

Retreat Reflections --- by Susan Freeze

While leading the adult class at our branch retreat [April 27-29], Aaron Smith stated, "How prepared you are for a church service can often affect how you feel the Holy Spirit there." He said that two people may sit in the same service and have different experiences. One could have felt very moved by the Spirit while the other felt nothing.

That reminded me of a time several years ago when I came home from church and complained about a sermon. (Honestly, I don't remember who preached.) My mother asked, "Did you pray for that person all week for his preparation?" Of course I had to say no. She told me I had nothing to complain about. Let me tell you I don't think I have complained much about sermons since then!

It would be a mistake, though, if this reads that the Spirit of God cannot rest upon us if we are not prepared. I believe He has the power to meet us where we are, but we may reach a higher plane if we are prepared.

Also, I have often been blessed because of the preparation of others. As an example, Natalie Thomas' spiritual preparation as director for the recent Young Women's Retreat blessed me. All of the classes at that retreat blessed me, mainly because of other people's preparation. May God bless all of us in our preparation.

Supplies for Troops — *Want to help send supply boxes to the troops overseas? For only \$10, you can help bring needed support and encouragement to our armed forces. Please contact Alice Blea if you would be willing to help. Thanks...*

Worship Times:		Communion
		Sunday
Sunday Early Worship	9:00AM	9:00AM
Sunday School	9:15AM	9:15AM
Prayer Service (Sacrament Sunday only)		10:00AM
Sunday AM Worship	10:30AM	11:00AM
Sunday PM Worship	6:30PM	
Wednesday PM—Prayer and Testimony	7:00PM	

Zion's Path

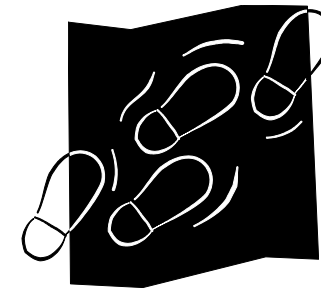
"...and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths..."
Isaiah 2:3

Church of Jesus Christ
Oak Grove Restoration Branch

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Isaiah 2:3

From the Pastor's Inkwell

Saturday evening of the Branch Spring Retreat we met to discuss how we as a Branch can fan the flames this coming year to become an incendiary people. The discussion was introduced by sharing some quotes that were generated as part of a Branch strategic planning process that took place in September of 2000. Members were asked to project forward five years and write a brief newspaper story about the Branch. The following statement is one of the brief stories that was shared as a reflection of what we as a Branch, and a people might desire to become.

"Oak Grove Restoration Branch is a vital part of life for many in the Oak Grove community. When people attend services at Oak Grove they come away changed by the Spirit that is present. The joy and love shown by the people is overwhelming. During some services, it has appeared the building would glow as if on fire, and the people would show this same glow. Their countenances shine unlike anything we have seen before."

After this brief introduction, the question was asked of the entire group what can be done to fan the flames that will make a difference at Oak Grove this coming year. The following reflects a couple of the things that were shared.

One year from now,

Our spiritual stewardship groups are flourishing.

- This will require reaching out and inviting more members to participate in a group
- Will require prayer that others may see the value

Attendance has increased by 30%

- Everyone bring a friend
- Be more welcoming

Upcoming Events

July 8-12: Junior Camp (Grades 4-6) at Odessa Hills Campgrounds

July 15-21: Junior High Camp (Grades 7-9) at Odessa Hills

July 29-Aug 4: Reunion II at Odessa Hills

- Generally reaching out
- Do guilt calls/check calls
- Pray for better attendance

After this initial discussion, three smaller groups were established and asked to identify an achievable goal for the coming year, and to discuss what it would take for us to achieve the goal.

Themes that seemed to emerge from the discussion are identified below:

- Increase involvement
- Increase attendance
- Increase fellowship/relationships
- Increase worship
- Increase involvement in spiritual stewardship groups
- Increase involvement of active priesthood
- Reactivate inactive priesthood
- Increase understanding of the office of member

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What can we each do personally to help the congregation move in this direction?
- By Elder Vim Horn, Pastor

June/July/August: Read the Doctrine & Covenants (Section 1-144) Quiz & Prizes in Sept.

August 11: Fun & Fellowship Pool Party at Oak Grove Pool with Bates City Mission

November: Tastes & Sounds of Christmas

Kenya With Us --- by Susan Booth

What a blessing it was to sit under the ministry of Kenya's Elder Eric Odida during the service at Oak Grove on Sunday evening, April 22, 2007. Elder Aaron Smith presided. Wailani Hallier and Valerie Lidberg ministered with music. The Spirit of God was in attendance.

Brother Odida shared many wonderful testimonies and gave valuable insights:

- priesthood (Eric's wife, Pamela, is an important ingredient that makes his ministry complete—individuals and family assist with the work in many ways)
- conversion of the aged and the important mission they have for the Gospel
- setting objectives important to keep focus on the joy of eternal life
- striving to live God's love---having an eye for grace vs. an eye for the law

Brother Odida expressed his appreciation for the ways the Oak Grove branch blesses them in Kenya and surrounding areas, by sending missionaries, sharing financial support and offering prayers. The Gospel work is spreading because of God's direction and the response of His people.

Tapes and CD's are available of this great sermon and may be obtained by calling Don Norman at 690-8165.

Mia Joins the Smith Family in Taiwan--- by Mindy Smith

Our family flew to Kaohsiung on May 2nd to pick up 2-year-old little Mia from her foster family. We brought her home that afternoon. (Kaohsiung is in the South of Taiwan and we live in the North.)

A very happy and outgoing little girl, Mia has done so well with us. We are very thankful for God's blessings. We've had some rough spots, but overall she has blended well with our family.



She loves having a big sister and Whitney is taking good care of her. They are getting along better with each passing week. It has been an adjustment for Whitney as well.

Mia loves to play outside, ride her tricycle, color, build with blocks and bounce balls. It's amazing how quickly she is learning English, saying new words each day. Mia and Whitney love to go to church in Keelung and play with the Daugherty kids. It has been such a blessing to our family to have Duff and Kendra come to Taiwan. They have helped with the work at the Mission, and were able to babysit for us when we needed to go to court for Mia's adoption.

All of Mia's paperwork should be final by the end of the summer. The entire process has gone very quickly and smoothly. We feel that God led us directly to Mia and we are thrilled to have her as part of our family. We look forward to the day that we can bring her home to meet all of you!



Young Women's Retreat at Odessa Hills --- by Katelyn Mercer

The woman's retreat was wonderful! It started off with the Fabulous Freeze Family Fondue. First there were apples, chips, and a variety of different breads; next was a chocolate fountain where you could dip strawberries, apples, bananas, and various other fruits. What a way to start off a weekend!

The campfires were also very nice. Since there was nobody under the age of thirteen, we were able to start right into the more moderate songs and skip all the louder, rowdier ones.

The classes the next day were very helpful. First was Patricia Chadwick's class, she talked about changing tragedies into treasures. After that was Marsha Bird's class on preparing our generation for Zion. Third was Jim Bailey's class based upon families following the commandments. Later was Natalie Thomas' class for the teens. She talked about the world's point of view of what we as women should be vs. the Bible's point of view. Last was Helen Brotherton's class. She discussed not breaking the covenants you've made to your Lord.

Another fun thing that we did was making scrapbooks. You were given different colors of paper that you could glue wherever within your book that you liked. There were lots of stamps to help decorate it. Everyone seemed to have a very good time.

Jim Bailey spoke on Sunday about keeping our homes in order, and fulfilling our responsibilities as the Latter Day Saints no matter what the circumstances are.



Zion's League Trip to Wichita

--- by Debbie Norman

On the weekend of March 23-24, eight members of our Zion's League, plus James Bullard and Don and Debbie Norman, visited the Restoration branch in Wichita, Kansas. Arriving at the church at noon on Saturday, we were joined by five youth from the Wichita branch. We enjoyed lunch provided by the branch, then got to know the Wichita youth through some fun mixers.

Then we visited some of the older branch members. First we visited Marjorie Cook in a local rest home, sharing in songs and listening to testimonies from this interesting and godly lady. To close, we held hands in a circle and prayed for her, and she for us. Next we visited Omer and Margie Smith. Once again, we were blessed as we listened to testimonies and shared together in song and prayer.

Wichita youth leaders David and Debbie Newman were our gracious hosts. After a pizza supper at their home, it was time for a campfire in the their backyard. Families from the Wichita branch gathered with us, and Rebecca Doubledee, Becca Horn, Rachael Doubledee did a great job leading the campfire. Afterwards, we enjoyed s'mores, social time and fun.

In the morning, we managed to get all seven girls, plus Don and Debbie, ready in an amazingly short time, and were even early to church. Our Oak Grove youth presented the main worship service, singing several songs, offering scripture readings and sharing insightful testimonies. Every one of them participated, and almost all of them shared testimonies. The Lord's Spirit graciously attended us, and the members of the Wichita branch let us know how very blessed they were by the good ministry brought through our youth.

All too soon it was time to say goodbye and head home. We were sent home with some extra apples (which were eaten) and bananas (which were eaten and used in other interesting ways). Gummy bears also played an interesting part of our trip home. Did you know that a moistened gummy bear will stick to the exterior of a vehicle, even when traveling down the highway? Ask a Zion's League member if you want more information about this interesting fact!

Odessa Hills Campgrounds and CMRB --- by Susan Booth

Oak Grove presiding elder Vim Horm presided over the CMRB all-branch gathering on Sunday evening, June 3, at the outdoor tabernacle at Odessa Hills Campgrounds. All were encouraged to support the grounds in helping bring many to a closer relationship with the Heavenly Father. Steve Bohall led a hymn sing, and the improved acoustics of the newly-renovated tabernacle were evident. This project, on which many CMRB Saints have diligently worked for several months, will be a real blessing for camps and reunions.

Church School Promotions

Promotion Sunday came early this year so that the youth attending camps and reunions this summer may move up to the same classes they will be in this fall:

- From Melissa Scott's Kindergarten Class (4's & 5's) to Vi Hallier's Primary class (1st, 2nd & 3rd Grade): Olivia English, Mariah Hallier, Ethan Hill, Mikayla Mapes, Adalaide Turner, Marshall Hight, Austin Mullins, Claudia Garcia, Jayda Richard.
- From Vi Hallier's Primary Class (1st, 2nd & 3rd Grade) to Gerry & Stephanie Bird's Junior Class (4th, 5th & 6th Grade): Jose Garcia
- From Gerry & Stephanie Bird's Junior Class (4th, 5th & 6th Grade) to Lori Smith's Jr. High Class (7th, 8th & 9th Grade): Caleb Smith, Jared Gowan.
- From Lori Smith's Jr. High Class (7th & 8th Grade) to Sr. High Class (10th, 11th & 12th): Will Rush

OGRB and Bates City Retreat --- by Ron and Sheila Lidberg

Members of the Bates City Mission joined the Oak Grove Restoration Branch the last weekend in April for a retreat at the Odessa Hills Campground. "Becoming an Incendiary Fellowship" was our theme for this special weekend.

From the invigorating and fun filled mixer on Friday evening to the spirit filled worship service Sunday morning, those in attendance were challenged to let God ignite them with his fiery Spirit.



Friday evening we came to know one another better during a fun mixer led by Mike and Valerie Lidberg where an enjoyable time was had by all. Aaron Smith introduced the retreat theme with a vivid pyrotechnic demonstration outside the dining hall where he ignited a slab of granite to illustrate that we can all be firm and immovable in our faith as the granite and still be ignited with passion to serve by the Holy Spirit.

An indoor campfire and snacks rounded out this evening of fun and fellowship.

John Martinko led early morning worship services on both Saturday and Sunday followed by breakfast. Throughout the day on Saturday, classes centering on the theme were conducted for all age groups. Kevin Anderson, Aaron Smith, Eric English, and Howard Parker presented inspiring material for the adult classes. Handouts from these classes were provided to those in attendance and are available upon request.

A lively game of kickball was enjoyed by many during the recreational period Saturday afternoon. While some campers took this opportunity to fish or to socialize, others found time to take a nap and rest up for the evening activities. After dinner, our pastor, Vim Horn, began a group activity by reading some mock newspaper articles, which were written by some of our more visionary members during a goal setting activity held many years ago. We later broke out into smaller groups to discuss ways we could "fan the flames" in our branch as you have read about on page 1.

The weather cooperated to allow an outdoor campfire that was enjoyed by many on Saturday evening. This activity ended with the campers forming a circle in a special candle lighting event that complemented the theme.

A prayer service was led by Don Norman on Sunday morning prior to the preaching service. Howard Parker brought our weekend to a close with an inspiring message that included a story about wildfires on the prairie.



Special thanks goes to the Bullard family for preparing delicious meals all weekend long for the hungry campers. We would also like to express our sincere gratitude to all the many volunteers who helped make this weekend an uplifting experience.

Question Time — Who do we say that we are? --- by Elder Todd Smith

One of the challenges facing latter day Saints is articulating who we are. Many find themselves saying nothing or stumbling awkwardly when opportunity to explain our church is presented. Sometimes we find ourselves spending more time explaining who we are *not* than who we are.

In the Book of Mormon (III Nephi 12:20), the church is unsure of what they should call themselves. Christ's response was, "But if it be called in my name, then it is my church, if it so be that they are built upon my gospel." Prefixes and suffixes seem to be of little consequence. The problem though is not in identifying ourselves as The Church of Jesus Christ. It lies in differentiating ourselves from the many other groups using the name of Christ. There seems to be no brand or one-word answer to fall back on. We do not have the opportunity to just say, "I'm Jewish, or Baptist, or Catholic."

So what should we say? If we follow the words of Christ, however we say it, the phrase "Church of Jesus Christ" should be included. Adding a prefix or suffix to further explain branch or group affiliation may be helpful, but isn't necessary. The terms Mormon, RLDS, COC, Remnant, Temple Lot, and yes, Restorationist, are all "brands" and certainly serve to help in identifying our group affiliation. Whatever brand we choose, we must not forget that we are the Church of Jesus Christ. It is interesting to note that the Lord wasn't troubled at all when dealing with the issue of the church name at the time of the reorganization. The key ingredient, His name, remained. Prefixes and suffixes may come and go, but the commandment is the same, "in my name."

From the time of the reorganization, confusion has been part of the landscape when dealing with our church name. Our problem is hardly new, but does contain new aspects requiring more explaining than before. I remember many times, while under the RLDS church, spending time detailing differences between the latter day saint churches to friends and acquaintances. We certainly have a task before us in articulating "Who we are," but it's the spirit within us ("built upon my gospel") that's critical to the task.

It would appear the glass is half-empty, but how we perceive things makes the difference. Having to explain about our church is an open door. Salesmen love an open door, and we should love the opportunity to share the gospel also. Our half-empty glass is really half-full, full of the opportunity to witness about Christ and the gospel.

"We are the Church of Jesus Christ and should say it with confidence because it is the Truth."

Let's remind ourselves of several basics.

We are "The Church of Jesus Christ" and should say it with confidence because it's the truth. The Church is alive and well in our branches where authorized Priesthood practice the ordinances and sacraments of the Gospel in the manner intended by God, and we should be eager to share the good news.

We are called to "labor" in this world. It may seem tedious to field questions about "Who we are", but it is the work to which we are called. We are challenged to "be not weary in well doing." Go to work and prepare yourself for the questions that come after identifying yourself with The Church of Jesus Christ. Be ready to explain the differences between other groups and our own. Imagine yourself being questioned and see yourself responding in an intelligent and positive manner. Remember to not run other groups down. We are to have charity at all times. Point out the differences in a polite manner and let the hearer be the judge. Be prepared to give a brief but positive explanation of where the Church is today and how God is working in your life. We are, after all, called to be missionaries for Christ and it is our just service to work labor patiently with others that may not understand.

Fear not (a simple concept, but one that so often eludes us). In the communion prayer, the request is made "that they may always have his Spirit to be with them." God has not left us alone. There is a popular advertisement for a telecommunications company where an army of technicians follows the customer around, providing support. God's army is with you; visualizing this helps you remember you're not alone. The open door of "What church do you belong to?" is like a prepared field, waiting to have the seed sown with charity. Seize the opportunity and "thrust in your sickle with your might."

Finally, we all know that any group can claim to be Christ's church. Jesus said the church must be built on his gospel. So too, with us, the difference is in our actions and the spirit we carry with us. Let your actions reinforce your testimony, not cancel it out. The glass is half- full, full of opportunity to spread the good word. Let's embrace the open door before us and cheerfully be about our Father's business.

Getting to Know — The Doubledee Family

The Doubledee Family: Mel, Loretta, Rebecca, Rachael, Tina Rios, Jose Garcia, Claudia Garcia, and Charles Garcia.

Melvin and the girls and I (Loretta) gathered here in 1996 from Medoc Valley, 17 miles north of Joplin, Missouri. We joined the Oak Grove branch because of church family ties and direction from God, so for the most part our daughters have grown up in this branch. The Lord has blessed our family greatly in ways too numerous to mention. We are privileged to be here and to serve in whatever way that we can.

Mel's father was a convert to the church, so Mel was privileged to know the gospel from his youth on up. We were married in 1987, and I was converted and baptized in 1992. I received my teaching degree in 1996 and under the direction of the Lord, I am now teaching third grade at Center Place Restoration School. Melvin used to work in the grocery business as a produce manager for 27 years, but retired and moved on to professional storytelling. He has worked with youth in schools throughout the country, but because of illness he has cut back on storytelling and our family is now involved in foster care.

Because of our love for children and our earnest desire to make a difference in their lives, the Hahns encouraged us to go through the STARS program. On February 9, 2006, we got a call asking us if we could take care of a 3-1/2 month old baby. So Charles came into our life, followed shortly by his brother and sisters Jose age 9, Claudia age 6, and Tina age 17.

Rebecca, our oldest daughter, has just graduated from C.P.R.S. and she will be attending the University of Missouri-Rolla in the fall, working on a degree in Civil Engineering. She plans to use her knowledge and gifts for the kingdom.

Rachael will be a senior at C.P.R.S. in the fall and is thinking about majoring in English at Truman

University once she graduates. She is a gifted violinist as well as a vocalist.

Tina is working on getting her GED and is working at Worlds of Fun this summer as Snoopy at Camp Snoopy.

Our pets are numerous and include: our three shelties, Feister, Spice, and Timmy, our great Danes, Buttercup, Daegan, and two pups, several cows, our horse Jazzy, many cats (Siameepy and Sue are the house cats), Jose's ducks Cheeps and Greeny, and Rebecca and Rachael's chinchillas Kippur and Isabella.

It's hard for us to get away for a vacation with so many responsibilities, but there are times when one needs to rejuvenate. Two years ago, we were able to spend a week at a resort north of Branson. We canoed, swam, rode horses, and visited Silver Dollar City. We also like to go to the Henry Doorly Zoo in Omaha, Nebraska, every now and then.

One thing our family could do to draw closer together is to have more family worship, something we have gotten out of the practice of doing these past few years. Oak Grove has been a tremendous blessing to us and to our new family and we would like to thank you all for your prayerful and loving support of our endeavors.



The Doubledees — Clockwise from left: Rachael, Loretta, Charles, Mel, Rebecca, Tina, Jose, and Claudia