all of them. Disciples of Christ cannot pick and choose which commandments we want to comply with; otherwise, how do we obey the first and second great commandments: "Love the Lord your God with all you heart, might, mind, and strength, and your neighbor as yourself"? We have to love God first and all others as ourselves. The accounts of the "Great Commandment" are given in Matthew 22:34-39, Mark 12:33-39, and Luke 10:26-38. They each have a different ending, but it is in Luke where we get the definition of "Who is my neighbor."

In 2nd Corinthians 5:15-21, we are reminded that God sent Jesus Christ into the world to reconcile the world to Him and that we are to be reconciled to God. There will always be broken relationships among mankind until the coming of God's Kingdom. We are very plainly told in Matthew 5:25-26 and D&C 42:23 what we are to do to restore broken relationships.

The spirit of reconciliation is the spirit of charity, and without charity, we are nothing. The church is to be the light, a city set on a hill, the shining example for the world to see. The church, through its members, must be filled with love and therefore be the leaders in the movement of reconciliation. We cannot exempt ourselves by thinking that we are right when confusion and mistrust, divisions, anger, and lost sheep abound in the church today.

The next scripture doesn't seem to have much merit in this article, and yet I feel very strongly that the Lord used this to help me see some things that I just hadn't seen. It comes from Matthew 24:56. This was after I had read W.W. Blair's autobiography, which is somewhat dry in the sense that it is more of a recounting of dates, times and people, as opposed to sharing a lot of testimony and experiences. The testimonies and experiences are in there but are brief in nature. I started in chapter two and had to go back to chapter one, but I felt it wasn't giving me what I was looking for.

One of the chief areas of ministry for Brother Blair was the fact that he was so instrumental in bringing literally thousands of people who used to be part of the Church back into the Church in the Reorganization. He truly had a ministry of reconciliation with all of these thousands of people he brought back into the Reorganization. Towards the end of chapter one, I was ready to stop, and the Lord said, "Continue to read it." So by the end of the chapter, I said, "Lord, I must have missed this." He shared so softly, "No, you did not miss it," and then it was given to me what He wanted me to see.

W.W. Blair's autobiography starts with meeting up with Briggs and the other individual that came to see him in the 1850's. That is all of chapter one, ending where he is ordained and doing missionary work for the church. In those ten or fifteen pages, there are paragraphs of individual testimonies of how God poured out His Spirit on their ministry and the people to whom they ministered. Time after time, there were miraculous healings or change of heart and casting out of demons or devils. **The still small voice spoke to me and said, "That is what I wanted you to see."** That isn't word for word but the impression I got. The issue is, God is in charge! He is in control, and by the fruit of the Spirit, which is one of the keys, the Spirit kept manifesting itself and validated that what Blair was doing was right. It was the constant assurance in the early part of his ministry that

they needed so desperately to know that what they were doing was right and that the revelation had been given that Joseph Smith III would come back and would take his rightful place as leader of the church was true.

I was then prompted to read Matthew 24, and it was verse 56 that I was looking for. **“And thus cometh the end of the wicked according to the prophecy of Moses, saying, They should be cut off from among the people. But the end of the earth is not yet; but bye and bye.”**

I had a problem. Where did Moses prophecy that the wicked were going to be cut off? The phrase “cut off from” is used forty-eight times in the Inspired Version. Moses uses the phrase twenty-one times. It was used in regards to the law that was given. One example is keeping the feast of unleavened bread in Exodus 12. If you did not keep that feast, you would be cut off from the people, cut off from Israel, or cut off from God. In Exodus 30:33, the same thing is occurring. You would be cut off if you used the anointing oil for anything but the anointing of the priest and their duties and roles. This the constant theme. In Exodus 31, you had to keep the Sabbath Day holy. If you didn’t, you would be cut off from among the people.

The one that I would like to look at is Numbers 15. This is the one that stuck out to me, not that it is a direct fulfillment, because I feel that Jesus, when he references this in Matthew 24, is referring to the total sum of the law but also to each one of the specific instances. I don’t think he is referring necessarily to one instance when Moses prophesied that the wicked would be cut off.

Numbers 15:27-30 offers this counsel: “And if any soul sin through ignorance, then he shall bring a she goat of the first year for a sin offering. And the priest shall make an atonement for the sold that sinneth ignorantly, when he sinneth by ignorance before the Lord, to make an atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him. Ye shall have one

law for him that sinneth through ignorance, both for him that is born among the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them. **But the soul that doeth aught presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from the among his people.”**

He does go on and says other things, but that business of sinning presumptuously stuck out to me. Now, we know the Law of Moses was fulfilled. We all accept that Christ fulfilled the complete law. He said not one jot or tittle was going to pass away until all things would be fulfilled.

If you have faith in Christ, repentance would give you the opportunity to change disobedience.

So repentance is an opportunity for our disobedience to be corrected and alleviated. This does not take away the issue of obedience, however. All throughout this time, the warning of being cut off was given to the disobedient. It was given to those who were going to sin presumptuously.

We have this issue of judgments which are to begin at the house of God, as mentioned in I Peter 4:17-19 and Doctrine and Covenants 105:9-10, first to us as a nation in total and also the church. The Judgment must begin at the house of God first and is going to happen to those who don’t obey the gospel of God.

And the last statement is, if we are going to suffer according to the will of God, then let us commit to the keeping of our soul to Him by doing what is right by being obedient.

God desires that we will be reconciled to each other. This can only occur when we yield to His presence in our lives. As a church, we must be the leaders in this area to the world. His desire is never that anyone would be lost. He is not trying to separate one person from another. He is trying to purify both of them, not to cause division

amongst His people. Yet that is the way it is looked at: I can just cast my brother off and write him off because God is just sifting us and his lack of obedience is his problem; it's not mine. As a church (the Body of Christ) that is not acceptable to Christ.

There are several characteristics we need in our lives to assist God in this business of reconciliation:

1. Love must be in our hearts.
2. We must forgo our role as judge and God (when we judge it must be righteously.)
3. We must be willing to sacrifice.
4. We need the opportunity to worship together.
5. We must maintain our brothers' integrity.
6. We must open up ourselves to be hurt and recognize the spiritual battle around us.

We could no longer love our brother and hate our enemy. Our new calling in him was to love both. We could no longer claim that our relationship with him was fine when there was aught between our brothers and ourselves. That was Christ's law! That was the standard that He set in comparison to the way He interrupted that old law. Jesus's calling was to die for our sins. We did not desire this, yet he still reached out to us by this magnificent act of love. Regardless of how we are or how we were or how we are yet to respond to that act, He chose to die for us and give us the chance to be redeemed.

We must choose in like manner, regardless of how our brothers are going to act, to give them the chance and to give them the opportunity to reconcile. How many of us want to reconcile ourselves to someone who doesn't love us or to someone who treats us with disdain? It is not a natural reaction! We must overcome our human emotions and desires and allow Christ's love to live in us. In so doing, we can do as he did. We

can choose to love, even when we know that the other will not return that love.

Our love will become unconditional. That doesn't mean that the blessings can be accessed by that love without conditions; they have conditions on them. If you want the blessings of God's love, you have to do this and this and this. But that will never cease; no matter what we do, God's love for us is unconditional. He will always be there because that is who He is. And in a sense, that is who we need to become. Our love will be unconditional. It will not be based on a set of predisposed circumstances or expectations. In choosing this method of love, we will do what is right. It becomes our response to Christ. It almost leaves our brother out of the equation, but that is not necessarily true. Our choice to love will be our response to Christ, not to our brother.

God is calling us to love our brother in the midst of his sin. This is the only way we can currently love, if we examine the situation. None of us are perfect! So if we love, we love imperfect people.

God calling us to love the sinner is nothing beyond what we are already capable of doing with our spouse or to our children who are sinners. Yet we are capable of doing that for them—loving them, having that unconditional love for them. So what happens is, we end up choosing which sins are greater, and we say, "I can't or won't love you any more because of this." Is this how God is? Does His love ever stop? We know from Romans that is not the case.

This is a critical understanding in the ministry of reconciliation. This issue of drawing a line in the sand and saying I can't love you anymore is not scriptural or God given. It is a result of us playing the part of God. For true reconciliation to take place, we must forgo our role as judge and God and open ourselves up to the role God created us for. **That role is one of a brother and one of the servant.** The brother and the servant generally have bad things happen to them. Look through the parables to see how many times the

servants were mistreated. How we handle that hurt is going to determine how we end up, either reconciling ourselves with God and our brother in the church or going off and establishing barriers and walls. The love must be offered, and the individual will choose to accept it or reject it. If he chooses to reject it, we must not change our position. Remember love is patient, love is long-suffering, love never seeks its own. This is another witness of the scripture from 1Peter 4: if we are in tribulation, we are to commit the keeping of our souls to Him in well doing.

The purpose of the tribulation is to bring us closer to Him, not to bring us closer to those like us, meaning other sinners. As we draw closer to him, we will be drawn closer to each other. This is one of the chief reasons we must worship together. Because in worship, we can focus on Him and be drawn together as individuals. So many times we love because first we have been loved; this is a scriptural principle. This principle needs to be lived out in areas of our conflicts. We must seek actively to show our love, not just talk about it.

We need to focus on what God has called us to do. We need to remember and magnify our calling and to remember the commission to preach the gospel. If our priesthood would be about our duty of preaching the gospel and fulfilling our duties, there would be a greater sense of duty among our people. This work is bigger than any priesthood member or any priesthood office. The work of taking the gospel of the kingdom to the whole world will require thousands and thousands of active missionaries. We don't even have thousands and thousands of faithful and obedient members.

The spirit of reconciliation must be among us. The garments of righteousness that allow us to remain at the wedding feast do not come because we want them to come. They come upon us because He wants them to come upon us. There are certain things we must do, but the desire

is His first. This is His work and His church. Sometimes we see this as our work, not His.

For reconciliation to have full sway in our lives, we must want what He wants. He wants His wedding feast to be filled. Matthew 22:-14 is the wedding parable and also Luke 14:12-24. His desire is to have as many people as He can redeem to be there. The invitation is to all, and that is part of the Church's message and role.

Each one of us needs the validation that what has been pronounced is true and right. We shirk our responsibility if we are not in tune with the Holy Spirit and studying the scriptures to know what He says. That is why we suffer today. We need to preach repentance as Christ did, with so much love to the people. To the seekers, He preached without accusing. He maintained their agency by giving them the choice to think in their mind, "Ok, that was a great story," and walk off, and He didn't condemn them by the truth hidden in the parables if they chose to walk away. In maintaining their agency, He protected their dignity. If they desired more light and truth, He was there and ready and willing to share more light and truth. The Church's position must never be one that stands back and accuses. But we must stand and present the true kingdom of God. In doing so, we can not waiver about Church being made up of sinful people. We must maintain the standard to be the salt that has not lost its savor. Love must be in our hearts.

*Christ loves His church more than we do, and He is going to present the bride spotless. As a church, we have been unfaithful. We need to get back to that faithfulness in Christ and Christ alone. We must separate from the world and become that shining light. When God extends or re-establishes His Church in its fullness, the spirit of reconciliation must permeate the membership in total. They must be willing to work with each other. **It is up to us to choose to make the critical decisions to focus as a membership to do what God has called us to do.***

Relationships in Priesthood

By High Priest Steve Bohall
Wellington, Missouri

I have said a number of times that the scripture segment found in Ephesians 4:11-16 may contain the most profound guidance for the Restoration Movement in this present day. It speaks of “unity of the faith” as a given condition as the Saints come to a knowledge of the Son of God and are edified in that process toward their “perfecting.” Cross references to these observations by Paul can be found in latter-day scripture in D&C 135:2b & c, which points out that “such unity will prevail if those holding the priesthood will remember their commission...” and D&C 129:9b & c, which again speaks of unity of purpose and unity of understanding. This unity precludes going on to perfection. We all-too-often and incorrectly suppose that unity will follow and come to pass once perfection is achieved. In other words (used elsewhere in the scriptures,) having our eyes single to the glory of God is necessary to reach the goals intended.

There must be good relationships that exist between parts of the body. A fully functional human body needs the available useful operation of each individual anatomical part. So it is in our churches, the “body of Christ.” One of our good branch elders often challenges us that we really should realize that we are “dependent” branches of the restoration, not “independent” branches.

In a 1937 broadcast on CBS radio, President F. M. Smith said, “...one of the purposes of religion is to promote proper relations.” This advice is in agreement with Hebrews 13:1, which speaks of the importance of brotherly love, and D&C 132:4, which stipulates that the great essential of

the accomplishment of our work is fraternal co-operation. “Fraternal” alludes to “brotherly.”

A question could be asked of the brethren of the priesthood: “Are you an ‘operative’ or a ‘co-operative?’” An “operative” could be thought of as an artisan, a secret agent, or a private detective. Rather, relationships and cooperation are very important among the servants of Christ. We suffer when relationships and cooperation fail among individuals, groups, branches, etc. On another occasion, F. M. Smith remarked, “As the end of the reign of selfishness approaches, the hearts of many of this people will fail.” We certainly see the prophetic implications of his observation; oh, that this condition would be coming to an end! The priesthood may be the greatest (or worst) contributors/culprits/sponsors/instigators of “relationship-itis.” Sometimes this occurs innocently, but more often, and sadly, not.

Continuing with another observation of Brother F. M., though he was speaking of a couple specific weaknesses of the brethren, he said, “...we have a right to expect that the ministry shall maintain a higher standard than the membership.” President Joseph Smith Jr., in a much quoted reference, said, “...when we undertake to cover our sins, to gratify our pride, vain ambition, or to exercise dominion or compulsion over the Souls of the children of men, in any degree of righteousness, behold the heavens withdraw themselves, the Spirit of God is grieved, then amen to the priesthood, or to the authority of that man...”

Here is an idea to consider: when the priesthood have right and good relationships, the branch is blessed and prospers. Considering this further: of our active church families, what percentage are those of a priesthood man? The number is interesting, and high. In many of our branches, priesthood families comprise a majority of the total. Who, then, suffers when priesthood are not in unity? How often has “hypocrisy” been cited as an excuse for folks’ non-participation in the worship and activities of our churches? Let

us consider the challenge brought out in D&C 124:7b-c: we should strive for honor and glory, though not for ourselves, but for the great work entrusted to us.

Why are there varied offices and specific responsibilities of priesthood in our church? Other churches have a “minister” or “preacher,” and some have assisting elders or deacons, for instance. But the bulk of the ministry of those churches rests upon one person. In the Restoration church, the offices of priesthood and the ministry are complementary to each other. It is unfortunate if those offices or ministries complicate rather than complement one another. My memory seems to remind me a lesson from geometry, that when two angles added together amount to 90 degrees, they are said to be complementary. That is, they are “square,” or make a “right” angle. That is a good lesson for the complementary ministries of our priesthood offices. Adding our ministries together “squares” the function of our branches for the “right.”

It is of note, also, that the priesthood have traditionally been sent out or asked to function by twos. We find support for this in a number of scripture references: Mark 6:9, D&C 42:2c, 52:3c, 60:3a, and 135:4. We often remember the ministry of the brethren in pairs: Moses and Aaron, Paul and Sosthenes, Paul and Timothy, Paul and Barnabas, Paul and Titus, Timothy and Silas, Silas and Judas Barsabas, Philip and Bartholomew, etc. We also remember the fraternity of members of the twelve. Notice that at the Transfiguration experience were Peter, James and John, and that their ministry together also had an effect on the latter day Restoration movement. Today, the pairing of brethren in their ministry is continued, especially in a number of the ordinances.

The fraternity and blessings of priesthood are also perpetuated through ordination: a man is ordained according to the gifts and power of the Holy Ghost within the one who officiates. The legacy is passed along, and one benefits from the other.

An interesting evidence of the shared responsibilities of priesthood is found in early church historical records. The secretary's minutes bear out that the branch I attend was organized early in the 20th century, with not only a presiding elder but a presiding priest, a presiding teacher, and a presiding deacon. The work of each and all was important to success. If the branch had functioning priesthood in the varied offices, it had good reason to bring forth a viable presence and bear fruit in those areas of the vineyard wherein they were planted.

Scripture passages in Matthew 18:19-20 and D&C 6:15b indicate that where two or three are gathered in the Lord's name, He is there, as they agree on one thing. We must work together compatibly.

Patience and long suffering, among others, are listed as the fruit of the Spirit. Paul advises to “run with patience...,” indicating these qualities have importance in our relationships with others. Peter enumerates a number of these and other Godly qualities, among which he lists “brotherly kindness.” Quite a number of other references impress patience upon us, reminding us that we must work together. John the Revelator speaks to us, “I...am your brother, companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ...” We should take this to heart, reminded of the support we share!

Chapter 10, Volume 3 of *Church History* records a very remarkable turn of events that led to the Reorganization of the church. Zenos H. Gurley Sr. and the brethren were grappling with the needs and evident work of preparation of the church. Very difficult times were experienced before a miraculous turn of events:

“...what was strange to us all, a good deal of ill feeling was manifest...we argued, we debated...we could not see ‘eye to eye.’...men who hitherto had been united, had seen ‘eye to eye,’ had labored together as one man for the cause of truth, were now opposed to each other...forever separate.”

Let me hasten to direct you to continue with that reading to see what happened! A remarkable transformation took place, and those men's hearts and minds were blended together for the benefit of the church at that time, and ever since! Even in extremely trying circumstances, the brethren were willing to be together in their responsibilities.

We must focus on being ministers of Jesus Christ more than being ministers of the church. We are to be servants of Christ, in His stead. Unfortunately, sometimes we get too busy doing church work rather than doing the work of the church.

We are guided by the prophetic ministry given in D&C 122:16-17. We are to continue in the ministry of our calling, we are to be patient and not contentious, we are equal in worth of position and work, and we are to prefer one another. We are to continue in steadfastness and faith, and we are to "let nothing separate you from each other and the work whereunto you have been called."

Our Relationship with Christ

By Seventy Richard Neill
Independence, Missouri



The Lord is calling us to better relationships in the Church. This is not optional. This does not depend on which branch we go to. It is universal. It is eternal that we are to improve the relationships within the Church. If you are asking if that is a "Thus saith the Lord," I will tell you that it is. Not because I am trying to be prophetic, but because He has told us over and over again, generation after generation, that He

wants us to become one as a people. "If ye are not one, ye are not mine." The time has come for politics to cease in the life of the Church. The only business that has a right to be discussed among the people is the business of the Lord. We must be about our Father's business. And if we are not, we are not His people.

So, we come to our relationship with Christ.

I want to begin with a personal experience, and then I want to share a scriptural experience that I think will shed light on this topic.

I was at a reunion in Illinois, participating in a class led by Bob Giertz. As we were discussing the gospel, Gary Whiting stood up and made a comment that those things which we think are the easiest are the hardest to do. As soon as he said that, my mind started clicking, because as a people, we really believe that the two great commandments are the easiest part of the gospel. We err, Saints, as we have come so short on those two. When someone preaches a sermon about them, often we, the Saints, just turn it off. We know what that scripture is. We think because we love someone, or something, that we are a loving people. That is not necessarily true.

It is mentioned in Alma 16 in the Book of Mormon about the Zoramites who would go up to Rameumptom and say the right things. But their lives were so compartmentalized that they could leave what they professed on top of that stand, come down from there, and live their lives the rest of the week however they wanted to. Then they would return the next week, get up on the stand again, and feel they had done their duty.

We, too, compartmentalize our lives. We find there are some people that we love more than others. We love some things more than other things. We even love some parts of the gospel more than other parts. Generally, what I have

seen over the years is that the area of the gospel we love and happen to be obedient to is the part of the gospel we promote. Why do we do that? It is because we find it is easier for us to manage? If we promote that as being REALLY important then we must be more righteous. If I think fasting, if I think the Word of Wisdom, or if I think service to the elderly is what the gospel is all about, and I am obedient to those things, then I must be a pretty good person.

Those are certainly very important parts of the gospel. If anybody has followed those things and worked hard, I do not want you to be offended by what you have just read. **My point is, the gospel is centered and rooted in love.** If we do anything that would promote ourselves, then we would be like the Pharisee, looking at the publican and saying, "Thank goodness I'm not like that man." Or we would be like the rich young ruler that would come by and say, "You know I keep all the commandments. What is it that I lack in order to enter into the eternal kingdom?" **What we find is that which we think is the easiest is the hardest.** Would we have the current condition in the Church today if we loved according to those two commandments fully and obediently?

Now, we may think that those things cannot be achieved. Granted, to fully achieve them can only be through the blood sacrifice of our Lord, Jesus Christ. In and of ourselves we will never become a fully loving person to those around.

Sometimes we might not love certain people as much as we love others. Maybe we do not love them because of some of the things they do. As Arthur Oakman would say, "Can we say we love the unlovable?" Would Jesus say we could be His servants while not loving the unlovable? There are people that are easier to get along with, there are flaws in everybody, and there are shortcomings. So how do we overcome this? The answer is very simple.

In the Old Testament, what did the brass serpent symbolize? If the children of Israel would keep their eyes on the brass serpent, they would be fine. It is only when they took their eyes off of it that trouble ensued. We so often hear the quote of John 3:16, "For God so loved the world..." that we forget that in John 14 and 15 is the discussion on the brass serpent. If our eyes are on Jesus, our relationships will be what they should be. But anytime we take our eyes down off Jesus, we are then at the mercy of the serpents of this world, who intend to kill and murder our souls and the souls of every person they possibly can. **So, to set our eyes upon Jesus is absolutely critical.**

Now I would like to share a scriptural example—the two thieves crucified with Jesus. This should be for us a little bit emotional because, as Arthur Oakman rightly said, "Who are the two thieves? **The two thieves are you and me.**" The thieves take the things of the gospel and pervert it and use it for their own purpose or reject it. The thieves, in other parts of the scriptures, were also called murderers. Do you know when we do anything that would take someone away from the Kingdom of God that we, too, are murderers? If, at the end of our life, you can point back to anybody and say you are a reason why that person will not enter into the Kingdom of God, you will have murdered that person spiritually. Thankfully, there is the mercy of Jesus Christ. For those who have been thieves and those who have been murderers, there is still the opportunity to enter into His Kingdom.

Let's look at the two thieves in Matthew 27. This begins in verse 47: "One of the thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth." He is reviling Jesus. Jesus has the chief priests, the scribes, the elders, and the people reviling him, and now also is the thief on the cross. Imagine what this is like for Jesus. He came to save mankind, but the adversary is using the very people that Jesus came to save to

spit in His face and say all manner of evil things to Him. How much more despicable can that be? Have you ever had the experience where you have really tried to help somebody, and the person, instead, seems to have a dislike for you? How did you feel? Take that feeling and magnify it a billion times for Jesus Christ, who is perfect. Who came to save mankind. Who said if we just keep two commandments, all the law would be fulfilled and we would have life eternal. Jesus offers us the greatest opportunity. If you are looking for a deal, He is offering you the greatest deal that could be offered. Imagine He is there on the cross and the very people that He came to offer that deal to are now rejecting Him.

Sometimes we think that if we go through a tough time, we will become humble; but as you can see with the thief on the cross, that is not truly scriptural. I am not going to stand before you and ever pray, "Lord, as your humble servant." I am not going to pray that when I am not humble. What I will pray is, "Lord, as your humbled servant." The word "humbled" allows the message to be known. If I enter into any depth of humility, it is because of Him and not because of me. I don't ever come before the Lord humble. I always have my own thoughts. I always have things I want done a certain way. We all know we are thieves, even in our better moments. I know I am. There are times I can hang on a cross and revile the Lord because the events do not always humble us.

With the Church in the condition it is in, I am amazed we are not a humble people. How far are we going to let this thing go? I hear people constantly saying they are right and someone else is wrong. When the truth be known, none of us are completely right. We see our church's history since being brought out of the wilderness in 1830. We see how the generations before us struggled with being humble. Today, are we any better than the generations that have gone before us? Do we get down to where we are like

Elijah, thinking we are the only one left? We know, fortunately, that the Lord does not have to rely on us for his purposes to be accomplished.

So we have this thief who was chastising the Lord. It goes on to say, "But the *other* rebuked him, saying, Dost thou not fear God, seeing that thou are under the same condemnation; and this man is just, and hath not sinned..." Something was happening within this thief as he recognized who Jesus was. As he came to know Jesus, he then had a relationship with Jesus. Next, he cried unto the Lord that he would save him. Have you cried to the Lord? Do you think you are good enough, you are faithful enough, or you are loving enough that you do not have a need to cry unto Him?

When this thief recognized who Jesus was, he recognized his separation, and he cried for salvation. The Lord said unto him, "This day you shall be with me in paradise." The Lord has the ability, power, and authority to bridge the divide. To bridge the divide in your life with Him. To bridge the divide in your home life, whether it be husband to wife or husband and wife to child. To bridge the divide in the priesthood and within the Church. Even with all our shortcomings, we must recognize and believe that it is possible for us to become a people of one heart and one mind, dwelling in righteousness, with no poor among us. If not, we must fall on our faces before the Lord!

There are many, who in their separation, have turned from the Lord and do not have a relationship with Him. How much do you love them? Consider that they are like the thief that chastised Jesus, and because of that spirit, they could be forever separated from the Kingdom of God. Do you love them enough to do whatever it takes so that separation does not happen in their lives? This does not mean to just go out and be good to that person. What about us becoming a people that would be a light set on a hill, to the extent that a city would be built that

would witness to the world that we, as a people, have a relationship with the Lord, Jesus Christ. They would know that we love the world, that God so loved us that He sent His Son, and that we so love the world that we are willing to follow His Son, that those who are in darkness will see the light. Do you love them enough to admit that it is not an easy thing to keep the two great commandments? To have love has, is, and will not be easy unless we change. Consider the love of the Master, who stepped down from his throne in the presence of His father to take our sins and know the agony of death, that, somehow, we might be restored. Do we love anywhere close to that? Then how can we say we are humble servants when we are not even close to the servants we should be? I think when the Lord touches our lives, it is because there are at least times that we try.

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.” (John 13:34-35) The commandment of love is not just to love your daughter or son but that **you love one another as Jesus loves you**. That is when you are keeping the commandment. How many of us are loving like Jesus loved? None of us! So why is it we go around in pride and separate from each other when we know we are commanded to love at that level?

Jesus says to love your enemies. Do you love the people that feel differently about certain aspects of the Restoration at this point? Do you love the person who does something to you that you don't like? Love one another as I have loved you. Not as you and I love, because our love isn't anywhere close to where it needs to be. “By this all men shall know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” (John 13:35) Our being in church does not prove anything. Us loving the people we are with, if we do it in the likeness of Christ, says we are disciples.

Unity

By Elder Charlie Booth
Independence, Missouri



As we consider the great plan of Zion's redemption, the covenant God made with His people, and the restoration of the true Gospel and His Church in these latter days, we must recognize that the Evil One does all in his power to thwart this marvelous work and wonder.

Ever since the time of Joseph Smith Jr., the church has suffered split after split. Some have sought after power, others believed they were in the right and all others were therefore wrong. Still others continue to wait patiently for another genuine prophet to come forth. And, saddest of all, others—far, far too many others—have wandered away into strange paths.

My father used to tell us this little story when we were children. “The night was dark and dreary. The soldiers were huddled around the campfire. Someone said, ‘Sergeant, tell us a story.’ And the story went something like this.” Then Dad would repeat the same sentences at least twice.

My wife Susan and I took our honeymoon trip to Pennsylvania in 1995. The bed and breakfast where we stayed included three meals a day. We enjoyed quiet dining with soft, pleasant music in the background. After two days, we realized that the music that was playing seemed to be the same each time. We asked our server about it. She laughed and said the CD was stuck in the CD player. None of them could figure out how to remove it, so it continued playing over and over. They were waiting for the owner to come back from a trip so he could fix it.

Sometimes we can get caught up in the routines of life, even if they have value and interest for us. The result is that we do the same things over and over

again, never really making headway. And we wait for someone in authority to “fix it.”

Our church history, clear up to the present day, tells how many things have been tried over and over again to build the unity men envisioned, and how, though their intentions were good, failure resulted. We of this generation hear many calls for unity, for coming together in this great task of helping establish the cause of Zion. Faithful Saints continue to hear voices calling out from various groups with roots in the Restored Gospel, “Come with us; join with us; we are the true church; our organization is authorized; we have a prophet and all the offices; let us have unity...”

And yet, unity continues to elude us, the people of the promise. So, to the average church member, it may appear that the topic is worthy of conversation; that it is good but not important, welcome but not essential, and comfortable but probably inconvenient.

Despite our common heritage in the many different branches of the Restoration tree, we are a very diverse group. Bringing unity would seem as much a miracle as resurrection from the dead.

Be assured that those outside the Church are watching and listening. With the claims we assert of God speaking in these latter days, they are watching to see if God is in our midst, and they are listening to discover whether our voices speak in unity. One of the crucial ways they will know we are His—and that He is here—is by the measure of our unity.

But don’t mistake diversity for disunity. We can be wonderfully diverse while being totally in harmony regarding who we are in Christ. Think of it this way: If God created over 350,000 species of beetles, why would He not want branches with unique personalities and abilities to reach people?

In other words, unity does not mean uniformity. Consider the project of building a house, with the differing trades and types of expertise. From excavators to carpenters to electricians to plumbers, would a home be properly built if the

subcontractors did not follow the same plans, use the same quality of supplies, and coordinate their work?

Unity on a building project means sharing a common goal and working toward that goal with similar passion and effort. It does not mean that all pursue that goal in the same way. Just as a house requires diverse trades, bringing about Zion requires diversity in action. That is, unity does not mean that we each have to do the same thing. Becoming one in the pursuit of the Kingdom does not mean becoming the same as everyone else, but it requires something even more important.

The great plan of God, through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ, is that men will be drawn back to Him through the processes of repentance, authoritative baptism of water and the Spirit, etc. They will become righteous through faithfully keeping His commandments, becoming fit for the Kingdom. I propose this: As righteous men and women become close to God, they are then able to become first one with Jesus and the Father, as Jesus and the Father are one, after which unity with one another is inevitable.

Those who have become one with Christ will predictably and inevitably be drawn together as one (becoming a cohesive group of faithful, obedient, and righteous men and women). In other words, oneness with Christ allows the development of the corporate “one heart and one mind” condition necessary for usefulness to God in the establishment of the cause of Zion.

Is unity just a dream? Remember this: No dream is hopeless until we give up on it! But the dream of unity is one that can only become reality if the process is established on this foundation: by believers individually taking the necessary first step of striving faithfully for the oneness spoken of in the scriptures—oneness with Christ.

***Any attempts to build unity, organize, reorganize, or come together as one will ultimately fail if the focus is on *what we can do between us*, rather than on *what God will do through us* when we are willing to humbly, faithfully, and obediently become subservient to Him through His Son. ***

I believe there is a clear and consistent pattern for this task that will actually work. Unity is possible among the Saints (the church, the body of believers, even all Christians)! Very simply, it is found in the treasured words of scripture. We read in Matthew 24:39, "And whoso treasureth up my words, shall not be deceived." So said Jesus.

The following scriptures confirm the call to righteousness and to keeping the commandments, which will ultimately lead to the unity of which we dream. But there are *conditions* to be met.

Ezekiel 11:19-20 "And I will give them one heart...that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God."

Genesis 6:67-71 [In the account of Adam's baptism, this passage concludes by saying the following:] "Behold, thou art one in me, a son of God; and thus may all become my sons."

John 17:14-23 [Jesus is praying for His disciples.] "...That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us...That they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one..."

(In 3 Nephi 9:23, 3 Nephi 9:30, and D&C 34:1a-b, the words of Christ are nearly identical.)

Next, let's look at three scriptures where specific wonderful things happened to the Lord's people because of the working out of this process I have just described.

Genesis 7:23 "And the Lord called his people, Zion, because they were of one heart and of one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and [*the result:*] there were no poor among them."

Acts 2:41-45 "Then they...were baptized... And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine...And [*the result:*] all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need."

Acts 4:31-32 [After Peter and John had been imprisoned, then released, the following took place.] "And when they had prayed...they were all filled with the Holy Ghost...And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul; [*and now came the result of this condition:*] neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common."

There are other scriptures which describe the same conditions of the heart and standards of behavior which lead people to fulfill the second greatest commandment—to love one another.

Ephesians 4:1-6 "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, In one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

Ephesians 4:11-13 "Till we, in the unity of the faith, all come to the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ..."

Philippians 2:1-3 [Paul exhorts to unity.] "Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind...Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus..."

1 Peter 3:8-12 [Peter exhorts to unity, and emphasizes how the Lord rewards the righteous.] "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous... For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous..."

Mosiah 9:54 [Alma speaking] "And he commanded them that there should be no contention one with another, but that they should look forward with one eye, having one faith and one baptism; [*here is another certain result:*] having their hearts knit together in unity and in love, one towards another."

3 Nephi 13:35-36 [speaking of the three Nephites] "...thus they did...preach the gospel of Christ unto all people upon the face

of the land; and they were converted unto the Lord, and were united unto the church of Christ..."

Think about the condition that existed in Enoch's city that caused it to be acceptable to the Lord as Zion.

D&C 36:2h "And the Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind [*with Him and with each other*], and dwelt in righteousness."

D&C 138:2b-c "...Unity should prevail. To this end, all the Saints should work together in the rich fraternity which can and will prevail among them [Does He stop there? No!] when they keep faithfully the commandments."

Arthur Oakman wrote, "It is useless, as events daily testify, to look for security in Zion unless the Zionic citizen is Christlike." (Saints Herald, 12/3/38, "The City with Foundations")

Again, may I make it clear, when we consider the concept of unity: As righteous men and women become close to God, they are then able to become *first* one with Jesus and the Father, as Jesus and the Father are one, after which unity with one another is inevitable.

And, again, any attempts to build unity, organize, reorganize, or come together as one will ultimately fail if the focus is on what we can do between us, rather than on what God will do through us when we are willing to live individual lives of righteousness.

[sometime in the future] It was a dark and stormy night. The soldiers were huddled around the campfire. Someone said, "Sergeant, tell us a story." And the story went something like this:

"In the first quarter of the 21st century, the men and women of the Restoration movement decided to humble themselves before God, keep His commandments, and truly strive to become one with the Father and the Son. And, when they did so, much to their surprise and joy, they *found the unity* with their brothers and sisters which had only been a dream in all the generations that had gone before..."

Kenya, East Africa, Mission Trip

By Val and Anita Brotherton
Alma, Missouri

There were six of us who traveled to Kenya, Africa, on March 8-20, 2018. The team consisted of Doug Smith, Marilyn Middleton, Sylvia Powell, Cara Smith, and Anita and Val Brotherton. We would be helping with church services, a women's retreat, and visiting in the homes. We would also be sharing in a memorial service for Donna Comfort, where we would be scattering her ashes in a wildlife preserve. She and Marilyn had visited Africa in 1992 and made contact with Pam and Eric Odida. Because of Marilyn and Donna's efforts, the church was again reestablished, and by the mid-1990's, ministry was once more being sent to Africa.

There were many testimonies that preceded our trip and made us aware that the Lord was preparing the way before us. We arrived in Nairobi on Friday evening to begin the first part of our ministry. We met on Sunday for worship services. There were approximately thirty-five people in attendance. They met in a school, where two other church groups were meeting. Cara and Anita taught the children's Sunday school class. Several of the children came from one of the other church meetings that did not have a Sunday school class. As the children would come into the school, James Yogo would ask them if they wanted to join the Sunday school class. He then ushered them into our room. We started with six of our own and ended up with sixteen! Maybe some seeds were planted, especially since we talked about the parable of the sower.

On the opposite side of the wall of our sanctuary, a Pentecostal group was meeting. During Doug's class, the yelling and wailing got so loud and

distracting that you could hardly hear what he was saying. When it was time for Val's sermon, many prayers were being offered that the other group would be quiet so we could worship. As Val started his sermon, the noise stopped and did not start up again until he was finishing up his sermon. What a wonderful answer to our prayers, especially since his sermon was on the power of prayer. God is so good!

For the next part of our ministry, we traveled seven hours to Kisumu. We would be staying with Pam and Eric Odida for a few days so that we could visit with the Saints in that area. The church people were always so kind and gracious. I was able to meet little Nephi Anditi, whom we had been praying for. His eyes looked wonderful, and he is a happy, active four-year-old. His parents said that he will have to wear glasses when he goes to school. They appreciate all the prayers for their son.

One of the highlights of the trip, for me (Anita), was being able to witness some of the final translation of the Book of Mormon into Swahili. These five men have been working faithfully to finish this translation. It has taken them several years. They are Duke Nyakweba, Nelson Mutahi, Eliud Okecha, Tom Okeyo, and Mishael Onyiego. It will be able to be read by 4.5 million people in Africa. What a blessing that will be!

We traveled to visit Judith Agwanda...a faithful servant of the Lord. She had four of her relatives/neighbors join us for an impromptu church service. Val gave a wonderful message on "We must be born again." There were four administrations. It was such a beautiful and peaceful time in her home.

We traveled to Oyugi on Thursday, March 15th, to set up for the Eastern Africa

Women's Retreat. It would continue until noon on Sunday. Our theme was, "Witness, that you have entered into a covenant with Him, that you will serve Him and keep His commandments." Mosiah 9:41. All of the missionary team taught at least one class, and Val shared the sermon on Sunday about keeping our covenants. The final count on the retreat was 106 adults (ten priesthood) and seventeen children. That was such a blessing, because they had anticipated that only 40 women would be able to come to the retreat. The rainy season had just started, and many of the women needed to start planting crops. I know there were many sacrifices made by these women to be at the retreat. Many of them traveled long distances to be there. It humbled me to realize the small sacrifice I had made.

We flew back to Nairobi, which saved us seven hours of drive time. James Yogo was so kind to drive all our luggage back to Nairobi, as we could not take them on the small plane. He then brought Austin Odicoh over to the airport so that we might visit with him. Austin has prostate cancer and is staying in Nairobi for five weeks while he is having treatment. He has been a valiant servant for the church in Kenya.

There were so many blessings on this trip...too many to be contained on this paper. Surely, the Lord did go before us.



Report from Australia

By Rachel Todd
Townsville, QLD Australia

Townsville is a long way from...anywhere really, and so it was lovely to receive a visit from Tom Rindels and Kevin Humphrey, missionary visitors from the USA. In particular, we were fortunate enough to receive the visit at a time when our family was in need of spiritual support and guidance. My father, Maxwell, suffered a massive stroke recently and has been rendered partially paralysed and almost speechless. He and my mother, Patrice, have been married for forty-two years, and she has felt the sadness and strain of this event keenly. Dad is progressing in his rehabilitation, and we have a new normal, which is challenging. But we are optimistic.

The missionaries visited with my father, who has been hospitalised for about a month, and prayed for his good health to be restored and for blessings for our family. At a time when one needs support, we were blessed to have the support from brothers of our church. We were also blessed to be able to have a Sacrament of the Lord's Supper and sharing of testimony.

I can only express my personal gratitude and my gratefulness to God for bringing these men to our homes. I was reassured by Brother Rindels that I wasn't alone and hadn't been cast off from the flock. He also reassured me that I'm loved by God and that he knows what is in my heart. It was such a blessing to know I have my spiritual Father's love.

Being geographically isolated can be difficult for the Townsville Saints. Being spiritually isolated can be worse than any temporal distance. We were grateful the brothers were safely guided to our home, over a 2000km (1243 miles) trek, to share with us and reassure us we were not forgotten.

Whilst here, my husband, John, showed Tom and Kevin some of our lovely sights and historical monuments. We enjoyed hearing about their families and shared stories of our experiences.

From Oregon to Ontario, the Lord Draws Us Closer!

By Alicia Mahoney
Stoney Creek, Ontario Canada



This past March, my family and I were greatly blessed in being able to welcome Elder Gary Livingston and his son, Michael, into our home for joyful fellowship and welcome ministry. During that week, the Spirit worked in our lives to draw us closer in Sainly bonds and to greatly strengthen and develop old and new friendships. During the week of March 26-31st, we were able to visit and feel peace together at some of God's beautiful and magnificent creations, including the stunningly beautiful Niagara Falls. We were able to experience some of God's power through his handwork when we took a tour behind the waterfalls. We were reminded of the promise God made with Enoch and Noah of the coming forth of Zion again when we viewed two tall and colorful rainbows that formed around the falls. How fitting it was that two rainbows would form in an area where the ground below is flooded by the powerful cascades of water flowing from the ledges above, and how comforting it was to our hearts. We were able to feel God's presence through His wonderful creations again as we walked through the forests on the edge of Hamilton Mountain, and while we stood on the shores of Lake Ontario, rain or shine.

In a world full of so much evil, it is a joy like no other to fellowship in the love of God with other

Saints. We were truly blessed with and thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated the classes taught by Elder Gary Livingston. In one class, we were given a visual representation comparing the length of our mortal lives to all of eternity. We were reminded how it is nothing in comparison, but that it's works that determine where we spend eternity. Over the week, we moved on to learning about how we should perfect our character during this probationary period we have here on earth. Some of ways included having works of righteousness, being stripped of pride, and being sufficiently humble. It is always a good thing to be reminded of how there is nothing in this world worth losing eternity with God over, as well as what we must do to prepare for that eternity with Him.

Brother Gary also taught classes to the youngest three members of the family, who enjoyed their classes with him so much that they wouldn't stop asking when their next classes would be! They were so excited to share what they learned and happily talked about their time with Brother Gary for days afterwards. It brings so much joy to the heart to see young children get excited for God!

On Friday, we had a wonderful Sacrament service led by Priest Lloyd Mahoney. How truly beautiful it was to be with our dear friends and remember the sacrifice the Lord made for us. We will never, ever, forget how brothers Gary and Michael were kindly willing to travel across the entire continent to visit us and provide ministry, or of the wonderful time we had in fellowship together. I am reminded that the love of God that the Saints have for each other is so strong that, although the land distance may be great, there is no distance in the hearts of the Saints who truly love God with all of their heart, might, mind, and strength.

I am truly thankful to Brother Paul Gage and to our Heavenly Father with all of my heart for creating the Pen Pal Project group that led to this wonderful and otherwise highly unlikely connection. I feel as though I will never be able to truly express in words how thankful I am. Having Brothers Gary and Michael here has been such a wonderful blessing that has strengthened my faith and relationship with God. I will forever be thankful for the time we had together, and it will never be forgotten. It has changed our lives in beautiful way! God is good!

CRE Women's Council Spring Retreat

By Terri Gard
Blue Springs, Missouri

It is always a wonderful time to share with my sisters of the Faith, so when the Women's Spring Retreat set for April 14th, 2018, came around, I planned on attending. I noticed several days before that I was thinking of excuses not to go, so I knew the retreat would be special!! (Sometimes the adversary works with us that way.) I was grateful for Suzanne Bendorf calling and asking me to write my experience regarding the retreat, so I had no excuse!!

Even though the theme was "The Lord carries Us Through our Brokenness," I was still glad to be there! I felt I could not really relate as I feel my life is so blessed! I cannot really think of major trials in my life. But I was about to be reminded...

My favorite time of prayer service is the testimonies, and that is basically what Melanie Coonts and Charlotte Anderson shared with us. Hearing Melanie share regarding a physical need and how the Lord provided was a wakeup call for me. I can depend on the Lord to provide ALL our needs, both physically and spiritually. Sometimes I need to be reminded of that.

Charlotte shared some trials she had during her childhood and how the Lord helped her through those. How blessed my childhood and life have been compared to what others have had to go through. I so appreciated the dreams she shared to remind me that our loved ones that have gone on before are in a much better place. She also reminded us to be thankful for everything that happens in our lives.

Kaetlyn Parker's song touched my heart very much. I don't have trouble sharing my troubles with others, but I know I need to look at others to see if the Lord is whispering to me, "Listen to them and their needs." Some people do have "Fake Smiles and Buried pain in their Sunday best."

Retreats are always a wonderful time for catching up with friends and loved ones. I pray I can take what I heard and apply these lessons to my life. I pray I can always accept things that come into my life and turn them over to God. Help me, Lord, to listen to Your voice and do Your will in my life.

The Spirit of God in Rwanda, Africa

By Elder Chris Capps
Alma, Missouri

Plans for a trip to Rwanda were well underway when we received word that the President of Rwanda had given a decree which caused the closing of up to 2000 churches there. Elder Eric Woolery and I continued our plans with much prayer and fasting, not really knowing what to expect when we arrived in Kigali, the Capital of Rwanda.

Elder Francis Baganizi and recently ordained Priest Jean De Dieu Rutihimbuguza met us at the airport. After prayer, Brother Francis explained to us that what was happening was a Two point decree which had many restrictions. We could not meet in our church in Kayonza until requirements were met. Francis had explained to the authorities that our priesthood are not paid and that our goal was not to get gain. He was able to testify of the gospel. Permission was granted to meet with current members and teach classes, but we were forbidden to have services at the church building. After asking for God's blessings, we retired for the night.

We travelled the next morning to Rwammagana and spent the afternoon teaching Jean and Michael the priests duties and ordinances and then taught classes on baptism and the Book of Mormon. Several neighbors stopped by to listen and asked lots of questions. One young lady started asking questions about the Book of Mormon and instead of directing the question

to one of us through interpretation, Jean began answering her question in her language, It was good to see him taking his role as a priest and teaching with power and authority. The Spirit provided blessings as we shared and brought us much joy as the gospel went forth.

On Sunday morning, we awoke to heavy rains, but dressed and prepared for the day. The rain stopped for the duration of our trip and throughout the baptismal service. We arrived at Lake Muhazi and prepared for the baptisms. The lake was glassy calm and the setting was beautiful, only surpassed by the beauty of the Holy Spirit accompanying us. Eric gave remarks on the Ordinance of Baptism of the Water for the remission of sin. A beautiful prayer was offered and Jean waded into the lake to greet the candidates for baptism. It was Jean's first time baptizing and it was an amazing experience for all of us, especially the young men, Daniel, Christian and Earnest. As each was baptized and escorted back to the shore, the members clapped their hands in true joy and greeted them with hugs and smiles. As we walked back to a covered patio, it began to rain again. The Spirit was in great abundance and we rejoiced and prayed a prayer of praise to our Heavenly Father. The rain ceased and we obtained transportation back to Rwammagana.

We shared in a service of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Frances shared remarks and I confirmed Christian and Francis confirmed the others, to their great joy. The Sacrament of the Lords Supper was prepared by Jean and Francis and served by Jean to all the members, new and old! After a meal, Jean and Michael escorted Christian back home to



prepare for school the next day but they asked if when they returned we could have more classes. We visited and shared as we waited for them to return. Jean and Michael returned with another young man named Regis. I remembered him as I had met him in 2012 at a priesthood retreat in Kigali. He was not a member but wanted to hear the gospel. Francis had baptized him, but he had not been Confirmed because of his travels for work. For six years he had tried to be available to receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit but it had not been possible. He heard we were in the country, and called Jean, who brought him to Rwamagana. He asked us to Confirm him and it was a beautiful experience with the Spirit very much present. We prepared the Sacrament again and Jean served him the Lords Supper for the first time. It was a great ending to a great day for the church in Rwanda.

We travelled to Nyamata the next day and arrived at the home of Jean de Dieu and his wife Laticia. They welcomed us, and after a snack we discussed the Bible and its translation, prophetic lineage, signs of the times and the Wise Men's journey. We talked at length of Gods perfect timing. We woke refreshed and enjoyed the abundance of fresh fruit found in this part of the country. After breakfast, members began to arrive and we shared classes on faith and repentance as well as life after death and salvation. Later we shared about the Book of Mormon and the Lost Tribes of Israel. there were many questions about repentance and whether the Lord could forgive the murderers of the genocide.

The next morning we left a blessing on the home of Jean de Dieu and Laticia and said our goodbyes and left for Gisenyi. After a long bus ride through the mountains we arrived at Gisenyi and were met by Priest Deward Kubuya, his wife Claudine, a friend Genevieve and twenty-two young people from The Democratic Republic of the Congo. They were able to cross the border into Rwanda but we had no visas to go into the Congo. The gathering quickly became an impromptu youth retreat. Many were non-members, but we had a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the classes were well received. They had lots of hard questions which the Lord was able to answer through us. The youth had to go back before dark

so we ended our retreat each day about 4:30 pm, and then shared classes with the adults that could stay. This trip has been a blessing to all; the church, the members, and the country of Rwanda. God is performing an amazing work here and our prayer is that the church will continue to function and prosper in a healthy way through the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit.

India/Nepal Mission Trip 2018

By Elder Brian Herren
Salem, Oregon

Recent missionary efforts have included a trip to Nepal and India, where Brother Doug Smith, Brother Andrew Smith, and I served from April 6 through April 22, 2018. We were blessed with the warm hospitality and generosity of the Saints as we visited as many homes as possible within the mission field. Our travels into Sikkim, Darjeeling, and West Bengal in India also presented opportunities to share with many non-believers and non-members as the field enlarges in India. Traveling between 300 feet and 8,000 feet in elevation, the team moved from dense bamboo jungles in steamy, lush forests, to mountain passes in the shadows of the Himalayan peaks. In the jungle climates, we enjoyed eating ferns, yams, and the leaves of stinging nettles.

Convenient to Naxalbari, we were able to share with a group of tea workers gathered into a hut of stripped bamboo. Our sharing required a hike through the tea plants, into tribal lands, where we saw groups of monkeys running about, and endless rows of carefully cultivated tea plants giving way and merging seamlessly with lush jungle foliage and flowers. I could smell incense burning as we passed by some of the village huts,

and watched as a people laden with their daily labors gathered into a humble shelter at twilight. The night before we arrived, five elephants had entered the village and caused some trouble, and the people were concerned for our welfare as the gospel message carried us beyond sunset. We left the village in the dark, as our friends warned about the elephants. I couldn't feel any fear though, only the lingering of the Holy Spirit as it covered us as a cloak. We moved freely, easily, back along the way by which we had walked in. Peace seemed a shield impenetrable by worry during our travels in Nepal and India.

We visited with one family new to the faith in southeast Nepal. They lived in small quarters with a newborn baby, where newspaper scraps made up the better part of the wall and wind passed through without much interference. When they were asked what we might pray for, the family did not ask that we pray for the betterment of their present condition, or the means whereby they might enjoy some small comfort. Instead, they asked only that we pray for their parents who had not yet received Christ, knowing that nothing earthly afforded would compare to the heavenly gift in Christ revealed.

We experienced miracles along the way. Men were brought into our path by extraordinary circumstance. The Spirit filled our mouths as the three of us shared in succession so that the message was delivered complete and in harmony. The hearts of men were changed. A failed flashlight gave light only when needed to share scripture and at no other time of need. One early morning Brother Doug prayed silently for the message to be delivered that day. Two messages were presented to his mind before he was led to personally speak on the third message presented to him. Later that morning, knowing nothing of Doug's experience, Brother Andrew stood and delivered the first message, and I stood and delivered the second. Lastly, Brother Doug stood and delivered the third of the three. He later bore witness of God's working by the Spirit.

When all that we have is the Lord, we realize that He is all that we will ever need. God is marshaling His army, revealing His Son, calling His servants, and sending forth His gospel. The Saints can rejoice in these latter days, knowing that the small afflictions which sour the day cannot turn back the unyielding forces of heaven that herald the coming Kingdom.



God's Spirit Is Moving Around The World: "Go Ye Therefore And Teach"

African Restoration Ministries (ARM)

Mission trips were completed to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania, Kenya and Nigeria in 2017. Rick Johanson and Dale Stafford will be going to Nigeria in June, 2018.

Jim Clark, Travis Clark, Brian Herren, Kevin Herren, and Ron Herren, from the Salem, Oregon RB will going to Africa October 19-November 4, 2018.

Greater European Ministries (GEM)

Elder Brian Mundy is learning the German language to be better able to provide ministry there. He will be in England in May, 2018 with Elder Jason Hamilton and back in Germany in August.

Latin American Missions Board (LAMB)

In Mexico, Seventy Juan Reyes reported making several missionary trips to the cities of Jojutla and to Matamoros. Juan and wife, Tina, attended the CRE Conference June 25-30, 2017 in Independence, Missouri and will be returning in 2018.. Funds from LAMB helped cover their travel expenses.

The LAMB board consists of: James Van Biber, Jr., Chairman, David Schoff, Treasurer, Joe Hale, Secretary, and members: Eric Baker, Manuel Castillo, Michael Holmes, Pete Hughes and Ken Ward.

Southeast Asia and Australia Ministries (SEAAM)

AUSTRALIA: A mission trip to Australia in March/ April 2018 was carried out by Elders Kevin Humphrey and Tom Rindels.

NEPAL/INDIA: Elders Doug Smith, Brian Herren, and Andrew Smith completed a mission to Nepal and India in April, 2018..Another trip is set for the fall of 2018.

PHILIPPINES: A mission is being planned for the Mindanao region in 2018. Elder Murray Broughton and wife, Delma were in Luzon in December 2017

Domestic Outreach: USA and Canada

Elder Gary Livingston and son, Michael were in Stoney Creek in late March, 2018.

HP Paul Gage and Elder James Loumiet were in Indiana, Ohio, and Ontario, Canada in May of 2018.

Elder John Mundy wintered in Arizona and visited Saints in Arizona and California. .

INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON THE CRE WEBSITE:
eldersconference.org
INTOWN REUNION INFO. CAMPS AND REUNIONS SCHEDULE
CALENDAR OF EVENTS MONTHLY TIDINGS OF ZION
ISSUES AUGUST 2017-MAY 2018.

CRE FIRST ELDERS SESSION: SUNDAY, JUNE 24, 2018
2:00 PM IN THE SANCTUARY AT CPRS/WALDO AVENUE RB

Announcements:

ADDRESS CHANGES

Please notify the CRE of **any changes** in your mailing address, phone number, email address, church or marital status, etc. All contact information is on the inside front cover of each *Tidings of Zion*.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

There is a great need for additional help in funding the *Tidings of Zion*. Please note the article, in this issue, from Ray Lane, CRE Treasurer. *Tidings of Zion* currently goes into 4400 homes around the world, including 48 states of the USA as well as Australia, Canada, England, Germany, Honduras, Kenya, Mexico, Nepal, the Philippines, Russia, and the United Kingdom.

Usually we print between 4800 and 5000 copies so we can send, by flat rate boxes, a larger number to Kenya and the northern island of Luzon and southern island of Mindanao in the

Philippines. The copies of *Tidings of Zion* are then distributed, by the ministers to the Saints in scattered areas.

As far as circulation, the *Tidings of Zion* probably reaches more homes than any other Restoration magazine. **If every family that receives the *Tidings of Zion* would donate \$20.00 each year, it would easily cover the cost for *Tidings of Zion*.** Some individuals are already doing this and it is VERY MUCH APPRECIATED. Checks can be made out to the CRE and in the memo line, write, "Tidings of Zion." Mailing information is inside the front cover.

Stewardship is the response of my people to the ministry of my Son, and is required alike of all those who seek to build the kingdom. D&C 147:5 a.

SHARE WITH US!

Please send your articles, testimonies, branch news, youth activities, regional events, etc. Send to the CRE c/o Publication Council. Contact information is on the inside front cover of each *Tidings of Zion*.

LIVE STREAMING of SERVICES:

Belton, MO RB	http://beltonrestorationbranch.sermon.net/rss/main/audio
Buckner, MO RB	www.bucknerrb.org
Central Florida RB	centralfloridarestoration.com
Garden City, MI RB	gardencityrestorationbranch.org
Oak Grove, MO RB	http://www.ogrb.org/video.html
Oakwood, MI RB	www.oakwoodrestorationbranch.org/mobile.html
Waldo Avenue RB	http://www.waldoavenuerestorationbranch.org

Usually, you can just type in the name of the branch and it will take you to their website.

***** **NOTICE: THE CRE OFFICE HAS BEEN MOVED** *****

TO 1551 N. COURTNEY ROAD, INDEPENDENCE, MISSOURI 64050.

This is 3-4 miles north of CPRS/Waldo via Liberty St. and Kentucky Road.

CONTACT VIM HORN OR RICHARD NEILL FOR MORE INFORMATION.

Tidings of Zion

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Independence, MO 64051

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The Lord Is Great

**“God is great,
The way is straight,
Jesus is Lord,
Do not be bored,
Remember always,
That we must praise,
The Lord Jehovah,
We must raise.”**

Dylan Lavigne, age 10
Stoney Creek, Ontario, Canada