



And now, behold, I say unto you, that the thing which will be of the most worth unto you will be to declare repentance unto this people, that you may bring souls unto me, that you may rest with them in the kingdom of my Father. Amen.

D & C 15:6



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SACTM: SOUTH AFRICA CAPE TOWN MISSION



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SACTM: South Africa Cape Town Mission

July 12, 2017 - January 31, 2018 - Book 1 of 4

CHRIS AND MAVIS STEVENSON | 1
SCATM: South Africa Cape Town Mission
July 12, 2017 - January 31, 2018 - Book 1 of 4



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CHRIS AND MAVIS STEVENSON | 1
SCATM: South Africa Cape Town Mission

2017

JULY 12 }

ALERT

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Just received some itinerary information that indicates Mom and I will be flying from Cape Town to East London, South Africa on July 31st. Here's a link to some images of East London:

https://www.google.com/search?q=east+london+south+africa&rlz=1C1GGRV_enUS751US752&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=oahUKEwjJo5HP8IPVAhUL8GMKHRom-CjsQ_AUIDCgD&biw=1366&bih=638

More details to come!

Love,

Dad and Mom



2017 JULY 20 }

MTC Pics

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Here are some great photos from the new teaching buildings at the MTC. Tremendous teaching facilities filled with light and truth! The Spirit we feel here is marvelous! Our testimonies have been strengthened and our spiritual batteries rejuvenated. We love you and so appreciate your love and support!





Tid Bits

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

1. Word of the week: "giddy," make (someone) feel excited to the point of disorientation. * Example:* Mom and I are just about giddy when we think we will be boarding an airliner tomorrow and head clear across the globe.

*2. Quote of the week: *

"Revenge is like drinking poison and hoping your enemy will die." -Nelson Mandela

3. Scripture of the week:

And thus we see the great call of diligence of men to labor in the vineyards of the Lord; and thus we see the great reason of sorrow, and also of rejoicing—sorrow because of death and destruction among men, and joy because of the light of Christ unto life. -Alma 28:14

4. Joke of the week:

Two elderly people were watching TV.

Wife: Will you get me some ice cream?

Husband: Sure, sweetheart, what kind?

Wife: Some chocolate. But, will you also put on some nuts? And, don't you think you should write this down so you don't forget?

Husband: Heck no, I can remember that.

Wife: Also some whipped cream on the ice cream. Please write it down so you don't forget.

Husband: No, I can do this!

Wife: Write it down or you will forget!

Husband: No, trust me, I can do this.

A few minutes later, the husband returns with a plate of scrambled eggs

and ham.

Wife (looking at him in amazement): I told you, you needed to write it down. Where's the toast?

5. Bee's Knees Award: Can you ride 209 miles on a bike in three hours? Probably not. Well, this guy can't either, but, he did do it in 9.5 hours. He is a great father, a great example of the gospel and a hard worker. He strives for excellence. He loves his wife and children dearly. He is generous, charitable and helpful without needing or wanting to be

recognized. He shows great wisdom for his young age and tries to understand people. He is lacking in upper body strength and touts a wide part in his hair. He has his priorities in order. Everybody likes him. Daniel, you are the Bee's Knees, brotha!!!

*6. Gospel question of the week: * Where do we go in the scriptures to understand what the "Doctrine of Christ" is?

*7. If I were you (advice to grand kids): *If I were you, I would read from the Book of Mormon every day.



Constant study of that book will bring you closer to the Lord and help you become converted to Christ. Try it. I think you will like it.

8. What I learned this week: Having a testimony is knowledge. Being converted to Christ is continually "doing."

9. What I am grateful for: I love the MTC. What a great spirit there. The instruction for missionaries is fabulous. The facilities are unsurpassed. The sacredness of the campus and the work is pervasive. The missionaries leaving to their fields of labor are set apart with authority and filled with power.

10. My goal for the week: My goal last week was to absorb as much as possible in the MTC. Mission accomplished. My goal this week is to write a personal email to each of the parents in our family.

*11. Photo of the week: * Senior couples from our week in the MTC.

[image: Inline image 1]

We love each of you so very much. Be worthy of the great blessings of the gospel. Be converted to the gospel by "doing" what you are supposed to. Be unselfish and turned out to others as the Savior was.

And...have fun living the gospel this week! We'll be talking to you from the other side next week. (Other side of the world, not the other side of the veil.)

Love,

Dad

2017 JULY 26 }

News From Cape Town

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Hello from Cape Town, South Africa! We are staying at a nice bed and breakfast nest the mission home. We have our first night under our belt and had a very good sleep. Went to bed at around 10:30 and slept until 6 AM. Then, back to sleep until 7 AM. Had a good breakfast of scrambled eggs, Canadian bacon, fruit, toast and a cup of hot chocolate.

The weather is cool. Even though we have a heater in the room, we did not use it last night. Nor did we use the electric blanket. The mattress was firm and the covers were enough to keep us warm through the night.

Met the office missionaries this morning, Elder and Sister Andrews from Gilbert, Arizona (finances and travel), and, Elder and Sister Hansen

from St. George (autos and housing). The Andrews lived in Arvada on our same street just before we moved in. They lived right across from the Poulsens. Small world!

We purchased a hair dryer and an electrical adapter today. Also, got to the bank to make sure we had all of our accounts in order. Credit card fraud is a huge problem in South Africa.

Had a great dinner at the Cattle Baron restaurant this evening with the Hansen's and the Andrew's. Very good people.

Tomorrow, we do apartment inspections in the morning and then, we learn how to drive in the afternoon.

Right now we are going to bed. We love you guys and think of you often throughout the day.

Love,

Dad and Mom

2017

JULY 27 }

Lion's Head

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

busy day learning to drive, getting set up with mission phones, doing missionary apartment inspections, lunch at Bread and Butter, this evening a walk through a very high end, super mall called "Canal Walk", and, Italian dinner. During my first driving course, I did not hit any cars or people. However, I did nail a few curbs.

The picture below is right on the coast at a high rent district called "Seaside." Behind us you can see Lion's Head. This is a high point overlooking Cape Town and the place where Elder William Holmes Walker and his companions dedicated the land for missionary work.

We were going to take the gondola up to the top of Table Mountain, but, it is down for two weeks for repairs.

Honestly, we feel like we are on an all expense paid vacation to a very interesting tourist destination. We are getting pampered! Part of this is due to President Lebethoa (lay bet twa, accent on the "bet" and it is a short "a" on the twa) is out to outlying areas of the mission doing interviews until Sunday. We will meet him on Sunday at dinner at his home.

He is 41 years old and a convert to the church when he was in his early 20's. Those that have met him say he is "on fire." He was the stake president in Soweto (near Johannesburg) when he was called to be the new mission president. He has 4 wonderful children. We have briefly met his wife. She is beautiful and very nice.

FYI, there is another senior couple in East London where we will be working. They are the Davies. They will be assigned to one zone and Mom and I

the other. Our lodging will be very close to theirs. Ours is 44 Hazy Ridge and they are located at #54. More details on the lodging when we actually see what we get on Monday.

We love you and think of you often. Thank you for your prayers and support!

Love,

Dad and Mom



2017 JULY 28 }

Vacation?

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

The reason we are still in Cape Town is because the mission president won't be back until Sunday and he wants to meet with us before we go to our assignment in East London. Consequently, the office senior missionaries have been showing us around.

Today:

Visit to Cape of Good Hope (BTW, not the furthest point south on the African continent)

Visit to Boulder Beach where we saw the rare African Cape Penguin

Visit to the Cecil Rhodes memorial. This guy made billions in the late 1800's and is the guy noted for bringing colonialism and prosperity to South Africa. Rhodesia was named after him.

Lunch at a cafe overlooking False Bay

Visit to the Water Front, Victoria and Alfred harbor and some chocolate gelato

Tough day!

Tomorrow morning we climb Lion's Peak. Then the Red Bus tour through Cape Town. Then early dinner at a nice restaurant.

FYI, I was wrong about the dedicatory prayer on Lion's Head. It was actually Signal Hill which is the rear end of Lion's Head.

We love you people.

Love,

Dad and Mom



Visit to Boulder Beach where we saw the rare African Cape Penguin



Visit to the Cecil Rhodes memorial. This guy made billions in the late 1800's and is the guy noted for bringing colonialism and prosperity to South Africa. Rhodesia was named after him.



Visit to Cape of Good Hope (BTW, not the furthest point south on the African continent)

2017 JULY 29 }

Lions Head

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

It has been another interesting, educational and eventful day in Cape Town:

- Early morning hike to the top of Lions Head. Even though Mom and I were up and back in 2.5 hours, it was a stout hike in parts that made me cry. Three or four different places required ladders, chains and staples (metal foot holds). Mom was a trooper and did not start to perspire until we hit the about 100 feet up the trail. Great views of the city. The rump of Lions Head is Signal Hill. We will be going there tomorrow with the AP's and possibly President Lebethoa. They will definitely mention William Holmes Walker in their welcome and presentation.

- Took the Red Bus Tour that gave us a very good look at some of the

history of Cape Town. Apartheid was a major problem for so many years.

Nelson Mandela is, of course, a national hero. One of the attached pictures is of the four Nobel Peace Prize recipients from South Africa - Mandela, Dewerk, Bishop Tutu, and, lethulu. - Went to the Victoria and Alfred waterfront. Had a delicious meal at the Mug and Bean restaurant. Also, a giant slice of chocolate cake that we split between Mom, Elder Hansen and I. Sinful, but que sabrosa! - Went shopping for an adapter so Mom can run her new hair dryer. Any electrical items we brought from the states will not work here with the exception of the computer, cell phones, tablets, etc. that are made to handle 220 volts. However, we still need adapters for different appliances since they have all kinds of shapes and sizes of plugs! - We also bought a potted flower for the Lebethoa's tomorrow when we go to

the mission home for dinner after church.

Our legs are sore and they will probably feel worse tomorrow. I pray the rosary every day that I will not have leg cramps. I have eaten a banana and taken a potassium pill to help prevent the dreaded cramps.

There is a severe draught going on in Cape Town. They recommend we bathe every other day and limit water usage as much as possible (87 liters a day). I'm trying to convince Mom that showering together is vi-

tally important and is highly suggested by the Cape Town municipal government. We keep a bucket in the shower so that "gray water" can be used to water plants, etc.

The weather today (winter) has been so wonderful. Perfect for climbing and sight-seeing. Enjoy the photos. Remember we love you! We think about you often and feel so sorry you can't be on a senior mission like us people.

Monday, missionary work begins in earnest. We'll meet the elders and



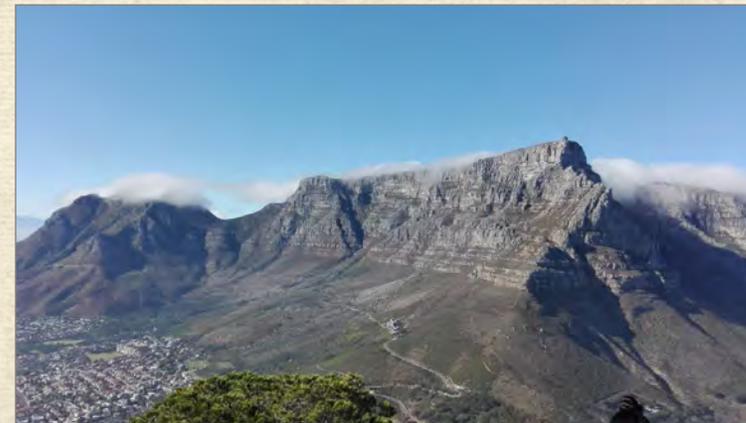


Lions Head

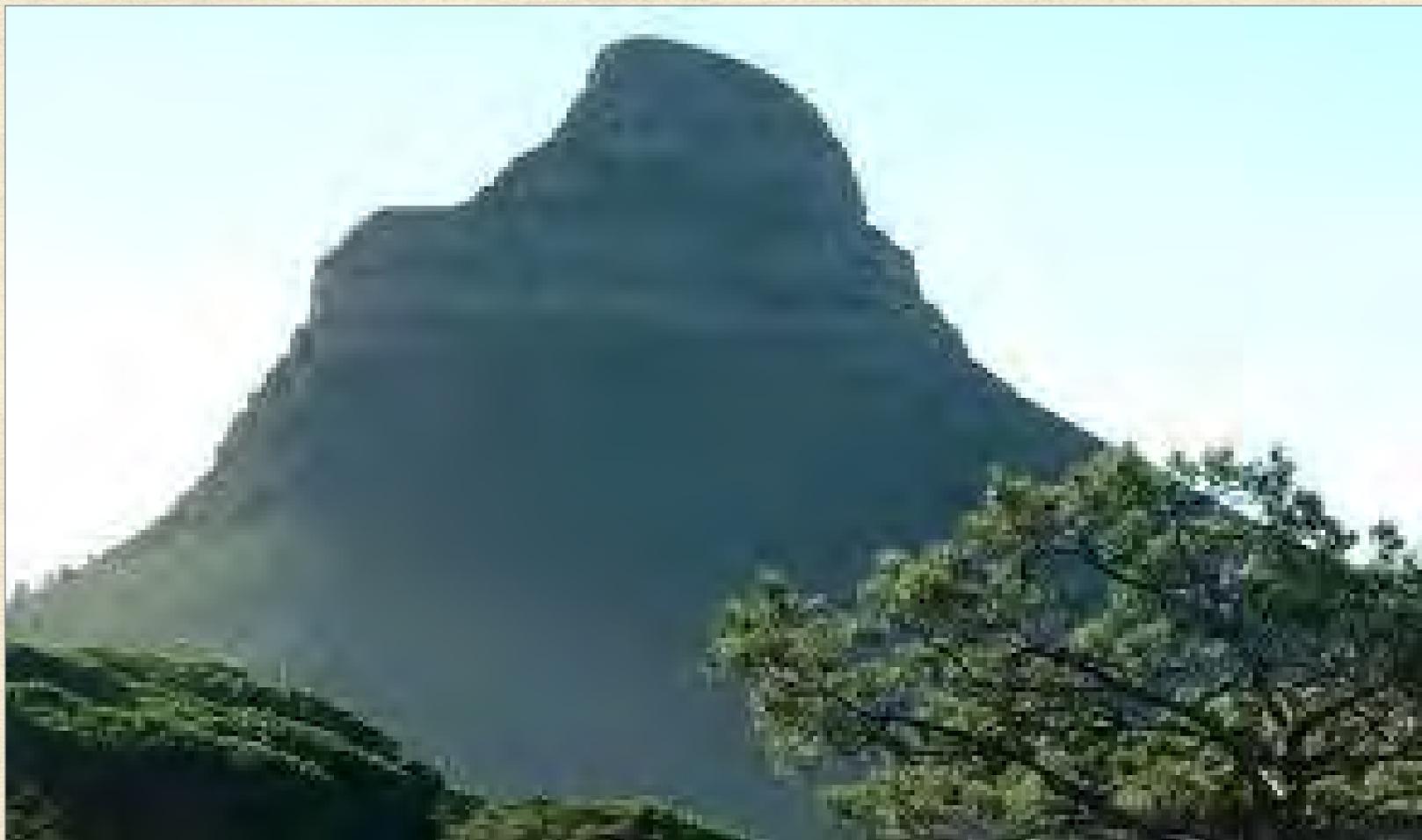
Elder and Sister Davies. The other senior couple in East London has been fixing up our boarding. However, we will need to do grocery shopping and get some other supplies for the flat.

Love,

Dad and Mom



Lions Head



2017

JULY 30 }

Same Church as Utah

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

How wonderful to attend church at the Mowbray Ward and find that it is the same as Huntsville, Utah. We had a delightful sacrament meeting with a black youth speaker (the mission president's son), a great talk from a wonderful black sister and a very instructive talk from a white brother. We enjoyed the sacrament. We sang hymns from the same hymnal we use in Utah. It was a sacred meeting to renew covenants.

After church we went to the mission president's house for a delicious dinner. Mom took a potted flowering plant. The other office senior missionaries were there. We officially met President Lebethoa and his wife and his four lovely children. We visited and shared background information and received some good instruction from him. He is energetic

and a man with good experience in the church.

BTW, it was Elder Jensen from Huntsville that called him to be a stake president in 2010. He remembers the Jensen's and it brought back good memories.

Below is a picture of a poster that discusses the history of the church in South Africa. Note that right at the beginning is a mention of the first missionaries into Cape Town with a picture of William Holmes Walker.

Also, a picture of the Lebethoa adorable children. Their smiles, good behavior and ability to speak is amazing.

The soccer (futbol) arena was made for the 2010 World Cup. Quite impressive.

After lunch, we went with the

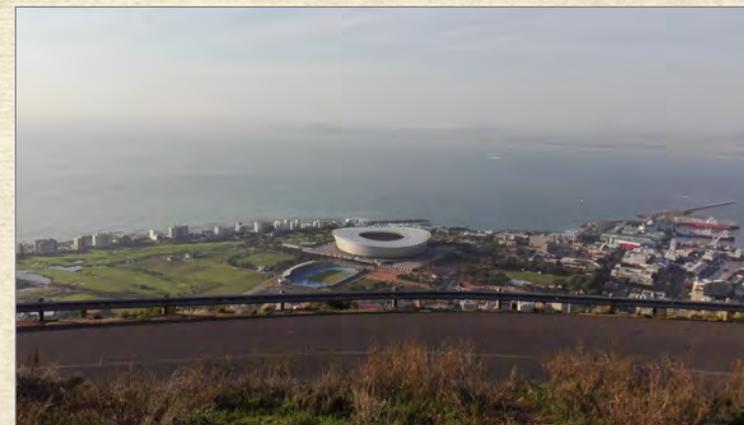
Hansen's up to Signal Hill. Here they explained a little bit about the mission and that this was the location where our great grandfather said a dedicatory prayer with his companions, Elders Haven and Smith. After visiting for a while, I asked if I could have a few minutes by myself. I went to a spot overlooking the city and said my own dedicatory prayer. It was simple, 'Heavenly Father, we dedicate ourselves to thee and the building up of the work here in South Africa.' That is all we want to do, just roll up our sleeves and help anyway we can.

After Signal Hill we went over to the Andrew's flat and had a soup dinner. It was all vegetables which Mom loves. Desert was Malva and chocolate ice cream. Malva is a pudding-cake. The Hansen's were there also. Both couples have done so much to help us.

We love you all. To our children, so sorry you can't be senior missionaries like us.

Love,

Dad and Mom



The soccer (futbol) arena was made for the 2010 World Cup. Quite impressive.



The adorable Lebethoa children. Their smiles, good behavior and ability to speak is amazing.



A poster that discusses the history of the church in South Africa. Note that right at the beginning is a mention of the first missionaries into Cape Town with a picture of William Holmes Walker.

Tid Bits

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

NOTE: I am adding my siblings to Tid Bits from now on.

This will help us get news to other family as well as our children - killing two squawking Ibis (African birds) with one stone. FYI, for my siblings, Tid Bits is a weekly newsletter that Mavis and I send out each week.

1. Word of the week: "funicular," type of cable railway in which a cable attached to a pair of tram-like vehicles on rails moves them up and down a steep slope, the ascending and descending vehicles counterbalancing each other. * Example:* Mom and I walked up to the lighthouse on the Cape of Good Hope instead of taking the funicular.

2. Scripture of the week:

And now, behold, I say unto you, that the thing which will be of the

most worth unto you will be to declare repentance unto this people, that you may bring souls unto me, that you may rest with them in the kingdom of my Father. Amen.

-D&C 15:6

3. Quote of the week:

[image: "Love should be our walk and our talk."—Dieter F. Uchtdorf]

4. Joke of the week: A Cape Town taxi cab driver and a full time missionary die and both report to Saint Peter at the pearly gates. Peter takes the taxi cab driver to a very beautiful, ornate, opulent mansion.

He then comes back to the full time missionary and takes him to a rather bland, ordinary and vanilla looking flat and explains that, "This will be your residence for all eternity."

The missionary looked confused and

asked, "Why do I get this and that wild, crazy, half-drunk taxi cab driver gets a luxurious palace?!"

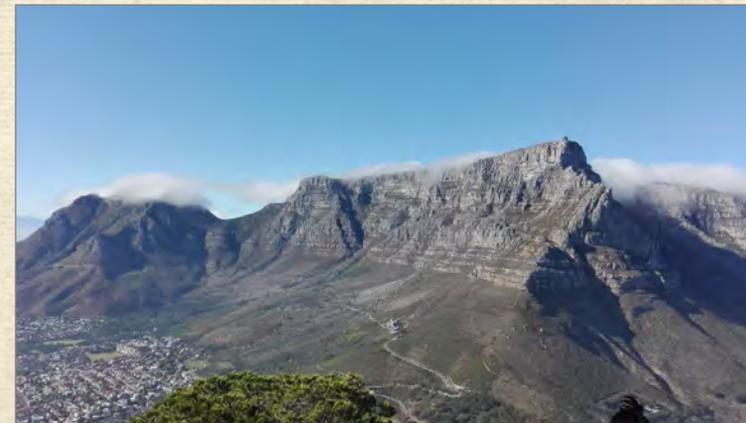
Peter, replied, "Look, this guy drove thousands more to prayer than you ever dreamed of!"

5. Bee's Knees Award: This guy is a genius at math. He is a model example of good manners, good behavior and good study habits. He drives a loser green Jeep, but the girls still love him. He is super athletic. He is planning on a mission and will be an outstanding servant of the Lord. He

loves his family and parents. He is an Eagle Scout. He runs a "learn-to-swim" class in the summer and makes millions of dollars. Great kid. David Walker, you are the Bee's Knees, brotha!!!

6. Gospel question of the week: Who was Alma quoting about prayer in Alma, chapter 33?

*7. What I learned this week: *Cape Town use to be known as a "party mission." President Merrill, who just went home, was in the military for years. He changed the reputation



This is Table Mountain. We did not get to take the cable car up to the top because the ride is down for two weeks for repairs. We'll do it some time before we go home. Iconic landmark for Cape Town.

and party atmosphere very quickly. It seems the missionaries are now focused on the work and good things are happening all over the mission.

8. If I were you (advice to grand kids): If I were you, I would learn immediately, that the habits, attitudes and personality you have now will follow you into the mission field. You don't wake up in the mission field or the MTC a new person. Something not right? Change it now.

9. What I'm grateful for: All the missionaries from all the missions in the world that have gone before us and done so much to move the work along. They made such great sacrifices! We have it so easy.

10. My goal for the week: I have an assignment to go get an electrical bill credit the mission keeps getting for an old flat they don't use any more, switched to the chapel in the area. Should be a lot of fun trying to run down the right person to talk to.

11. Photo of the week: This is Table Mountain. We did not get to take the cable car up to the top because the ride is down for two weeks

for repairs. We'll do it some time before we go home. Iconic landmark for Cape Town.

[image: Inline image 1]

12. New Boarding Flat: Wow, did we luck out. we have a great two room, two bathroom flat. One bedroom we use for an office. New appliances, new paint, stocked with all kinds of bedding, tableware, etc. We believe a tender mercy of the Lord. It just happened to come available a few weeks ago and the senior couple were able to secure it for us. It was for sale, then, when the senior couple asked about leasing it, done deal! The two couples in the area have really knocked themselves out getting this ready for us. We feel very fortunate and grateful. I tried to upload some pics, but the cell phone network is having issues this evening. Give us a couple days.

13. Work: Tomorrow morning we have a zone leadership meeting at 10 AM. We will also be getting some specific assignments. Our Stake is the East London Stake. The other stake is still pretty new and inexperienced. It also includes a lot more of the outlying areas around East Lon-

don. More details to come.

We love you all very much. Have fun living the gospel this week!

Love,

Dad and Mom

Archives

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Daniel,

Our Internet service has been down a lot and we haven't been able to access our gmail. I think we can anticipate more of that while we are in SA.

I'd like to ask two favors of you:

1. Would you please print off or in some other way, archive the emails and Tid Bits I send from South Africa? I am not a good journal writer (yet) and I think this might be one way to preserve some good memories and experiences.
2. Believe it or not, I forgot to bring the missionary journal of William Holmes Walker. Maybe a couple options here to see how I could obtain that important record:

- a. Scan the journal page by page and send me it electronically in PDF format.
- b. Find my book at the house (probably in the old office somewhere) and send it to me via FedEx or DHL. You would have to check on the price of mailing it. It might be too expensive that way

The work is moving along well. Our zone leaders probably average 4 lessons a day. The goal is to find the very golden of investigators that can be the priesthood holders and leaders near term.

Thanks for everything. You are so good to Mom and I. We love you and so appreciate all the family support. Please pass along greetings to your beautiful family.

Update

Dear family,

We are doing well. Our Internet service has been down and it has been impossible to access Gmail. This is a short note to basically get you an idea of our boarding flat. I will be sending a more detailed email this evening.

Mom has been down with a cold and is just now starting to feel better. We are going out to look at some apart-

ment furnishings and to purchase some more groceries.

The weather continues to be wonderful. Wind blows regularly. May get some rain here on the Eastern Cape tomorrow.

We had a Mission Leadership Council meeting yesterday. It went for about 4 hours. It is an important meeting to get valuable information and direction to the field from the mission office. I relayed to the zone leaders in our area (2 zones) the analogy I heard a long time ago from

Our humble abode!



Pres. Harold B. Lee about the trees right next to the irrigation ditch get plenty of water and growing stronger and stronger. The trees at the end of the irrigation row would be scroungy and weak. He emphasized how import it was to get water (information and direction) to the end of the row.

I'm going to send photos of our flat separately. It will be a little easier and quicker.

We love you very much! Be good boys and girls.

Love,
Dad and Mom

August 2, 2017 Update

Dear Family,

Today has gone by so quickly! We are glad that the Internet is back up and running.

This morning we got up and worked on getting our Skype set up and our

printer connected. We were able to do that, get showered and dressed and in front of our computer by 10 AM for what they call the "Senior Skype." I affectionately refer to it as the "Senior Moment."

In this meeting, we have all the senior missionaries online and we discuss various matters concerning the missionaries, our duties and review what was discussed in the Mission Leadership Council from yesterday. These meetings have a lot of information and Mom and I are trying our best to absorb and digest it all.

We volunteered to be the "Porters" for non-US missionaries that what to get a certificate on how proficient they are in English. These certificates are very valuable for these return missionaries as they can use them to secure good jobs and further their education. Basically, for those missionaries on the Eastern Cape, we set up a test environment for them so they can take a written and verbal test via the Internet.

Elder Davies and Sister Davies are the other senior couple in East London. They were recruited by the

Hansen's who work in the mission office - both being from St. George. She has about 40+ years of nursing under her belt. She is an absolute blessing for the mission and especially the Elders in our neck of the woods. She is 71 years old and a bit feisty. Body has slowed down a bit, but, her mind is "full steam ahead." Her husband says he is just along for the ride. However, with 30+ years of building maintenance under his belt, he is "Mr. Handyman" for our Elders. He is 79 years old. Today he handed out a pass-along card to a store worker and got the referral for our zone!

We went shopping today for a couple bookcases, some home supplies and a few groceries. I drove and we survived. Actually, the conversion to left-hand driving has been rather easy. However, this is only day 2 and there is a lot more to learn. The mission stresses the need for the "second driver" to be alert and to be an active part of the driving experience. In a very positive sense, Mom is good at that. She is the co-pilot and not a backseat driver.

We are getting settled in. With two

bathrooms, we don't get in each other's way in the morning. The mornings have been very pleasant and we don't turn on any propane heat. Since the homes do not have central heat or air conditioning, many people use a propane furnace. We enjoy the cool mornings. There is always a breeze, sometimes a strong wind.

We are counselled to keep our windows closed while we are gone. Monkeys have been known to come into houses and virtually ransack them! We have seen baboons at the Cape of Good Hope, but no monkey so far here in East London. We live in a very secure area, gated community. Additionally, we have two separate emergency buttons in the house (the kitchen and the bedroom) where we can depress them if there is a problem. Yes, Mom has already accidentally push the button. And, yes, the armed response truck did come out and survey the situation. No one was shot or harmed.

We will be assigned to the East London 3rd Ward. Brother Krull is the Bishop. We accidentally met his wife in the grocery store when she saw our missionary badges. Very nice

sister. Part of our assignment will be to carefully assist the ward leadership and members, without pushing ourselves on them. We have also been counselled to let them do as much as possible. If we do everything, they do not learn anything. When we leave, we want them to keep on doing what they are supposed to do.

On Tuesday, we will be spending time with President and Sister Watson. Elder Watson is in the mission presidency. It will be good to spend the day with them and get some more questions answered and receive more instruction. Plus, we will go to dinner with them and get a free delicious meal!

We heard from Bob and Renae Lewis. They knew President Lebethoa when they served in Johannesburg. They love him! President Lebethoa remembers them and so enjoyed their friendship. Small, small, small world in the church!

I am a little shocked at how much money is spent in the mission field. Without going into details, it is a lot - car accidents (the church is self-

insured), furnishings for flats, airline tickets, cleaning supplies, office equipment, etc. The church is very serious about missionary work. You get the idea that the leaders of the church are extremely committed to the Lord's injunction to take the gospel to the whole world. Mom and I have been the recipients of a lot of help, pampering and unselfish concern for us by other senior couples.

We are getting our MagicJack set up. I am porting my cell phone number over to MagicJack. As soon as that happens, we will try giving you a call.

We love you very much! For our children, we are so sorry you can't be senior missionaries like Mom and I! Thank you for your prayers and your love and support. They are needed and greatly appreciated.

Love,

Dad and Mom

2017 AUGUST 3 }

Aug 3 Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Happy Birthday to Kathy Lange. What a beautiful, wonderful sister!

This morning Mom and I went with Elder and Sister Davies (the other senior missionaries in East London) to do a flat inspection of the zone leader's apartment. Everything looked very good. We also looked at their car and it was standing tall.

The flat inspections are important since the missionaries can get a little sloppy now and then. This creates a health hazard and you can't teach if you are in bed sicker than a dog. And...a clean environment is more conducive to the Spirit.

We did more shopping for our flat. Our goal is to have this all done by Saturday midnight. Starting Sunday we will be thinking of ways to integrate ourselves more into the ward

and missionary work. We have measured for drapes that mom will pick out and order soon.

Once we have the drapes up (maybe before. We do have blinds right now.) we plan to have an open house where neighbors can come and greet the "new Mormons." It will be an invitation to all the complex with the mandatory light refreshments - maybe caviar and mimosas?

We have our MagicJack connected and we can call out, but, no one can call us until we get my old cell number transferred or ported to MagicJack. We will have to systematically make some calls. It would be nice to call everyone all at once!

Weather is still very pleasant. This is my kind of winter!

We picked up another pass along card today. I wish I could say it was

from me, but good old Elder Davies scored this one. I just received a stack of cards and will now become expert at securing missionary leads. People here are friendly and show a lot of respect for our name tags. Elder Davies got a free hair cut the other day because the lady barber would not take any money from him because, "He works for Jesus."

Mom is feeling much better. I'd say she is about 90% back to normal. When she gets a cold, it can knock her for a loop.

We are going to bed now. Long day. Tomorrow morning are the district meetings and we will be meeting more Elders. We will try to remember names, but a lot of these missionaries will be leaving on transfers in another week.

We love you all very much. Keep up the good work. Keep doing good.

Love,

Dad and Mom

2017 AUGUST 4 }

August 4_2017 Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

It has been an interesting day. We stated out this morning with zone/district meetings at the Amalinda church house. It is a beautiful building by South African standards. The church also owns 25 adjacent acres. According to my calculations, that is enough for a temple! We just need a few more tithe-paying members.

The meeting began with Elder Davies (Sr. Missionary) giving the Elders a tip on their cars. Specifically, making sure there is the correct amount of air pressure in the tires. He also mentioned that during the week he had called a missionary and the greeting on the other end was, "peanut butter." He instructed the missionaries that such a greeting was childish and inappropriate for servants of the Lord.

The meeting began in earnest with Elder Gordon, an assistant to President Lebethoa, welcoming the Elders to the meeting. He did a very good job of comparing the gathering to the Sons of Mosiah upon meeting each other after their missions to the Lamanites. He praised the Elders for their good work and urged us all to do better.

As a mission we will be studying and reviewing the lessons for investigators (Chapter 3 in PMG "Preach My Gospel"). Mom and I will be doing this also. PMG is POWERFUL! That manual is filled to the brim with inspired doctrine, counsel, direction and teaching. We will turn ourselves into the "sponge mode" and soak up as much as possible.

We took a zone picture that I am hoping to attach to this email. We have a great group of Elders. Mom and I attended one of the district

meetings and it was superb. Elder Manoalibe from Johannesburg was the district leader. It was so good to see a native, black member of the church teach our training and do such a fine job. He taught of the importance to teach with the Spirit. I could not help but think what a great asset he will be to his ward and stake when he returns to Jo-burg.

Sister Davies told us a little bit about his conversion. Everyone thought he was literally crazy as he was growing up. He kept hearing voices talking to him. When the missionaries began to

teach him the restored gospel, he recognized it as the things he was hearing in the voices. He says, the voices are of my ancestors on the other side telling me to find the gospel!

This afternoon we bought some personal items like clothes hangers, yoga mat, etc. We also bought two older style chairs for the living room that Mom is going to make vibrant colored cushions for. We also had some duplicate keys made so if one of us is locked in the house and a fire starts, they can get out. You are ac-





We bought a very nice living room Lazy Boy (not a recliner) chair.

tually locked inside your house for "safety" reasons. We also bought a very nice living room Lazy Boy (not a recliner) chair. It kind of finishes off the living room.

We also bought a bunch of drapes for the living room and our bedroom. Right now we only have some ugly Venetian blinds that do not do a very good job. Mom will make the drapes look like a million bucks!

Mom is still trying to recover completely from her cold. Today pretty well wore her out. So, I went

with the other senior couple to help go clean the church in another part of town - our assigned ward, the East London 3rd Ward. It turned out that the cleaning crew was us three senior missionaries, Bishop Kruul's Family (his wife and five children) and one other member. I was given the assignment to clean the women's and men's bathroom. Without going into detail, the smell coming from the men's toilet about knocked me over. I think it could have gagged a maggot at 100 yards! Anyway, I humbly went about my work and did a Mavis McKay Stevenson type job

on it. I also mopped a long tile hallway.

Mom and I were touched by the good spirit the Elders had as we met with them this morning. They are all doing a good job in their respective areas. I am sure we will get to go on splits with them at times into some very poor townships. However, just like the beginning verses of Alma 32, some times it is the poor and the rejected who will listen humbly and with real intent. The goal is to find "father-led families." Also, those people between 18 and 30. This is a pivotal time in their lives and the church has found out that when this group joins the church, there seems to be greater retention and future leadership.

We love you. You are wonderful. We heard from Michelle that there have not been any family fights since we have left home. That is good!

Love,

Dad and Mom

We have a great group of Elders. Mom and I attended one of the district meetings and it was superb.



2017 AUGUST 5 }

August 5_2017 Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Today was P-day and boy, did we need it. I did push ups and sit ups first thing (I will not disclose the number of each of the above-noted exercises). We had Jungle Oats (oatmeal) for breakfast and then went to work.

Mavis kindly asked me to wash the living room walls. Since she thinks she is the senior companion, I naturally said, "yes." The previous owners put new paint on the walls, but, the curtain rods and some of the walls still needed attention. Sister Stevenson has been busy cleaning and ironing drapes.

Around 1 PM I went to get some things that Mom put on her shopping list, For example, picture frames for a picture of Jesus Christ and another one for the Johannesburg Temple. They are now proudly

displayed on our living room walls. We were gone for about 4 hours, but were able to get everything on the list except for flaky coconut, onion salt, dried minced onion and quinoa. Too bad about the quinoa since I love it so very much (JK).

In the grocery store I found myself asking several different women where items might be located. They were all very nice and I thought how simple it would be to hand out pass along cards. Elder Andrews was with me and at age 79, he handed one out and got it back with contact information. Mom and I need to do that every day! He is a good example.

When I returned home, Mom had one panel of drapes up and hung the drapes in the office. I heated up some delicious stew that Mom made yesterday. After we ate, Mom made some wonderful peanut butter/corn flake cookies. She wanted to do that

since we will be having the Davies over for lunch tomorrow after church. We are having Hawaiian haystacks and cookies and ice cream for desert.

We are just about there as far as the flat goes. we'll get the rest of the drapes up on Monday. I also need to figure out how to get Mom's tablet to sync up with the router. I think I'm doing everything right. Someone let me know what to do. I can call you at a pre-designed time if you want.

This evening, I marked up two Books of Mormon. I have about 30 verses I like to scripture chain that do nothing but testify of Christ. Since we claim the book to be a witness of Christ, and, since so many people in South Africa are believers in Christ, these passages of scripture should really speak to them. Of course, the last scripture is Moroni 10:3-5.

We go to our ward tomorrow and look forward to meeting a lot of members. The, we need to start building a plan on what we will do for ward leaders, members and the missionaries in our zone. Tuesday we receive more instruction from a

counselor in the mission presidency and his wife, Elder and Sister Watson. We truly look forward to that.

We are looking to having an "open house" of sorts so all of our neighbors can get a chance to meet us - around 75 households. We will do up flyers and stick them in their HOA mail boxes. Of course, light refreshments and Sister Stevenson charming them like they were her own family. Should be a good time. Maybe two weeks from now?

We love you all very much. For our own children, we are so sorry that you cannot be senior missionaries like us!

Love,

Dad and Mom

2017 AUGUST 6 }

August 6_2017 Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We attended the East London 3rd ward this morning. Guess what? The church in East London is the same as it is in Huntsville, Utah! Can you believe it? Of course, it was that same way when we went to Aruba, Italy, Scotland, etc.

We arrived early to church as Bishop Bowen has taught us and had a chance to meet and greet several of the ward members. Most of their names are difficult to pronounce and remember. However, the warmth and the smiles meant everything to us. They are warm and friendly and what you would expect from a welcoming LDS ward.

Mom and I were invited to bear our testimonies this morning in fast and testimony meeting. We hope we were able to connect with the members and that they felt our love for

the South African people. We hope they felt the Spirit as we bore testimony of the truthfulness of the gospel. The whole time was filled with members bearing their testimonies. It is a mixed ward. How wonderful to see brothers and sisters of all colors sitting shoulder to shoulder in church. This scene was dramatically portrayed as we witnessed two young men blessing the sacrament - one white, one black. Likewise, black and white passing the sacrament.

Sunday school was very good. Great lesson by Sister Kruul, the bishop's wife. I thoroughly enjoyed priesthood meeting. The lesson was given by "Brother Mike." I guess his last name is so hard to pronounce that people just call him Brother Mike. He said something in the lesson that really struck me. We need to be specific in our prayers. I think I am way to general and repetitious when I

pray. I need to focus on my prayers and become a lot more specific with questions, gratitude for blessings and direction on what to do.

So far, we have an invite to a good sister's birthday party. She sells tourist items and trinkets on the beach. We also have been invited for dinner next Sunday to the bishop's home. We also got an invite to come over to a member's house, the Steenbeek's, for lunch or just a visit. The father has recently come back to church after being away for 10 years. (His wife says it has been 15 years.)

Definitely some opportunity for fellow-shipping.

After church there was a baptism of Duncan Hutton. He appears to be about 12 or 13 years old. His parents gave consent for him to join the church. His mother is a member, but his dad, or, mother's boyfriend (don't know for sure) is not a member. The grandfather was named after President David O. McKay. His name is David Oman McKay Hutton. I had him show me his driver's license to prove it. He actually worked in the States for a while and has been to

Domo Pans?
Or Domo
Software?





Our Senior Missionary district from the MTC.

Huntsville. Anyway, we see an opportunity to work with Duncan's father, or, mother's boyfriend.

It was fun to meet so many members. And, can you imagine in your mind's eye, Mom meeting, smiling and getting to know different people. She has a gentle, pleasant and sincere way about her. I think the East London members are really going to love her, big time!!!

I drove to church today and we took the Davies with us. Driving has become relatively easy for me. The

challenge is keeping a sharp eye out for crazy drivers and people that all of a sudden dart across the street. Mom has been good at keeping us both alert.

I am amazed at how many BMW's, Mercedes and Jaguars I see on the road. Maybe it is just our neck of the woods, but wow, I see a lot of nice cars. Supposedly, BMW offered the church a "great deal" of BMW's for the missionaries to drive - a better deal than they got from Chevrolet! However, the church elected to go with Chevy. They thought BMW's

would give the wrong image. And, would you want an 18 year old kid driving your BMW? No way! They can be pretty rough on the cars.

We had the Davies over for lunch. Mom made Hawaiian haystacks. I was her loyal assistant and was in charge of chopping up things - green onion, tomato, pineapple, celery, etc. Let's face it, she could not have pulled that dinner off without me! It was good to have them over and for us to do something for them for once. They have been so good and gracious to us from day 1. Then, we had ice cream and some delicious cookies that Mom made last night. The meal was a hit for the Davies as they each had seconds.

This afternoon, Mom and I packaged up some cookies and took them to our neighbors as an official get-to-know them meeting. We delivered the cookies on a real plate so that they will have to return it to us. We hope! Our plan is to make good friends with every one we can in this complex.

So, an eventful day. A great day to have attended church and partake of

the sacred emblems of the sacrament. I am going to try to do much better this week at being a true disciple of the Savior.

We love you all. Keep all of the commandments and we promise you, you will be very, very happy. Just do it and don't argue.

Love,

Dad and Mom

Tid Bits

Dear Family,

1. Word of the day: "disparity," difference. *Example:* *The disparity between the restored Church of Jesus Christ and other religions, according to Joseph Smith, is that we possess the Gift of the Holy Ghost.

2. Quote of the week:

"Never back up any more than you have to." -Wise Father

3. Scripture of the week:

"But that ye have patience, and bear with those afflictions, with a firm hope that ye shall one day rest from all your afflictions." -Alma 34:41

4.Joke of the week:

Q: When did Adam partake of the forbidden fruit?

A: A little before eve.

*5. Bee's Knees Award: *This girl is totally awesome. She is smarter than the average genius. She is very adventuresome and brave - like jumping off a high cliff into water. She is an incredibly beautiful young lady. She has a very strong testimony of the gospel and it shows in the way she talks, thinks and behaves. She loves her family and is ecstatic that she now has a little sister to spoil. She can play the piano like a maniac. She will do many wonderful things in her life.Ella, you are the Bee's Knees, sistah!!!

*6. Gospel question of the week:

*What message from the Angel Moroni did Joseph Smith receive that referred to a scripture in Malachi?

*7. If I were you (advice to grand

kids): *If I were you I would be super nice to everyone. Some times, your smile, your kind words, your helping hand can make a huge difference in a person's life. Try it. I think you will like it.

8. What I learned this week: The world becomes a very, very small place within the church. We have been surprised at all the people we have met that have common friends and acquaintances. Today I met someone, Brother Azola Sibeko, in priesthood meeting that knew Uncle Greg and Aunt Sandy from Durban.

9. What I am grateful for: I love hard-working, faithful saints who do so much to keep a ward going, i.e., Bishop Kruul and his family. Wow, this ward would be having a hard time without their drive and contributions to the work.

10. My goal for the week: Get the router for our computer and Mom's tablet checked out. Both the laptop and the tablet are not synching with the router like they should.

11. Photo of the week: Our Senior Missionary district from the MTC .

[image: Inline image 1]

We continue to love you all very much. We pray for you and ask the Lord's choicest blessings upon you. He loves each of us and knows what is best for us. Let's continue to trust Him and be the best examples of the gospel we can be. Have fun living the gospel this week!

Love,

Dad and Mom

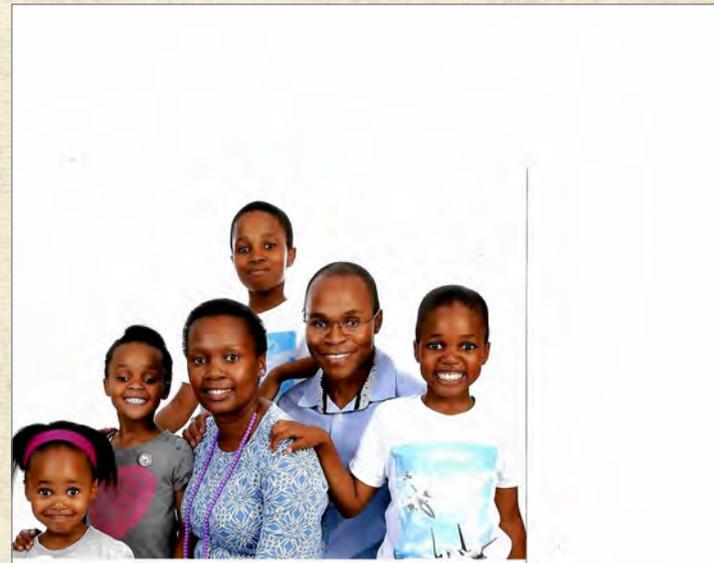
2017 AUGUST 7 }

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

I forgot to attach a photo for the day. Here is a photo of President Lebethoa and his family. Lebethoa is pronounced, "Lay - Bet - Twau."



Lebethoa
Family

Aug8th_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a very busy day. At 9 AM President and Sister Watson came to the house for MLS training. The Davies were also here. The training went for several hours and finished around 3:30 in the afternoon. Some of what we heard was repetition from when we met with the mission office staff in Cape Town, but we also heard a lot more and had outlined for us the delineation of assignments between the Davies and ourselves.

Basically, as it comes to missionaries, we have the following duties:

- Financial coordination for the area
- Flat/boarding inspections for the Mdantsani Stake (New Stake)
- Vehicle Coordinator for the two zones
- Boarding problems, i.e., leases, changes, landlord issues, etc within our zone
- Welcoming and saying farewell to missionaries in our zone

At first, we were told that Mom and I would be assigned to the East London Stake, East London 3rd Ward. When Elder Watson was going over our assignments (as told to him by President Lebethoa, he felt that our stake and zone assignments should be switched with the Davies. This makes a lot of sense as the Mdantsani Stake requires a lot more travel and time. Sister Davies is the nurse for the area (maybe the whole mission?). She gets very busy with medical issues and would do best if she wasn't traveling and spending time away from her phone and computer. Also, driving at night for her is difficult.

The Mdantsani Stake is new. It also covers a lot of township areas. One branch is approximately 40 miles away. We will be spending a lot of time travelling here and there. The work is going well in these areas, but there still is a great need for re-acti-

vation and teaching. For example, classes on "Strengthening the Marriage Relationship," "Temple Preparation," and "Overcoming Addiction." If we are asked by the bishop or branch president from the ward or branch we are assigned to, we will teach those types of classes. However, President Lebethoa has stressed that as we teach, we also teach along side of us the people who will be the new teachers to take our place.

Bill and Nita Watson are very fine people. They both were raised in Arizona, mesa/Glendale area. They

moved to San Diego years ago, but have spent many years working abroad - Portugal and Greece. Sister Watson has worked in the San Diego Temple for 20 years. President Watson has been a sealer in that temple for 10 years. They are the type of people you can grow to immediately love and appreciate, mainly because of their love for the gospel and their dedication to their callings.

We finished up the day with a quick trip to the ocean front (see photo) and then to dinner (see photo). The Davies are the couple closest to the

Ocean Front



Missionary car



Missionary cars get pretty beat up. (Last 3 accidents have been due to other cars hitting the missionary car)



camera.

The missionaries can be very hard on cars. As you can see in the attached pictures, cars can get beat up pretty bad. The last three accidents in the mission have been due to other drivers, not the missionaries. Usually, the other party hits the missionary's car and then leaves the scene. Very few drivers have insurance. The church is self-insured and pays a pretty penny to maintain its fleet.

aries that had their car stolen at gun point. Unfortunately, that car somehow did not have a tracking device on it. All of them do or should have that type of tracking. So, pray for us and all the missionaries. I think we will be going into some scary areas. You know, kind of like the hood in Huntsville! We love you very much. Keep doing good things.

Love,
Dad and Mom

Last night there were two mission-

Dinner (The Davies are the couple closest to the camera)



2017 AUGUST 9 }

Aug_9th_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

With our new assignment to manage the 11 car fleet in our two zones, I spent time today gathering inventory information and trying to figure out the details of the job. I received an email from Elder Hansen in the mission office and he outlined quite a bit for me. I will forward that email to you so you get an idea of what we will be doing.

We also bought more things today! I can't believe how much we have had to get to make sure we are fully stocked in our flat. The most important thing we bought was a map of East London. That is a huge help. As an "Almost Eagle Scout" I can orient ourselves and get a better idea of how to get around. I'm getting it laminated tomorrow.

Thanks to Daniel and Grace for photographing and emailing pages from

the William Holmes Walker journal. We are working on our talks for Sunday and reading again some of the trials and hardships they had is amazing. After the persecution became so great in Cape Town, WHW decided it was time to go to the Eastern Province. He had to get over mountains to get there. We flew over those same mountains when we came to East London and I can assure you, it was a Herculean task - especially with one horse each. Locals told them they would never make it without 6 horses. WHW refers to this miracle as one of the kind mercies of the Lord in their work.

They ended up at Ft. Beaufort and Grahamstown. They eventually make their way to Port Elizabeth. I can't remember if they get to East London, but I think so???

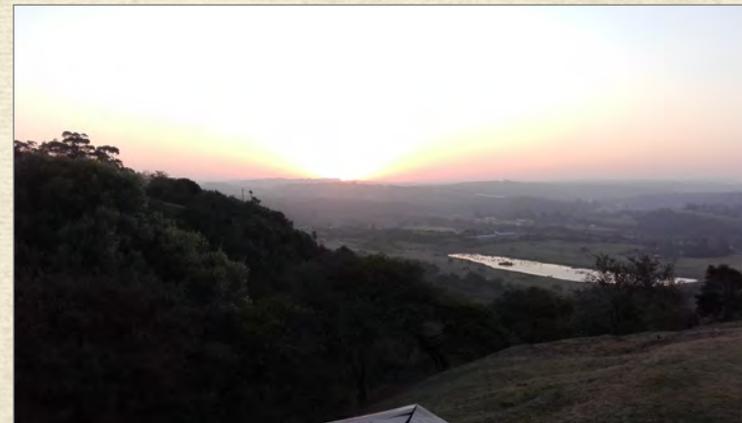
Tomorrow we go to King Williams

Town to check out a flat. This is a ward that will be in our assigned stake. It might be a ward the Stake President will ask us to support. Anyway, it's about 45 minutes away. It will be interesting. This particular flat has been seeing huge electric bills. Having inherited my father's LAPD genes, I think someone is stealing their power. We have been asked by President Watson to investigate. We'll see what they are paying for the lease and calculate if it is worth it to move them to a new location.

FYI, almost impossible to get out of a lease. The mission will move elders if it is unsafe or if there are health issues. They will continue to pay on the old lease! Ouch!!! Anyway, it might be worth it to leave them where they are and pay the high electric rate than move them somewhere else and pay two lease payments each month.

Beautiful sunset this evening. Attached picture was taken from the back deck of the Davies flat. How would you like to have that every night?

Sunset



Drapes



Love,

Dad and Mom

P.S. Andrew and Josh, park the car
and don't let it get scratched.

Also, Mom did a great job on the drapes. (See attached photo.) She also put new drapes up in our bedroom.

While in Provo for our initial training, we watched a video in the MTC which was of a talk Elder David Bednar gave on Christmas morning, 2011 to the missionaries, entitled, The Character of Christ. At one point in his talk he mentioned that some times people will reference the "Martin and Willey handcart ancestors." Meaning no disrespect to those great pioneers, he said that some-

times he thinks, "So what? What are you doing?" Isn't that a great observation? What are we doing? We can't rely on the actions, testimony or experiences of others. We are not going to ride into the Celestial Kingdom on the coat tails of anyone else. The most important thing we can do is roll up our sleeves and go to work, honor our sacred covenants, be converted to Christ as dedicated disciples and endure to the end.

We love you all so much. Stay loyal to the Royal!!!

2017 AUGUST 10 }

Aug_10th_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

At 6:20 this morning I took out the trash. We don't put it out the night before due to cats in the area. Around 7 AM there are workers that come by and pick it all up in a push cart. After they collect it all, it is then deposited outside the compound and across the street. Once it is there, there are poor people that come and sort through it all. For that reason, Mom and I separate the wet garbage from the dry trash, i.e., cardboard, plastics, wrappings, etc. The poor people take that recyclable material and will make trinkets out of it to sell on the street. By separating wet from dry garbage, it makes it easier for these people to recycle for us. (See attached photo)

This morning we went with Elder and Sister Davies to a city about 45 minutes from here by the name of King Williams Town. The highway

between here and there is quite good. It was interesting to see the sprawling townships along the way. I felt like I was back in Bolivia again as we saw the tin roof shacks and poor living conditions.

We were expecting to see a run down town with dusty dirt roads and beggars on every corner. Not the case. There were lots of people, large (but older) buildings, dozens of churches and nice roads. It wasn't a huge town, but big enough for a ward of the Church.

We went to check out the living arrangements of the two Elders working there, Elders Ondrachek and Monolide. Their flat was not very appealing. It was the lower part of a house, similar to a walk out basement without a sliding glass door, just some windows. It was dark and felt damp. The biggest problem was the fact that the mis-

sion was paying a lot of money each month for the electricity. As it turns out, the tenant upstairs and the neighbor behind their house were getting a free ride each month.

The Elders took us to a different flat that they want to move to at the end of the month. It looks much better. However, Mom would need a couple weeks to make it presentable to her standards. When we weighed everything in the balance, it was a good move for the missionaries. The best news? Both dwellings are owned by the same landlord. She will be will-

ing to let the missionaries switch to the new place and not have to pay any rent for the old flat.

We also went to the King Williams Town ward house. It was purchased by the Church from another religious organization and then, renovated by the church. It was originally built in 1925 and the church has made it look fantastic. (See attached photos.)

After King Williams Town, we headed back for East London. We dropped off the Davies and then ran

Trash.





Mom and I
with the Davies
and Elders
Ondrachek and
Monolide.

about a half dozen errands. Mom is a great co-pilot and helps me stay on the right side of the road (well, really the left side of the road). We drive okay, but you really have to look out for the other crazy drivers and pedestrians on the road.

We stopped and purchased gas for the first time. It is real full service all the way. They pump the gas, check the oil, add water to the wiper reservoir, check the air pressure in the tires and wash the front and rear windows. It was great. After the fill up and signing the credit card slip,

we tip the guy 5 Rand, or, about 37 cents.

I spent a lot of the day looking at the car situation in the area and making sure we have a good inventory record. Also a little time on my talk for Sunday. I got our two bookcases hinged together and got everything ready to hang our whiteboard. I have to let the adhesive hooks cure for 24 hours and then, up she goes.

Mom made a delicious dinner of chicken meat and gravy over mashed potatoes, and, a very delicious salad.

I topped it off with a few cookies and 1/4th of a Kit Kat candy bar.

We have tested out our Skype with Annie and it seems to work okay, but not super great. *PLEASE SEND US YOUR SKPYE ADDRESS/NAME SO WE CAN ADD YOU TO OUR CALL LIST.*

We love you all very much. Thanks for all you do and your efforts to live the gospel. It will provide us lasting peace and true joy. Honest. I mean it.

Love,

Dad and Mom

King Williams
Town Church



Aug_11th_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

This morning Mom and I did our exercising before we got ready to go to district meetings. I did push-ups and sit-ups (the number of repetitions of each exercise will remain undisclosed) and we both went walking. I walked and Mom did jogging and walking. I do 10 laps around out little village block which is suppose to be approximately 1.82417 miles. Mom does more.

District meetings were very good. Since I now have the car assignment for the two zones, I took pictures of all the cars (front, driver side, passenger side and rear) and pictures of the registration that is suppose to be in each window on the driver's side. I will have all the regular vehicle information in a file, but I want to supplement it with photos.

Elder Cole, who is an American, but

comes from Malaysia, gave our training. He did an outstanding job of addressing the topic of "Gifts of the Spirit." We especially liked how he went to many different scriptures and PMG to discuss the subject. We were impressed. Also in the district were Elders, Gillis, Msali and Wabwire.

I took pictures of all the Elders one by one. Even though some of them will be getting transferred in a few days, we figure our paths may cross again while yet in the mission. Also, I can place a face with each car that is being driven by the missionaries. We did not get back to our flat until after 2:30 PM. On our way home we had to go by a certain grocery store where we purchased electricity for one set of missionaries at their boarding. The church pays for it and the store gives us a set of 25 numbers. I text those numbers to the missionaries and they enter them into their elec-

tric meter at their home.

At 5 PM we picked up the Davies and went to clean the East London Stake Center. I quickly went to work vacuuming the chapel before I could get assigned the restrooms again. Mom cleaned the downstairs bathrooms. We were finished in about 1 hour.

Had some good pizza today, 2 Brothers Pizza."

Today, I sent a text to President Mahlangabeza, the stake president of the new Mdantsane Stake, about

meeting with him and finding out what unit we will be assigned to. We are anxious to get involved at the ward/branch level and do what we can without doing everything for them. We hope to hear from him very soon.

There is a certain tree that grows here that looks totally fake. (See attached photo) We see them all over the area. They remind me of a fake Christmas tree.

Also attached is a photo of where the East London 3rd Ward meets. We



There is a certain tree that grows here that looks totally fake.

East London
3rd Ward
building.



told Bishop Kruul about our new assignment and he was definitely deflated over the news. He and his counselors had already discussed how they wanted to put us to work. We will speak in their ward this Sunday and then on to our new assignment.

good.

Love,

Dad and Mom

As I am typing, Mom is out walking some more in the cool air. It is safe as we are in a gated community with a bunch of lode folks here and there - I mean people older than us.

We love you very much. Be good. Do

2017 AUGUST 12 }

Aug_12th_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

I am shortening the email distribution list for our daily updates to just our immediate family and Uncle Thom's family. We received some feedback that maybe people are not interested in daily journal entries. Instead, maybe a weekly letter to describe a certain experience or event. We think that is a good suggestion. If you are on this email list and don't want to know all the minutia of the day, just delete the email as you get them or let us know to put you on the weekly email. Either way, the subscription cost is the same.

Today was P-day. We spent this morning cleaning up our flat. Mom did the bathrooms and I vacuumed, dusted and worked on getting our printer to wirelessly sync up with the computer. Not an easy task with a router made in China!

The rest of the morning we worked on our talks for tomorrow. The topic is, "Pioneers of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young's Day, and, Modern Day Pioneers."

Around 2:30 we picked up the Davies and all of us went to Sister Ivy's birthday party. Wow, our first South African party and it was quite the experience. Attached are some pictures. The music was loud and repetitive, the food a little strange (not sure exactly what the meat was?), the MC said "Halelueja" every other sentence, and, the dancing was crazy.

The MC was Sister Ivy's sister. The DJ was her son, Iven. Father, as in so many cases in African families, is long gone.

According to President Lebethoa, the problem of fatherless families was exacerbated with the imple-

mentation of Apartheid. Blacks were forced to leave the cities and live on the periphery in townships. For example, you may have heard of Soweto as a township outside Johannesburg. It is a southwest township, hence, SO-WE-TO. Men would leave their families in the townships and come into town to work. If the township was far away, they learned to stay in other places to save money. Many times they found new women to be with and would never return to their families.

When it was all said and done, Sister

Ivy went all out. She does not make a lot of money selling trinkets a few blocks away on the beach front. The event was catered and she really went all out to make it a fun time for all who attended. We wanted to let her know we cared and coming to her party meant a lot to her.

We are still waiting to hear back from President Mahlangabeza about our unit assignment. Even though we are getting a little anxious, Mom reminded me that, "This is Africa." Things happen a little slower around here. She consoled me that he was

Food at Ivy's birthday party



Sister Ivy's
birthday party



probably talking and discussing things with his counselors and maybe bishops. Her advice, just be patient.

We love you. Be strong and devoted to your covenants.

Love,

Dad and Mom

Tid Bits

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

1. Word of the week:

"aplomb," complete and confident composure. *Example: *Mom was the epitome of aplomb as she gave her talk this morning in sacrament meeting.

2. Quote of the week:

3. Scripture of the week:

If thou art accused with all manner of false accusations; if thine enemies fall upon thee; if they tear thee from the society of thy father and mother and brethren and sisters; and if with a drawn sword thine enemies tear thee from the bosom of thy wife, and of thine offspring, and thine elder son, although but six years of age, shall cling to thy garments, and shall say, My father, my father, why can't you stay with us? O, my father, what are the men going to do with you?

and if then he shall be thrust from thee by the sword, and thou be dragged to prison, and thine enemies prowl around thee like wolves for the blood of the lamb;

And if thou shouldst be cast into the pit, or into the hands of murderers, and the sentence of death passed upon thee; if thou be cast into the deep; if the billowing surge conspire against thee; if fierce winds become thine enemy; if the heavens gather blackness, and all the elements combine to hedge up the way; and above all, if the very jaws of hell shall gape open the mouth wide after thee, know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good.

The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than he? -D&C 121:6-8

4. Joke of the week:

If an IRS agent and an attorney were both drowning, and you could only save one of them, would you go to lunch or read the paper?

(or)

Did you hear about the terrorists who hijacked an airplane full of lawyers? They threatened to release one every hour if their demands weren't met.

5. Bee's Knees Award: This kid is a worker. He is universally like. He will do anything for you because he

is that kind. His favorite after shave is diesel fuel. He would like to build a "Rat Rod" one of these days. He loves his children and wife and does a good job of providing for them. He is a valiant priesthood holder. He is big, tall and strong as an ox. He owns a 23 foot trailer and is a camping maniac. Andrew, you are the Bee's Knees, brotha!!!

*6. Gospel question of the week:

*Can people of other faiths feel a witness of the Holy Ghost as they attend their churches?

Attached is Mom and I at the big birthday party!



7. If I were you (advice to grand kids): If I were you, I would learn and practice good manners. Manners really do matter! This is important since the world is looking at you and making judgments all the time. You want them to look upon you, your family and the church favorably. Try it. I think you will like it.

8. What I learned this week: Elder Davies, the other senior missionary elder in our area, is 79 years old. I greatly admire his desire to serve. At that age so many are content to sit back and run out there time here on earth. I hope I can be as active and productive as he is when I get to that age.

*9. What I'm grateful for: *I have tried a couple of brands of cookies here. I don't like them, but, I have found one generic type cookie that really does taste good. And, they are inexpensive compared to the rest. Actually, there are two flavors; one is coconut and the other is a short-bread.

*10. My goal for the week: *Have a meeting with President Mahlangabeza regarding our assign-

ment in his stake.

11. Photo of the week: Attached is Mom and I at the big birthday party!

We love you all very much. We think of you often. Have fun living the gospel this week!

Love,

Dad and Mom

2017 AUGUST 14 }

Aug_14th_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

This is not a good time to have car problems. Our car has been acting up and it gets worse each time we drive it. I think the transmission or ABS is having issues.

We had a brie (barbecue) for the Elders in the Mdantsane Zone. Actually, only one missionary is leaving our area, but the missionaries wanted to get together and have a going away lunch. The Elders purchased the meat and the senior missionaries brought the rest. Mom made some very good cookies, potato salad, veggie plate, 5 boxes of juice and 5 liters of spring ("still") water.

On the way home, the car was getting worse every kilometer. I decided we didn't want to go all the way home and unload the car and risk coming back only to have the car breakdown on the highway. We

called Elder and Sister Davies and asked them to meet us at the dealership. Fortunately, they had not gone all the way home yet. On our way to the dealer, we really did not know if the car was going to make it. We got it there, white knuckles and all.

We will get a call from the service department tomorrow regarding the problem. If it is minor, we just get it fixed. If it is a major problem, we'll call the mission office and see what Elder Hansen, the fleet manager, has to say about it.

The car is a Chevrolet Sonic. It is not a premium, luxury car by any means. GM is leaving the country, so the mission is getting rid of all their Chevys and going strictly with Toyotas. Maybe we will get a new car???

We love you very much,

Dad and Mom



Brie (barbecue)



2017 AUGUST 15 }

Aug_15th_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We received a phone call that the car will not be ready today. Also, if we would pay for what would have been the 45,000 Km service, then, they would count the car as being under warranty and replace the coil pack that is bad without any charge. That is a good deal for us. They also called and said our front brakes were down to almost nothing. Likely report from a dealer! We said go ahead and replace the pads.

We studied PMG together this morning. We will be going over the investigator discussions in Chapter 3 for the next month or two. What an absolutely marvelous missionary tool. I would love each of our grandchildren to dig into that book and study it thoroughly before they go on their missions. At night we read the Book of Mormon together.

We walked over to to the local strip mall and bought a few groceries and picked up a city map that we had laminated. The lamination looks very good, but, the map does not cover the new area we have been assigned to! So, tomorrow we will try to find a map of Mdantsane.

We spent most of today writing letters and managing our social media. We love the Loyal to the Royal FB site.

Mom made Tamale Pie for dinner this evening. Very good except the olives we bought were not very good. They are suppose to be "black olives," but they look purple and have a vinegar taste to them.

Below is a picture of the command center.

We love you.

Dad and Mom

Dad

Help

Boys,

I need to know how I can stream BYU Football here in South Africa. Go to work on it and let me know what to do. As you know, this is very important and should be your highest priority on your "to do" list.

Thanks,

City Map



Aug_16th_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

It has been a very busy day in East London. We started out this morning at 4:30 AM. We had to get ready and meet the missionaries at the stake center and then, over to the airport to bid "Farewell" to some Elders and say, "Welcome" to others coming into East London on transfers.

Elder and Sister Davies had a difficult time saying goodbye. They have known these missionaries since they started their mission and have really grown to love them. One of our Elders went to the mission office to be an assistant to the president. We like this. We figure we can have some extra influence on decisions to be made when we put in for a new car, an increase in pay and an upgrade to the 4,000 square foot flat down the street.

After the airport, it was to the grocery store with the Davies to purchase food for the Elders we invited over for lunch. We bought a lot of food and the dozen missionaries we had over did a great job of making it all disappear! Normally we would not do that, but they had to wait around until 4 PM for more Elders to fly in from Cape Town. It was better to have them at our place than sitting around at the airport.

They are all wonderful young men. We were very impressed with the black Elders that will be working in Queens Town and Mthatha. I drove one, Elder Tshawne, over to the drug store to get some cough medicine. He was very articulate, personable and enthusiastic about the work. He also needed his pants mended.

The car was ready at the repair shop. Sister Davies ran Mom and I down to the shop and we jumped in our car

to do some errands.

This is where Mom stepped in and did a marvelous work and a wonder on pants that appeared to have gone through World War III. She ended up repairing two pair of his pants with a sewing machine that was purchased by previous senior missionaries for the area. Mom was in her zone. Unfortunately, she had me get a pair of black slacks that I have so she could cut out one of my back pockets for material to sew into Elder Tshane's pants.

Mom was all over the lunch. She felt right at home preparing food for the masses. We had left over tamale pie, deli meat, rolls, all kinds of fruit, guacamole, chopped lettuce for soft tortilla burritos, shredded cheese, chopped tomatoes, etc. I think she truly enjoyed feeding such fine missionaries.

The car was ready at the repair shop. Sister Davies ran Mom and I down to the shop and we jumped in our car to do some errands. We had to buy an electric kettle for a set of Elders in our zone. Mom also bought me an

Laundry Room
(back porch)



East London
City Hall



apron, a big clue I need to do more in the kitchen!

After going to the airport at 4 PM to greet new missionaries (which we missed by about 15 minutes), we received a call from the new stake president, President Maghangabeza. He asked if we could meet him at 6:30 at the stake center to discuss where Mom and I should be assigned to labor. We arrived early (around 6:05). He arrived late at close to 6:50. Part of the problem was that he had to get a ride with some others and they happened to be a little late

picking him up.

Let me just say, what a delightful man the stake president is. He is relatively young, maybe in his 30's and only a member since some time in the 90's. He is a twin, which explained my natural feelings of admiration for him! He was so excited for us to be in his stake which was just created in July.

We are assigned to work in the Mdantsane 1st Ward. However, this ward will be splitting soon to create the Mdantsane 4th Ward. The 4th

Ward will be our primary responsibility. We are to report to the 1st ward on Sunday and then, when the 4th ward is created, start going to church there with the 1st ward being a secondary part of our attention. They are just waiting for the new bishop that has been recommended to clear Salt Lake.

We are excited to meet members and help the bishop where we can.

Below is a picture of the laundry room (the back porch). Also, a photo of East London City Hall.

We love you and pray for your welfare every morning and night.

Dad and Mom

Journals

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Daniel and Grace,

I think the journals have arrived! We had a call from the mission office a few days ago that a package had arrived. We are hoping to see them here in East London by tomorrow or Saturday.

Thank you so much for doing this. We look forward to seeing some of these areas where WHW had traveled to preach, teach and baptize.

Love,

Dad and Mom

Aug_17_2017

Dear Family,

Rain, rain, rain. Very windy and rainy today. We spent most of the day inside. I put together a handout for the Elders re: the different assignments the Davies and we had so that they will be clear who to call when something needs attention by the senior missionaries.

Mom has worked her magic in being able to make applesauce muffins when there is no applesauce to purchase anywhere. She boiled the apples we had and then, smashed them up and made her own applesauce. Then, she worked some more magic and made cinnamon rolls for the Elders to have at the district meetings tomorrow. I sampled one and can vouch for their wonderfulness. Or, maybe as missionaries we should

say, "Heavenly Goodness."

The zone leaders came by the house *around lunch time*, can you imagine that? We had them wipe out some left over pizza we had and had them sample several applesauce muffins. They loved them.

I made several phone calls regarding information and prices to get duplicate keys made for all the cars in the zone. Our fleet manager, Elder Hansen, said we need to get this done. Even though the Davies are working with someone to get this

done, I feel like I need to get into the loop on what is entailed. The locksmith I spoke with and that Mom and I went to see this afternoon said it would take 1.4K to 1.6K to make actual, car-computer-consistent keys. That is around \$120. That is cheap compared to U.S. prices. However, Elder Davies said he has a guy coming tomorrow to look at each car and will do it for 400 Rand, or, about \$30. Sounds too good to be true. We'll see what happens tomorrow??? (Of course, the Chevy dealership, wanted \$300!)

Mom's Baking



Mom was very good at helping with the driving this late afternoon. We had two or three close calls. Unfortunately, it was my driving that was creating the danger! I hope Mom doesn't develop an ulcer. We made it home safely without harm or accident to anyone.

While we were out, we got Mom some whey protein. Two large containers - one chocolate and the other vanilla. She makes her little chocolate energy balls as a healthy snack during the day. The vanilla she adds to a smoothie or yogurt or oatmeal, etc. Being in Africa, I like to get my protein from grubs, worms and beetles.

I spent some time reading today in the journal of William Holmes Walker. Thank you Daniel and Grace for sending it to me. I got tired just reading about all the walking he did, all the sore muscles and blisters, all the lame horses he went through, all the persecution and rejection, all the illness, rain, heat...I think I would have quit very soon after arriving in South Africa if I had experienced what he did. But, somehow he and his companions persevered and

were able to pick the cream of the crop and bring them to Utah.

For dinner, we had beer-battered fish filets and salad. For our anniversary (43 years!), she is making cheesecake with Oreo cookie crust since we cannot find any graham crackers. BTW, the Oreos are made in Saudi Arabia and don't quite have the same taste as the real deals in the USA.

Thank you for your prayers and support. We love you very much!

Dad and Mom

Aug_18th_2017_update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had district meetings today. We were able to meet and greet the new missionaries again. Each zone held combined district meetings. Today, Elder Clark, our Mdantsane Zone Leader, gave the training. He did an admirable job and made sure his new companion (not as eloquent, but very much on target) did his part of the training.

Mom's cinnamon rolls were a smash hit! The missionaries went crazy over them.

After zone meeting we met with a good brother from the East London 3rd Ward. He is the High Priest Group Leader and had volunteered to help Mom and I navigate the government bureaucracy in getting an electric bill (invoice) terminated. The mission office has been receiving an invoice every month for a couple

years from the Buffalo City Municipality for an old building we don't use any longer. The invoice shows a very small credit.

Because of Brother Mike, we were able to successfully get the invoice cancelled from printing each month - we hope.

We ran some errands to chase down a chair mat for the office. My office chair is tearing up the carpet a little and we don't want that to get worse. No one has a traditional chair mat. So, we ended up buying a thin, woven, rubber-backed mat that we think will work.

I also purchased a good size plastic box. maybe 15 x 15 by 3 inches high with about a dozen compartments in it to hold duplicate car keys for all the cars we have in the East London area. When keys are eventually made, I will keep them in this box

for safe-keeping.

The locksmith that Elder Davies lined up for our district meetings this morning never showed. I'm beginning to think that what this key person may have to offer is the wrong solution. We'll probably have to go to someone else and have to spend about \$120 per car to get them made. Times 12 cars is \$1,440!!!

We had some good split pea-type soup this evening that Sister Davies shared with us with rolls. We also cut into the Oreo-crust, baked

cheesecake. It was delicious and just like home, except without the sour cream!

It is truly sad to see so many broken homes. It is unusual to see a home with a father in the townships. If the father (if he really is the father) is there, sometimes it means he is an alcoholic and that is where he sleeps off his hangover. Or, it may mean he is there and living off the little income the woman makes. "Father-led Families" are what the missionaries pray for. The gospel can be so wonderful for their families and they can

Haven Hills building (the new Mdantsane Stake uses)



Amanda's
Place



be so wonderful for the church. The future of the church here in South Africa is going to be based on so many of these family-led families.

We love you very much. Be good children.

Dad and Mom

If any come to East London we think they can just stay at Amanda's place. Great view of the ocean. (See attached photo)

--
Christopher W. Stevenson
241 S. 7600 East
Huntsville, Utah 84317
(801) 791-9933

Also, a photo of the Haven Hills building where the new Mdantsane Stake holds its stake meetings. This is also where our Zone holds its zone and district meetings on Fridays.

2017 AUGUST 19 }

Aug_19th_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Wow, what a day! We left early this morning to take part in a Helping Hands Service Project. We met at the East London 3rd and 4th Wards church house. There were about 30 of us. We headed over to an pre-school/day care type home that needed cleaning, painting and yard work done.

Of course, Mom got right to work. She and Sister Davies found a room to clean and away they went - walls, chairs, filing cabinets, floor, furniture...everything. I was drafted to put some "magnetic door closers" on long cabinet doors that didn't want to stay closed. You put a small metal strip on the door and then, a magnet embedded in a plastic gizmo that fastened to the frame of the wooden cabinet. The idea is that when you shut the door, the magnet hold the door in place and shut.

Everyone did a great job and it was satisfying to help out in that manner. Hopefully, the person that was taking pictures with a good camera will be able to use them for some PR in the local papers. The PR is good, but the joy from serving our fellow brothers and sisters is the big reward.

After the project, Mom and I decided to go visit a family where the father has decided to come back to church. Evidently, he and the previous bishop got into a spat over something very insignificant (the boundaries of the ward). Horrible excuse to stop coming to church for 10 years, but we felt it was important to visit them and encourage them to keep up the good work.

We had called them in the morning and told them we would be coming around 1 PM. We did not realize they lived 30 kilometers away from the

airport which is already 40 minutes away from our flat! They lived way out there and very close to the ocean - actually, only 400 meters away on a small dirt road.

We were planning on a quick visit. When we got there, Sister Steenbeek had a large chicken in the oven, roasted potatoes, veggies and rice and some pumpkin cooked like a squash of some kind. Anyway, it was a whole meal and a half. Mom loved it.

The home is hard to describe. They

are part of a cluster of homes well off the beaten path. It is actually a retirement type community of maybe 40 homes. Their home has been a project over the last 17 years with several rooms added on here and there. Most interesting though, were all the animals. There were 5 or 6 dogs. One was a border collie and a very nice, smart dog. At least 5 cats, maybe more. One owl, a parrot, 2 parakeets, a coca til and who know what else. All these animals were in the house with exception of all the dogs except one that was a small, older dog and was hand fed.

Beach





Owl

The meal was good. However, when I sat down there was a cat laying right next to my plate. Right before we started to eat, Sister Steenbeek had her husband, Rollo, remove the cat from the table. As you can well imagine, Mom was having a quiet, minor comfort level issue to the animals, cat and dog hair everywhere, etc. She never let on to the host and hostess about her dislike for animals ruling and roaming the home.

After dinner, we drove down to the beach. No one in sight! We walked along the seashore and found all

kinds of lovely sea shells, Mom found what appears to be a Nautilus shell, Rollo was ecstatic because it was unbroken and a rare color. We took pictures of it because he thought it might be a new, yet undiscovered species! Mom is going to make it a conversation piece here in our flat. I want to sell it because it could be worth millions of dollars.

Coming back to the home, we had fresh cooked guava in a sugary syrup, topped with custard pudding made from sweetened condensed milk. Then, we had some kind of a

custard pie. All of it was very good, but the pie was very tasty. Really, three deserts? Of course, no complaints from me!

How nice of these people, who from all appearances did not have a lot of money, to go so far out of their way to prepare this meal for us! Such is the generosity and kindness of the saints in East London. If only WHW had such a reception from the people in Cape Town.

Attached are photos from the day's activities. Enjoy.

We love you more today than yesterday.

Dad and Mom

Helping Hands
Service Project



2017 AUGUST 20 }

Aug 20th_2017_update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We have had a delightful Sabbath day. We attended our assigned ward, Mdantsane 1st Ward. It is a beautiful building surrounded by township homes as far as the eye can see. (Photos attached)

Besides the missionaries, there was only one other white couple in the congregation. Attendance today was good at approximately 150 people. As I have mentioned before, this ward is splitting and there will be a new ward, the Mdantsane 4th Ward. The stake president, President Maghangabeza, wants us to focus on the new ward as our first priority and then, consider the Mdantsane 1st ward as our secondary ward.

We had the chance to meet many of the members. They were all very nice and welcoming. Some of the names are very different and it will

take some time to get them under our belt. They are humble, testimony-believing members of the church. It was an honor to be among them and enjoy the blessing of partaking of the sacrament in this part of the world.

Three good speakers. There were two priests administering the sacrament with four deacons passing. All with their white shirts and looking good. One of our young missionaries, Elder Milne, played the organ. The chorister was really getting into the music with a little swaying and bobbing up and down. She did great!

Sunday School was well-attended. It is so great to see so many brethren attending church. The instructor was a black return missionary from 2012. He is now married and did a wonderful job teaching the class. He was well-prepared and spoke with a great voice and confidence - a good example of what a strong native

African can do to help his ward upon returning from a mission. He spoke about a third of the time in Khosa so many of the older sisters in the class could understand. Mom and I, along with two other class members, were asked to bear our testimonies of Joseph Smith.

During priesthood meeting the bishop asked to speak with Mom and I in his office. Basically, he welcomed us and said they will gladly use us to help the ward grow and learn. He invited us to come to the bishopric meeting on Friday so we can discuss

with his counselors who on their ward roster we can start to visit and help to "reactivate." Bishop Jade (pronounced "jaw-dah") is a very kind, humble man. His wife mentioned to him this morning that a problem members would like some instruction on is "debt." He thought maybe we could address that topic some time in a class or fireside type environment.

We spent a little time driving through the Mdantsane area. It is hard to express how big this township is. It is sprawling government-

J&J





built housing. Where the government housing isn't, settlers have started their own shacks made of tin and crates, wood and other materials. A government home is basically a rectangular size home with a front door and two windows to each side. Maybe a two bedroom home with no bathroom. There is usually an out door enclosure as an outhouse.

On the way home, we passed the Johnson and Johnson plant. Oh how we wish Michael and Annie would come to East London! Michael could be the product manager for Vermox,

a product to help prevent getting worms in your system. Mom and I drip Vermox into our bodies every night with an IV just to make sure we don't get worms. Here is the marketing pitch they should use, "Take the vermin out, with Vermox." Thanks, J&J for all you do!!!

We each took a little nap this afternoon. We studied the Sunday School lesson that was given earlier in the day. We had beef stroganoff (without sour cream) and wrote in our journals. Oh yeah, we also had some more cheesecake!

How wonderful to see that the gospel is the same anywhere in the world. We sing the same songs, hear similar sacrament meeting talks, receive the sacrament with the same exact prayers being said, attend for three hours, etc. It is truly a blessing to be part of the latter-day growth of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We gladly throw in our small contribution to help this new generation of members. We rejoice that people all over the world are coming to know the truth and enjoy the blessings of the gospel.

We love you.

Dad and Mom

Tid Bits

Dear Family,

1. Word of the week: "elicit," to draw out by discussion. * Example:* As missionaries we try to elicit the religious questions confronting the investigator.

2. Quote of the week:

3. Scripture of the week:

O that cunning plan of the evil one! O the vainness, and the frailties, and the foolishness of men! When they are learned they think they are wise, and they hearken not unto the counsel of God, for they set it aside, supposing they know of themselves, wherefore, their wisdom is foolishness and it profiteth them not. And they shall perish.

-2 Nephi 2:28

4. Joke of the week:

The other day I went out to run some errands in East London while Mom stayed home. She heard a news broadcast saying that some idiot was driving down the freeway in the wrong direction.

She called me to say, "Honey, be careful out there. I just heard that some jerk is driving down the freeway on the wrong side of the road.

I told her, "What do you mean one jerk, there are hundreds of them!"

*5. Bee's Knees Award: *She's super wonderful. She's super beautiful, su-

per kind, super mother, super wife and a super daughter-in-law. She is all-in when it comes to the gospel. She has a strong testimony and you see it in her talk and actions. She loves her children and husband. She loves children. She is a camper extraordinaire. She is a good cook. She is smart, frugal and wise. Melissa, you are the Bee's Knees, sistah!!!

*6. Gospel question of the week: * Who are the seven most constipated men in the Bible?

*7. If I were you (advice to grand kids): *If I were you, I would keep a gratitude journal. Keep it by your bed and each night write down at least one thing you are grateful for. Try it. I think you will like it.

8. What I am grateful for: Return African missionaries that come back to their home wards and become a dynamic force to help the ward progress. Such was the case this morning - a returned and now married missionary who did a fantastic job in teaching Sunday School today about Joseph Smith.

9. What I learned this week:

Things happen slowly in South Africa. "Just now" can mean sometime in the next 2-3 weeks. "Now, now" means right away, like within the next 30 minutes.

10. My goal for the week: Have companionship study everyday.

Photo of the week: Attached is the Nautilus that Mom found on the beach.

Have fun living the gospel this week!

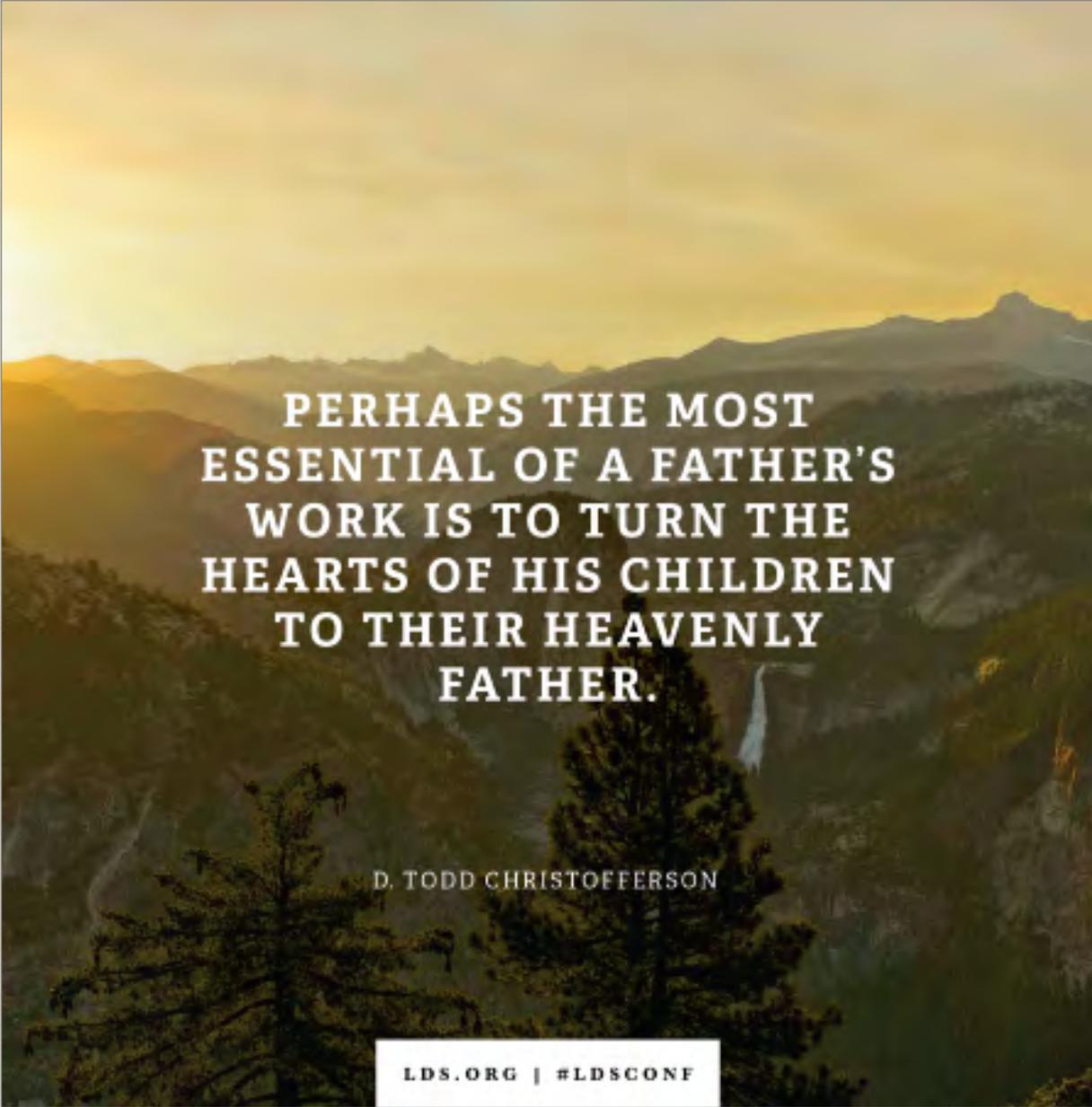
Love,
Dad and Mom

Mdantsane
Ward



Nautilus Mom
found on the
Beach





**PERHAPS THE MOST
ESSENTIAL OF A FATHER'S
WORK IS TO TURN THE
HEARTS OF HIS CHILDREN
TO THEIR HEAVENLY
FATHER.**

D. TODD CHRISTOFFERSON

[LDS.ORG](https://www.lds.org) | [#LDSCONF](https://twitter.com/LDSCONF)

2017 AUGUST 21 }

Aug_21st_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We have used today as a P-day since Saturday (our normal P-day) we used to help on the service project and visiting a less active brother.

We got our daily dozen in and then took off for Jacksons Fabrics in Nahoon. This is always scary for me. Mom can get into a fabric store and not leave for 2 - 3 days. By some miracle, we were there for only about 30 minutes. We purchased some more "Swayshay" material to make a couple cushions for our two wooden chairs we have. The pillows and chair cushions will add a nice splash of color and personality to our living room. This colorful material is made here in South Africa and used to portray a South African feel.

Today was a first. Around lunch time, we went to McDonald's for a

quick bite to eat. Attached is the meal and bill for the lunch. Everything was surprisingly about the same as the States. I'm going to say the food (look and taste) was about 90% of what we would have bought in the USA. The bill was acceptable. my Big Mac meal was 39 Rand or about \$2.93. I like the price and the grub was good enough to do it again some day.

We took a drive down what is called the Wild Coast of the Jikeleza Route. Maybe we didn't go far enough, but it is not anything to write home about - just rolling hills and not any coast line to speak of. I'm sure if we would have gone far enough (20 Km) we would have seen some better scenery.

However, further up that same road is the Inkwenkwezi Private Reserve. This is suppose to be a good park to visit to see the "Big 5" and other wild

animals. The big 5 are: Elephant, Lion, Buffalo, Rhino and Leopard. We will be doing this one of these P-days soon.

We are also going to go on a tour of the Mercedes Benz plant here in East London on one of our upcoming P-days. In September (around the 19th) we will be going to the Port Elizabeth area for a senior missionary get together and from there seeing several parks and sights. More details to come later.

We have basically chilled out this

evening. Temperature was warm today. If the cell phone reading was correct, it was around 93 degrees Fahrenheit. The constant breeze/wind we get here made it feel somewhat cooler than that.

We are on hold a little bit as to what we will be doing specifically in the MD (Mdantsane) 1st Ward. We meet with the bishopric on Friday evening. In the mean time I will be tagging along (splits) with three different sets of Elders on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. This will get me oriented to the area and



McDonald's



meeting some people before Mom
and I start poking around in that
township.

We love you all very much. You are
in our prayers constantly.

Dad and Mom

2017 AUGUST 23 }

Aug_23rd_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Mom and I ran some errands this morning. We found a nice place for lunch and dinners not far from our home. I had a sirloin steak (maybe 6 ounces) roasted veggies and french fries. Mom had tempura fish, veggies and a salad. The meals came with a desert - I had the brownie with ice cream. Mom had Malva with ice cream. Price tag? \$7.50 for both of us. On Wednesdays, they have these menu items as an "old folks" discount. (see photo)

Busy day with the missionaries from the Mdantsane 1st Ward. I spent the afternoon and into the evening (8:30) visiting investigators and teaching. These missionaries are the zone leaders and had a full schedule for today. Elder Clark is from Kaysville,

Utah and Elder Palavi is from Australia.

Mom spent the afternoon working on some things here at the house. She finished some cushions for our two old chairs and they look great. My going out with the missionaries is , in part, to get to know the area better before Mom and I try to tackle it. And, from what I have seen so far, we would never try to navigate that township/maze in the dark. No street lights to speak of and people walking all over the road in dark clothing.

Our first visit was to a couple that have been looking into the church for a few weeks and really trying to understand and believe what the Elders are teaching them. They are

very poor and unemployed. The wife, Isanda (sp.) and her husband, Jay, are very nice and sincere. Their daughter, who's name translates into "Beautiful Morning," was sleeping on the only bed in the house. They both have had very difficult lives and are having a tough time in their marriage now. They have responded to the missionary discussions favorably and will probably be baptized. (see photo)

Jay was not there at the beginning of

the discussion. He did show up toward the end of our visit. Keep in mind that this is a one room tin shack. When he arrives, he unpacked his backpack. He pulled out a used soda pop bottle that was half full of what looked like milk. Then, he pulled out one onion and put it on their shelf. It about broke my heart to think that this was all they had to eat. We had a prayer that the wife gave before we departed. Jay walked out to the car with us and I was touched as Elder Clark reached into the back seat of the car and pulled out some deep fried bread (fat cakes)



Restauraunt



Picture below shows our home and the car we use. So far the car is dent and accident-free!

It's late and I don't think this update is very coherent. I'm going to bed.

Love,

Dad and Mom

for Jay and his family. I could see that Jay was so grateful.

It was a long day, but one of joy and a privilege to share my testimony with so many.

I told both of them to be sure to let Mom and I know when they will be baptized because we want to attend the service.

We have one of our missionary cars that got a little banged up going over a curb. I need to find a repair shop to do the work on it. I'm hoping to get things straightened out and painted for less than \$500. This is a better route than reporting this to the insurance carrier and going through all the paperwork and trouble with them trying to fix things.

So went the rest of the day. We visited a lot of people and despite their poor situations and immense challenges, they were genuinely happy and receptive to the gospel message.

House and car



Aug_24th_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Another busy day with missionaries. We met with investigators, less active members and members we visited to obtain referrals. I spent most of the day with Elder Warren (London) and Elder Milne (St. George, Utah). These are two very fine, exceptional missionaries. It was an honor to be with them. Once again we had a local member with us who helped with the language when needed and also with directions around Mdantsane.

Mom stayed home and worked on some organizing of files, getting ready for district meetings tomorrow and planning for teaching missionaries about cooking. We are thinking of having a set of missionaries over once a week with some of Mom's cooking instruction. We want the missionaries to do the work and then, we'll eat it together.

I was called on each time during our visits to share some thoughts and my testimony. With non-members I promised them great joy and peace coming to know and understand the truth. With the less-active, I explain Alma 32 and that the seed of the gospel that is planted in our hearts, needs to be nourished by our good works. I explained we need to use "CPR-" Church, prayer and reading the scriptures. For the active families, I talked about our joy in bringing the gospel to others and how great our joy will be if we should bring many unto the truth. Also, D&C 33:8-10, OYM - "Open your mouth."

Had one meeting with the family of one of the counselors in the Stake Presidency. What a wonderful little family and what a wonderful spirit we felt in that home. I enjoyed kidding with their two children, Simbu and Singa. When I see a South

African family like this, I feel assured that the future is going to be very bright and wonderful for the saints in this part of the Lord's vineyard.

Below is a picture of a taxi. Don't mess with them. Give them the road. There are some ugly horror stories about these guys. Most have criminal records and they all carry some type of weapon with them. Two quick cases in point:

1. Missionaries accidentally scraped a taxi. Of course the missionaries stop to take care of things and ex-

change information. Unfortunately, the taxi driver is outraged and crazy. He produces a gun and takes the missionaries and their car hostage. They are kidnapped. To make a long story short, the church ended up settling the whole matter by paying the taxi cab driver 15,000 Rand (about \$1,200) so he could get his taxi repaired. Even though the police were involved, no criminal charges!

2. Elder Milne, who I was working with today, was driving in his last area and had a taxi speed up right behind him, flashing his lights. Poor

Taxi





Elder Milne had no where to go to let the taxi go by. Coming up to a sharp 90 degree turn, the taxi passed along side of him and did a sliding pit maneuver, blocking his way. The taxi driver got out of his vehicle with a crow bar and a knife in hand. Elder Milne needed Depends (adult diapers) like never before in his life! Somehow they were able to escape and live to tell about it.

Important: I have learned some things here in South Africa through sad experience. Don't be sitting on the toilet when you flush it. There is

a veritable tsunami that just about blows you off the porcelain throne. Without any more details, just take my word for it.

I am pleased to report that the missionaries I have worked with, do a great job in teaching the gospel. It is amazing to me to see the difference between that new missionary that goes into the MTC and the ones that are in the mission field teaching lessons in the trenches. Of course, the most important element of the equation is the Spirit. These missionaries are worthy servants of our

Heavenly Father and bring that Spirit into the homes of those they visit.

Mdantsane is massive. I included another photo of a small portion of the area. Mom and I will be very busy as we plan to track out every home in the township! For what it is worth, the dogs here are much nicer than the dogs in Bolivia.

Hope all is going well in your homes. Hug those grandchildren of ours. Hold them close and make sure they know you and their grand parents love them.

Love,

Dad and Mom

2017 AUGUST 25 }

Aug_25_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Today we had district meetings. It was a great meeting as the training was from PMG, chapter 6, "Christlike Attributes." We took time to discuss each of the attributes listed in that chapter and also to look up key scriptures. Elder Milne was the instructor and did a fine job. I shared an example of "Charity." It was a few days ago when one of the missionaries gave some fat cake to an unemployed father that simply did not have anything to feed his family. The missionary obviously felt love for this good man and was willing to bless his life. I had an emotional time sharing that story because I was so touched by the charity of Elder Clark and the deep gratitude on the face of the person receiving the bread.

Mom and I did work on preparing for teaching Elders some cooking

tips on this coming Monday. Mom gave some suggestions for meals they could learn about this morning in the district meeting and the vote was for hamburger rolls, stuffed butternut squash and brownies. We will have 8 missionaries here in the house on Monday to learn and then, eat what they prepare.

I'm attaching a picture of some paver stones from a parking lot at one of the flats of the missionaries. This type of work is very common here. I think it is because asphalt and concrete is very expensive. It is not unusual to see massive parking lots, for example, at a grocery store, covered with this type of paver stone work.

Mom and I met with the bishopric of the Mdantsane 1st Ward this evening. We left somewhat discouraged because we still do not have from them a list of the ward leadership and a list of those we can con-

tact to attempt to reactivate. This is coming Sunday, we hope. We need to be patient and realize that things move quite a bit slower here in Africa.

Due to the high potential to get lost in the Mdantsane Township, we will take our reactivation list and go visit people with the help and aid of a "fellowshipper." This will be a person that 1) knows the territory, and 2) who can help with the language when needed. We will have many instances where the people speak primarily, Xkhosa.

Both Mom and I will be going out with a pair of missionaries on Wednesday. The objective is to get Mom introduced to the environment (which can be pretty shocking at times) and the type of members/investigators we can expect to meet on our own. We will work with them from about 2 PM until 8:30 PM.

We love you very much. Do what is right. Love each other. Serve each other.

Dad and Mom



Paver Stones

Tid Bits

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

1. Word of the week:

"bawdy," humorously vulgar. *

Example:* At lunch yesterday, many felt that Brother Steenbeek told some bawdy jokes and stories.

*2. Quote of the week: *

*3. Scripture of the week: * D&C 62:3

Nevertheless, ye are ablessed <<https://www.lds.org/scriptures/search?lang=eng&start=11&end=20&query=angels&testament=dc-testament#note3a>>, for the btestimony <<https://www.lds.org/scriptures/search?lang=eng&start=11&end=20&query=angels&testament=dc-testament#note3b>> which ye have borne is crecorded <<https://www.lds.org/scriptures/search?lang=eng&start=11&end=20&query=angels&testament=dc-testament#note3c>> in

heaven for the angels to look upon; and they rejoice over you, and your d sins <<https://www.lds.org/scriptures/search?lang=eng&start=11&end=20&query=angels&testament=dc-testament#note3d>> are forgiven you.

4. Joke of the week:

It was high-council Sunday, and Brother Smith came out of the meeting before the high councilor had finished his talk.

In the foyer he met a neighbor who asked, "Has he finished, then?" Brother Smith replied, "Oh yes, he's finished, but he won't stop!"

5. Bee's Knees Award: Here's a guy that is as honest as the day is long. He is happy and positive. He loves his fellow brothers and sisters and always does what he can do to help. He loves his family and does

his best to provide for them and make them happy. He teaches his family the gospel and the joys of serving. He honors his priesthood and does his part to magnify his callings in the church. He loves dogs and is not sheepish about training them. He avoids debt like the plague. He is just simply one great guy. Everyone loves him. Klave, you are the Bee's Knees, brotha!!!

6. Gospel question of the week: What was the date of the restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood?

*7. If I were you (advice to grand kids): * If I were you, I would learn to love everyone. You may not like what they say or do, but realize they are spirit children of our Heavenly Father. Be able to see past their words and actions and love them for who they really are. Try it. I think you will like it.

*8. What I learned this week: *Years ago I was sitting on the floor in Grandpa Stevenson's Three Fountains condo. The TV was on and breaking news hit the screen. Elizabeth Smart had been found. She was



Steenbeek's balcony



safe. She had been rescued. It was the most thrilling news one could hear. I had tears in my eyes. What joy spread across the nation. I felt like shouting hurrah! Today, in sacrament meeting we sang hymn #192, "He Died, the Great Redeemer Died." Part of the third verse says, "But lo! what sudden joys were heard!" In the last verse, "Cherubic legions guard him home, and shout him welcome to the skies." Oh, how I hope we will be able to witness what it was like in the heavens when the Savior finally overcame the world and when spiritual and physical

death would have no victory! What joy there must have been as all of us were rescued and saved.

9. What I am grateful for: My earthly father who somehow, some way, made good decisions that have affected generations after him.

*10. My goal for the week: *this last week, I was going to have PMG study with my beautiful companion every day. Done. This week, I'm going to try to be out in our assigned area with Mom Tuesday through Friday from 1 PM to at least 5 PM.

11. Photo of the week: Attached is the scene looking out from the Steenbeek's balcony. All kinds of wild life back there, even gnomes!

Have fun living the gospel this week!
Love,

Dad and Mom

Aug_27_2017

Dear Family,

This morning we left for church at 8:30. It takes about 25 to 30 minutes to get to our assigned ward. When we reached the main highway, it was blocked off. We decided to take a back road and get onto the main highway at a different on ramp. That on ramp was also blocked off. So, we got out the map and plotted a different route using residential streets. As we tried that, there were other roads blocked off. Plus, the traffic was starting to get backed up.

We decided there was no way to get to our ward and make it for sacrament meeting. We figured out a way to get to the East London 3rd Ward

which also started at 9 AM. We made it there just as the opening prayer was being said.

The reason the roads were all shut down was due to a big bicycle race of some sort.

We had a delightful time at the 3rd Ward and were invited to come to dinner at Bishop and Sister Kruul's home at 6 PM. We came home after church and had an excellent lunch of roast beast, potatoes, carrots and gravy. Mom also had beets. We did some writing and filling out recipe cards. Then, off to dinner. We had taco salad which was very good.

Bishop Kruul's children are maybe third or fourth generation South African Mormons. Their ancestors and one or two other families were the real pioneers in this area. Now the church has multiple stakes in the Eastern Cape and missionary work is on the move. Their children are wonderful. They are dedicated and great examples of the gospel.

I don't believe we have sent you any pictures of Elder and Sister Davies. This is a photo from a few weeks ago

at Sister Ivy's birthday party. Sister Davies is "perpetual motion." As the mission nurse, she stays very busy watching after the Elders. He is about to turn 80 and always ready to help with anything. He is "Mr. Fix It Man."

Love,

Dad and Mom

Sister Ivy's
Birthday Party



2017 AUGUST 28 }

Aug_28th_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

I meant to say that yesterday evening after dinner, the Kruul family has the tradition of spinning a table knife in a circle and see at which person it ends up pointing to.

That person is then responsible to give a spiritual thought. The knife pointed right at Sister Stevenson. Let me tell you folks, she did a marvelous job. She quoted, from memory, the poem, "Little Lamb." They were quite amazed. Then, she bore her testimony of the Savior. Great job, Sister Stevenson!!!

We had a fun day. We both got our walking/jogging in early. Then we cleaned up our flat. Mom started the basic ingredients for today's cooking instruction for our zone missionaries. I tried to hook up a simple hose to an outside faucet and failed miserably. I will try again tomorrow.

Around 10:30 we started to get Missionaries in from our Mdantsane Zone. All together we had 8 missionaries. Mom started right away getting them involved in making the lunch. The lunch items were: stuffed butternut squash, hamburger rolls and brownies. She did a great job of teaching them. Don't know if they will take the time to do it on their own, but you never know.

Another zone was cooking chicken pot pie and peach cobbler at the Davies condo. At 1 PM we combined forces and had a most delicious feast. The missionaries cleaned up most everything like a horde of locust! Mom's brownies disappeared very quickly. The Elders enjoyed themselves and it was a good time.

Fortunately, some of our missionaries were able to go through a ward directory Mom and I obtained from the ward clerk and highlight for us

the people that would be good for us to visit in an effort to reactivate them. We also had them mark the leadership within the ward and to make us a list of fellow-shippers that can go with us. It was valuable information to get us started.

We start tomorrow with Thandikaya as our navigator and translator when needed. We have about 20 people we will first visit and revisit over the next little while. We plan to meet with the Relief Society President, High Priest Group Leader, Elders Quorum President and Primary

President to ascertain who else they would like us to visit.

I'm debating whether I need to confess this afternoon's activity to our mission president? I watched what I consider an important church meeting this afternoon - BYU vs. Portland State. Wow, BYU needs to really get moving on their offense. I'm afraid LSU is going to eat them alive!

Mom spent time this afternoon doing some sewing, part of which is sewing missionary clothing that has



Master cooking instructor and her students



been ripped or worn through. She is becoming the Eastern Cape seamstress for our part of the mission. Or, the "Hostess with the Mostest." All the missionaries like her.

One of the missionaries found our WHW missionary journal in the bookcase. They quickly surmised that he was the guy that first came to Cape Town lo those many years ago. I told them the story of John Green who was baptized by WHW and now has a great great grandson that was our home teacher.

These are great missionaries. They work hard and do a great job of teaching.

Below, photos of the master cooking instructor and her students!

We love you people very much. Do what is right and you will be happy - we promise!

Dad and Mom

2017 AUGUST 29 }

Aug_29th_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

I went to an auto body shop where we will be getting a missionary car repaired. The quarter panel had been damaged as well as a small area at the bottom of the read driver side door. I chose these guys because the price was good, they look like they do good work, and especially because the car will only be tied up for two days max. This morning I had to run over to the flat of some missionaries where they had an old Toyota parked in their garage. I had received a call that the salvage company we use wanted to pick it up. It had about 100K Km on it and was primarily used as a spare. Got that done and on its way.

After a light lunch, Mom and I took off for Mdantsane. We met our "fellowshipper," Thandikaya. He was great at looking over our list and giving us directions on how to get to

different places. He has his mission papers in and is just now waiting to hear where he will be called. We had the chance to meet with about three different families. Our goal was to meet some of the less actives and visit. We wanted to listen before we start teaching anything like a long lesson. One young man is 24 and said he would come to church this Sunday prior to going to his work. We hope to see him there.

Mom was asked to give a short spiritual thought at each location. She did a wonderful job. The message was that God loves us all. We are all His children and He wants us to be happy. We are the happiest when we are obeying His commandments. As a good missionary and companion, I bore witness that the things she said were true. Mom is an unusual treat for these members. There are no young, white sister missionaries in our mission. Some of these people

may have never seen a natural beauty like Mom. I think they felt special having her in their homes.

One of the neat things about getting out into the township is the children as you can see in the attached photo. They are poor, but oh so happy! Before we could get into the car, we had to do the special handshake with each kid. They loved it and we loved it. (Then, we used our portable bottle of hand sanitizer.)

The other pictures have to do with some of the peculiar things they

have here in South Africa. One photo is the different type of plugs they have. You need to have an adapter for each type of plug you have. Also, the switch just above the outlet is to switch the electricity on and off. Even though you have something plugged in, it won't work unless you have the switch showing red. Also, french drains to keep the water from around the house. Also, a large plastic/nylon (?) tank in the back of the house that captures water running off the roof and into the rain gutters. This water is used to flush toilets, take showers, etc. However, not to

Plugs





Large plastic/nylon?



Patio

drink. The water that comes into the house is okay to drink, but, we run it through a filter just in case.

You can also see the nice little patio area we have for romantic meals and reading in the sun. Mom sat out there for about 30 minutes this morning while her hair dried in her curlers as she read a book about Sister Hinckley. Nice and peaceful and secluded.

We have had a great day in the service of the Lord. We may wonder if we have done any good as we look

back on our day. But, that is stinkin' thinkin'. Everything we do counts. Everything matters. Waving to children, encouraging people to come to church, saying a prayer, smiling, a pat on the back, leaving a spiritual message, showing enthusiasm for the gospel...everything we do can and does make a difference. We never know some times, so, we just DO!

We love you very much. You are in our prayers and thoughts.

Love,
Dad and Mom



French Drains



2017 AUGUST 30 }

Aug_30th_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

It is late and it has been a long day. This might be a short update.

This morning we got the banged up missionary car over to the auto body repair people. Hopefully they won't have it too long. Cost: \$174. Cheap compared to the USA.

We went to lunch at the Pine Creek Restaurant. It was a senior day. The meal is good and the price is right. Lunch and desert about \$3.75. We invited the Davies to come with us and we paid for lunch.

We met the Elder Cole (Malaysia) and Elder Msali (Durban, South Africa) at the Mdantsane 3rd Ward parking lot. From there we saw a lot of people.

Most notable was a man who use to

be high up in the ranks of the Jehovah Witness church - to the point they paid for him to have a home and other money. After studying with the missionaries, he sensed a real difference between the two religions. He loved the Spirit the missionaries brought to him and his house. He joined the church, but his challenges and problems still haunt him. (No photo tonight, Internet too slow)

There is a great spirit about this man, Brother Albert. He is experiencing a huge trial in his life now. His wife wants to move to a type of lifestyle that allows her to care for her father but, it would mean no church any where nearby. That is unacceptable to him - he is staying right where he is and his wife may Here.

We took a few minutes for some early dinner. Below is the photo of the

join where we purchased ribs and T-bone Steak. I had ribs and they were not that good!

Dear Family,

I was so tired last night that I left out details of our day, did not spell-check, did not attach a photo and injured my forehead as I feel asleep at the computer and slammed my head into the keyboard! Three teeth knocked out, 18 stitches and blood

everywhere. The ambulance should be here by tomorrow afternoon.

Anyway, we had some good visits yesterday. Our last visit was to a member family that is having cottage meetings in their home on Sundays. Paperwork has been submitted to start a branch in the area (Unit P). The wife was just baptized in November. At the end of our lesson, we played "Don't Eat Pete." We'll explain the game on Skype one of these days.

Attached is a photo of Elders Cole and Msali in front of the roadside

Elders Cole and Msali



stand where we stopped to get some lunch. As you can see, it is an old ship container turned into a "kitchen/eating establishment." I am hoping my immune system is strong enough to reject any form of Trichinosis after eating the ribs.

Love,

Dad and Mom

Aug_31_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Today started out with a twist. It looked like we were going to have to turn our car over to the Davies (mission nurse) for the afternoon because their car is in the shop. So, we had to contact our fellowship member and let him know we would not be visiting anyone today. Then, it turned out we would be able to have our car, but our fellow-ship member had the flu and wasn't going to be able to make it. So, I spent most of today trying to get a spare key made for our car (no luck, "come back tomorrow"), wash the car, water the plants around the house and get a pair of pliers. Mom did quite a bit of baking for the district meetings tomorrow - applesauce muffins (which means she had to make the applesauce first), and, provide apples, oranges and bananas to boot. She has also mixed up some "Bisquick" type powder for Elders

that want to have something in their flats that they can make a quick meal with.

We received news that an Elder in Queens Town, about 2-3 hours from here, broke his ankle while playing rugby on P-day. A very large Samoan Elder fell on his leg. His leg was put in a cast yesterday and he has to go home for surgery and about 3 months of recovery and physical therapy. Elder and Sister Bell, who have a touch of the flu, drove him to East London this evening. Mom and I met them at the airport with a new pair of crutches and a wheel chair. It was an emotional moment for the Bells who said goodbye to him. However, he was in good spirits. (see attached photo)

We spent about two hours with him until the airlines people came to assist him in boarding the plane.

Had we been in our assigned area today, no senior couple would have been available to help the Bell's or this good missionary. The other senior couple (the Davies) still have their car in the shop until tomorrow morning and the bell's had to immediately turn around and head back to Queens Town. So, a tender mercy from the Lord that we cancelled our visits today and we were available to assist in getting this missionary taken care of.

Below is a "fake wallet" I carry in my back pocket. It has fake ID and credit

cards. The real credit cards are in my white plastic missionary hand-book carrier. My real driver license and about \$50 dollars in cash, I carry in my hidden pouch (see photo). It has two loops that my belt slides through and then, it tucks down on the inside of my pants. Being robbed in this country is a real possibility. That's why we take this precaution. I might have about \$5 in my pants pocket that we would gladly turn over to any would-be thieves. Any way, what they get would be pretty discouraging for them.



Elder in Queens Town broke his ankle.



Fake ID and credit cards



Fake Wallet

We love you and hope you are having
a good week.
Love, Dad and Mom

Sept_1_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We left our house at 9 AM and went to pick up a car from the auto body shop. From a distance, it looked just fine. If you got close (2 ft.) you could see that it was not "Show Car" quality. But, for \$174 USD, it was an excellent deal.

We then went to the locksmith and paid a lot of money to get a spare key made. The mission fleet manager insists we have spares. So, with the addition of our spare key, I now have in our possession a spare key for each of the ten cars here in East London.

District meetings were excellent. Our instruction was on the importance of getting investigators to church. Mom and I scripture-chained a half dozen scriptures or so that are great for both investigators and less-actives to hear. After our training, the missionaries dug into

Mom's applesauce muffins and took fruit from the large fruit bowl she put together. They loved the muffins and they disappeared very quickly!

We met our fellowshipper for the afternoon, Zizi. That is his nickname since his real name is too difficult for us Americans to pronounce. He is a great kid that is having interviews and getting everything in order to go a mission. He speaks Xkhosa and knows the territory.

We were able to see a number of people. One family is less active and a sad situation since the husband is a return missionary from 10 years ago and was once very active in the ward (maybe a counselor in the bishopric if I remember correctly). He was not there when we visited. However, the wife, Nandi, and three of her four children were there. Some very good things happened. First, Nandi fell in love with Mom. From the very be-

ginning, Nandi was all smiles. She gave Mom a hug like they were old friends. Then she wanted a photo of us all together. She said she is going to get it printed and hang it on her wall.

We left a message about attending church using some of the scriptures we went over in our district meeting. Mom gave the prayer before we left. Nandi said she was so excited and really felt the Spirit. She said she was going to come to church on Sunday. Heck, that's why I go, so I can hang out with Mom.

Nandi has a 5 year old boy that is pretty hyper. He does all kinds of silly things primarily to get attention. I gave him, his brother and his sister a piece of candy and things really changed. This boy kept giving me hugs and hung all over me. all the children were such loving kids. (He is the one in the red shirt)

We also had other good visits. We visited the May family and they said they would come to church. We'll see. Some times their intentions are good, but, they have a difficult time following through. We hope to see

Nandi's Children



everyone we visited at church on Sunday.

On the way home we stopped and ordered some food at "Fishaways." We brought it home and it was actually very good. We both had fish. Mom had a salad. I had rice, mixed veggies and onion rings and an undisclosed name of a liquid refreshment. (It was not beer.) \$3.75 each. We don't always splurge like that, but we were a little tired and had heard this was a good place to eat.

We love each of you very much. Be loyal to the Royal!!!

Love,

Dad and Mom

Sept_2_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

This morning we met the other missionaries in our zone at a mall in Mdantsane. It was a busy place since it was the first of the month and people get their government checks. The objective of meeting at the mall was to do a "finding activity." We all separated by companionships to different parts of the mall. The goal: get 50 contacts. We would approach people and ask them if we could do a survey. We'd ask about four questions:

- Do you believe in God?
- Do you believe in prophets, like the ones in the Bible - Moses, Abraham, Elijah and others?
- What is most important to you in life?
- What brings you the greatest happiness in life?

We then ask them if they would like a free gift, a DVD, that talks about

god and Jesus Christ. They typically say, "Yes" and we get their name, phone number and what part of Mdantsane they live in.

Mom and I only got 20. The other three companionships got 30. This was a new experience for Mom and was definitely outside her comfort zone. Nevertheless, she did great.

After an hour of that, Mom and I went to the ward house and met with the young men's president. We took part in a young men reactivation activity. The president divided up the names of the less active young men to visit by geographical closeness. Mom and I took two young Aaronic Priesthood holders around to various parts of the area to pay visits to their fellow, less active priesthood holders. It was a good exercise for them even though we put 2 million kilometers on the car! (See attached photo)

We ran over to Hemingways Mall and did some research on the Internet router we have. The reception/coverage we have now is slower than molasses on the North Pole. To make a long story short, we need to swap SIM cards in the router with a service provider that has a better coverage. This will happen on Monday.

We went back to the church and attended a baptism for Sandlile, an investigator that Elders Warren and Milne have been teaching. Good service and good testimony given by

this new member of the church. (See attached photo).

We came home, Mom sewed up some pants for one of our missionaries and we are now enjoying the evening.

We still love you. You are great! Keep living the gospel every minute, every hour, every day!

Love,

Dad and Mom





FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Nice try, bucko! WHW baptized Nicholas Paul, the second man to be baptized in South Africa. He was baptized in the Liesbeek River, not far from the mission office. Nicholas Paul became the first branch president of the Mowbry Branch where Mom and I first attended church in Cape Town. He and his wife later migrated to the USA and to Utah. WHW took Harriet Paul, their daughter, as a polygamous wife.

Nicholas Paul was friendly to WHW and his companions. WHW stayed with the Paul family and held meetings at their place. On one occasion during a meeting, there were threats of breaking windows and making a rukus while WHW preached. Brother Paul, a man of some considerable influence in the area, told the ruffians, "I will fill the first person to disrupt this meeting with more holes than a

sieve." The meeting continued without any problems.

Sept_3_2017_Update

Dear Family,

We made it to church today at 9 AM. I estimate there were about 200 people there. Sitting on the stand was the stake presidency. The first matter of business was the announcing of the new bishop for the newly created Mdantsane 4th Ward. I would tell you who they are but we can't remember and pronounce their names. Anyway, this is the new 4th ward that will be our primary interest and focus.

Some of the people we visited last week that said they would come to

church did not show. So, we just keep working with them. You may remember the photo I sent a few weeks ago of me and a couple with two missionaries that looked like giants. They were at church last week and this week. I think they will be baptized soon.

We spent this afternoon writing, reading and Mom making fried rice for our dinner. We also had a chance to Skype with Arnold Cortez for about 30 minutes.

Tomorrow we plan on finding the

remedy for our miserable Internet problem. Wish us luck.

We love you!

Dad and Mom

P.S. Sorry, no photos, inexcusable!!!



Sept_4_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

I have taken the liberty of adding Arnold Cortez to our email distribution list. I know some of you will be very upset about this, but Mom and I are trying to fellowship him. He suffers from deep psychological scarring when I use to pound him in basketball week after week after week - raining 3 point shots down on his afro-style hair, playing above the rim 93% of the time, slicing to the hoop and slam dunking, and, dribbling circles around him until he got sick and threw up.

I took some cookies over to the Gonubie Auto Werks shop that fixed one of our missionary cars. The owner and his wife/girlfriend (?) are very nice. They were very happy to see me with a plate of cookies. As I was leaving, she ran out the door to tell me, "Tell Sister Stevenson thank

you for the cookies." I don't get it? How does she know it wasn't me that made those delicious snickerdoodles?

Today is a landmark day! We accomplished two significant things:

1) We traversed Mdantsane by ourselves and did not get lost. As a matter of fact, we went to three separate addresses and we found two of them home. Additionally, no accidents or close calls.

2) Mom and I have been able to track down relatively good maps of Mdantsane. Supposedly, they did not exist. We went to the engineering department in down town East London and we were able to acquire two different maps that outline each of the zones/units in Mdantsane and provides house numbers. The maps are a little old, but where they have not been updated, at least they pro-

vide the range of house numbers for any given block.

We visited Nandi's house, no one home. We came back later and found the dad. He is a return missionary that has gone less active (I should say, zero active). He was friendly and set a time for us to come back and visit his family on Thursday when he will also be home. We are taking in a video, scorpions in the Arabian Peninsula, and we also have CTR rings for the kids.

We also visited Jean (male pro-

nounced as John), a member we have tried to visit two or three times so far. He hasn't been coming to church because he had a stroke in March and had been in the hospital. He was very appreciative of our visit. We conversed and had prayer. He said he will come to church this coming Sunday. (It is not uncommon to have people commit to coming to church and then not show.) We hope he comes. He seems like a very nice man.

We did some grocery shopping. Mom is making a fruit salad for the

Minions invaded the neighborhood





Michelle has taken over the grow boxes

Mission Leadership Council meeting tomorrow morning. She is also doing a veggie tray and making brownies. We plan to put a scoop of vanilla ice cream on the brownies and dowse it with chocolate syrup. The MLC is a video conference with the mission president, AP's, ZL's, presidency counselors and the senior missionary couples. Mom will be doing my hair and make-up for me.

Ever since Michelle has taken over the grow boxes she has been trying to expand her influence throughout the world. We see it right here in

South Africa. (See attached photo)

Also, the Minions have invaded our neighborhood. (See attached photo)

We love all of you very much. You are in our prayers daily. We ask Heavenly Father to help you make good choices and to make a difference for good in the world. Hug all of our favorite grandchildren for us. We miss them!

Love,

Dad and Mom

Sept_5_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Mom ran her 22 laps this morning! She's the Cheetah of Hazy Ridge. the go-go girl of Gonubie, the silver-haired bullet, the South African antelope...you get the picture.

Also, this morning we were busy preparing food for the Mission Leadership Council. The brownies were already made, but we had to get the fruit salad made and the veggie tray. Our meeting started at 10 AM but not without some scrambling to make sure the video conferencing was set up correctly.

First of all, no one seemed to know there was going to be a new video conferencing system. Once we got it downloaded to our computer, we discovered that it would not work for anyone until accounts have been set up. Those accounts require au-

thorization from the Johannesburg Area Office. So, no video today. We just used a telephone conference call.

I think one of the challenges in our mission, and I am sure in many others, is getting information disseminated to all the right people in a timely manner. We seem not to get all the information we need to know as senior missionaries. I call it "Elder Abuse." We have a dinner scheduled here at our home with President Lebethoa on Saturday. That might be a good time to tactfully share the issue with him. He will be in East London for stake conference and a combined missionary zone conference on Tuesday.

As we listened to the MLC this morning, it occurred to me that as senior missionaries, we don't need to be a part of that meeting. All the information and discussion is single-

missionary related. I'm going to recommend they discontinue our attendance. The pertinent information can be passed on to us the very next day in what is called the "Senior Skype." That basically frees up a day when Mom and I can be in the field. Not trying to be a rebel, but I think the mission presidency already feels that way.

I spent this afternoon lining up a transfer arrangement between our personal bank account and the church. This way we pay our gasoline bill each month. I also got much

closer to resolving our Internet problem. I have a SIM card from Telkom, a different network than what we now use, with a small amount of prepaid data on it. I am going to pop that into our router and see how it does. If it works well and a lot faster than what we have been using, we'll purchase more data. Right now, the plan is to use what we have left on our present card.

I also had 4 sets of Mdantsane maps printed up for the other 4 companionships of missionaries in our Mdantsane Zone. There are ten



Highschool kids in uniforms

Shacks we visit



\$1 USD per hour.

Also, according to the MLC meeting this morning, our mission had 47 baptisms last month (August). I'm betting September will be a lot better. We should be doing a lot better.

Attached are a few photos for your viewing pleasure:

- High school kids in their uniforms
- Typical shacks we end up visiting
- members that do not have the cement block, square, government housing
- What happens to a car if it is left on the street. Sooner or later (mostly sooner) the car loses its wheels and other parts. That hitch looks pretty good. Mom and I might swing by there later tonight.

Sorry to ramble on. If you do not find this interesting, sue me! We love you all very much and hope and pray all is going well for you. Be good. Be very good.

Love,

Dad and Mom

pages (both sides) in each set. Mom and I think it will be valuable for them. I know we are going to use ours.

Mom came up with a good idea instead of an Open House here in our compound. She recommends we make cookies or something else and just go to our neighbors one by one and get to meet them. Great idea! Basically, it is a *WOMAN* suggestion. "Wisdom of Mavis and the Nimble-minded." This approach is a lot more personable.

It was hot today. There are two ways to calculate the temperature in Fahrenheit from Celsius:

- 1) $.869 \times$ the cosign of the orbit of the sun $\times \frac{1}{3}$ of the quantum factor of the corn production in Iowa, divided by the number of days until a full moon, *or*
- 2) Double the Celsius and add 30. (For example, 22 Celsius would be* roughly* 74 Fahrenheit.)

Also, the minimum wage in South Africa varies, but, you can say about

What happens to cars
left in the street



Sept_6_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

This morning we had what we call the Senior Skype (I affectionately call it the "Senior Moment"). It is a time when the mission president and all the senior couples get online and we discuss various items that we need to be aware of in the mission. Today was fairly basic stuff, but we do have a problem with automobile accidents. Our mission is the highest for accidents in the South-east Africa Area. Consequently, we are introducing a campaign to help missionaries be more cautious and to drive very defensively. Fortunately, in our two-zone area, we have not had an accident for at least four months. We would like to keep that going.

We ate lunch with the Davies at Pinecreek and enjoyed a delightful meal at senior, or as they say in South Africa, "Pensioner's" prices.

We had some special guests with us for lunch (See photo). I don't think they realized we were eating some of their relatives.

Mom made muffins and cookies today. We are starting to take them around to our neighbors as a way to meet them and strike up genuine friendships. We visited tow today. Both invited us in and we had very good visits. Both were women and they took an immediate liking to Mom. We believe by getting around to these neighbors we can develop a positive image for the church.

I've had a tremendous idea over the last couple days. In our Mdantsane area, I don't think there has been much exposure outside of the church with the movie, "Meet the Mormons." I think there is a huge opportunity here to make a very big splash with scheduled movie nights at each of our church houses.

Folks, I'm talking about doing this thing up as big as we can make it:
- Posters all around town and in businesses - Flyers, hand invitations - Radio interviews with the Stake president - Big time projection and sound, and of course, popcorn - Searchlights at the church houses on movie night, loudspeaker announcements on cars(?)

We are meeting with our zone missionaries tomorrow at 10:30 to discuss this. It would need to be a total involvement with the members, stake leaders, PR people (if we have

any) and the ward mission leaders. It needs to be their show. Attendees need to see them running the show.

We have a member missionary fire-side on the 24th. We might use that as a way to kick things off. So, this is a developing story. More details to come.

I got my free haircut today. A few weeks ago I bought some hair clippers so Mom could cut my hair when needed. She did a great job. I told her she should also cut the Elders' hair, but, she doesn't feel confident



Free Haircut

Special guests
at lunch



enough to do that. Normally, they pay \$2.25 to \$3.75 for a haircut. (See photo)

Looks like we are going to hire a gardener to take care of our outside flower beds, etc. We are thinking of having him come two times a month and take care of the trimming, weeding and pruning - you know, all that gardening type stuff. It would probably be about \$10 a day.

We found out today that the mission president will not be to our home on Saturday evening. Instead, he will

meet with us and the Davies over dinner on Sunday evening. Mom is doing her world famous cinnamon-sugar dinner rolls and bringing ice cream for the apple pie. Main course is beef stew.

Hope all is going well for you. We think of you often and pray for your welfare. Do what is right and suffer the consequences!

Love,

Dad and Mom

Sept_7_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

The weather today is pretty hard to beat. For us, on this side of Planet Earth, it is Spring time. A slight breeze made it even more pleasant. No complaints.

This morning we met with the missionaries from our zone. The objective was to talk about the idea of having a massive "Meet the Mormons" program in Mdantsane. I prefaced the meeting with an experience we had in Bolivia when I was on my mission. I explained how we would "attack" various cities that so almost overnight there would be a deluge of media depicting the words, "A Mi Me Importa," (I care). People would be asking us what does that mean. People were coming to us and we were setting teaching appointments.

Bottom line, the members were

more involved, the community really knew the Mormons were in town, the missionaries were excited and having fun, and, our baptisms went up due to more appointments and teaching.

Anyway, the whole group is excited about it. Mom was right in there with good suggestions and comments. We are meeting tomorrow morning here at our house to lay out some plans and strategy to make sure it all happens. Then, the missionaries will take it to the stake for their review. We are talking about a Ceicil B. Demile type production here!

Mom is making a delicious meal for the end of our meeting, chicken ala king. The missionaries will love it, vegetables and all. Frankly, I think any time you put mushrooms in a meal, it is a form of poisoning. We have two different types of delicious cookies for their way out the door. I

know, I have eaten several of them myself.

We met Kandikaya at the church house around 12:00 noon. He is the young man presently waiting for his mission call. We kid with him that he will go to Huntsville, Utah and have to shovel snow. He is a truly wonderful member of the church, a dedicated disciple of the Lord. He will make an outstanding missionary. (See photo)

We met with Sister May today, a less active member of the church. As

could be predicted, Mom and Sister May had an immediate bond the first time they met a week or two ago. Mom was intrepid with soliciting commitments to come to church and to bring her family. Mom asked, "Do you have any questions we can answer for you?" Mom taught about the importance of coming to church. Folks, she was on top of things like a senior companion showing a junior companion how it is done! (See photo)

We also saw Sister Zimbini. Mom was all over this one. She brought

Sister May



Thandikhaya



her the Liahona where there were some good articles about self-reliance. Mom explained the Pathways program and told Sister Zimbini who she needed to contact regarding these education classes. She asked commitment questions. I was the delivery boy and gave her three of Mom's incredible banana/oatmeal with chocolate chip muffins.

We then visited Nandi. I played with the kids and Mom really connected again with this good sister. She feels so uplifted and happy when we come, but her husband is just not

with the program. She wants us to come back tomorrow when she hopes her husband will be there. We will give a lesson on families again. Today we taught from the Gospel Principles lesson manual and showed a video, "Families are Forever."

We also, brought the family a picture of Jesus Christ so they can hang it in their home. We gave each of the children a CTR ring. They loved it! Kandikaya went to the car and got a "Family, proclamation to the World" mini-poster to hang in their home.

All in all, a good meeting.

I plan to gift wrap some of my white temple socks for the husband. I want him to open up the gift and see those socks with a message that tells him the greatest thing he can do for his family is to take them to the temple and be sealed for time and all eternity. He may not be ready now, but I want those socks to become a constant visual reminder of what he needs to do.

Later today, I went and got 20 GB of data for our router. We have tested this Internet service provider and it works so much better. Ask Amanda and Annie. Our Skype with each of them went pretty good.

Mom is cooking away and getting ready for tomorrow. We love these missionaries! We are grateful for their love of the Lord and the people. We learn from them (except driving skills).

Have a great day. The Lord loves you and is mindful of you. Don't forget that. Make sure you include Him in your plans each day. Make good choices.

Love,

Dad and Mom

Sept_9_2017_Update_Photos

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

I took a few photos today and know that the size of an email with all of them would be too large for Gmail. Therefore, I am sending a couple in advance of my regular update. Hope you don't mind.

Mom and I saw a Mexican restaurant and we decided to give it a try. It is called "Mochachos." Given the name and logo, we thought maybe it was a cross between Mohigan and Mexican food. I had the steak burrito and it was not that good. Way too greasy.

We also saw this very beautiful, broad, blossoming tree with orange flowers. It was lovely and now of good report.

Love,

Dad and Mom

Dear Family,

We went to the church today to help clean. Mom volunteered us for the kitchen. At first glance, it didn't look too bad, but upon close inspection, it was in very bad shape. Mom started on the refrigerator. I worked on the stove. There was at least an hour each on these two items if not more. Of course, they had to meet Sister Stevenson's high level of quality cleaning. I felt I did a great job on the stove only to find that Mom worked on it after me and my feelings were seriously damaged! We cleaned inside all the cupboards and drawers and all the counters.

When we moved the fridge out, a lizard scampered out from underneath it. I killed it with one whack of an empty ketchup bottle. Mom

thought it was still alive because its tail was still moving. I was able to study its traits and characteristics and later did some Internet research. As it turns out, its scientific name is *Lizardis Negris Mambus*. It is related to the Black Mamba snake and is ten times more venomous! They will hide and actually leap at a human being and latch on to their jugular vein, injecting over 12 ounces of venom. While they are doing this, they whip you on each side of your head with their scaly tail causing serious lacerations! We are lucky to be alive!

We also cleaned walls, scrubbed the floor (Mom was elected to clean under the fridge and stove.) There were eight dead cockroaches in the refrigerator. We both found live ones - mine in a cupboard and Mom's in the fridge. As I was cleaning out the cabinets, there were small black specks everywhere. Without going into too much detail, they were cockroach fecal matter. I was the lucky guy who got to clean it all up.

I was able to study the traits and characteristics of our cockroach friends and later did some Internet

Blossoming Tree



Mexican
Restaraunt



research. As it turns out, its scientific name is Cockroachis Negrus Mam-bus. It is related to the...never mind, you wouldn't believe me anyway.

This afternoon, Mom worked on making dinner rolls for our supper tomorrow evening with President Lebethoa. I will be eating some of them for my dinner tonight!!!

I took a trip up the highway about 35 minutes to a game reserve called Inkwenkwezi. It is suppose to be a good park to visit. I went there to negotiate a deal for the Davies, Mom

and I to visit the park on a day tour/safari. Unfortunately, I only spoke with a young lady behind the reception desk. She could not swing a deal no matter what I said. I found that unacceptable and in true Stanley Stevenson fashion, I got the name and email address of the owner of the private reserve, I have sent him a message directly and requested complimentary passes to the park. More details to follow. (The worse he can say is, "No.")

Photos (not necessarily in order):
- The entrance to Inkwenkwezi

Private Reserve where they have white lions - Somewhere around the tree photo there is a monkey. Can you see it. I tried to sneak up on it and they are too quick. I saw about six of the little guys today. They are really yellow-belly chickens. - The piggy family - Thatched homes at the entrance to a township - Murray, the surfer at Cintas Beach. Spent two years in Southern California. - Fishermen with part of their catch for the day

We love you all very much. You are wonderful and we miss you! Well, Mom misses you. Okay, and I miss you too. Be loyal to the royal!

Love,

Dad and Mom



Murray, the surfer at Cintas Beach.

Fishing at Cintas Beach



The piggy family.





Thatched homes at the entrance to a township.



Somewhere around the tree in this photo there is a monkey.

Sept_10_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Today we had 5 hours of church meetings. We are spreading ourselves out between the Mdantsane 1st and 4th Wards. So, we started at 9 AM and ended at 2 PM. We are going to have to figure out how to best divide our time.

Today, our new ward was short a Young Women's teacher. Bishop Jada of the 1st ward chased down Sister Stevenson and had her teach a spur of the moment lesson. She did good. Next week Mom said she will have a lesson ready just in case they haven't called anyone yet to that position.

During Sunday School, the new bishopric had Mom and I in their office and we talked about what we could do to help move things along. Basically, it was decided that our efforts should be focused on reactivation. We will be meeting with a

member of the bishopric on Friday evening to go over the ward list. (See photo our the 4th Ward Bishopric. From left to right: Brother Booi, Bishop Lalendle, Brother Makeke)

Today we noticed that three of the less-active families we have been visiting came to church today - Sister Nandi and her family, Sister May, and, Sister Zimbini. How cool is that? We hope and pray they are well received and they keep coming to church because of the Spirit they feel and the fellowship they feel there with the saints.

This afternoon I worked on some material for talking to the missionaries in Tuesday's zone conference regarding their cars and driving.

At 5:30 we went down to the Davies and met the mission President, Thabo Lebethoa, for a delicious beef stew dinner topped off with apple

pie and vanilla ice cream. It was a pleasant visit. We will see President Lebethoa again on Tuesday at the combined East London/Mdantsane zone conference. (The name "Thabo" means, "Joy.")

I took a photo (attached) of Limhi Xamane who is the son of Sister Nandi. He was sporting the CRT ring that we gave him during our last visit to his house. His sister, Lsakanya, also received one and wearing it proudly today. It was good to see them at church.

The Lord is mindful of each of us. He wants us to be instruments in His hands to serve his children where ever they may be. We need to ask and then, listen as to what we can do. Look for ways you can serve others. Our own problems and trails seem smaller and less burdensome when we serve our fellow brothers and sisters.

Love,

Dad and Mom



Limhi Xamane



Md 4th Ward
Bishopric
Left to Right:
Booi, Lalendle,
and Makeke

Tid Bits

Dear Family,

1. Word of the week: "consort," keep company with. *Example: *Those who consort with people who cuss and swear are more apt to cuss and swear themselves.

*2. Quote of the week: *

3. Scripture of the week: D&C 31: 3-12

3 Lift up your heart and rejoice, for the hour of your mission is come; and your tongue shall be loosed, and you shall declare glad tidings of great joy unto this generation.

4 You shall declare the things which have been revealed to my servant, Joseph Smith, Jun. You shall begin to preach from this time forth, yea, to reap in the field which is white already to be burned.

5 Therefore, thrust in your sickle with all your soul, and your sins are forgiven you, and you shall be laden

with sheaves upon your back, for the laborer is worthy of his hire. Wherefore, your family shall live.

6 Behold, verily I say unto you, go from them only for a little time, and declare my word, and I will prepare a place for them.

7 Yea, I will open the hearts of the people, and they will receive you. And I will establish a church by your hand;

8 And you shall strengthen them and prepare them against the time when they shall be gathered.

9 Be patient in afflictions, revile not against those that revile. Govern your house in meekness, and be steadfast.

11 Go your way whithersoever I will, and it shall be given you by the Comforter what you shall do and whither you shall go.

12 Pray always...

4. Joke of the week:

One night the junior missionary woke his companion. "I think there's

a burglar in the kitchen eating the cake I made," said the elder.

His companion replied, "Should I call the police or an ambulance?"

*5. Bee's Knees Award: *This is a most wonderful girl. She is a cowgirl at heart. She is more beautiful than 10 beauty queens all smushed together. She is smart, kind, happy, helpful, polite, sensitive and a great example of the gospel to her friends and family. She helps her dad and mother. She loves babies like the new little brother that came into her home. She is loved by everyone because she loves everyone. She has a beautiful smile. Nora, you are the Bee's Knees, sistah!!!

*6. Gospel question of the week: *How many temples in all of Africa?

7. If I were you (advice for grand kids): If I were you, I would memorize a scripture every week. Try it. I think you will like it.

8. What I learned this week: Be a believer, especially when it comes to the gospel and the growth of the Lord's church. When Joseph Smith

spoke to a few priesthood holders about the growth of the church, he told them that it would eventually fill the whole earth. I wonder how many could see the vision. When I was in Bolivia as a young missionary, I often thought, "No way. The church just can't make it in this part of the world." Today, there are four missions, multiple stakes, a temple and thousands and thousands of faithful members. In South Africa, the work being done now will blossom like none of us can imagine. Ten years from now, it will be breathtaking to see the growth and development!

9. What I'm grateful for: Technology that allows us to communicate so quickly and easily with our family on the other side of the globe.

10. My goal for the week: I have been more patient this week. However, I want to keep that as a goal again this week. I'm proud to say I have not struck anyone this past week.

*11. Photo of the week: * Any one recognize the nerd in this photo? (See attached photo.)

We love you. Have fun living the gospel this week!

Love,

Dad and Mom

Tid Bits

Amanda is the weeeeeenar for this week's gospel question in Tid Bits. Chocolate milkshake when we get home!



Any one recognize the nerd in this photo?



Sept_12_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had an excellent combined East London/Mdantsane zone conference. President Lebethoa is energetic, sharp as a tack and full of good instruction. He is a very good teacher. He spent an hour teaching from D&C 58:26-29 ("Man should not be commanded in all things...") The missionaries were attentive and the message was right on.

After the conference, which ended at noon, we had a catered meal of chicken, lots of steamed veggies, roasted potatoes and for desert, a moist cake with custard pudding over it. It was a good meal and plenty to eat.

About 1:30, Mom and I set out to visit families in our assigned area. Guess what, we could not find a thing. We looked for a certain address and the harder we looked the more confused

we got. And, it was starting to sprinkle. Like babies, we called it quits and resolved to do a better job of coordinating with a "fellowshipper." They save us time and know the language.

We came home and then went to the local grocery store to buy some items and to meet up with "Skinny." He is a contact I made last week. We want to go to his home and teach him. If he is legit, then, Mom and I will turn him over to the Elders to teach. As it stands right now, he has our number and is suppose to call us when he has some time off. We are not holding our breath, but it would be great if he did call us.

We drove home by the ocean. A lot of the coastline here is pretty rocky as you can see in the attached photo. Also, in the USA we have signs for speed bumps. Here they have signs that say, "Traffic Calming" which

means a speed bump is coming up.

We do have our JW Kingdom Hall in this area. However, we usually do not come across very many of their members.

We continue to have shortages with water in South Africa. Attached is the bucket we keep in our shower. We get wet. Turn off the shower. Lather up. Turn the shower back on and rinse. Then, we take the bucket outside to help water the plants.

Hope you have a good day. Be "do-

ers." Christ was the Master Teacher, but He did a lot more than just speak. He was out with the people doing things. Christ was a doer.

We love you,

Dad and Mom

Rocky Ocean



JW meeting hall



South African speed bump



Bucket in shower to conserve water



Become a Strong Link in the Chain

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Here is a link for talks given by Elder and Sister Bednar given at a YSA devotional. This is such great counsel and advice.

https://www.lds.org/broadcasts/watch/worldwide-devotional-sep/2017/09?cid=HP_SA_10-9-2017_dSI_fB-CAST_xLIDyL1-B_&lang=eng

Love,

Dad and Mom

Sept_13_2017

Dear Family,

After exercising and taking care of breakfast (oatmeal with bananas), we set out for our assigned area, sprawling, intimidating Mdantsane. We met our fellowshipper, Tandikaya, at the church house.

Because this guy loves KFC, we suggested we go there to begin with and look over the ward list and maps we had. No argument from him. We sat down to some good old fashion fried chicken and started to plot the names and locations of less active members on our maps. As could be anticipated, not all the house numbers on the ward list actually matched up with what was showing on the map. Thanks to Tandikaya, we were able to plot a large number of our less active brothers and sisters. This took about 1 1/2 hours.

We went to Brother Magwaca's house first. He is a solid member of the church and a previous bishop in the Mdantsane 1st Ward. What a great man. We could feel his love for the gospel and his willingness to do whatever we would ask him. We made arrangements for him to go visit a grandmother of some boys that were taking the missionary dis-

cussions. It is a relative of his. The boys want to be baptized, but the grandmother says, "No." We think he will be able to make the difference. Sister Stevenson left a prayer in the home.

Side note: He lost his wife about three years ago. Stories are that he

took such great care of her - washing the clothes, ironing, dressing her, helping her to church, etc. He loves her very much and misses her.

Next, we visited an elderly grandmother that has been going through a rough time. She has lost about three family members in the last

Mkwando shack



Mkwando family



month or so. She is holding up well and is a good member of the church. On her shelf in the living room are pictures of the missionaries and her at her baptism. We tried our best to comfort her. I was asked to pray.

We visited the Mkwando family next. The Grandpa and Grandma have not been coming to church. He has a few doctrinal questions that we will be addressing over the next few visits. The grandchildren are beautiful. We gave a message about the importance of reading the Book of Mormon. Then, Mom asked the little

ones if they knew any Primary songs. Yes they did, "I'm A Child of God." They sang it to us as we helped in a very soft voice. It was a choir of angels. Then we played, "Don't Eat Pete." This went over gigantically well. (See photos below of neighborhood and the family.)

Here's how you play. Divide a piece of paper, by drawing lines on it, into 9 squares. Place a small piece of candy on each square. One person is asked to leave the room. Then, the group decides on one of the candies being "Pete." The person comes back

into the room and starts to one by one select a candy. He proceeds until he touches the candy designated as Pete. When he touches it, we all shout, "Don't eat Pete!" Both the grandparents and the children loved it. Try it in your own homes.

It is a blessing to see the gospel take root and blossom in South Africa. We love and are so thankful for those families that have embraced the truth and have been the true pioneers in this part of the Lord's vineyard. Their hard work and sacrifice has laid the foundation of great blessings for thousands, and yes, ten thousands to come. Lucky us, we get to be a small part in it all.

Be kind and good to each other and everyone else.

We love you,

Dad and Mom

2017 SEPTEMBER 14 }

Sept_14_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

This morning we went to three different boardings for our Mdantsane Elders. This is the time just before transfers where Sister Stevenson gets out her white gloves and inspects the flats of each companionship. To make a long story short - Mom passed one of the three flats off. I passed off one of the four cars I inspected. The Elders that passed received a half dozen each of Mom's chocolate chip cookies. The Elders that flunked will get another chance on this coming Thursday.

This afternoon we met up with Zizi, our fellowshipper, and went to less active families we have never seen. We had some good visits, Sister Kusasa and kids, and, Sister Noqobo. Our first visits with less active members are designed to primarily *listen*. We try to hear what their concerns are and why they are not com-

ing to church, and then, make a plan from there. We want to have at least three pre-planned discussions, "CPR"- Church, Prayer and Read the scriptures.

While we were visiting with one family, Some of the little kids in the neighborhood came to tell us we had a flat tire. I changed it and will try to get it fixed first thing tomorrow morning. We will be taking the car on a trip starting Monday morning and it would be a good idea to have a functioning spare in the trunk.

One older guy was walking by and decided to help me. I didn't need his help, but let him jump in and do some stuff. I gave him a R10 bill (about 75 cents) and he was a very happy guy. We don't mind tipping and helping people out when they do something for it.

Photos depict David Stevenson ex-

panding his welding business to South Africa. Also, me showing the kids how it is done!

We love you,

Dad and Mom



David Stevenson expanding his Welding business



Sept_15_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We have had a long day. This morning I had to get our flat tire from yesterday repaired. I thought we had rolled over a nail, but as it turned out, it was a very sharp, pointed rock. (See photo)

Mom and I went to meet our fellow-shipper at 1 PM. His name is Siya and is the ward clerk. We first attended the bishopric meeting with him and one of the counselors. The others, including the bishop, could not make it. Mom and I gave a report on who we are trying to see in the way of ward members. After the meeting, We took our fellowshipper to KFC. There, Siya took a look at the ward list with us and added some names of less-active members we can visit.

We met with Dale Luzipho, an elder-ly gentleman who seems to have some health issues going on. He has

been a member since September of 2000. He is a very kind man and seemed to appreciate our visit and message. He said he would be at church this coming Sunday along with a young man, from Zimbabwe, that rents a room from him. We did not know it at the time, but this good brother also plays the piano very well.

We visited or at least tried to visit several others - Brother John Sineli, Sister Ayanda Bodoza (see her daughter jump roping in the at-tached photo) and the Xamane fami-ly.

Brother Max and Sister Nandi Xam-ane were both home with their chil-dren. Mom and I felt the reception by Brother Max was a little warmer than the few times before. We fol-lowed up on their challenge to have family prayer and they said they worked on it. We committed them to

keep on with family prayer. We showed them a video about obedi-ence and taught them that when Heavenly Father gives us command-ments, it is because he loves us and wants to protect us if we will be obe-dient. Then, we played "Don't Eat Pe-te." It was a smash hit! However, I tried one of the little candies we were using and they were horrible - tasted like soap! We have new candy we will be using in the future.

At 5:30 we met with Brother and Sis-ter Booi. He is the first counselor in the 4th Ward bishopric. He and his

wife went over our ward list and made corrections to addresses and gave us more suggestions of people to visit. It was dark when we left and we had to find our way out to the main road to get home. We had been to their home once before in the daytime, so, it made it easier to get out this time in the dark. One of the big problems is oncoming traffic that hogs the skinny road and just about pushes you off onto the shoulder.

Brother and Sister Booi are very good people. They were married in the Johannesburg Temple and prior



Ayanda's daughter



The rock that
caused our
first flat tire

to their marriage she served as a full time missionary in London. They are relatively poor, but a very gospel-oriented family. They have two boys I enjoyed playing with and making them laugh. It is so good to see a strong priesthood holder in the home and being a good role model for others.

We love you people!

Dad and Mom

2017 SEPTEMBER 16 }

Sept_16_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We woke this morning to a steady downpour. Last night the wind was howling and we assume it was also raining. It has rained all day long.

But, do you think for one minute that stopped us from driving through the rain, mud and flooded areas of Mdantsane? Well, we stayed away from that place. It is pretty muddy and dangerous in this kind of weather. So, I fixed a plumbing leak under the sink and fixed an interior light assembly in our car that keeps falling down any time we hit a bump (very annoying).

We also went to a local retail center and did a bunch of shopping for things our missionaries need - muffin pans, cake pans, cookie sheets, pillow cover, plastic food containers (like Tupperware), freezer bags, etc.

It is a good thing that there is a senior couple in the area to look after the missionaries because half of that couple is a sister missionary that is also an experienced mother. Mom is really looking after her boys. She is loving, supportive, instructive and very helpful. They are lucky she is here for them!

I looked up some driving directions for a little senior missionary excursion we are taking Monday through Wednesday. There will be about 6 couples on the trip. We will be going to the Port Elizabeth area and visiting some wildlife parks. Should be good:

[https://www.san-](https://www.san-parks.org/parks/addo/)

[parks.org/parks/addo/](https://www.san-parks.org/parks/addo/)

<http://www.birdsofeden.co.za/>

<http://www.monkeyland.co.za/>

<http://tenikwa.com/>

We will be staying at a resort at St. Francis Bay on the beach. It should be a nice, and busy, two day excursion/boondoggle!

FYI, WHW came to Port Elizabeth a couple times. He was very successful in a town called Grahamstown that we will be passing through on our way to PE. I have written down names of people WHW baptized and want to check the names out with the locals.

We went back to the retail center we purchased some things at earlier to-

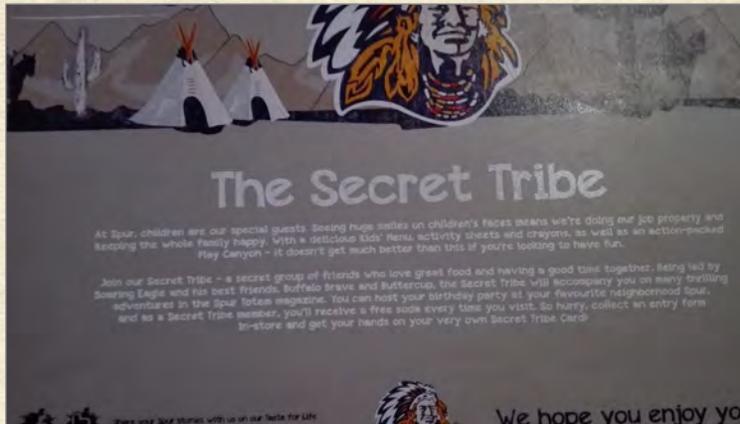
day only to find it closed. Saturday at 5 PM they roll up the sidewalks and close up shop. So...I suggested we go to Spur Restaurant for ribs. Mom had an appetizer of shrimp prawns in a cheese sauce and I had the ribs. They were good and somewhat tender, but nothing like Steve Terry's fall-off-the-bone ribs! I brought some of mine home in a "take away" (doggy bag) so I can eat them for breakfast in the morning. So far there is only one place that has good ribs, Roca Mamas.

The Spur Restaurant is a confusing

South African
Steak House



Spur Table Mat



Spur restaurant decor



array of decorations that are supposed to represent American Indians. See the pictures and judge for yourself. I believe, "Wykato" is a Japanese name. And, do Indians wear spurs on their moccasins?

We love you and think about you once or twice a month. Post more to "Loyal to the Royal" and we will probably think of you more often.

Dad and Mom

Spur restaurant interior





more Spur

Tid Bits

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

1. Word of the Week: "in-substantial," lacking material form or substance. * Example:* Adam Stevenson's argument that a Pagani super car is better than my 911 SBC conversion is insubstantial and therefore unworthy of any intelligent and expert recognition.

*2. Quote of the week: *

3. Scripture of the week:

And remember also the words which Amulek spake unto Zeezrom, ain <https://www.lds.org/scriptures/search?lang=eng&query=from+their+sins&x=7&y=3#note10a> the city of Ammonihah; for he said unto him that the Lord surely should come to redeem his people, but that he should not come to redeem them *in *their sins, but to redeem them from their sins. -Helaman 5:10

4. Joke of the week:

A Good High Council Talk

The definition of a good high councilor talk: It should have a good beginning. It should have a good ending. And they should be as close together as possible.

5. Bee's Knees Award: This kid is incredible. He is polite and respectful. He is smarter than 100 computers all smushed together. He is a handsome dog. He can play basketball at the junior high level but with natural NBA talent and skills. He is an excellent artist. He is a good example of living the gospel and doing good. He has a blossoming testimony and will be an outstanding missionary. He loves his family and does his part to help around the house. Barrett, you are the Bee's Knees, brotha!!!

6. Gospel question of the week:

Who was the first person in the Book of Mormon, that we know of, to commit murder as part of a secret band of evildoers?

*7. If I were you (advice to grand kids): * If I were you, I would learn how to do many things on your own instead of waiting to be told. Ask yourself, what can I do to make things better around my home, then, do it. Try it. I think you will like it.

8. What I learned this week: If we sincerely pray to our Heavenly Father and ask Him what we need to

stop doing, He will, by the power of the Holy Ghost, help us to know what it is we need to stop. I tried it this week and I knew immediately what I needed to do. Then, if we act upon that revelation, the Lord is willing to give us more and more light and knowledge as we are obedient in applying the revelation we get. (D&C 50:24)

9. What I am grateful for: Mom and I are so glad we have a car to drive as we visit various members of the wards we attend. I remember in Bolivia that it took forever to get to



Mom on our front room sofa reading.



some appointments because we had to walk everywhere. Additionally, this car has cruise control. It's great. In this country they hand out camera tickets left and right. It is so easy to go over the speed limit and get nailed with a camera ticket.

10. My goal for the week: Enjoy time with other senior missionaries on our little excursion. It will be nice to meet more couples and get to know them.

11. Photo of the week: This is Mom on our front room sofa reading. She

is wrapped in a blanket because it is a little chilly today. (See attached photo)

12. Mom's new dress: The other day Mom was in a women's clothing store while I was doing some other stuff. When we met at the car she had a beautiful dress on that looked like a million bucks.

I said, "Honey, that dress looks great how much did it cost?"

I could see that she was a little nervous to tell me. I asked, "\$20?"

She was a little embarrassed and looked down to the ground.

"Did it cost \$50?" She shook her head as if to say "No," and gestured with her thumb that it was more than \$50.

I said, "\$100?" Again, she indicated it was more.

Finally, I said, "more than \$500?"

She nodded, "Yes."

I yelled at her, "How could you do that? We don't have that kind of money!"

She quickly replied, "The devil made me do it."

"Well, can't you simply tell the devil, 'Get thee behind me Satan?'"

"I did and he said the dress looked even better from behind."

We love you all like crazy. You are everything to us! Do what is right and reap the happiness from righteous living. And...have fun living the gospel this week!

Love,

Dad and Mom

Sept_17_2017

Dear Family,

We attended both wards today which means 5 - 5 1/2 hours of meetings. The great news - we partake of the sacrament two times each Sunday!

After our first sacrament meeting, Bishop Jada called us into his office. There will be a fireside next Sunday and they want Mom and I to keynote the fireside with a presentation on financial management. I will be recommending several different stock market brokers and hedge fund managers for them to invest with (JK)!

The program will be the ward employment specialist talking about self-reliance. Then, Mom on tithing, budgeting and home production. I will address getting out of debt and the value of education, innovation and making due with what you have.

Meetings were interesting. First of all, in both sacrament meetings, it appeared that either some speakers were not called or they did not show up. The bishoprics in each ward had to fill in. The Sunday school, relief society and priesthood lessons seem to be 85% in the Xhosa language. We don't speak that language yet and probably never will speak more than 30 words of that tongue.

We had two more people show up at church today that we visited during the week: Brother Dale Luzipho and Sister Ayanda. It was so good to see them. Brother Dale came right in, found us and sat right next to us. Whoa, this guy has a booming voice like you wouldn't believe! When he stated singing, I about jumped right out of the pew. Also, Sister Nandi came with two of her children. The kids were still excited from playing "Don't Eat Pete" the other day. Her daughter, Lisakanya, wants us to come back and play so her friend can join in with us! We need to really work on Nandi's husband, "Brother Max."

Tonight we pack for our three day trip. I won't be able to do updates

until Wednesday night when we get home. I hope to have a few photos of South African wildlife for you to review. I want a photo of Mom wrestling a lion, or, outrunning a Cheetah, or, lifting an elephant...I have great ideas, but getting my model to cooperate is a bit of a challenge some times.

Also, two other things I forgot to tell you in previous updates:

1) Mom drove for the first time in South Africa! She backed the car up 30 feet in the church parking lot to make room for another car.

2) We were coming home the other day and it was just getting dark. We were on a two way road going about 40 mph. To our surprise, we suddenly saw a truck coming at us in our lane. I hit the brakes and then, seeing that he was still coming at us, started to go off the road. Fortunately, the guy finally swerved over to his side of the road. It was a close call and one we don't want to experience again any time soon. I had horrible nightmares that night of reporting to the mission fleet manager that we totaled one of the cars and we both

had died in the accident!

Dad and Mom

Today's photos:

- "Bikers Church" - This has inspired me to start the "Porsche Owners Church" when we get back from South America - Traffic Camera - It is universally agreed by intelligent people that the traffic camera is one of the tale tell signs a country is heading for communism.

Have a great day. We're going to bed! Remember we love you!

"Bikers Church"





Traffic Camera

2017

SEPTEMBER 20 }

Sept 20th Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Wow! It has been a very fast and action-packed 2 1/2 days! I will give you a quick overview with some details and then, a lot of pictures.

We left Monday morning and felt comfortable that we knew the way. Basically, stay on N2 and get off at the Addo exit. Wrong! We took N2 and drove about 45 minutes to King Williams Town. Somewhere at the beginning of that town there was a sign telling us to turn left to continue on N2. Well, we did not see it and we drove through the town and about a half an hour on the other side of it. We realized that we had left N2 somewhere and we had to turn around. We added about an hour to our trip.

Once on N2 leaving King Williams Town things went well. We stopped

in Grahamstown where we got gas. Grahamstown was an area WHW had some good success in his missionary travels. It was here he baptized John Green, the great, great grandfather of Brother Deem. He also baptized Brother and Sister Roper (wealthy land owners) who sold all their possessions and landholdings to get enough money to buy a ship, a captain and a crew to help the new converts to the church immigrate to Utah. They had to do this because all the sea captains were in league not to provide passage to any Mormons.

We were 1 1/2 hours late to meet the other group. My mistakes along the way. A 3 1/2 hour trip took us 5 hours.

Addo Elephant Park was very interesting. We were prepared to pay the entrance fee, but learned that that day was free due to Heritage Week - a national time of remembering the

great heritage of South Africa. That was great news. We drove for about 1 1/2 to 2 hours inside the park. We saw elephants, warthogs, zebras, twisted antler animals, cape buffaloes, etc. (See photos)

We had a late lunch at Cattle Baron's. This is a nice restaurant and especially if you like steak. I had the Chateau Briand with onion rings. Very good!

Our lodging was at a beach resort on Cape St. Francis. It took a while to get there but our accommodations

were very nice. We rented a 4 bedroom home about a 300 foot walk from the beach. The cost for each couple for two nights was \$67.50. Mom and I had the king size bed and our own bathroom. It was very clean and comfortable. And, we read our scriptures and PMG each night before going to sleep.

The next morning we had cold cereal, yogurt poison, fruit and toast. Then, we hit the road for Tenikwa. This was a very interesting game/rehabilitation reserve. We saw all kinds of cats - Caracal, Serval, chee-

Addo Elephant Park





Addo Elephant Park

tahs, lions and an awesome leopard. We saw penguins and all kinds of birds. They have a white lion that I barely got a shot of.

From there we went to Monkeyland. Monkeys everywhere - reminded us of all our grandchildren! We also went across the longest suspension bridge in South Africa. Kind of cool because the bridge walking area was made of sticks. It was a 75 foot drop to the bottom of the gorge below us. In the photos you will see Bolivian Monkeys, two white (light colored) apes, lemurs, etc. Over 700 monkeys

in the joint!

After that we went to Storms River. We descended a steep road down to a rocky coast line of the Indian Ocean where the Storms River feeds into the sea. Mom and I and one other couple hiked over to a suspension bridge that spans the mouth of the river. Actually, it was one of three suspension bridges. We may be the only people in the entire world that have been on four different suspension bridges on the same day! How suspenseful is that?

We had a little dinner/snack at a different Cattle Baron than the one I mentioned earlier. Mom and I split a charred chicken and avacado/pineapple salad and I ordered cheesecake. I lobbied our cute little waitress to bring me an extra big piece. To my surprise, I ended up with a double portion!!! One couple in our group made a present of a Book of Mormon and some other pamphlets to, Melanie, our waitress. She was truly touched by the gesture and ended up giving all of us a hug when it came time to leave. (She hugged me the longest.)

It was dark on our way back to our lodging. We were going around 120 KM per hour. This is about 20 Km over the mission rule of 100 Km per hour. My excuse? I was following a member of the mission presidency and I did not want to get lost since we did not know the way to our beach house.

Well, President Watson hit a very large portion of a retread truck tire in the middle of the road. After hitting it, it flew up in the air and we then hit it straight on. After we hit it, the couples in the car behind us hit

it too! We are all very lucky no one tried to swerve and miss it or I am sure any of our cars would have rolled. Fortunately, most of the damage to all three cars is cosmetic (front bumper). However, it appears the retread managed to smash in the AC compressor on our car. I'm taking it to the auto body (panel beaters) people tomorrow for a quote.

Had a good night sleep and then Mom and I took a walk on the beach around 7 AM this morning, hand in hand, as the waves crashed on the shore floor and the wind wrestled through our silvery hair. We kissed passionately in front of the great white lighthouse 21 times which is suppose to give us good luck for the remaining 21 months of our mission. (JK on the kissing stuff) We were back by 8 AM for breakfast.

It was a great little trip with something to do every minute. We were able to meet a few more senior couples and had some time to discuss what they were doing. Some of these couples have already been on other missions and plan to do some more. They are exceptional, good, dedicated people.

We hope you like the photos. We have limited what we are sending so you don't see 50 pictures of the same animal. Enjoy! I will be sending them in several different emails due to the size restriction by Gmail.

We love you! We have a busy couple days ahead of us.



Addo Elephant Park



Addo Elephant Park

Addo Elephant Park



Jukani Cat Park



Jukani Cat Park



Jukani Cat Park



Jukani Cat Park



Jukani Cat Park





Kozy Corner
(Indian Ocean)

Senior Outing -
Monkeyland



Addo Elephant
Park



Monkeyland





Cat park

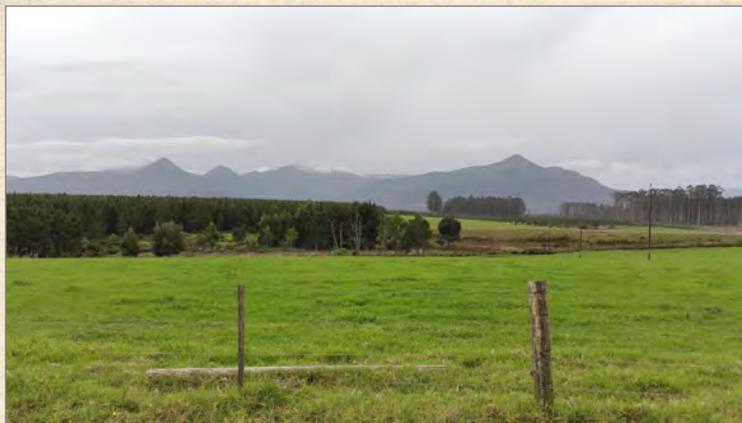


Monkeyland



Garden Route

Senior Outing -
Monkeyland



Monkeys



St. Francis Bay
- Senior
Missionary
Getaway



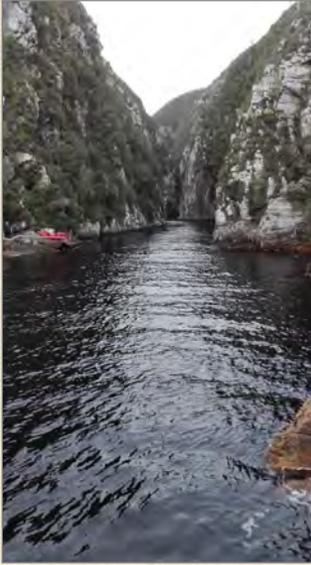
St. Francis Bay
walkway



Storm's River
seashore



Storm's River
suspension
bridge



Storm's River
Gorge



Storm's River
suspension
bridge

Sept_21_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had to get our car over to Gonubie Auto Werks first thing this morning for an estimate to fix the front bumper and air conditioning condenser. Gary, the owner, was good enough to look at it right away and took down notes so they can do an estimate for us. As I was driving away I noticed the steering suddenly became hard. I turned around to mention this to Gary. We opened the bonnet (hood) and discovered that a power steering line was spraying fluid all over the place. We consider it a tender mercy from the Lord that this waited until we got home and right at the repair shop before it acted up. We are happy it did not happen 225 miles from home!

We are now driving Lulu (beat-up blue Toyota with 100,000 Km) until our car is repaired (see photos). It is a standard shift with the gear shift

on the left. That I was able to get use to. However the windshield wiper switch and the blinkers are on the opposite sides of the steering column than our Chevy in the shop. Consequently, I have turned our wipers on about fifty times today instead of our blinkers!

We went to two missionary flats today for re-inspection. Both passed. Both received homemade cookies. We had one flat that was a disaster last time. Today it was so much better. We gave them a good pat on the back for doing a great job.

After inspections, we shopped for some items the missionaries needed - an electric kettle, curtains, neon light, etc. We got that done and then, McDonald's. After lunch it was off to our assigned area to meet our fellowshipping. Brother Zitshu, or, Brother "Shakes" which is a nickname he goes by. He was very help-

ful in directing us to some less active members. We made a good connection with one family where the father is not a member. While we were visiting, the father called home and was happy we were there. Evidently, he became close with some other senior missionaries and was almost baptized at one point. He wants to be at our next visit and the mother and two children said they would be at church on Sunday.

All in all, good visits today! Then, off to KFC to feed our fellowshipper. On the way he let us know that he needs

a computer or tablet so he can do his BYU Pathways schooling. We told him we wished we could help, but we cannot. He is a return missionary and a very nice guy. He has a hunch back but does not let that get in the way of being happy and congenial with everyone he knows.

We had a scary thunder storm this evening with booming thunder and streak lightning. We hope we get a lot of rain because the dams are very low right now.

We had a good Skype with Annie.

Elder and Sister wishing Lulu farewell





After, reading in the WHW mission-ary journal, I think negotiating genes have passed from him to Stanley Walker Stevenson and then to some of his children. Most notably is Uncle Greg, or, Rabbi Gregory Stevenstein.

Can everyone pray for her. She has a bad cold and it needs to go away right now.

You can see the damage that was done to our little silver bullet (BB). It would be a miracle if the estimate came in under \$500 and we won't have to report it to the insurance company.

We love you. Have a great day!

Dad and Mom

Sorry, I meant to send this to the whole family as a warning, but accidentally just sent it to Arnold. Be careful!

Do not EVER allow Arnold to repair your car! He will charge way too much. Without going into detail, I have been able to negotiate the repairs for about \$490. This is a firm that has already done some work for us and they do a credible job.

Goodbye!





Sept_22_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a very good zone/district meeting this morning. Elder Milne gave the training on "commitments" with our investigators and less active members. Sister Davies brought a bowl of fruit and brownies. I ate an apple before I had a brownie hoping that the good would offset the bad.

Mom and I went to pick up our car at the auto body company. I sat down with the owner's girlfriend, Lindsay, and figured out some creative invoicing to get the auto body work done for \$490. Basically, we are treating the power steering repair as separate from the front bumper damage due to the fact that it happened two days later and the leak was up high, not down below where the other damage was.

I drove Lulu (the blue Toyota) home

and believe it or not, Mom drove the Chevy home all by herself. She said it was easy and that she has been driving for 40 years now. We will take the Chevy back as soon as the front bumper and AC parts come in.

We have spent the balance of the afternoon emailing and preparing for our "Financial Management" fireside that we are giving on Sunday. Mom is basically addressing budgeting, tithing and home production. I will be talking about getting out of debt and how to get employment and how to better one's employment situation. Can we do it all in 30 -40 minutes?

Attached are some photos for your viewing pleasure. KFC is very big here in South Africa. People love chicken here. The last few times we have gone to KFC to feed our fellowshippers, I have found the chicken to be very oily. I don't like it that way. It

is as if their deep-frying oil is not hot enough. Anyway, I can't talk about it anymore. It is making me ill.

One photo is of King's Mall. This strip mall is only a block or two away and where we go to do most of our grocery shopping. They also have a "Sweet Treats" store there. It is the only place where I have found cookies that I like - shortbread and coconut. Other cookies in the regular grocery stores have strange after tastes to them.

I took a picture of the pump we use

to fill up with gasoline (Petrol). Not really. They have modern pumps. This is just one that is mostly a decoration and storage cabinet at Gonomie Auto Werks.

Life is good. We love you. We love the gospel. It makes a huge difference in people's lives when they embrace it and live it. Make good choices!

Love,

Dad and Mom

King's mall



Typical KFC



Old time petrol pump at AutoWerks



Sept_23_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We attended a baptism today for 4 people (see photos).

Brother and Sister Buleylo and two young girls. I had visited the Buleylo's before with the missionaries and it was so good to see them in white and being baptized.

I think it is so significant that when the missionaries first met this couple, they were having all kinds of problems and there seemed to be a real darkness when they visited. At one point the missionaries felt they should drop them from their teaching pool. As they listened to the missionaries and accepted and kept commitments, there was a change that took place. Each time they visited, there was more and more happiness and light in their lives.

They felt so wonderful after being baptized and will be confirmed to-

morrow in sacrament meeting. After the baptism, Mom and I walked with them to the lobby of the building and showed them a picture of the Johannesburg Temple. We told them about receiving the Holy Ghost tomorrow, about receiving the priesthood and then, getting ready to go to the temple. Mom and I will be teaching them and talking about Eternal Marriage on future visits. We told them that we want to go with them when they go to the temple to be married for time and all eternity.

It is amazing to me as we sing, "Hark, All Ye Nations," how much meaning it has for me. It is awesome to consider the words as you see these beautiful people go into the waters of baptism:

Searching in darkness, nations have wept
Watching for dawn, their vigil they've kept

All now rejoice; the long night is o'er
Truth is on the earth once more!

It is hard for me to sing that song and not get emotional. I recognize the darkness that so many have experienced and how they have longed for some light; for the truthfulness of the gospel.

The girls have painted faces because this is Heritage Week - a time when people remember their cultural history. So, you see the face painting, cultural dress and other things to celebrate their roots. We actually

will be attending a Heritage activity this coming Monday at the church. Should be fun and interesting!

I finished up my talk for the fireside. Mom has a lot of notes she is trying to condense down to her fifteen minutes of fame. I am taking a bold step forward and have put my presentation on getting out of debt into a PowerPoint slide show. We'll see how it goes???

I had a nice visit on the phone with Adam today. He's a good kid. However, some times I have to straighten

Biltong



Lamb



Elder Palavi (Aus) and companion (from Layton) - Christian Goje (2nd from right)

him out on cars.

Looks like we now have Chandler lamb products in South Africa (see photo).

You can see how women carry their babies. This is not the best shot. Some mamas are very, very rotund. The baby has to do the splits to get their legs around the back.

I have bought some bill tong to munch on as a snack. Basically, it is beef jerky. I keep it in the freezer to stop it from spoiling. Very tasty!

We love you all very much. Be good, be very good!

Dad and Mom





Mamas
carrying babies

Tid Bits

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

1. Word of the week: "inculcate," instill (an idea, attitude, or habit) by persistent instruction. *Example:* I have tried to inculcate into the minds of young children as early as possible the evil of the world found on the campus of the University of Utah.

2. Quote of the week:

3. Scripture of the week: D&C 58:26-28

26 For behold, it is not meet that I should command in all things; for he that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant; wherefore he receiveth no reward.

27 Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free

will, and bring to pass much righteousness;

28 For the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves. And inasmuch as men do good they shall in nowise lose their reward.

4. Joke of the week:

Baby Bear goes downstairs and sits in his small chair at the table. He looks into his small bowl and it is empty. "Who's been eating my porridge?!!", he squeaks.

Papa Bear arrives at the big table and sits in his big chair. He looks into his big bowl, and it is also empty. "Who's been eating my porridge?!!," he roars.

Momma Bear puts her head through the serving hatch from the kitchen and yells, "For Pete's sake, how many times do we have to go through this? It was Momma Bear who got up first,

it was Momma Bear who woke everyone in the house, it was Momma Bear who made the hot chocolate, it was Momma Bear who unloaded the dishwasher from last night, and put everything away, it was Momma Bear who went out in the cold early morning air to fetch the newspaper, it was Momma Bear who set the table, it was Momma Bear who put the cat out, cleaned the litter box, and filled the cat's water and food dish, and, now that you've decided to come downstairs, and grace Momma Bear's kitchen with your grumpy presence, listen

good, cause I'm only going to say this one more time..."

"I HAVEN'T MADE THE PORRIDGE YET !!"

*5. Bee's Knees Award: *This girl has a great imagination. She can entertain herself for hours on end. She is very smart. She is now a school girl and absolutely loves it. She always tries to be like Jesus and does the right thing. She is a good helper around the house. She is a beautiful princess. She can sing, ride a bike, play dress-ups, run like the wind



The boatman was singing



and a million other things. She is looking forward to being baptized. She is fun and has a wonderful laugh. Audrey, you are the Bee's Knees, sistah!!!

6. Gospel question of the week:
Fill in the blanks, "... for he said unto him that the Lord surely should come to redeem his people, but that he should not come to redeem them _____, but to redeem them _____."

*7. If I were you (advice to grand

kids): *If I were you, I would make friends with everyone and especially those that feel like they have no friends. You can be their friend and make them happy. How cool is that? Try it. I think you will like it.

*8. What I learned this week: * Pride Prevents Progress

9. What I'm grateful for: I love to hear the wisdom of older people. So many times it is absolute great advice. They have years of experience and we can benefit from it if we will but ask for it and listen.

10. My goal for the week: I plan to super clean our car. It is still pretty dirty from our senior excursion.

*11. Photo of the week: *This photo goes back a few years. The boatman was singing, "When the moon hits the sky, like a big pizza pie, it's amore."

Sept_24_2017

Dear Family,

I worked late last night to put the finishing touches on our "area book." We have 44 families that we are trying to visit and track. This book will help us know when we have visited them and what we taught.

We started church today in the 1st ward and then attended the sacrament meeting in the 4th ward. At noon we set up for our fireside in the chapel. Mom presented her material first. Very good information on Tithing, budgeting and saving money. You could tell people were listening because they asked her specific questions about her part. I did the PowerPoint presentation and it went

well due to some of the younger brethren that made sure all the projector equipment and sound was working well.

The fireside was well-attended, maybe, 30 -40 adult members. Questions ranged from how do you balance your time between school, work, church and family to how do you save if you don't have any money in the first place? One of our challenges is being able to understand everything members say since their native tongue, Xhosa, seems to impact the pronunciation of English words.

We have families that we are visiting continuing to come to church. That is rewarding. I was in the hallway and three little kids came walking by and said, "Don't eat Pete!" I didn't recognize them, but, they were kids from the Mkwando family where we played the game once.

The temperature is starting to warm up a little. As we are now into Spring and will be in Summer by December, the smells around us seem extra strong. We don't know if it is the outhouses, open garbage, burning

trash, etc, but there is a definite odor in the air. We will learn to live with it.

We love you. Be good until the end!

Dad and Mom

Garden
highway



Sept_25_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

It has been a rich and rewarding day. Mom and I went to the Mdantsane 1st Ward Heritage Celebration this morning that was suppose to begin at 10 AM. Well, people really started to show up around noon. But, when they showed up, it turned into quite the party.

Heritage day is to celebrate your cultural roots. Consequently, you see all kinds of traditional clothing, ducs (or hair wraps), face painting, etc. The dancing and singing is loud, happy, upbeat and fun. I'm enclosing this link to dropbox so you can see some of the video from today's program:

I will be attaching photos via a couple separate emails. I wish I could explain each one, but you will have

to just view them and see that they are fairly self-explanatory. For example, the food. In one photo you might think they were preparing chicken feet for our meal. Wrong! Look closer. They are actually preparing chicken feet and chicken heads. The bean and corn dishes speak for themselves. The green stuff is spinach, cabbage and onion all mixed together in a type of paste. The bread was a bunch of dough in a couple plastic bags and then boiled and steamed. It turned out rather tasteless and doughy.

Mom and I had the vegetable and bean dishes. It wasn't that bad, but nothing like a Big Mac or Little Caesars pizza. As much as we wanted to devour the chicken feet and heads, we felt like there wasn't enough to go around...so we passed on that delicatessen.

The party broke up around 2:30.

Mom and I went to a local mall and got a pizza, and me, a diet Coke. That seemed to correct our taste buds back to normal.

We found our way around to the home of a less active family, the Fisiko family. We met with the mother and the two children last week and had a good visit. Today we found the father at home along with their four stupid crazy dogs. They look very mean, bark loudly and seem hungry. That's a bad combination for visiting missionaries! We spoke with the dad through the

fence and made arrangements to come see the family tomorrow. The mom had just got home and was cleaning the house and he was going to work on the garden. The father is not a member and we intend, with the help of the Lord, to change that.

We headed home and did some grocery shopping. Mom is helping to prepare a big lunch for the missionaries on Wednesday for our area missionaries as they wait in between arriving and departing airline flights due to transfers. We will have the missionaries over to our compound

Mkwando child on the right





Mkwando
grandaughter
on the left

and feed them taco soup, fruit, cookies, etc.

We believe there is a mission policy that discourages and instructs to avoid missionary gatherings outside of zone meetings and other special occasions. We sent an email to President Watson (mission presidency counselor) about the practice of doing this on transfers. We heard back from him today while we were shopping for the food for lunch. His comment was, "No, we should not be doing this." I negotiated an exception for this Wednesday. He will make it a

topic on the MLC (Mission Leadership Council) in October. As much as we love the missionaries and enjoy their company, the direction from our leaders is to not distract them from their work. We will be obedient.

We had some chili this evening that Elder Davies made. He is eighty and his cooking shows it. Wow, it tasted like 4 cups of salt for each cup of chili. We love the man and are so grateful for the kindness and generosity of the Davies, but the chili was a killer! However, the cornbread

that came with it from Sister Davies was excellent!

I like to think I am a resourceful type guy. I have had some toe fungus over the last year, but it is disappearing as I have treated it with Tea Leaf oil for months. There still is a little bit at the end of my toe. I went to our cleaning supplies here in our flat and found some bleach. I poured the bleach onto the toe in an effort to eradicate the fungus. This was a bad idea. At first I felt good trying to kill the pesty fungus. I was teaching it a badly needed lesson. After a minute or two, I noticed a burning sensation in the same location I poured the bleach. Then, it felt like the toe was on fire. I thought that any second my big toe would burst into flames. Deep inside I was hoping the fungus was feeling the effects of the bleach too. I screamed, "Die, die, die, you stupid fungus!" If you think this is funny at all, then, you are a very sick person.

Mom and I listened to the talks from the Women's Conference. We love it!!! Those talks by those great sisters and President Utchdorf were powerful and delivered by the power of the

Holy Ghost. Oh, how we hope each of our daughters, daughters-in-law and grand daughters listened carefully to each talk. One of the themes of self-worth is simply spiritual gold. Ignore the world! The large and spacious building has nothing to offer compared to the truths of the gospel!

We love you all so very much. Be loyal to the Royal. Be happy!

Dad and Mom

Stevenson Family Slogan

Dear Family,

I came across two examples of a positive and a negative attitude:

- 1) Life is like a circus, but at least we haven't been assigned to scoop up after the elephants.
- 2) Due to economic cutbacks, the light at the end of the tunnel has been turned off.

Now, separate topic, I would like to

recommend that as a family we officially adopt the following slogan:

*"Quick, someone get a bucket. That glass is half full and *
* will quickly spill over the top."*

If you think this is a good idea, please let me know. Any suggestions, positive comments, etc. are welcomed and encouraged.

If you don't like the slogan, fine. However, don't email me to let me know your negative comments, and, be warned that you will be removed from all family email distribution lists.

Love,

Dad





Mkwando grandchildren



Samp and beans (Beans and corn) ... and chicken feet



Samp and beans

Spinach and pap



Chicken parts



Mom with Sister Stempa and Nompumlelo



Heritage Day - MD 1st ward



Chicken feet
and steam
bread



Kids practicing
Heritage Day
dance routines



Beaded
slippers



Sept_26_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

I ran some errands this morning, one of which was to purchase some more "data" for our router/Internet. It appeared to run out of data last night. As it turns out, the service provider has had an area-wide outage and thousands of customers are left in the lurch. That is, except for us. We simply plugged in the old data card we still have from the previous provider and good news - we have the Internet. The bad news, it is the same old, snail speed service we had before.

We had three very good visits today. I say good because these were to members who are not coming to church and not enjoying the full blessings of the gospel. It is interesting why they do not come. One or two have a transportation problem. A couple of these older sisters have bad knees and cannot walk the dis-

tance to the church house. It appears one has joined another church because ours is too quiet. The new church is a lot more alive with music and dancing. One brother may have some doctrinal questions he is dealing with. No matter what the case may be, the first step for us is to listen and learn. When their testimonies are rebuilt, they will find a way to be at church.

Pay attention to the attached photo of the mother carrying her baby. This is a common sight in Mdantsane. However, also see the Mercedes parked in front of one of these concrete block homes that may or may not even have running water. I haven't figured it out yet???

There is a story in this mission that when it came time to settle on which car manufacture to use for supplying the missionaries vehicles, that BMW gave the church an unbelievable

deal. However, even though it was better than Chevrolet, the church went with Chevrolet because the BMW's would not be leaving the right impression in the community.

Because of aggressive pricing like that from BMW, I can understand why GM is leaving South Africa all together.

The attached photo of the grapefruit tree is of a tree right here in our compound. We pass it several times each day that we do our walking/jogging. Each time Mom passes that

tree she starts to salivate and craves a grapefruit. Since we are missionaries, she would not steal one. Well, to this point, I do not think there has been any blatant criminal theft activity.

The pretty blossoms in one of the photos ha been given a nickname by Mom, "Bottle Brush Bush." Can you say that ten times real fast in a row? Try it right now.

You can see a photo of a worm. I think this is the type that come up out of the ground after a good rain.



Mother and Baby



"Bottle Brush Bush"



Grapefruit

You can see what our front lawn looks like. I did some research on this worm. The scientific name is Wormus Negras Mambis. Yes, folks, it is related to the deadly black mamba and is ten times more venomous. It can actually lunge at your jugular vein and inject over 10 fluid ounces of toxic juices designed to turn your brain to a horrid green liquid that runs out of your eyes and ears. As it injects its deadly venom, it will swig its tail back and forth to whip each side of your head until you are unconscious. This is one reason it is hard to get senior mis-

sionaries to come to South Africa.

We love you. Take good care of each other. Be loyal to the Royal!

Dad and Mom





Worm

Sept_27_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We left early this morning (6:30) to go to the airport where we had four missionaries flying out on transfers. We arrived too late to see them before they boarded the plane. My mistake on timing to get to the airport. We did get their LDS emails and we plan to write them and tell them how much we have enjoyed serving with them.

Mom and Sister Davies had fixed a delicious meal of taco soup, fruit and cookies. As you can imagine, all the food was consumed. The meal was designed to have them gather at our compound instead of hanging out at the airport. This will change in the future as the mission presidency will be putting their foot down on these type gatherings in the future. And, as we observed today, there is plenty of time for these missionaries to go to their respective areas, unpack and

go to work. The meal is a nice touch, but also a distraction from the work.

We had one mission car that was having a difficult time starting. The missionaries explained they had to jiggle something down behind the engine to get it to start while the other missionary would turn on the key. I went home and changed into my work clothes and met the missionaries at the church parking lot where it was parked.

I jacked up the car and crawled under it. Having been an ace mechanic most of my life, I quickly discovered the problem. It was a loose positive wire to the starter motor. Of course, I stuck a wrench in there to tighten it up and blew sparks all over the place! Then, I remembered it would be a good idea to disconnect a cable from the battery. This I did and then went about tightening the nut holding the wire to the motor.

I was confident the car would start perfectly. Not the case. We tried and tried to make it happen and no matter what we did, it would not turn the starter. After about 30 minutes, one of the Elders suggested we have a prayer. So we did. I then reached down and pulled the wiring toward me instead of just up and down. The car started immediately. While I was putting away tools in the back of our car, I noticed the three elders standing with their arms folded and offering a prayer of thanks. They are good, faithful elders. No doubt their mothers taught them. With the

Lord's blessing, we all made it to the airport to pick up four new elders in time.

The car is still under warranty and will go to the dealer tomorrow morning for repairs.

The elders in the car with the unreliable starter followed us so they could find their way through East London and then, to King Williams Town which is their area of labor, about 50 minutes away. When we got to familiar territory for them, we pulled into a McDonald's and bought



It has nothing to do with the State of Idaho; simply a coincidence. We thought maybe there was a run away Mormon trying to hide from home teachers.



Shopping baskets are called "Trolleys."

We love you,

Dad and Mom

them a late lunch. I ordered the promotion meal, a DOUBLE Big Mac. That's right, four meat patties. That was a bad idea. Needless to say, that filled me up right to the top!

With all the car shuffling, Mom had to drive again. She did great and said it was no big deal. I'm glad she gets to really drive once in a while. The way it is right now, she has nearly punched a hole in the floorboard on her side of the car trying to hit the brakes for me every time she thinks we need it.

Photo below is of a sign we see everyday on our way to our assigned area. Finally, we turned down the driveway and to the property owners home to get the history behind the sign. It has nothing to do with the State of Idaho; simply a coincidence. We thought maybe there was a run away Mormon trying to hide from home teachers.

Shopping baskets are called "Trolleys."

Have a great day. Make good choices. Do the right thing.

Car Problems

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Below is an email I sent Bishop Bowen. I wanted him to share a car problem experience with the young men of the Huntsville 1st Ward. I also thought it would be a good thing to share with your families. I think there is a very important message or two we can learn from it.

Bishop,

Hope all is going well for you. Would you please share the following message with the young men of our ward?

I received a phone call yesterday from a missionary that told me he and his companion were having car problems. He said that the car would not start unless he giggled some wiring down behind the engine.

Being an ace mechanic for most of my life, I told him I would meet him at the church and take care of it. When I arrived, I jacked up the car and crawled under it. I spotted the problem right away. The positive cable to the starter motor was loose. I started to tighten it when sparks flew all over the place. That's when I remembered it is always a good idea to remove a battery cable when you are working with electrical issues.

After doing that, I tightened up the nut holding the wire to the starter and crawled out from under the car and reconnected the battery cable. "Start it up, Elder," I said with a high degree of confidence. To my surprise the engine would not start. It appeared that matters were worse now that I had worked on the car!

We tinkered with the problem for at least one half hour. Still, no success. We were concerned about time,

since we had some new missionaries coming into the airport and we needed to be there to pick them up.

One of the missionaries suggested we pray for the Lord's help. We all folded our arms and one of the missionaries pleaded with the Lord for His assistance. It was a prayer of faith.

After the prayer, I reached down behind the engine and pulled the wiring toward me (instead of up and down like I had been doing) while an Elder turned the key in the ignition.

The car started up immediately. Wow, was I happy!

I lowered the car off the jack and started to collect all the tools. As I was putting them away in the back of our car I looked over at the other missionaries. I was both emotionally moved and had feelings of guilt as I saw three missionaries standing in a circle with their arms folded and heads bowed, offering a prayer of thanks and gratitude to our Heavenly Father who had just intervened on our behalf.



Some people do not have cooking facilities in their homes so they cook outside, or, have a corner business where they cook things and sell them.



All gasoline (petrol) is full service. When we get gas, the attendant fills it up, checks the tires, oil and water and washes the windows. We tip the guy 5 Rand or about 36 cents

So, my young friends, my brothers in the priesthood, remember this:

- Exercise your faith in prayer when you need the help of the Lord
- *Do not ever* forget to offer thanks for the divine assistance we receive

I love you young men. You will all be fantastic missionaries of faith. The Lord is counting on you. Step up and do your part!

Love,

Elder and Sister Stevenson

Sept_28_2017

Dear Family,

What a great day! We spent part of this morning putting together 3 lesson plans for the people we visit.

Here's how it goes:

- First visit - Listen to the member, find out what they remember from their conversion, who were the missionaries that taught them, what feelings do they remember from their conversion...listen, listen, listen. Leave message about Hela-

man 5:12 and that we want to continue visiting them to strengthen their testimony of the Savior. - 2nd visit - lesson one, Prayer - 3rd visit - lesson 2, Sabbath Day observance (attend church) - 4th visit - lesson three, Studying the scriptures - Additional topics as needed

We picked up our fellowshipper, Tandikaya, and headed to Brother Max and Sister Nandi's home. All but the father have been coming to church for the last month. Father is the returned missionary we have talked about before.

We had a great visit and the lesson on prayer went especially well. Mom bore strong testimony of the value and importance of prayer - especially to have the strength to do the right things. He mentioned a lot about his mission and when he was a counselor in the bishopric years ago. When our lesson came to an end, I asked if we could have a prayer before we left. He gave the prayer! I had a hard time holding back the tears as we listened to his beautiful, humble prayer. Truly a milestone today. Progress!

We visited the Fisiko family, the one with the four hungry dogs. The mother was not home and the father was sleeping. On the telephone, she was very apologetic and rescheduled for tomorrow. We want to keep visiting this family because the father is not a member and we believe he would be receptive to the gospel message.

Also visited another less active man. Very positive meeting and we expect to see him at church this weekend to watch conference.

We went to Whimpy's to buy our fellowshipper a hamburger and to talk about his business. He hit us up a few days ago about loaning him some money to expand his business. We had to tell him, 'No,' due to mission rules about that and the fact that we were not in a financial position right now to do it anyway. I'm going to check on what there is out in the world via micro-loans for him to check out.

Photos:

- Some people do not have cooking facilities in their homes so they cook outside, or, have a corner

business where they cook things and sell them. - Advertising on cement walls of bridge - All gasoline (petrol) is full service. When we get gas, the attendant fills it up, checks the tires, oil and water and washes the windows. We tip the guy 5 Rand or about 36 cents

We love you guys. The book is blue and the gospel is true! Keep a steady course on the strait and narrow.

Dad and Mom

Advertising on cement walls of bridge



Sept_29_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

This morning was our zone/district meeting. Our new district leader is Elder Tucker from Bountiful (went to Woods Cross High School). The training topic was "Teaching with Companion Unity." He did a very good job. To show our unity, I suggested to Mom that we kiss several times during our lessons with the less actives. She did not agree. How's that for unity???(JK)

Mom put together some pumpkin chocolate chip cookies for the elders and a large bowl of fruit. Everything was devoured in record time. The missionaries love Mom's cooking.

We had a missionary car that had a tire going flat. They filled it up prior to the meeting. I checked out the tire pressure before they left the church and it had plenty of air to get them

to a garage and have it repaired.

I started looking at all the car tires in the parking lot. One companionship had a huge bubble on the sidewall of one tire and the metal threads showing on the tread. I told them to get new tires *today*.

All the cars had spare tires, but two of them did not have car jacks. None of the missionaries are big or strong enough to hold the car up while the other one changes a flat tire. I found two jacks and will give them to the Elders in the morning.

Then, this evening I had a call from some missionaries out in Mdantsane with their car shutting off on them. It had happened two times. I advised them to go straight to their flat. I did not want them to be stuck out there in the dark. Too dangerous. I heard back from them later and they said the car seemed to be running better

and they were going to their scheduled appointments. I hope it all works out for them. I will go see the car tomorrow morning.

We had some good visits today. We met with Bongiwe, a mother of three, that has become inactive. She likes to drink on the weekends. We challenged her to do better and that we would remember her in our prayers. We will keep on visiting her.

Also met with the Fikiso family. The husband is not a member and we were able to meet him and visit for a

little bit. He is a little cool right now, but we hope he will warm up with time and take a serious interest in the church. They have two great kids. Good family that really needs the gospel. We hope to get them all out to church.

I have a serious dilemma. Mom will frequently make cookies. Then, she will give me *one* and tell me they are not for me and to not eat any more of them. I feel like I am being tempted far more than I am capable of resisting. What is a man to do with 3 dozen cookies sitting on the

Traffic circle - Mdantsane



Neighborhood racers



More racers



kitchen counter? I will tell you. You have to steal cookies when Mom is not looking. Really? You make cookies and then tell your husband not to eat them? That is Satan-inspired torture! My feeling is that if I don't get caught with my hand in the cookie jar, I am standing on enough legal ground to avoid any spousal repercussions.

Photos are of kids and their race cars. The wheels on these things are worn down to almost nothing. They get going downhill and have a blast. Also, a bad shot of a round about.

These are the most dangerous places on the face of the earth. This one is not busy. During the rush hour, you take your life into your own hands.

ALSO, you must go to my Google Drive and see some of these videos:(You might have to copy the link and put it into your search field)
<https://drive.google.com/open?id=oB4cMrVvZQGgdU3Y1d1FQcV9ETEk>

Love,
Dad and Mom

Racers in action



Plan for You

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Over the years, I have frequently heard the comment, "God has a plan for you." It kind of bothered me. I thought, "Of course, He has a plan for me. It is to come to earth, get a body, receive the saving ordinances and then, endure to the end." I thought too many people were overthinking and stressing over this point.

As I was walking a few days ago, I started to think about a few things:

- The Lord is a god of order. We read that in the scriptures. There was very detailed steps in the creation of the world down to each blade of grass. - If there was that type of detail to the creation of the earth, I can't imagine His spirit children were just randomly scattered upon the face of the planet. There was probably planning down to the tiniest detail - President

Kimball said the Lord is mindful of us and wants to bless us, but it is usually through the kind acts and service of others that He blesses His sons and daughters. - If the Lord is interested in our personal growth, good and development, He is going to place us in certain environments and at certain times to maximize that growth. And...our placement on earth may in large part be to help the growth, good and development of others. - We all have various gifts and talents. We need to find out what those are and then use them for the betterment of our fellow brothers and sisters - You find out those gifts and talents by pondering, prayer, asking others what they see in us, evaluating what makes us feel good and inspires us, study our patriarchal blessing, listen to our parents, etc. The point is, I don't think we have to rack our brains and develop an ulcer trying to figure things out. - I had Uncle

Gunn tell me once that he thought I could relate and build a rapport with anyone. It dawned on me that that was one of my gifts from God. That mini revelation came from someone telling me what they have observed.

So, I now understand better what is meant by, "God has a plan for you." He is so personally aware of each of us that He has placed us here on earth in very specific circumstances and at precisely the best time for us to serve and help in the work.

Well, I was already to share this information in a D.O.P.E. Manual submission. Then, I heard the Saturday morning session of General Conference. Wow, what a reinforcement of the the thoughts I had just a few days ago! I listened carefully to President Uchtdorf, Sister Oscarson and then, Elder Pingree. Forget the D.O.P.E. Manual, just get a copy of their talks. Anyway, I hope I did not bore you to death. I plan to read the talks once or twice as soon as they are available online.

Love,



Dad

Tid Bits

Dear Family,

*1. Word of the week: * "acrimony," bitterness or ill feeling. * Example: * There were definite signs of acrimony on the part of blacks when Apartheid was ended in South Africa.

*2. Quote of the week: *(paraphrase from Elder Christoferson at yesterday's morning session)

"Since justice had no claim on the Savior because he was sinless, He alone could offer himself to stand in place for our sins."

3. Scripture of the week:

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock.
3 Nephi 14:25

4. Joke of the week:

Q: How is dying and going to the

bathroom the same?

A: When you gotta go, you gotta go!

*5. Bee's Knees Award: *This girl is very awesome! She loves her family so much (two boys and one girl). She loves her parents who have taught her the truth and set such a wonderful example. She cherishes that. She enjoys having a good time and luvz to laugh. She loves camping. She does things with her children to make sure they learn and have fun times. She is a good cook. She is prettier than any combination of 10 queens and princesses all smushed together. She loves the gospel and the happiness it brings. Stacy, you are the Bee's Knees, sistah!!!

*6. Gospel question of the week: * There are several pictures of churches in Mdantsane on my Google Drive. Go to the link and see if you can identify the LDS church house. Just tell me which one it is, numbering them first to last. This is a sure fire way to tell if you really are a Mormon.

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=oB2WRfDR-VseKUVhRU->

Us4Vk5HMHM

*7. If I were you (advice to grand kids): * If I were you, I would learn to appreciate art in all its forms - painting, music, sculptures, gardens, etc. Try it. I think you will like it.

*8. What I learned this week: * God has a plan for me.

*9. What I am grateful for: * I am so thankful for living prophets and apostles to help guide us through the stormy seas of life. They are the ones that will lead us in the way of life and salvation.

*10. My goal for the week: * Go to the East London Aquarium.

*11. Photo of the week: * Uncle Thom and I checking out alternative medicines to Ibuprofen.

We love you all very much. Have a great week. Have fun living the gospel this week!

Love,

Dad and Mom

2017 OCTOBER 1 }

Oct_1_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We have enjoyed watching General Conference today. We can get about two sessions with the live broadcast at our church building, but the other session we have to watch once they have been recorded and put on the church website. Watching live is a little frustrating with a lot of buffering when we stream a session. We are back on our old Internet data card until with get our good one loaded up again.

Having been in our ward for about 2 months, with an all black congregation, it becomes strikingly apparent at how "white" our church must look to native Africans. I think when a TV camera pans the Mo Tab Choir, all our members are looking for that one or two black choir member we see now and then.

We have had rain off and on today. It

is the hope of all that we get more rain and the dams fill up back to normal levels.

Tomorrow is the first of the month and that is when so many get their government welfare check. The malls are crazy full of people and drinking is on the increase.

Photos:

Moles are a big problem here as you can see from the digging they do.

The bird with the long beak is an Ibis. They squawk like crazy.

Builders express is our "Home Depot" except quite a bit smaller

Debonairs Pizza is okay, but nothing like home with Domino's, Little Caesar's or Pizza Man. They do a lot of home delivery of fast food here - KFC, pizza, McDonald's, etc.

I hope we all soak up the great messages from conference. Spiritual survival depends on us staying focused on the counsel and direction we receive from the living prophets and apostles.

Love,

Dad and Mom



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Moles are a big problem here as you can see from the digging they do.



The bird with the long beak is an Ibis. They squawk like crazy.

Oct_2_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Kind of a cool, misty day today. When we woke up we discovered we had no water. Fortunately that all changed a few hours later. In the meantime, I put on my missionary clothes and started for downtown.

I made arrangements to have a missionary car come in for repairs tomorrow morning at the local dealership. Then, it was off to check out some more hotels. There was a relatively nice one down on the ocean front, but the cost was double what a nice hotel the mission president uses when he comes to town. Even though the less expensive one is farther away from the airport, I think it is worth the extra 5 minutes of driving for something very nice and clean, and, half the price of an ocean front hotel.

It is kind of strange to go out on my own. While I ran errands, Mom stayed home to do some wash and exercise. This is allowed for senior missionaries, but it still feels weird. Usually, Mom comes with me.

I also went and purchased some more prepaid data from our good Internet provider. This allowed us to watch the Sunday morning session of General Conference without the display buffering every two minutes. It was so nice to watch it without technical interruptions!

We transferred some money into our South Africa personal checking account. From there we transfer money to the church account for gasoline charges. As senior couples in this mission, we pay for the first \$300 of gas. This month's charges were unusually large due to all the travel we did for the senior excursion a few weeks ago, total = \$273.

We did some grocery shopping and then, home to watch conference. We were saddened to hear of the passing of Elder Hales. He was such a great example of a true disciple of Christ. He will be missed. I believe he was a good friend of the Evan Stevenson family (Elder Gary Stevenson's father).

- Beautiful flower outside the home of a neighbor we visited and took cookies to. The flower is called a Clevia. Mom noticed this beautiful flower. She sees beautiful things like that when I seem to not pay atten-

tion. Glad she is my companion!

We got vacuuming done, wash done, errands ran and ironing completed, but, in between all of that we were thinking of you! We love you very much. We love "Loyal to the Royal" pictures and videos. Keep them coming. Have a great day!

Dad and Mom



The entrance to our compound - very safe, quiet, comfortable

2017 OCTOBER 3 }

Oct_3_2017_Update

FROM: Elder and Sister Stevenson



Dear Family,

Today was basically 5 hours of a Mission Leadership Council meeting. We had a 30 minute break where Mom and Sister Davies had put together a Hawaiian Haystacks meal. Naturally, the food was quickly consumed by the missionaries. I should note that they are always very appreciative and grateful for the meals.

I had to keep copious notes for President Watson (counselor in the mission presidency) because he and his wife were getting a boarding squared away for a new missionary couple, the Bullman's from Ireland.

I just finished typing up the notes and I can tell you honestly, I don't want to do that again!

Below is photo of our two zone leader companionships listening

diligently to the telephone conference for the meeting. From left to right: Elders Clark (kaysville), Greengrass (Johannesburg), Shaw (?) and Palavi (Australia).

Have a great day. Mom and I are going to read a chapter in the Book of Mormon, study PMG, pray and go to bed.

Love,

Dad and Mom



Two zone leader companionships listening diligently to the telephone conference for the meeting.

2017 OCTOBER 4 }

Oct_4_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

This morning we had what we call, "Senior Skype" (which I sometimes call "Senior Moment"). This is about an hour long meeting where we discuss various items that concern the senior missionaries and what is going on with the young, full time missionaries.

We had 50 baptisms for the month of September. The mission has a goal of 2 baptisms per companionship, If we were hitting our goal, we would have 88 baptisms. 37 of these baptisms were from member referrals. 15 of the baptisms are potential priesthood holders.

It has been windy and raining all day. I feel sorry for Mom because she takes time to make her hair look so nice and then, she steps outside the door and the wind blows it all crazy. We tried to visit less active

members in the 4th ward today.

First we visited an active male member that we had already visited last week. Mom felt inspired to get him some pedigree charts and family group sheets. She walked him through how to complete them. We challenged him to dig up the information and fill them out. We then taught him that the primary reason for this research is so he can go to the temple and do work for his relatives who have passed on. We told him to keep that as a goal for the future.

We also visited the Noqobo family but only found the 27 yr. old son there, Hlomelani. We taught him Helaman 5:12 and gave him an assignment to read Alma 32 regarding faith. We also challenged him to come to church. He said he would. Like so many people in the townships, he is looking for work.

We also visited the Kusasa family. (See photo below). The kids have been coming to church. Mother has had a broken leg and just had the cast removed. She goes back to work next week. She commutes to East London and stays there until Friday afternoon. While she is gone, the grandmother takes care of the children. We had a short lesson on prayer. We do not believe the grandmother is a member. We plan to investigate that on our next visit.

Mom and I are still so amazed at how few homes have a father leading the

family. You just don't see that very often. Fathers seem non-existent in the homes. Mothers work, when they can get a job, and it is very common for the grandmother to tend the children.

We did see some workers in our compound doing some asphalt work. We have suggested they send their resumes on to David for employment opportunities. All the asphalt patching is done by hand at this level. They put it in the trench with a garden spade and then, tamp it down with heavy tampers that they

The Kusasa family.





Workers in our compound doing some asphalt work.

dip in water first. The asphalt is cold, not hot.

We love you all. Do good. Be good.

Dad and Mom

2017 OCTOBER 5 }

Oct_5_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Mom and I watched the Sunday afternoon session of general conference this morning. Great talks, great messages! Let there be no doubt regarding the importance of these messages. They are meant for us and employing the direction they give us can make all the difference in the world (pun intended).

It rained this morning and most of last night. Fortunately, there wasn't much rain when we arrived at our assigned area, the massive, monstrous maze called, Mdantsane! We made a trip over to one of our fellowshippers to ride with us. Unfortunately, he was not available. This meant we got to drive all over the place trying to find our families.

We first went to the Xamane home and visited with Brother Max and Sister Nandi. Had a very good visit.

Brother Max opened up quite a bit and we think he will be to church a week from Sunday. He usually works 4 Sundays and then, off 4 Sundays. We told him, "Brother Max, you need the Church in your life and the Church needs you."

The kids like us. The two youngest climb all over us. Some times it is difficult to talk because the kids want to play. I finally got one to settle down by letting him play with our magnetized missionary name tags. Super cute kids!

Had a great visit with the Gobeni family. Two young boys that are members with their mother. We taught around the scripture, Helaman 5:12. The boys were attentive and we have the okay to return to have more lessons. Nice family. Mom closed the visit with prayer. She has to work this Sunday, but will be to church the following Sunday.

We spent a whole bunch of time driving all over the place looking for house numbers. We did find one, but no one was at home.

Love,
Dad and Mom

We walked our laps this evening because we didn't want to walk them this morning in the rain. Had left overs for dinner - fried rice and hamburger.

Attached is a photo of the road sign used in South Africa for pot holes. I think every road in this country needs one of these signs. Some of the pot holes are serious craters.



Attached is a photo of the road sign used in South Africa for pot holes. I think every road in this country needs one of these signs. Some of the pot holes are serious craters.

Oct_6_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a full day. First was district meetings. Basically, a pass along of information from our Mission Leadership Council (the big 5 hour meeting). There is a good spirit about these young missionaries. They want to work hard and be obedient. They are trying to apply the principles they study in PMG. It is easy to love these faithful young Elders!

At 1 PM we went to the Mdantsane 1st Ward bishopric meeting. This starts out with the missionaries providing the bishop an accounting of who we have been visiting. The zone leader companionship goes first, then us. It is an important time to relay to him information we have gleaned over the previous week. The bishop truly appreciates our efforts. He will also, at times, give us new people to visit. FYI, our list is now

over 50 less active families.

We ran a couple errand at the NU6 Mall and then, stopped for lunch at Wimpy's. Meals are okay. I had ribs (mediocre) and Mom had a chicken salad. While we were there, I noticed a young family (no dad) sitting at another table. I went over and complimented them on how well-behaved the children were. I then got their name and address so we can get them a free DVD on Jesus Christ. Come to find out that she is already a member. "We use to belong to that church," she said. Any way, we are going to follow up, give them a DVD and then, start to teach them if they will let us. They need to come back to church! (Bolo Family)

We went to visit the Fikiso Family. Unfortunately, only the 13 year old daughter was there. Today was her birthday. She is a very nice young lady and enjoying Beehives. We pulled

a king size Snicker bar out of the glove box (that is intended to be used to bribe traffic control police in case we get stopped for violating traffic laws) and gave it to her. She was elated. I also gave her a Book of Mormon to mark and highlight for me. She has a list of all the scriptures to mark along with a new highlighter and red pen.

Her parents had just left a few minutes earlier. We were sorry we missed them because we had a planned appointment. We left their house going a different direction

than normal because we were looking for another address. As we came to a rather remote part of the road, there was the Fikiso's car parked along the side. We drove by and waved to them and then, pulled over in front of them. Long story made short, they were having an argument and they decided it was better to argue somewhere else instead of in front of the children.

They stepped out of their car. I shook hands with Brother Fikiso, Mom started talking with Sister Fikiso who was crying. Mom is a great

Squatter's shack





A lot of creative entrepreneurs will use old cargo ship containers to make a corner convenience store.

listener and empathizer. Evidently a bad previous night for the family. The couple was trying to work things out and from talking with the husband, he might have a bit of a temper. I explained to him that things can be worked out, but they both needed to agree on "What is right" and not "Who is right." I also tried to explain to him that it is normal to have differences of opinion - people are different and they can have different opinions and feelings on things. However, when both people in the relationship focus on Christ and try to follow him, those

differences become less and less as they each become more like him. Mom gave Sister Fisiko a warm, caring, loving hug before we left. We believe we were guided to go that way, on that particular road, at that time, to meet them.

Sister Fikiso explained that their son, maybe 14 years old, had a very bad experience. Without going into all the details, it is a very sad and stressful event in their lives. The boy is very upset. He doesn't want to talk to the bishop. Sister Fisiko said, he would probably talk with us. This

may very well be the source of the couple's tension and argument. We feel so badly for them.

We made some other stops along the way. Found one sister that is now living in the home of a less active we were tracking down. With her Xhosa language, we could not tell if she was a member or not. We are going to check with our bishop who she said she knows.

Leftovers for dinner, but Mom has made some delicious apple muffins. I just had one and they are very, very good.

Photos:

Women's hair in South Africa is crazy! This photo is not uncommon at all. She was in front of me at a checkout line and I covertly snapped a photo.

A lot of creative entrepreneurs will use old cargo ship containers to make a corner convenience store.

We love you guys more today than yesterday. Have a great day!!!

Dad and Mom

Priesthood Meeting

Dear Family,

I meant to write this last week after General Priesthood Meeting. I made some notes on what I love about that meeting.

5 Things I Love About Priesthood Meeting:

1. *Prophets* - What an incredible time in the history of the world to listen to living prophets and apostles! The advice and counsel they give us is so important in fighting the deception and rhetoric of the world. If somehow Joseph Smith could speak at one of our conferences, we would pack the building with standing room only. We should be just as driven to attend this meeting because we can listen to actual modern-day prophets.
2. *Time with Sons* - Priesthood meeting has always been a time when I could hang out with my boys. It has always been a treat for me to attend that meeting and be

surrounded by sons, sons-in-law, and, grandsons. What a great feeling! 3. *Where's Dad?* - When I put on a shirt and tie and go to that meeting, I want my whole family to know I am a priesthood holder and going to that meeting is so very important and valuable to me. When my sons were young and they would ask Mom, "Where's daddy?" I wanted her to say, "Oh, he's at priesthood meeting and someday you will get to go with him." 4. *Energy* - I get added strength from being around other priesthood holders. When I am there I get to see other examples of strong and loyal priesthood holders. 5. *Obedience* - I believe the Lord will bless me for being obedient and going to that meeting. I need all the blessings I can get.

Dad

Anyway, just wanted to share some belated thoughts on priesthood meeting. I wish I could have been in Utah to share the time with my boys, but I'm happy to be here and share the time with my South African brothers for a while.

Love,



Women's hair in South Africa is crazy! This photo is not uncommon at all. She was in front of me at a checkout line and I covertly snapped a photo.

Oct_7_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We got a little work done today. Mom did wash and some baking. I vacuumed and worked in the yard.

Pulling weeds is difficult for me. As a young boy, my father forced us to weed the front and back yards of our home. So many times Uncle Thom and I considered turning him in to Social Services. But, we knew that would not work since he was a policeman and they could get away with anything. Over the years, this forced labor has created deep psychological hemorrhaging and even physical illness. And people wonder why Uncle Thom and I use to get into so much trouble. Well, folks, now you know the ugly truth.

I bought a rake today to clean up all the weeds I pulled from around the house. Pictures below will serve as

evidence that I really did pull weeds and fluff up the dirt so it was like "temple soil."

After we did some grocery shopping, we headed out to visit the Fikiso Family. We didn't know quite what to expect after yesterday's visit with them. However, we were prepared to talk about their son's problem or about how to manage differences in a marriage. As it turned out, they did not invite us to talk about either one. So, we discussed the Restoration of the Gospel and priesthood authority. Discussion went well.

The young girl in the family (13 yrs. old) had marked up a Book of Mormon for me and did a great job. She said she wanted cookies in return. So, Mom will be making cookies for them and we will see them on Tuesday. I think I will have her mark up one Book of Mormon a week.

Our goal is to place at least one Book of Mormon a week. We mark about 50 scriptures that all have to do with Jesus Christ and the Atonement. If we find someone that truly believes in Jesus Christ, then the reading of these highlighted scriptures should have a powerful effect on them.

Photos: We have a security company that looks after most of the homes in our complex. If there is ever a problem, we can hit one of two buttons in the house. This will then dispatch a security person right to our home. They know which

home it is because the button we press also activates a light on top of our house. Supposedly, the security person is armed.

A couple photos of the results of my laborious task of pulling weeds today. The tree in the photo is not dead, it is just a late blooming something. Also, note the dual function rake I bought. One side for leaves and the other for raking gravel or things that are larger. We love you. You are wonderful!

Dad and Mom



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Tid Bits

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

*1. Word of the week: * "im-bue," inspire or permeate with (a feeling or quality). *Example:* Our whole bodies are imbued with a desire to improve after listening to General Conference.

2. Quote of the week:

3. Scripture of the week:

For it is wisdom in the Father that they should be established in this land, and be set up as a free people by the power of the Father, that these things might come forth from them unto a remnant of your seed, that the covenant of the Father may be fulfilled which he hath covenanted with his people, O house of Israel; -3Nephi 21:4

4. Joke of the week:

There was this BYU student from Southern California who wanted to take advantage of winter sports in Utah. She went to the library and started studying all about ice fishing. She then went out on the ice, set up all her stuff, and sat down.

All of a sudden, a bellowing voice from above said, "There are no fish under the ice".

Startled, she got up and moved to a different spot. Right as she began to sit down, the voice from above spoke again, "There are no fish under the ice."

Frustrated, she got up and walked to a third spot on the ice. She sat down and set up all of her gear.

Once again, the voice spoke, "There are no fish under the ice."

Now the BYU student was very mad.

"God, is that you?" she asked.

5. Bee's Knees Award: This is the most lovable boy in the entire world. He has a great smile. He is all cowboy and can ride his spring-loaded rocking horse with the best of them. He prays for his grandparents every day that they will be safe from cougars and tigers. He is happy and loves to make good choices. He helps around the house doing his jobs. He loves his brothers and sisters and his dad and mom. He is reverent in church. Tyke, you are the Bee's Knees, brotha!!!

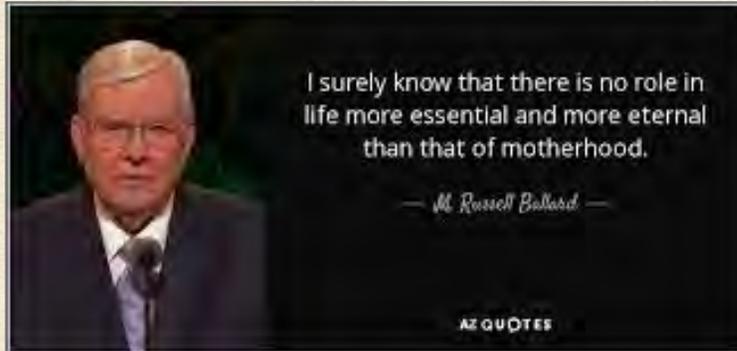
6. Gospel question of the week: Is the "Family, a Proclamation to the World" scripture?

7. If I were you (advice to grand kids): If I were you I would write your testimony in a Book of Mormon and prayerfully ask Heavenly Father who you should give it to. Try it. I think you will like it.

8. What I learned this week: I learned something from conference that is really important for those that have doubts, questions, etc., when they do not readily have all the



Oct_8_2017_Update



answers. Paraphrasing, "Hold on to what you believe in and have a testimony of and then, be patient in waiting for the rest of the answers to come."

9. What I'm grateful for: I am so impressed with the humanitarian efforts of the church. When there is a disaster, the church will be there for its members and non-members alike.

10. My goal for the week: I was going to try and go to the East London Aquarium, but that is now

schedule for Wednesday morning. My goal this week is to line up a tour of the Mercedes Benz factory where they make the C Class model for the world.

11. Photo of the week: Below is a blast from the past! Michael's 40th birthday jig.

We love you all very much. Have fun living the gospel this week!

Dad and Mom

Dear Family,

Kind of a cool and drizzly day, but we went to church anyway! We had a combined meeting this morning with the other ward so we could all watch the last session of conference at 12:00 noon. The big problem was that the bishops of the two wards just decided this on Friday and the various members of the wards did not know about it except for those that found out via social media. Consequently, there was a little confusion today at church.

Even though we see some of these things coming, the overall advice from our mission president is to let the local leaders figure it out. Sometimes there is a tendency to jump in and try to make everything look like church in Salt Lake. The Church in Africa will survive without us trying to take over and run things.

Even though Mom and I had already watched the last session of conference earlier this week, it was good to see it again. We look forward to get-

ting the November edition of the Ensign and be able to read each of the talks.

We had the Davies over for dinner. Mom fixed a delicious roast beef meal and Sister Davies brought apple pie. A great meal to end our fast. Unfortunately, Brother Davies is having some memory problems and is also having a difficult time with one of his two artificial knees. It seems to act up and give him problems when the weather changes to cold and rainy. You have to hand it to them, they keep going and keep contributing. Brother Davies is 80 years old. I hope I am still kicking at that age.

I picked up a Jehovah Witness pamphlet at our favorite sweet shop. Mavreen, the cashier, is a very nice acquaintance of ours. She said a person just came into the shop and said they were going to leave the pamphlet on the counter. She was surprised that the person did not ask permission, simply said they were placing it there and left. I asked if I could have it. She said, "yes, of course." (One of these days we will ask her about taking the missionary

lessons.)

It proved to be interesting reading. I'll bet most of you did not know that angels are created "creatures, are not male or female, have wings, can be sent to earth, but, "dematerialize" once they have finished their mission.

Photos:

Not everyone in South Africa is poor. I saw this 5.0 Mustang in the local grocery store parking lot. Very clean, very nice. That is saying a lot since I don't like Fords all that much.

Watermelons and Pumpkins are in season right now.

"Trading Hours" instead of store hours.



Not everyone in South Africa is poor. I saw this 5.0 Mustang in the local grocery store parking lot. Very clean, very nice. That is saying a lot since I don't like Fords all that much.



Watermelons

Pumpkins



"Trading Hours" instead of store hours.

Oct_9_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

It appears that we had another car stolen at gunpoint a few days ago. To make a long story short, because we do not know all the details, three thugs pulled guns on the missionaries and took the car. As they spoke Xhosa, they were trying to figure out if the car had a tracker. The missionaries had a fellowshipsper with them that also spoke Xhosa. He said, "Yes, it does have a tracker." Supposedly, the carjackers bailed from the car and fled.

It rained all night and all of today. This is good since they need the water to fill the dams and reservoirs. However, it does make for very slippery, muddy roads.

We have a fellowshipsper that we use frequently by the name of Tandikhaya. He is a very good young man and "waiting for his mission

call." He was recently featured in a video produced by the Southeast Area Office in Johannesburg. Here is the link to his conversion story. The missionaries in the video are our Mdantsane zone leaders, Elder Clark and Palavi.

<http://africase.lds.org/thandikhaya-goje?lang=eng-za>

I ran some errands today, i.e. purchasing jumper cables for missionary cars and getting chocolate chips for Mom to do some delicious baking. Her baked goods are in high demand by a lot of people! Tandikhaya, for example, always instructs Sister Stevenson to bring cookies when he rides with us.

Later in the afternoon, we took some cookies and muffins over to Mavreen at the Sweet Treats store in the strip mall near us. We also brought some for her fellow employee, Kathryn.

Wow, what a smash hit!!! We now have friends for life. Below is the picture of them with us.

We also received a call from our fleet manager in Cape Town, Elder Hansen. He said his tracking software showed a car in a certain location and he wanted us to go find it. Evidently, a cart that has kind of slipped through the cracks. No one here in our area knew anything about it. It has been MIA for at least 6 months. As it turns out, it appears the car is in a salvage yard where people can bid on it and purchase it

online. The business was closed when we arrived there, but, we will go there tomorrow and make sure it is really there. This missionary car was hit by another vehicle, driven by a drunken, off-duty policeman near Port Elizabeth, about 4 hours from here.

Somehow, our people have lost track of the car. How it got from Port Elizabeth to East London is a mystery. However, Elder Stevenson, son of top notch police officer and crime fighter, Stanley Stevenson, is on the case. We will leave no stone un-



Mavreen and Katherine at the Sweet Shop



"No Hooting" means no honking your horn.



It is common to see barbed wire or electrical cabling along the top of a residential or commercial building to discourage the burglars. This photo shows a very creative way to make the deterrent look attractive?

turned, every clue fully investigated and every possible theory of criminal mischief examined under the microscope of justice, the American wave and apple pie. More details to come.

Photos:

"No Hooting" means no honking your horn

It is common to see barbed wire or electrical cabling along the top of a residential or commercial building to discourage the burglars. This

photo shows a very creative way to make the deterrent look attractive?

Doesn't this pizza look good? Actually, it is just okay. Nothing like pizza in the USA.

Hope all is going well for each of you. Make good choices and you will be happy all day long! Really, no joke, seriously, all day long!

Love,

Dad and Mom

2017 OCTOBER 10 }

Oct_10_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We got a late start today. I had to take the car over to the panel beater for them to replace the AC condenser and the front bumper. They said it would be completed by noon. Not the case. So, we borrowed the Davies car since they did not need it for the afternoon. We left for our area after a quick lunch. On our way, we stopped at the salvage yard where a "missing" mission car was located. We were able to enter the yard with the manager and found our car. I took pictures of it and it has definitely been fixed since the accident over a year ago. How it got into this yard is still a big question. Fortunately, they have not sold it yet.

I called our mission office and reported in. We got the area fleet manager on the line and made a plan of action. Basically, I am to wait until I

get further orders. The car looks fine, but the battery was dead. It can probably still be used in the mission. We had a very nice visit with the Mkwando Family. Mom and I had decided to talk about temple marriage and family history. It is amazing to me that this family who we met 4 - 6 weeks ago, is now coming to church, has met with the bishop and was very responsive to our suggestion they consider the temple as an important goal to shoot for. Brother Mkwando even asked if he could set aside some money each month to the bishop so they will have enough when it is time to go. Truth is, they need to tuck that money away in savings and the church in South Africa has funds available to help such people. The main thing is that they make some sacrifices on their own first.

We met with the Fisiko Family outside their home because they were

in the process of killing, decapitating and plucking chickens to sell. We are set to come back tomorrow and visit. We want to focus on the father and challenge him to study, pray and ponder. If we feel inspired, we will commit him to baptism for the middle of November.

We received a phone call that our car was done. So, we hurried back to Gonubie and picked it up. The mission is stunned that we got the car repaired for under \$500 USD, We have another mission car that needs a front bumper. They will do it for

\$240 USD. Every other quote the mission has seen is astronomical. I think Mom's cookies have made these guys pushovers!

Please do not share this with anyone, but after we returned home, we walked down to the corner and bought an ice cream cone - Mom had a caramel dipped cone, I had a chocolate dipped cone.

We called LeAnn Halgren and planted the idea of coming to South America a year from October and be the mission nurse. They have been



Pizza - This is the pizza photo I forgot to attach yesterday. Once again, good but nothing like home!!!



Communication Center - I'm not sure we have ever sent a photo of our master bedroom, AKA the "Communication Center." Quaint and comfortable.



New Car - This is the car after our friendly panel beaters took care of it. Plus, the AC works just fine!

thinking about a mission a year from next June, so the timing would be just about perfect. Anyway, we have planted a seed. John was not there. She said they will talk and do some more thinking and planning.

Photos: Pizza - This is the pizza photo I forgot to attach yesterday. Once again, good but nothing like home!!!

Communication Center - I'm not sure we have ever sent a photo of our master bedroom, AKA the "Communication Center." Quaint and comfortable.

New Car - This is the car after our friendly panel beaters took care of it. Plus, the AC works just fine!

Sweet Chili - This is a popular product down here. It is made by H.J. Heinz. Mom puts it on her meat dishes here at home, i.e., roast beast. We love you very much and keep you in our prayers and thoughts daily. Enjoy every minute of this day.

Dad and Mom



Sweet Chili - This is a popular product down here. It is made by H.J. Heinz. Mom puts it on her meat dishes here at home, i.e., roast beast.

2017 OCTOBER 11 }

Oct_11_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a busy day. We started out by going to the natural museum in East London. We received a free pass and VIP tour from the curator because Mom had donated a rare Nautilus sea shell to their shell collection. The Davies came along with us. Very interesting exhibits and some photos below of the beautiful fish in these parts of the ocean.

We went to Pin creek Restaurant and had a nice outdoor "pensioner" lunch. I had chicken with fries and veggies. Mom had fish, salad and veggies. We both had a brownie with ice cream. Total cost = \$7.00 USD.

We had to hustle out to Mdantsane to pick up Sister Booi who was going to be our fellow shipper for the day. She is a return missionary that served in England. She was married

in the Johannesburg Temple. Her husband is the 1st counselor in the MD 4th Ward bishopric. She and her husband and two boys are a wonderful, faithful family.

We visited the Fisiko Family again. Short visit because they were still slaughtering chickens to sell. I thought it a good idea to help (see photo). We did sit down and talked about the "Family. a Proclamation..." They did not read it as a family yet like we challenged them to do. We reissued the challenge.

We went to see Sister Keya who turned 76 yesterday. Mom brought her some muffins. We sang to her "Happy Birthday." She was so happy to see Mom and I and that we remembered her birthday. We had a delightful visit (see photos). Mom will be helping her teach the Temple preparation course in the 4th Ward once we get manuals in from Jo-

burg. She has been endowed and now has a grandson, that she raised, serving a mission. This sweet lady manages an organization that aids elderly people. They have an event planned in a few days where they will be feeding 500 elderly people!

We visited 3 or 4 other brand new families we haven't visited before and got home just before 8 PM. To give you an idea of how successful a visit can be, we had one brother tell us in front of his wife, "We need fellowshipping so we can come back to church." We arranged to see this

Ngalo family again tomorrow evening.

On first visits, we try to get to know them, discuss Helaman 5:12, ask if we can come visit again to talk about how to strengthen our testimonies, and then, set an appointment to return. We also commit them to read in the Book of Mormon each day and to come to church.

Photos:

Me helping with the chicken operation





the orange looking one is thought to be a discovery of what was once a pre-historic fish.



Me helping with the chicken operationMe helping with the chicken operation

Mom and Sister Keya in the middle, Sister Booi on the right.

Some phishy photos - the orange looking one is thought to be a discovery of what was once a pre-historic fish. This one was caught in the waters near East London.

Hope all is going well. We love you. You are great!

Dad and Mom



Mom and Sister Keya in the middle, Sister Booi on the right.



2017 OCTOBER 12 }

Oct_12_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Another great day in paradise! We needed to find a place that makes license plates ("number plates") for our car that had the run-in with the truck tire retread. I looked up a company that was close by and headed out to see them. They are in the same vicinity as the body shop, so I stopped there to see if they knew where the company was located. What a pleasant surprise to find that they actually had a new plate for us right there and were going to call us to come by and have it put on our car. I guess that was part of the whole repair job and didn't realize it. Now we are "obeying, honoring and sustaining the law."

We met Tandikhaya around 1:30 and quickly got him over to the KFC for some lunch. While he ate, I talked to him about micro-loans. There are a lot of companies and banks that do

micro loans. However, there is a really cool 501c3 company in San Francisco that does wonders for third world countries and people who need start up capital. The company is called Kiva. Check them out: kiva.org

We had some very good visits today. The Xamane family is so much happier now from when we first encountered them 6 - 8 weeks ago. Brother Max works this Sunday, but said he will be to church the following Sunday. That will be a first in a very long time for him. You might remember that this is the return missionary and past bishopric member.

We met with Sister Zimbini. We had a good lesson about our baptismal covenants. She needs employment (like the rest of the township) and we plan to introduce her to the ward employment specialist this Sunday.

We met with the Ngalo family. They have been less active for a long time. Brother Ngalo has a good spirit about him. Unfortunately, Sister Ngalo was away to a meeting of some sort. We had a lesson on Sabbath Day observance. We committed him and his family to come to church on Sunday. He said they would be there. I'm betting a chocolate milkshake they will be there.

We believe so many of these families just need to feel the Spirit again in their lives. When that happens, they begin to realize what they have been

missing. We hope the ward members go out of their way to welcome these good people when they return. That can make all the difference in the world. Have a good day doing good.

Love,

Dad and Mom



Election time of the year. This is just one of several political posters around the area.



Me with the Xamane children. The kids around here will love any one who gives them candy.

2017 OCTOBER 13 }

Oct_13_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Today was a little different. Mom had a headache that carried over from the previous night and needed to stay home today. So, I had a delicious chicken salad that Mom made for lunch and headed out to Mdantsane by myself to attend the 1st ward bishopric meeting. The missionaries give a report at the opening of this meeting and then, we are excused.

After the meeting, I met up with our fellowshipper for the day, Zizi (see photo below). He is a fine young man, 20 years old, and just finishing up his paperwork for his mission. We joke with him that he will be called to Huntsville, Utah and will be shoveling snow for hours on end! Of course, he knows the territory here in Mdantsane and speaks Xhosa.

We had 6 families I wanted to see to-

day. We actually found all 6 homes and ended up speaking with 3 of the families. We found no one home at 3 of the homes. Actually, one is a young man of about 17 years old. He is in high school and loves soccer and basketball. It's kind of funny because I have yet to see a basketball hoop any where in South Africa. As we were leaving, his grand father caught us and asked that we leave him alone because he has finals these next few weeks. We had already told the young man we would pray for him and catch up with him after he was finished with finals.

I took our fellowshipper to KFC. This seems to be the favorite place for all of our fellowshippers. I got him a lunch box to go and he ate it on the way to the church house where he was going to attend Institute class. Good kid. He wants to come home from his mission and study law.

Photos:

Zizi, one of our great fellowshippers

Our next form of transportation if we have another mishap with our vehicle!

Keep up the good work of doing good works. We love you. We pray for you daily.

Dad and Mom



Zizi, one of our great fellowshippers

Our next form of transportation if we have another mishap with our vehicle!



2017 OCTOBER 14 }

Oct_14_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Long day! We picked up Brother "Shakes" around 1:30 to go start visiting some families. We located a young man who has been a member for about 2 years, but, has become less active. He is about 17 years old. He was very timid and didn't talk much. The whole time the TV was blasting away the TV show, "Top Gear." It made me think of David and Andrew a little. We hope to see him at church tomorrow and got the okay to come visit again.

We saw another person that is active, but we told him last Sunday we would come visit him this week. Nice guy, and if I have my story correct, he was a golden investigator. He read the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants and Jesus the Christ before he was baptized. He had family from out of town so it was pretty much "hello" and then we

were on our way. We look forward to visiting him in the future.

The church was well-used today - a funeral from 9 AM - 2 PM, a school graduation and a baptism. The graduation ceremony was in the cultural hall. It was loud! I think some of these people had their first experience with a microphone. Not only was it turned up all the way, but they were yelling into it!

We had a very nice baptism at 3 PM. The two sisters that were baptized were excited and very happy. Of course, tomorrow they will be confirmed members of the church and told to, "Receive the Holy Ghost."

We did some more visiting and then took our fellowship to KFC. I bought him a four piece meal so he could take some home to his grandmother who is in bed with a broken leg. We are pretty confident they do

not have much, if any, food in the house. Brother Shakes is a return missionary with a great testimony and a heart of gold. He walks everywhere even though he has a hunched back and seems to walk awkwardly. Mom and I wish we could help him more. Like so many others, he has no job and no income. We wonder what the future holds for this guy?

We went to a 6 PM missionary correlation meeting. It was good to be there. We are going to start coordinating with the young Elders and the Ward Mission Leader a lot more

closely. One request from the missionaries was to go visit some investigators where there is some physical abuse going on. This is an area I have little experience in - it has been so long since I have done any physical abuse.

We arrived home by 7:40 PM. We are anxious to see if some of our families will be to church tomorrow. We hope and pray they will be there.

Photos:

Mom with baby

The ban from the school graduation





Mom with baby

Baptismal candidates

The ban from the school graduation

We continue to love you guys very much. Be as good as you can be - it will make you happy!

Love,

Dad and Mom

Tid Bits

Dear Family,

*1. Word of the week: * "salient," most noticeable or important. *Example:* The most salient part of a sales presentation is the part that addresses a customer's concerns.

2. Quote of the week:

3. Scripture of the week:

45 And this is not all. Do ye not sup-

pose that I know of these things myself? Behold, I testify unto you that I do know that these things whereof I have spoken are true. And how do ye suppose that I know of their surety?

46 Behold, I say unto you they are made known unto me by the Holy Spirit of God. Behold, I have fasted and prayed many days that I might know these things of myself. And now I do know of myself that they are true; for the Lord God hath made them manifest unto me by his Holy Spirit; and this is the spirit of revelation which is in me. -Alma 5:45-46

4. Joke of the week:

"I hope you didn't take it personally, Bishop," an embarrassed sister said after the sacrament meeting, "when my husband walked out during your talk."

"I did find it rather distracting," the bishop replied.

"It's not a reflection on you, sir," insisted the woman. "He's been walking in his sleep ever since he was a child."

5. Bee's Knees Award: This girl has lots of energy, lots of imagination

and is lots of fun. She is a fast runner, high jumper and a strong lifter. She loves her family very much and loves to play with her next older sister all day long. She is so pretty that every prince wants to marry her - even Prince Hans. She is a big helper around the house. She likes to do jobs for candy. She tries to be like Jesus. She is a good singer. Katie Bug, you are the Bee's Knees, sistah!!!

6. Gospel question of the week: Where do we find the ten commandments in the Book of Mormon?

7. If I were you (advice to grand kids): If I were you, I would be very reverent in church. I would listen and learn. I would use this time to think how I can do better - to be a better person. Try it. I think you will like it.

8. What I learned this week: William Holmes Walker was one heck of a "walker." While in South Africa, he walked hundreds of miles and was sick from exposure many times. As I was reading in his journal this last week, walking long distances was not a new experience for

him. He was prepared for his church mission by all the walking he did as a member of the Mormon Battalion. During that historic march, he walked hundreds of miles and became very weak and nearly fatally sick from exposure.

9. What I'm grateful for: I love faithful members of the church who demonstrate week after week their commitment to the Lord by coming to church, due to financial sacrifice or physical demands in walking an hour or more, some times with a child strapped to their back.

10. My goal for the week: We will prayerfully find a person to give one of our carefully marked Books of Mormon to.

11. Photo of the week: SEMA with the guys!

Have fun living the gospel this week!
We love you muchisimo!

Dad and Mom

Baptismal candidates





2017 OCTOBER 15 }

October 15_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We did our five hours of meetings today. However, after church, Mom noticed a little guy, that is the son of a sister who was baptized yesterday, was still at church. His mother and his sister had already gone home. His home was quite a ways to walk for someone that is only about 6 years old. Plus, he would have had to cross a very busy main road through the township.

We ended up taking a member of the church that knows where the family lives and the little boy to his home. It is kind of amazing how children are left to walk long distances to get to different places and back home. Also, it is so common for children to just play in the street all the time. Pretty dangerous with some of the crazy traffic going up and down the streets.

It was rewarding to see Sister Mbomvane at church today. We had a good visit during the week and she said she was going to come today. The Mkwando family was there. The Fikiso family was there (minus the non-member father). Sister Xamane was there too.

We have a busy week ahead of us. We still have many families we have not visited. Thank you for your prayers and thoughts. We heard that Tyke prays for our safety from Tigers and Cougars!

Photos:

This is Sister Lubelwana and two of her boys, Khanyisile and Zizibele. Both have papers in to go on a mission. They will be good missionaries and great future leaders in the church in Africa.

This little boy was fascinated with

Mom's magnetic name tag. (This was also the little kid that was left behind at church today.)

Hope you have a delightful Sabbath. Be strong!

Love,

Dad and Mom



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This is Sister Lubelwana and two of her boys, Khanyisile and Zizibele. Both have papers in to go on a mission. They will be good missionaries and great future leaders in the church in Africa.

Oct_16_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

I love saying/typing the words, "Dear Family." Mom and I are so fortunate to have such good family. You make us happy.

Today was preparation day. We had a call from a missionary companionship that they had run out of electricity. So, we ran to the store and with their meter number, we were able to buy them another month or two of electricity. They also needed some spare keys made for their garage. Elder Davies had their only key to get one made, so we picked it up had a couple made. We then ran it over to the missionaries.

On the way back we went to the Nahoon Nature Estuary. It is an area of several trails into a natural reserve and bird refuge along the Nahoon River. We had a good time seeing Blue Duikers, birds and all types of

interesting trees and plant life. And, most importantly, I picked up a good walking stick. I am attaching the pictures to prove it.

We also bought some Two Brothers Pizza. We purchased a large pepperoni and a large chicken bar-b-que. And, we bought some Pringles and a croissant stuffed with whipped cream.

We have lined up our fellowshippers for the week and plan to visit some more families we have not met yet. Every once in a while we get some bad vibes from dropping in on people, but that is missionary work some times. We tend to highlight all the good experiences we are having, but, there is some level of frustration from day to day. The good news is that the sweet, spiritual moments far outweigh the difficult times.

*Photos: (I am sending the nature

reserve in a separate email)*

There seems to be a lot of rules for the beach.

This is Bonza Bay Beach. It was empty, but we are told that in the Summer (December) it is crowded and noisy.

Lawn Bowling is popular among the elite and well to do.

This is the first elderly crossing sign we have seen in South Africa

We came across an elderly and assisted living village. I was posing for a picture by their sign and a couple of the orderlies tried to subdue me and drag me inside, thinking I was escaping the compound. Not really, I don't look that old. Or, do I? Please, no one answer that.

We love you like crazy. We miss you. We think you are great. You are in our prayers daily.

Dad and Mom



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Nahoon Nature Reserve

This tree branch looks like a braided rope and was where "Guardians of the Galaxy" got the idea for the character, "Root."

This is one of the awesome trees we saw. This one was the inspiration for the horrifying tree scene in "Sleeping Beauty."

This was a good size tortoise. This was actually the one used in "Swiss

Family Robinson."

This is an Ibis, but, I have renamed it the "Squawking Ibis." You may remember it from the Alfred Hitchcock thriller movie, "Birds."

You might remember the Cliffs of Insanity from Princess Bride. It was filmed right here.

This is a ground cover of miniature ice plant, but has been used by several filmmakers to imitate a Forrest since they can't afford to go film a real one from the air.

This is where the Nahoon River meets the Indian Ocean and was the place of a famous scene in the old classic, "African Queen" with Humphrey Bogart and Katherine Hepburn.

The "Green Beret" with John Wayne was filmed in this bamboo thicket.

You probably have heard of the hit song, "Under the Boardwalk." This was the original boardwalk mentioned in the song.

You can see where the wealthy of East London live. One of these homes was the setting for the movie, "The Great Gatsby."

Blue Duiker

Attached is the last photo. It is of a Blue Duiker, a small deer-like animal that is very shy and hard to catch on film. This one is probably 15 feet away and let me squeeze off a shot before it ran away. They are quick. This little guy is right in the middle of the photo if you look closely.

Walt Disney caught several of these and used them in the world famous movie "Bambi." That's right, Bambi was really a Blue Duiker! Below is a clip photo so you know what they look like. My photo is hard to see."



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"Under the Boardwalk."



You can see where the wealthy of East London live. One of these homes was the setting for the movie, "The Great Gatsby."



This little guy is right in the middle of the photo if you look closely.



It is of a Blue Duiker, a small deer-like animal that is very shy and hard to catch on film.

Oct_17_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

This morning we said goodbye to "Lulu." This is the battered blue Toyota that one companionship has been driving for 3 -4 weeks. The towing company delivered the "mystery car" from the salvage yard and then, loaded up Lulu (See photo).

We also had a missionary car problem this morning. Their car would not start. Mom and I got over there and sure enough, it would not start for anything. The dash lights came on and the headlights worked, but it would not turn over. Some times you have a little battery but not enough juice to turn over the starter (you need all 12 volts). We jumped the car and it started right up. So far so good. We haven't heard from them.

We had another vehicle car-jacked in the Port Elizabeth area. That is the 4th one in about 6 months. I think

the word is on the street that the missionary cars are an easy target. We were going to have dinner this evening with President Lebethoa, but he had to cancel so he could give 110% attention to this problem. I'm thinking the missionaries might be taking public transportation to their areas and then, walking. It's too bad, because a car helps you cover a lot of ground faster. On the other hand, there is good with walking the streets and meeting people along the way.

Mom and I met the zone leaders out at the Mdantsane chapel. They have a dented fender (another missionary tried to lift the car for fun and the fender buckled). I think it is an easy fix and we will have our Gonubie Auto Worx people get on it. Mom suggested we take the Elders to lunch. She is such a cream puff, push-over. She loves the missionaries. I think it is her maternal instincts to want to

take care of these boys. We went to Wimpy's and bought them what they wanted, including desert - one had a milkshake and the other a waffle with ice cream and whipped cream. I'm glad we did it.

We spent quite a bit of time with the Relief Society President of the 4th Ward, Sister Dinana. She is a very nice lady. Her husband is a counselor in the Stake Presidency. They have two very cute, fun children, Singa and Sibob. She reviewed our ward directory and highlighted some more people she thought we should

be visiting.

After visiting with her, we went home thinking that we needed to be ready to meet President Lebethoa, our mission president, for dinner. As it turned out, he had to cancel and focus on the stolen car problem. Our misfortune. We had looked forward to visiting with him and asking some questions.

We decided to go out to dinner anyway. We picked up the Davies and made our way to the Sanook Eatery. I had ribs that were very good - very



Believe it or not, this is how the government cuts the grass along the highways - with weed whackers! Makes for a very long day.



These flags rise high into the air on very tall bamboo poles.



Lulu goes the way of all flesh and will never be resurrected.

tender and a good sauce. I bought enough so that I could have my leftovers for breakfast tomorrow morning. Mom had a small salad and some sweet potato skins.

Photos:

- Behold, the buckled front fender. Some missionaries need to use a little common sense. - Believe it or not, this is how the government cuts the grass along the highways - with weed whackers! Makes for a very long day. - Lulu goes the way of all flesh and will never be resurrected. - These flags rise high into the air on

very tall bamboo poles. They represent the location of a "medicine man." Some one who is a healer. Maybe even a palm reader. For sure, some one without the priesthood!

Hope all is going well in beautiful Huntsville.

Love,

Dad and Mom



Behold, the buckled front fender. Some missionaries need to use a little common sense.

Oct_18_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a productive day. We met Sister Lubelwana this afternoon to help us visit some families. She is a counselor in the 4th ward Relief Society. She has a strong testimony, knows the area and loves the people. And, she knows the language which we always seem to need help with.

She has three living boys. She has one the was killed several years ago. She sent her son to go buy some goods at the Highway Mall. This is a dangerous place. He was confronted by a person that wanted to rob him. Unfortunately, things did not work out well and her son was stabbed and killed. This was before she and her husband had joined the church. When they were exposed to the gospel they learned about repentance and forgiveness. This helped remove the bitter anger they had to-

ward the perpetrator of the murder. Since then, the whole family has been blessed by the gospel. She and her husband have been sealed in the temple and have done the work for their deceased son!

We visited Sister Moyake and two of her children. When she saw us and Sister lubelwana, it was like a family reunion. She and Sister Lubelwana hugged and kissed and laughed. It was a great reunion. She listened intently as Mom and I taught Helaman 5:12. Mom committed her to come to church. She said, "Yes." Now we just hope and pray she will be there with her children.

We visited Sister Sisonke. She will be a church this Sunday. She seems to be an active member, but misses church now and then. We usually share Helaman 5:12 or Alma 32 on our first visit. We chose Helaman. She was a little surprised because

she was reading that very verse today as part of her Book of Mormon Challenge.

Then, we visited Sister Lulama. We shared Alma 32 (faith, similar to planting a seed). She is now free on weekends from work and said she would come to church after Mom committed her a couple different times. Mom takes no prisoners! Sister Lulama is nice and friendly, but evidently has had a child out of wedlock. According to the bishop, this is the main reason for her inactivity.

We dropped off Sister Lubelwana at her home and Mom gave her a plate of delicious apple muffins.

I think I am in a little hot water. I had the bright idea of making cookies for the employees at Game (South Africa's version of Walmart). They have done some good things for us in making purchases and the head manager there might be interested in taking the missionary lessons. I cornered one of the managers and asked how many employees there were. She asked, "why?" She said she could keep a secret. I told her we



We bought a new pillow for one of our old wooden chairs. Do you think it looks African enough?



This is Sister Moyake on the left, Sister Lubelwana and two of the Moyake children - Anam and Oyisa.

were thinking of baking some cookies for each employee. She told me, "80 employees." I told mom that at 2 cookies each, that was only 180 cookies. No big deal.

Photos: - We bought a new pillow for one of our old wooden chairs. Do you think it looks African enough? - This is Sister Moyake on the left, Sister Lubelwana and two of the Moyake children - Anam and Oyisa.

Have a wonderful day. Be an example of all that is good!

We love you,
Dad and Mom

Also...

Dear Family,

I failed to mention a few other things:

1. Mom made some pumpkin pie a couple days ago. I bought some canned whipped cream and smoothed my pie with it. I would have had more, but Mom thought we should

take some over to a companionship we had to see.

2. I am now wearing my summer pajamas each night. We had a few cold nights last week or so and I had to wear my winter pajamas a couple of times.

3. Here is a link to a very good article you might find interesting: http://speeches.byu.edu/talks/harold-blee_loyal-royal-within/

4. Daniel wrote us and suggested we share the top ten ways we might avoid a carjacking:

1. We stay moving. We don't want to give any one the luxury of time to approach our car
2. We keep the doors locked
3. We usually work during daylight hours (Rarely at night when it is dark and the forces of evil are all about)
4. We avoid certain areas that we know are dangerous
5. We are having a tracker installed on our car on Oct. 23rd. If someone wants to carjack our vehicle, we make sure they know there is a tracker installed and the cops will be on them quickly to pistol-whip them, cuff them and throw them in the slammer
6. We rub lion dung all over the interior of the car. South Africans have a natural fear

7. There is a laser beam built into the driver's seat. With a click of our spare key, the laser burns a hole through his rear extremities.
8. As soon as they take the car, Mom will lay down in front of the car and I will lay down behind the car. Trapped!!! Now they can't go anywhere.
9. We keep the gas level down to almost nothing. Driving on fumes, they will only get a block or two.
10. Stick our Bic pens into the barrels of their guns and laugh in their faces! The write shall prevail.

We did hear of one situation somewhere in the world when a couple was getting robbed. One of the missionaries said, "Jesus is very unhappy that you are doing this." The robber gave back their wallets and ran off.

We love you. We are being safe.
Thanks for your prayers.

Dad and Mom

Oct_19_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

It has been a full day for us. We started this morning by going to the Mercedes Benz plant here in East London. The car they make in this factory is the "C Class" which is a nice car but not their top of the line "S Class" which is made in Germany. Without going into too much detail, it was fascinating to see how automated everything is and how much effort is dedicated to quality. The plant has about 500 robots that do everything from spot welding, adhesive application, applying and tightening bolts, etc. The cars are beautiful when they come off the assembly line and can be shipped anywhere in the world that Germany tells them. They build over 3,000 cars a week. (Photo of one of the first cars invented in the world and built by Karl Benz.)

We met our fellowshipper, fed him

KFC lunch and then hit the road. Our first visit was a "no show." We will try again tomorrow. We then went to the Xamane family to make sure that Brother Max was going to be there tomorrow afternoon. We have made arrangements to take the old bishop he was a counselor to years ago, to visit him. We think this will go a long way to helping this brother back to church. He doesn't work this coming Sunday so we have our fingers crossed.

We went to the "TB house" we have told you about. This is a dangerous situation for the people in that home. If you remember, this family, with young children, took in an older lady that has TB and who was chased off by her own family. To make matters worse, it appears she also has HIV. After this visit, we went to the hospital to see about how to get this woman admitted. To make a long story short, she has to first go to a

clinic and they then refer her to the hospital. Fortunately, our fellow-shipper, Tandikhaya, has a friend that is a paramedic and who can set up an ambulance to take her to the clinic. We then want to make sure all the residents of the home get tested for TB.

We had a pleasant visit with Brother Mgwaca, the old bishop of the 1st ward. Great guy who was exposed to the church because his wife heard the missionaries and embraced the gospel. His wife has since died from a stroke and brain tumor as well as a

daughter that may have passed away from some type of cancer. He has been a pioneer for the church in Mdantsane.

We met with Brother Ngalo. He is a South African Black man, but he must also be an albino. He is as white as anyone in Huntsville, Utah. He has a good spirit about him and he seems to want to come back to church. He said he is not working this Sunday and that he will come. We think his wife is the one with cold feet. This family will need more attention from us.



Moi, surrounded by two lovely Methodist sisters. They were good sports and fun about having their picture taken. The Methodist Mama's wear very traditional, color-specific clothes - on Sunday and during the week. Some churches will have blue and white, others, green and white. Very interesting. And, no, I am not joining their church.



Children are taught to accept gifts, such as candy, with two open hands. This is a sign of respect and gratitude. On one street we went to this evening, I was surrounded by about a dozen kids with their two hands extended, asking for candy. I obliged.

terest. Such is the nature of missionary work in the trenches. We hope they will come along eventually. We will just keep plugging away and do our best.

We love each of you very much. Thanks for all you do. Keep up the good work y que siguen adelante!

Dad and Mom

Photos:

- Moi, surrounded by two lovely Methodist sisters. They were good sports and fun about having their picture taken. The Methodist Mama's wear very traditional, color-specific clothes - on Sunday and during the week. Some churches will have blue and white, others, green and white. Very interesting. And, no, I am not joining their church. - Children are taught to accept gifts, such as candy, with two open hands. This is a sign of respect and gratitude. On one street we went to this evening, I was surrounded by

about a dozen kids with their two hands extended, asking for candy. I obliged. - One of the first cars invented in the world (Internal Combustion) by Karl Benz in 1886 who was an old schoolmate of mine - People just learning how to drive have to place a large, red letter "L" in their back window. Because of the way some of them drive, some argue that the "L" stands for something else.

We had a couple disappointing visits today where the members are not showing too much motivation or in-



One of the first cars invented in the world (Internal Combustion) by Karl Benz in 1886 who was an old schoolmate of mine.



People just learning how to drive have to place a large, red letter "L" in their back window. Because of the way some of them drive, some argue that the "L" stands for something else.

2017 OCTOBER 20 }

Oct_20_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had district meeting this morning and were well-instructed in that great missionary section of the Doctrine and Covenants, D&C 4: 1-8. We learned a lot as we discussed that passage of scripture for an hour.

I jotted down all the mileage from each of the missionary cars. I try to do that every Friday at district meeting so we can make sure cars are getting into the dealership for servicing every 15,000 Km. If you miss a service, you can invalidate your warranty.

I also examined all the cars for damage. We have a few scrapes and scratches, but nothing too terrible.

Mom and I went to downtown East London to meet with the fitment company that will install tracking

devices in our missionary cars. We have a total of 9 cars that need devices. We start Monday morning at 8 AM and do two cars every two hours. We have 5 cars that are coming from Queenstown, about a 2 1/2 hour drive one way.

We hit our work area today by starting with the Xamane family. We took some printed photos to them of Mom and I and their family. They were very happy with them. We were unable to connect with the previous bishop that was going to go with us on that visit. When we went by the bishop's home, he was not there. So, we are going to ask him to just go visit Brother Max Xamane on his own when he gets the time. He will be a great influence on Brother Max.

This family is a good example of how MLS missionaries can help. We visited this family starting two months ago. They were totally less active and

had been for quite some time. The family now comes to church with the exception of Brother Max. He is off this Sunday and will probably come. Especially since his wife is giving a talk in Sacrament Meeting. The children enjoy church. Sister Nandi has been called to be the Young Women's President. They want their daughter baptized before she goes to live with her biological mother in Cape Town. Probably, any senior missionary couple could have done this. Many times it is just a matter of visiting them and inviting the Spirit into that home. When they see and feel the

love you have for the gospel and them, good things happen.

I should note that Sister Nandi and Mom hit it off so very well to begin with. They are now good friends. She likes Mom a lot.

We dropped off some other photos to other families. One sister has a very loud, prolonged laugh. She saw the photo of her and her kids and let out a roar of a laugh. She was happy to get the photo.

While we were out, we received a



This is Mom and I doing a selfie on the banks of the Nahoon River where the Aaronic Priesthood was restored.



This is how the missionaries will park their 10 cars in the church parking lot during district meeting. This way they do not have to have their companion stand outside to help safely back the car out of a stall. Leaving the parking lot is a little like, "Gentlemen, start your engines."

phone call from President Lebethoa. The Madagascar Mission is having all its missionaries withdrawn from that country. There is an epidemic outbreak of bubonic plague. 69 missionaries are being pulled out. 10 will go home because they are close to their completion date. 59 others are being reassigned. 8 of those are coming to the South Africa Cape Town Mission. 4 of those are coming to our zone of Mdantsane. Fortunately, we have places for them to stay. We have two companionships that each live in a four-man boarding. So, these new missionaries will

have a place to move into this coming Monday when they arrive.

Mom and Sister Davies will be making sure they have bedding, some food, incidental items, etc. Elder Davies and I will work on getting beds frames and mattresses moved. We want to make sure their arrival to our zone is as easy and comfortable as possible.

We had a very nice dinner tonight with the Davies and a couple from their ward. Presently, they serve as the family history specialists in the

East London Stake. They are very nice and are putting their papers in for a Johannesburg Temple mission. They seem so perfectly matched. She will often call him, "Lovey." We had roast beef, potatoes and carrots. Then, strawberry shortcake with whipped cream for desert!!!

Photos:

- This is Mom and I doing a selfie on the banks of the Nahoon River where the Aaronic Priesthood was restored. - This is how the missionaries will park their 10 cars in the church parking lot during district meeting. This way they do not have to have their companion stand outside to help safely back the car out of a stall. Leaving the parking lot is a little like, "Gentlemen, start your engines."

We love you all very much. Have a great day making good choices!

Dad and Mom

Oct_21_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

This morning I needed to get everything coordinated for 9 cars to receive tracking devices in downtown East London. Everything is scheduled and everyone is notified of when to bring their cars in for installation. The fitment company is on board and will try to keep installations on time. This way missionaries can get back to their areas and go to work.

With 4 new missionaries coming to our zone, we spent a good part of the day making sure that these new Elders will have shelter, a bed, clean bedding, food to eat, kitchenware, etc. Our goal is to make sure these missionaries feel welcomed, comfortable and settled so they can go to work and feel like they are an important part of the mission.

Mom and Sister Davies will be doing

a lot on Monday morning to get beds made, food purchased, etc. These Elders come from a mission where they walked. So, here they will get rides to their assigned areas by the driving missionaries and for the present time, walk. There is still a lot of coordinating to get worked out. That will be the job of the zone leaders.

While we were out, we went to lunch with the Davies at Spur. I avoided the ribs since I already know they are bad. I ordered a steak and got half of a cow! It was pretty good. Ate a lot at lunch, then, had the rest put in a doggy bag. I had some for dinner this evening and will have the rest for breakfast and lunch tomorrow.

I came home and washed the car. It has been a very nice warm day and our car was pretty dirty. I let it dry real good and then drove it into the garage to cool down. Then, I waxed it and buffed it with an electric

buffer. (See photo)

Mom has made a bunch of cookies with oatmeal, corn flake, peanut butter and coconut in them. She left them on the counter which is a clear sign they were to be eaten. She thinks differently. "They are cooling." Stealing cookies as if they were an inescapable addiction worse than heroin, is not a sin listed in any of the standard works. Eating Mom's cookies, even at the risk of physical harm and corporal punishment, should be considered one of the highest forms of flattery.

Photos:

- This photo does not do the wax job on our car justice. The buffer really helped the job turn out nice.
- The cookies!

We love you. Hope you have a great Halloween party tonight.

Dad and Mom



The cookies!



This photo does not do the wax job on our car justice.

Tid Bits

Dear Family,

1. Word of the week: "adroit," Clever, skillful, dexterous.* Example:* C. S. Lewis was very adroit at writing.

2. Quote of the week:

3. Scripture of the week:

And these things doth the Spirit manifest unto me; therefore I write

unto you all. And for this cause I write unto you, that ye may know that ye must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, yea, every soul who belongs to the whole human family of Adam; and ye must stand to be judged of your works, whether they be good or evil; Mormon 3:20

4. Joke of the week:

Little eight-year-old Sally was in the garden filling in a hole when her neighbor peered over the fence. This kid was always good for a laugh. In-

terested in what the cheeky-faced youngster was doing, he asked, "What are you doing there, Sally?"

"My goldfish died," Sally sobbed, "and I've just buried him."

The obnoxious neighbor laughed and said condescendingly, "That's a really big hole for a little Goldfish, don't you think?"

Sally patted down the last heap of earth with her shovel and replied, "That's because he's inside your cat."

5. Bee's Knees Award: Wow, can you play the piano like Mozart? Do you know everything there is to know about medicine? This girl is simply great, wonderful and fabulous all at once! She is a dedicated, loving, nurturing mother. She is more intelligent than 10 rocket scientists all smushed together. She is more beautiful than 20 super models all rolled into one. She is has a strong testimony of the gospel that blesses her family. She loves her husband and will do anything for her children (that is for their good). In a word, she is "super wondrous." Megan, you are the Bee's Knees, sis-

tah!!!

6. Gospel question of the week: Can you name the 12 Apostles of Jesus Christ during His mortal life?

7. If I were you (advice to grand kids): If I were you, I would get into the habit of *sincerely* complimenting others around you. They will feel good and so will you. Try it. I think you will like it.

8. What I learned this week: I learned how important it is to make sure new missionaries coming to our area feel welcomed and comfortable with their new surroundings. It has been a blessing to help get things ready for our four new missionaries. They are coming from a tough situation in Madagascar and to totally new area in Mdantsane. We want to help them make the adjustment as easy as possible.

9. What I'm grateful for: Knowledge that the Lord is in charge. We may not understand everything in this great Plan of Happiness, but that isn't important. What is important is the fact that matters are in His control and we get to be tools in His

hands to help out.

10. My goal for the week: Hand out another carefully marked Book of Mormon.

*11. Photo of the week: *Lambing season has been quite the experience for our families!

We love you all very much. Have fun living the gospel this week!

Dad and Mom



Oct_22_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

It has been a rich and rewarding day. I really don't know where to start so maybe some bullet points on why today was a spiritual feast:

- It was good to see some of our less active families at church. That is always a treat. - We didn't see Brother and Sister Xamane at the very beginning of church. That had us worried. She was suppose to give a talk. As the opening song was being sung, she came in and her long time less active husband was with her! She was the first speaker and was visibly nervous. She did a great job! After sacrament meeting, I gave her a big hug and told her what a good job she did. Later Mom gave her a hug. Nandi said, "I am so glad you are here. Because of you I am here." - We partook of the sacrament - a truly great blessing in and of itself! - I was tapped on the

shoulder five minutes before Sunday School and asked to give the Sunday School lesson. It was a little rough, but the lesson on the "Spirit of Elijah" went well. I mentioned the fact that we enjoy so much knowledge about the gospel compared to the rest of the world. We have a treasure chest of doctrine. (For example D&C 76, 110, 138) - Earlier this week we dropped off a white shirt to an Aaronic Priesthood young man that did not come to church because he did not have one. He was here today, looking very sharp. - Mama Maluke sat in front of us during sacrament meeting, a great grandmother. After the closing song and prayer, she turned to me and shook my hand and with the other hand to her chest said how much she feels the Spirit when we get to sing. She is the sweetest woman! I love her and just that one experience filled my heart with great joy. - I saw the Stake President set

apart a new Elder's Quorum President. He first explained the necessity of "Priesthood key." How great to see these members function and take care of their needs. The president gave this man a wonder blessing. - Three people were baptized today into the Kingdom of God. (See photos) During the baptismal meeting the full room sang with gusto. They love to sing. When we get started, someone will sing the first line Capella to give us the correct pitch. Each time it is beautiful and right in tune. - After the baptism, Mom and I delivered a Book of Mor-

mon in Xhosa to a less active family that does not speak very good English.

So, we count ourselves very fortunate to enjoy the blessings of today.

Photos:

- Three baptisms. One baptism was the little girl on the left, standing next to her mother. - Little babies get great naps snuggled next to their mothers. - The Xamane Family. Big Brother Max in a suit and at church!!!



Little babies get great naps snuggled next to their mothers.



The Xamane Family. Big Brother Max in a suit and at church!!!



Baptism!



One baptism was the little girl on the left, standing next to her mother.



Baptism!

Oct_23_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

What a day of crazy driving around. I made a trip downtown to make sure everything with the tracking device installations would go okay. The install/fitment company did not have any job order from Cape Town or the area office. The tracking company (located in Durban) didn't know anything. Johannesburg (Jo-burg) wasn't helping any so I called our fleet manager in Cape Town. Fortunately, he had installers right there at the mission office and they were able to tell our installer what device to use. To make a long story short, 8 of our 9 cars received trackers. We had to send one companionship back because the installer ran out of devices. They'll get their device next Monday.

I received some interesting information on this last carjacking. Not pretty. The carjackers actually kid-

napped the missionaries and the fellowshipping. They said they were going to kill them. When the thieves discovered there may be a tracker in the car, they kicked the missionaries and the fellowshipping out and took the car. However, they did take all their money, wallets, watches, backpacks, scriptures, etc. Bottom line, a royal mess and a huge worry for our mission president.

We also went to a nice restaurant and fed our missionaries that came in from such far away places. (See photo). I had ribs, of course, and I give them at least one thumb up. They were pretty good. The price was good. We received permission to pay for the meal with the church credit card. Thank you, President Monson!

We went to the airport and met the new missionaries from Madagascar. We had a good welcoming party and

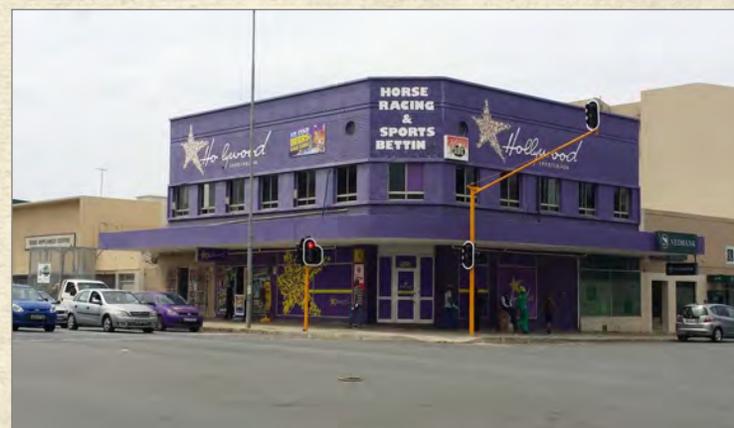
got them and their luggage safely delivered to their respective flats. Later in the day, Mom and Sister Davies went shopping and got them the basics - eggs, pasta, rice, milk, eggs, cereal, etc. They are very happy because the flats are a huge step up from their previous dwellings and the selection and variety of food is like going to heaven. Plus, new sheets, pillows, blankets, comforters, etc.

I had a good visit with Uncle Greg (Rabbi Stevenstein) on Magi Jack. He said they had a pretty good wind

storm come through town. He found one shingle in his backyard from his roof. I told him that with all his negotiating experience and success, he should be able to get a new roof from the insurance company!

Photos:

- Hollywood has made it to East London. This is a betting bar downtown. - All the missionaries at lunch. - Tires being strapped down for delivery - Trucks that have a wide load are designated as "Abnormal"



Hollywood has made it to East London. This is a betting bar downtown.



Tires being strapped down for delivery



All the missionaries at lunch.

We love you guys. We are glad you had a great Halloween party. I got sick just thinking of the Mike Finks! I can tell you from past experience you should never put dried parsley flakes in the drink!

Dad and Mom



Trucks that have a wide load are designated as "Abnormal"

2017 OCTOBER 24 }

Audi R8

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

I came into our compound the other day and noticed an Audi R8 in the driveway of a home just a few doors away. I asked permission to take some pictures.

Some might ask, "Would you rather have the R8 instead of your missionary Chevrolet Aveo?" That is a very dumb question. Of course, we want the Chevy! Who really wants a \$185,000 sports car. You can't haul grandchildren. It's too low to the ground for old people. Head-snapping acceleration will send you to the chiropractor. You can't manage speed bumps with such a low front end. There is an endless list of problems with such a car.

Love,
Dad and Mom

Oct_24_2017

Dear Family,

Yesterday would have normally been our Preparation Day, but we spent quite a bit of time getting cars installed with tracking devices, meeting and greeting new missionaries and getting food purchased and delivered them. So, we have taken today as a preparation day of sorts. Please do not rat us out to the mission president.

Mom has done it again. She never ceases to amaze me. She baked a million cookies to take to the employees of a local retail store. Actually, she baked about ten dozen today and was going to do 4 more dozen tomorrow. However, we got the Davies in on this jig and Sister Davies baked the remaining 4 dozen. See the attached photo of the oat-

meal/con flake cookies and the snicker-doodle cookies that Mom did..

I purchased some lean beef billtong (like jerky). While I was at the billtong shop, I tried some Kudu jerky. Tasted like beef to me. (See photo). They said that was one of their most popular meats that people purchase. Strange looking animal!

We got some grocery shopping done, fixed an interior light in the car that keeps dropping down on us, and had some photographs printed up

for some of our members. Pretty much a laid back day.

We love you and think about you often. Happy Birthday to Klave!

Dad and Mom

--
Christopher W. Stevenson
241 S. 7600 East
Huntsville, Utah 84317
(801) 791-9933







"Squawking"
Ibis



Biltong!



oatmeal/cone
flake cookies
and the snicker-
doodle cookies
that Mom did..



Kudu

Oct_25_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Busy day. It all started with our normal exercise routine. Missionaries have to be physically fit! We have started a new walking program. We do 2 miles in the morning and then, 2 miles at night. We have now done that routine for one continuous day.

At 9:30 AM The Davies and us showed up at the local retail store, Game, with about 15 dozen home-made cookies. We had a laminated thank you sheet and delivered it all to the manager and assistant manager. I could tell from the smiles on their faces that this was a smash hit of mega proportions. If anything, it is good public relations for the church.

We hurried home and did some things before we met an Mdantsane missionary companionship at a local

mall where we did two things: 1) Bought them lunch with a desert to boot, and, 2) Coordinated information between the less actives they are visiting and the ones we are seeing. It is also a good time to get pertinent information about less active members to help us know what we should be teaching them.

I ordered a steak and received a roast. It will literally feed me for three meals. We were happy to treat these hard-working elders. They are two Brits, Elders Warren and Hawkins. Mom says they are "English Chappies." They seem to work well together.

We started out visits today in Unit 9. We hardly ever go to that end of our ward boundaries. It is a long way for these members to walk on Sunday. At the first home, no one was home. We then stopped by the Dinana home to visit since they live nearby.

Their children are adorable, Sibob and Singa. We asked them to try to fellowship the family we did not find at home.

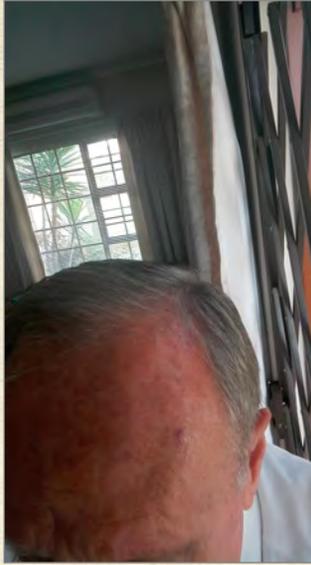
We then chased down another address. The mama is out of town a lot doing construction work. However, we did meet the Sister and Aunt. We had a good, short visit, but we were able to get her permission to return and to teach them lessons. In the attached photo, she is the one cleaning the fish. FYI, she has that yellow cream on her face to prevent sunburn. We are going to get a photo-

graph of them printed and take it on our next visit.

We went to the Mbomvane Family for a quick visit. As we met outside, we asked how everyone was doing? "Very hungry, there is no food." We had just had a huge lunch and what we spent on lunch would feed this family for a month. They were obviously hurting and Mom and I could feel their pain. In addition to this, we spoke extensively with the niece. We heard a story that really tore at our heart strings.



I told them they had to sing before I would give them any candy.



The gaping, serious, life-threatening wound on my head!

She was raped some time in her youth. This resulted in some very difficult psychological and emotional struggles for her. She was a very angry person growing up. She did not get along with her mother and moved out to live with her aunt. Unfortunately, she was raped again - three to four years ago. The perpetrators tried to hang her. She remembers hanging and at the same time looking down at her CTR ring. At that point the rope broke. She was so angry at the people who had done this to her that she felt she was a prisoner to her own emotions and

pain. It wasn't until she decided to forgive that she felt herself being set free.

How do you leave a situation like that and not do something? Mom and I simply felt like we needed to go to the store and get this family something to hold them over for the next week. We bought carrots, potatoes, beans, rice, milk, cabbage, bananas and bread. We went back to the home and walked in with our simple, little gift that will mean so much to them over the next few weeks. We left feeling good inside.

Our 5:30 PM appointment was a no show. Actually, we were in the living room and we are pretty sure the mother was in the bedroom and did not want to see us. Mom has a good plan for this family. We will try again and may find that they are not home again. We will leave a little something in the way of cookies or muffins with a note explaining to them how much we want to befriend them and teach them.

Sorry to ramble on, but I need to share this with the family. In the middle of the morning I got out of bed to use the men's room. Mom was using my private bathroom, so I was forced to use hers. Not being use to a foreign bathroom in complete darkness, I managed to bump my head when I went to sit down. As I was explaining this to Mom at the breakfast table she started to laugh. I thought that a little unusual. I went on to explain the excruciating pain I experienced. This made her laugh even more. People, that is just plain wrong! I told her I didn't find it funny. She continued to laugh. Please advise: Is this serious enough for me to write our mission president? I'm not asking for a transfer, but just to

let him know how much I am suffering.

Photos:

- I think the advertisement in the men's room was uniquely placed over a urinal! - The gaping, serious, life-threatening wound on my head! - A public outhouse in a squatter's village - The new sister we met and will start teaching - Here is a link to some kids singing. I told them they had to sing before I would give them any candy:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=oB2WRfDR-VseKaiFaVUR2Y1pJSmM>

We are grateful to be in the Lord's service. No question about it - it is work. However, good to go to bed knowing you have been involved in the most important work on the face of the earth. We love you!

Dad and Mom



The new sister we met and will start teaching.



I think the advertisement in the men's room was uniquely placed over a urinal!



A public outhouse in a squatter's village.

Oct_26_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We started today by inspecting the boarding flats of the missionaries in our zone. Overall, they did a good job. It was not celestial clean, but good enough to get a half dozen pumpkin/chocolate chip cookies per companionship. We did, however, walk away with a lengthy list of items the missionaries need.

We spent most of the afternoon securing those items. One request by the Madagascar missionaries was bicycles. I told them I thought that might be a good idea, but they would have to get it cleared by the mission office. Long story made short, clearance okay upon input from the Stevenson senior couple. There are two main concerns: 1) Safety on the bicycles for the missionaries, and, 2) security for the bikes so they do not get stolen. If we can resolve those issues, we can get bicycles. I think we

have ways to accomplish both of those issues.

Photos:

- A pair of very noisy birds outside the flat of one set of missionaries. I hope they are quiet at night. - Work continues on an intersection that was begun over 6 months ago. Most work is pick and shovel. In the USA, I'm guessing it would be a two week job.

We have our Mission Tour next week. Elder Koch of the Area Presidency will be touring the mission with his wife and President and Sister Lebethoa. On the evening of Oct. 31st. we have a catered dinner planned with them and the Davies.

Stay Loyal to the Royal! We love you,

Dad and Mom



A pair of very noisy birds outside the flat of one set of missionaries. I hope they are quiet at night.



Work continues on an intersection that was begun over 6 months ago. Most work is pick and shovel. In the USA, I'm guessing it would be a two week job.

2017 OCTOBER 27 }

Oct_27_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had our district meetings this morning. Elder Hawkins, from England, gave a very good training on helping our investigators gain a testimony born of the Spirit. They can DO everything we ask them, but until they FEEL the Spirit working in their lives, they may be superficially converted to the gospel.

Mom was feeling a little ill with headache and see spots. I took her home for a well-deserved nap and I went to the computer to do some research on bicycles for a pair of our walking missionaries. I learned quite a lot. One important fact, if you buy junk, it will breakdown quickly and you will be back in the market again and again.

I looked up several bicycle shops in the area and decided to go to four of

them. When it was all said and done, I boiled it down to Giant and a South African manufacturer, Momsen. We would be looking at an entry level mountain bike. These would be fairly durable for the type of dirt and asphalt terrain we have in Mdantsane. I will forward my written email recommendation that I sent to the mission home for anyone that is completely bored today and will read anything for excitement.

I meant to tell you that I stopped the car on the road last Sunday to intercept a guy that I saw walking with what I thought was his wife. As it turned out, it was an older teenage young man and a friend. I challenged them to take the Book of Mormon and to carefully read the scriptures we had marked. I got his and her telephone numbers and we agreed that I would call them in one week for a follow up and to see what they thought of the book. I will call them

tomorrow (Saturday).

I had tapioca pudding for desert this evening! It was almost the same at the states. This stuff didn't set up too well - a little runny. Mom thinks next time it will be just right. Attached photos are of some of the bikes I looked at and have considered. Which one of these would you pick for the missionaries? (None of these are the Giant or Momsen.) We love you all. Have a great day.

Dad and Mom

Bike Recommendation

This is what I sent to the mission home:

Elder Hansen,

I recommend the mission purchase two bicycles for the MD2 missionaries (Elders Dlokova and Olivier) to work their assigned area. Elders Smith and Shai will continue to walk for now. They have no interest in bikes at this point.





***Rationale for Recommendation*:**
 - Missionaries will be able to quickly cover more ground (compared to walking) which will translate into seeing more investigators and less active members - This can become a test area for the effectiveness of bikes, testing security concerns and determine long term costs for maintenance

***Operating Assumptions*:** - Missionaries will not be riding bicycles on the highway, i.e., from their boarding in Cambridge to Mdantsane - Bicycles will be se-

curely stowed at night in the church or some other safe location, i.e. member's home. Bicycles will be in a secure area (preferably indoors) and locked with chain and padlock.
 - Fellowshippers will have their own bicycles, or, missionaries will use fellowshippers by specific areas, or, not use a fellowships because Elder Dlokova speaks and understands Xhosa. - This is a one time shot. Missionaries must demonstrate they can use the bicycles safely and keep them secure from theft. - Missionaries will not be riding after dark fall. They will wear helmets at

all times while riding. Bicycles are only and strictly for missionaries to use.

Initial Cost for one bicycle*:** - Large frame bike (Giant or Momsen) R 5,500 - Riding helmet R 395 - Tools R 200 - Slime R100 - Tire repair kit R 80 - Air pump R 185 - Lighting R 150 - Chain and lock R 300 - *Total R 6,910 (\$518.25 USD)*

***Points to Consider*:** - Mdantsane is a combination of asphalt and dirt roads. The best type of bicycle is an MTB or mountain bike. Entry level type bikes are fine since these bikes are not being used competitively. However, they must be durable. Game and Marko specials are cheap and unreliable. Giant and Momsen are highly respected brands and receive good reviews - The Missionaries know that these bicycles must be secured each and every night. This means in a locked, enclosed area, and, each bike chain locked to an immovable object like a pole. - During appointments or meetings at homes, the missionaries will lock their bikes and place them out of view of

the general public. For example, behind the home they are visiting.

***Questions*:** - What happens to the bicycles when these missionaries are transferred? - These bikes are for two missionaries measuring 194 cm and 184 cm tall. What happens when the next missionaries to this area are 170 cm's tall?

***Next Steps*:** - Mission office to review recommendation and give approval or disapproval - Upon an approval response, we will proceed to purchasing and fitting bicycles for Elders Olivier and Dlokova.

Let me know if you have any questions or if you need additional information.

Sincerely,

Elder Stevenson

** *These are sturdy bike frames, disc brakes (safety feature), durable double-walled rims, large tires, front end suspension and Shimano gears/derailers/cranks. *Note:* the price can drop if we go to rim

brakes. However, I recommend the disc brakes for faster stops and better all-weather performance.



Oct_28_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Mom had a good experience today. She went to a Relief Society "Speed Friend Shipping" activity. That's right, speed friend shipping. It's similar to speed dating, but this is intended to get to know some of the other sisters in Relief Society a little better. Mom was able to learn a little more about some of our members and her brownies were a smash hit. They also had egg sandwiches, chicken wings in some type of sauce, Vienna sausage and cheese wrapped in a pastry (probably store bought), potatoes, etc. I would have eaten some of the food but had just gobbled a Big Mac at McDonald's.

While the R.S. party was going on the community had a huge funeral going on in the cultural hall. It was packed and people out in the foyer and courtyard. These funerals go on and on with people shouting and preach-

ing like crazy. It also sounded like they had some type of band playing now and then.

I had a good conversation with a member of our mission presidency. He is not in favor of bicycles in our area. Based on his experience in Port Elizabeth, he thinks they take up too much time with repairs and maintenance. They still have bikes stored in that area. I think we should still give it a try in our area and use the bikes they have in storage - defraying a big chunk of the initial cost to try bicycles. I think they could work out fine.

Another program that is being tried in the mission is the "Transport Program." This involves members who may have cars and use them for taxis. They would in essence contract with the missionaries to take them to their work area and pick them up at the end of the day. At the

end of each week, the senior couples would pay them in cash and then, get reimbursed by the mission. They will have a better idea if this works in another week or two. I always worry when you use members of the church and money. Sometimes that can become a little sticky.

Photos:

- This is the type of pollution you inhale if you get behind the wrong car. Fortunately, we only had to follow this car for 3 miles! - Sorry about the picture of this guy. We are guessing that as part of his bache-

lor party, he had to go out on the street corner and collect money from passing cars. I wish I would have had him flip his little sign around. Obviously, a little insensitive to passer-by's. - I don't think this condominium complex would qualify as missionary dwelling.

Thanks for all your prayers and support. You are wonderful and we love you very much.

Dad and Mom



Sorry about the picture of this guy. We are guessing that as part of his bachelor party, he had to go out on the street corner and collect money from passing cars. I wish I would have had him flip his little sign around. Obviously, a little insensitive to passer-by's.



I don't think this condominium complex would qualify as missionary dwelling.

Tid Bits

Dear Family,

1. Word of the week: "prologue," an introduction. *Example:* *The prologue to the Book of Mormon is good for investigators to read.

2. Quote of the week:

3. Scripture of the week:

For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immor-

tality and eternal life of man.
-Moses 1:39

4. Joke of the week:

The China Plates Lay Hidden

The china plates lay hidden,
Deep in the cabinet drawer.
Until a child found them,
And dropped them on the floor.

The real song is:

"The Golden Plates"
(The Children's Songbook, p. 86)

5. Bee's Knees Award: This girl is really one incredible person. Can you make cheesecake that is so good that it will be someday be served in Heaven? Can you play soccer better than Messi? This girl is a great example of the gospel at home and in public. She has high standards. She is kind. She is as smart as 10 geniuses all smushed together. She is an "A" student. She is neat and meticulous. She goes on dates. She is a regular guy magnet. She is genuine. Sidney, you are the Bee's Knees, sistah!!!

6. Gospel question of the week: What section of the Doctrine and Covenants describes the appearance of Elijah to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery?

7. If I were you (advice to grand kids): If I were you, I would find a talk from this last conference, read it carefully and then, highlight the parts you like the best. Try it. I think you will like it. (*Let me know hat talk you chose*.)

*8. What I learned this week: *Researching to find an answer to a question or trying to get information to solve a problem is always very im-

portant. However, do not forget or discount what others can share with you from their own experiences that might be of help to you.

9. What I'm grateful for: I love the fact that in today's technological world, one can send photos, videos and messages almost instantly to any where around the world. Our globe has shrunk due to this technology. And, there is more yet to come that we can't even imagine at this point in our lives.

10. My goal for the week: Last week I had the goal of placing a Book of Mormon. I did that and will call the person on Sunday to follow up. This week, Mom and I have a goal to make at least 12 less active family visits, but, will shoot for 15.

11. Photo of the week: Campus couple!

*12. The Holy Ghost: *We recently heard Jonah Stevenson (the great race car driver from Las Vegas) tell us his part from their Primary Program in their ward. It reminded me of a very important message from Elder James E. Faust. Please share it

with your children.

<https://www.mormonchannel.org/watch/series/mormon-messages/voice-of-the-spirit-1>

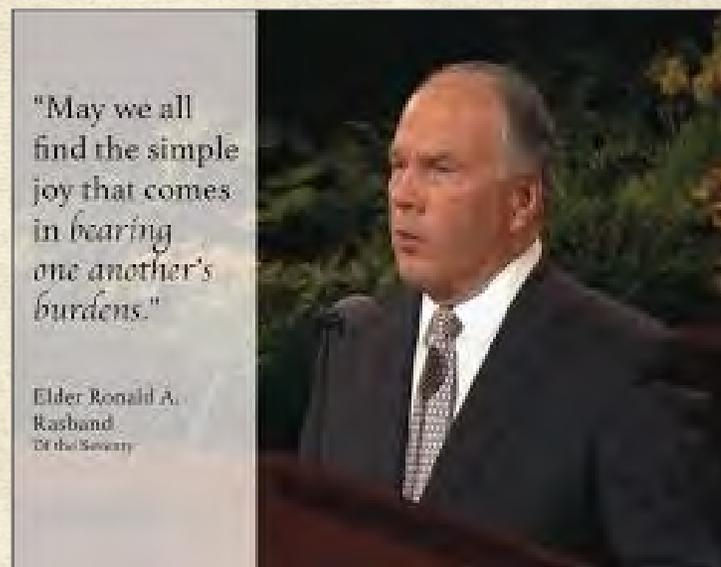
We love you guys very much. Have fun living the gospel this week!

Dad and Mom

This is the type of pollution you inhale if you get behind the wrong car. Fortunately, we only had to follow this car for 3 miles!



Josh Michelle



"May we all find the simple joy that comes in bearing one another's burdens."

Elder Ronald A. Rasband
Of the Seventy

Oct_29_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

It was great to see Brother Max at church today again. He had a great-looking suit on with a Johannesburg Temple pin. I truly hope he will take his family there some day and wear the white socks Mom and I gave him just a few months back. He participated a lot in Sunday School class.

Sister Kusasa was at church. She is a hard-working, nice lady that needs the church as she raises her children.

Sister Mbomvane and her 14 year old son were at church. The missionaries are now teaching her son. This is the family we dropped off groceries to. We hope their attendance is due more to testimony than to food in the cupboard.

Sister Fikiso and her daughter and

son were at church. We went over to their home at 1 PM to give a discussion to her husband. He was very cordial and open to our message regarding the Restoration. It was a lot to take in for him, but we will review again with him next Sunday and then, talk about the Book of Mormon. When we gave the baptismal commitment to him, he just said, "I don't know." Unacceptable! We will ask him again next Sunday.

This morning I texted the two people I gave the Book of Mormon to last Sunday. I hope to hear back from them. They are young but would make great future missionaries. I will call them tomorrow and see if we can meet with them.

We have a busy week ahead of us visiting families. Also, on Tuesday evening, we will be having our dinner with Elder Koch of the area presidency and his wife, and, Presi-

dent Lebethoa and his wife. Should be interesting.

We had a delicious roast beef dinner with roasted carrots and potatoes with gravy. To top it off, tapioca pudding and banana nut bread!

Photos:

- These trees are know as the Dr. Suez trees by Mom and I - This is the tree that looks almost fake. It reminds me of a fake Christmas tree
- This tree has the Latin name: *Celyus Fone Arbolis* - Most Mahindra trucks (manufactured in India) are

white and look pretty beat up. They are diesel and it sounds like their engines will blow up any minute. This one looks new and had a lot of extras on it.

We love you, we love you, we love you! Have a great day making good choices!

Dad and Mom



These trees are know as the Dr. Suez trees by Mom and I



Most Mahindra trucks (manufactured in India) are white and look pretty beat up. They are diesel and it sounds like their engines will blow up any minute. This one looks new and had a lot of extras on it.



This is the tree that looks almost fake. It reminds me of a fake Christmas tree



This tree has the Latin name: Celyus Fone Arbolis.

2017 OCTOBER 30 }

Oct_30_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,
Today was preparation day and I did a lot of exploring. Mom did a lot of wash and cross stitch. And, she made delicious apple muffins! I know because I ate four of them. This morning I met some missionaries over at Gonubie Auto Worx. They have a dented front fender. These guys will pull out the dent today, prepare for paint and then, paint the fender today. Tomorrow it will be dry and polished. The car will be ready by noon. And, the price will be dirt cheap. I like these guys a lot. I do believe Mom's cooking has had a positive effect on them.

I stopped by Cycle HQ and talked price with one of the owners about two new bicycles. I think I've got the price down as far as they will go. It is R 410 below the next lowest price from another shop. However, the latest development since this morning is that we are going to proba-

bly use the bicycles that they have in storage in Port Elizabeth. I spoke with the senior Elder there and we are going to meet half way between our areas, have lunch with our wives and then, hook up the bike rack and the bikes to our car. Should be a fun day trip for Mom and I.

This afternoon, I went to a local junior high school here in Gonubie and watched a game of Cricket. Strange game and twice as boring as baseball, which is already a semi-boring sport. I have attached some pictures for you to peruse. The pitcher is called a bowler. Scores can somehow get up into the hundreds??? However, the kids were having a great time. So...good for them. The "bowler" really gets a work out throwing the ball time and time again!

I then went down to where the Mighty Gonubie River meets the In-

dian Ocean. Not too spectacular! The river is down to a dribble. However, I did get a good shot of the river, a cliff and palm trees - the three basic elements of good photography. (I took Photography in high school and know all about composition, focus, lighting, shutter speed, film speed, film developing, gluing chairs to the classroom cement floor, TP'ing our teacher's house, etc.)

Tonight Mom and I were walking. As we talked, I mentioned we were going to have Chicken Cordon Bleu for dinner tomorrow in my best

French accent, which I take very seriously. I guess Mom found this funny. I told her that she should not make fun of my French. She said, "You sound like a goose with a cold!" Oh, how it hurts!

Photos: - Cricket players - The famous river/Cliff/Palm Trees shot
Hope all is going well. We pray for you daily and seek the Lord's choicest blessings on you. Be worthy!

Love,
Dad and Mom



Cricket players



The famous river/Cliff/Palm Trees shot.

2017 OCTOBER 31 }

Oct_31_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a full day. And, it was HOT and HUMID! We did our fair amount of sweating today.

This morning I went over to the body works (panel beater) place and paid for the work they did on one of our cars. It was a buckled fender. Total damages: \$165 USD. It looked very good - no bondo and new paint. They are nice people to work with and they have a really neat wiener dog.

We met the Madagascar Elders and their boarding companions at the NU13 chapel. They were able to show us how they could keep bicycles secure and out of sight during the night while they are back at their boarding. We felt comfortable that the bikes would be safe and that the missionaries would have continual access to them when they needed

them. Next step is getting the bikes here from Port Elizabeth.

We took all four missionaries to lunch. We are trying to do that with each companionship before they get transferred out of our area. It is a small fortune, but we feel worth the time together. They get a very good meal with desert and we get to know them a little better. Part of our mission is to inject happiness and encouragement into these missionaries. They rarely get a meal out with a no-hold-barred, carte blanche, blank check, anything-on-the-menu opportunity to eat. They went away very satisfied.

We had some good visits today. One is a young lady who joined the church a couple years ago. She now has a 5 month old baby and is not married. She did commit to come to church this Sunday. We have our fingers crossed. While we were visit-

ing, the father of the child shows up. So, we talked with him some, gave a lesson on faith like planting a seed (Alma 32), and have his okay to come visit them again. We got his name and phone number and the missionaries will give him a call.

We had dinner this evening with the Davies, President and Sister Lebethoa, and, Elder and Sister Koch. The setting at the Europa B&B was outstanding. The meal, prepared by Peter Stiffler, the owner, was simply delightful. He is also a professional chef. The meal was not chicken cor-

don bleu like we thought it was going to be - it was pork cordon bleu and it was delicious. All the food was excellent. Desert was a half of a pineapple bowl with a fruit cocktail in it, topped with vanilla ice cream and a sliced strawberry on top.

Elder Koch and his wife were very pleasant to visit with. Elder Koch was pretty verbal about his opinion of the United States and some other countries (Venezuela, Bolivia, etc.). His feelings about the USA with its greed and conspicuous consumption are probably accurate. He thought



Sister Mcata and boyfriend/father.



We see people all the time with old wheel barrels hauling all kinds of stuff for miles and miles in the hot sun



Elders from the Mdantsane 2nd Ward area eating lunch with us at Wimpy.

this condition was particularly problematic for the state of Utah. He and his wife have two daughters and three grandchildren. One daughter lives in Redmond, Washington and the other in Brazil.

Hope you have a great day as we are sleeping on this side of the world.

We love you,

Dad and Mom

Photos:

- Elders from the Mdantsane 2nd Ward area eating lunch with us at Wimpy - Sister Mcata and boyfriend/father - We see people all the time with old wheel barrels hauling all kinds of stuff for miles and miles in the hot sun

Nov_01_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a great combined zone conference today. Our general authority was Elder Koch (pronounced "Co" with a long "o"). One of the main themes he taught was "joy." Man is that he might have joy. This is the ultimate end result our Heavenly Father wants for each of us. When we teach, when we are in public, when we mingle with members, etc., we need to show joy. Obedience leads us to joy. Service adds to our joy. Anyway, I think you get the picture.

President Lebethoa taught about teaching, using D&C 42, verse 8. He discussed how we "shall find them that will receive you..." We also had good instruction from both Sister Lebethoa and Sister Koch.

We had a very good meal for lunch. We have a lady that does all the

catering and she does a good job - baked chicken, roasted potatoes, veggies, squash and bottled water. Desert was a moist apple cake with a custard pudding-type topping.

We had some excitement this evening. As we were eating dinner, we noticed a lizard running across the wall above our drapes. We sprung into action trying to find it. We turned over sofas and pulled back drapes. Finally, we found it on the wall behind one of the drapes. I smacked it with a dust pan and it fell to the ground. Before I could pick it up, it scampered off like a bullet and we have not seen it again. It may have left the house through the open patio sliding door or the open front door. We think it is gone. However, it could very easily still be in the house and could viciously attack us some time during the night! Please, please, don't worry. We will be okay. We will trade off guard duty shifts

every two hours.

Photos: - Terry the life guard. I had a good discussion with him. He was very talkative, maybe had a beer or two in him. I gave him a pass along card, but Mom and I will go back and get his full name and phone number. - Marvin carrying his 25 pound boat and heading out to sea. Interesting that he does not have a life jacket. - Evidently, rip tides are a problem and you always need to be careful.

We love the gospel and all those mis-

sionaries throughout the whole world that do so much to help advance the work. The work still moves forward and will continue until it has gone to the ends of the earth and the truth has been sounded from every roof top. It's cool to be a missionary!

Love,
Dad and Mom



Evidently, rip tides are a problem and you always need to be careful.



Terry the life guard. I had a good discussion with him. He was very talkative, maybe had a beer or two in him. I gave him a pass along card, but Mom and I will go back and get his full name and phone number.



Marvin carrying his 25 pound boat and heading out to sea. Interesting that he does not have a life jacket.



Nov_02_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

It is late and I need to go to bed. But, sweet is the work!

Mom brought along some of her dollar store reading glasses that we took to one of our families. The grandfather in the home can't read the print of the priesthood manuals and other church literature, so we thought this would help. Actually, the ones we thought would work the best for him actually went to his wife who also needs glasses. Tomorrow, Mom and I are going to a local drug store and we will buy this good brother a stronger pair of reading glasses.

We had a very good discussion today with the Mkwando Family about Priesthood and the Word of Wisdom. This is a couple that is very serious about preparing to go to the temple. He holds the Aaronic priesthood

now and is preparing to be ordained an Elder.

We met with one family today that has four generations of women/girls in the house. The great grand mother is a beautiful, lovely, kind old ma-ma. Every time we go to her house, we sing an opening song. Today was, "How Gentle God's Commands" and also a closing song, today, "Choose the Right." Her daughter (who is a grandmother) is totally less active and is now going back to her old church. She carried on and on about how our church did not feel right and how she could not understand the Book of Mormon. Mom and I tried several times to have her consider things otherwise, but she would not have any of it. When we left, our fellowshippier informed us that the real reason she might not be coming to church is that she smokes and feels uncomfortable at our chapel.

We also met with a new member of the church. She is very sweet and nice and trying to learn as much as she can. The lesson tonight, given by someone else than Mom and I, regarding the Book of Mormon, seemed pretty heavy for a new member. I think Mom and I will also get back to her and visit on a little more basic, milk instead of meat, level.

We had other visits, but, my eyes are giving out on me and I haven't even taken my sleep aid yet.

Photos:

- These two girls are the 4th generation that hopefully will be members of the church. They came with their mother 2 weeks ago for church

- This little boy is a ball of energy. His parents are active, strong members of the church. The father is a return missionary and studying to be a school teacher. He is great. We will be taking them dinner one of these nights. This was the family that had us over for dinner one Sunday evening and fed us a mile high plate of food.



These two girls are the 4th generation that hopefully will be members of the church. They came with their mother 2 weeks ago for church



This little boy is a ball of energy. His parents are active, strong members of the church. The father is a return missionary and studying to be a school teacher. He is great. We will be taking them dinner one of these nights. This was the family that had us over for dinner one Sunday evening and fed us a mile high plate of food.

Have a great day doing what is right.
Be loyal to the Royal!

Love,

Dad and Mom

2017

NOVEMBER 3 }

Nov_03_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

One of our missionary companionships took their car in to the shop to see why the "Check Engine Light" keeps coming on. They were told it would take 6 weeks to get a part, a sensor, in to fix it. So, as you would expect, they left the car there and got a ride back to their boarding. What??? Aren't you going to need that car to do your work? You can still drive the car while the light is on without harming it.

Anyway, Mom and I went down there and picked up the car and delivered it to the missionaries. The shop will call when the part gets in to their garage. The good news, Mom drove the car like a pro in downtown traffic.

We picked up a fellowshipper by the name of Patrick. A very nice 20 year old young man who is in school/uni-

versity now and has three years to go to graduate. Then, he plans to go on a mission. We need to have a serious talk with him. Going to school is great, but if he were to serve a mission first, he would be miles ahead of the game. And, he would be a great missionary.

We went to the Maluke family for our first visit. Sister Margarit was also there visiting. Attached is a picture of her and Mom and I. She is a stalwart, pioneer member of the church in Mdantsane. She has been to the temple and takes her covenants seriously. Great Grandma Maluke is the sweetest lady around. She has us sing a song before we leave any kind of a message. When we left, she held on to my hand and said, "Every time you come here I learn something new." I left with a lump in my throat.

We drove for what seemed like an

eternity to find a home of the Mgidi family. Whoa! This guy was either on the bottle or he had a few screws loose. He was loud, pounding his chest, laughing at us and letting us know that all we need to do is believe in Jesus and there is nothing else required. Believe and all your sins are forgiven. "Jesus is in me," he would shout. I began to disagree with him and he let us know we could not come and visit him any more. Mom simply bore her testimony to the man and we felt it was time to leave.

Our fellowshipper looked a little too skinny so we took him to KFC. He loved it. FYI, for a relatively new person in the church (2015) he did a good job of trying to spiritually counter punch our enthusiastic, yelling, Pentecostal, crazy-eyed, overly-animated good brother.

Tomorrow morning Mom and I are going to take off and go to Port Alfred, roughly a 2 hour drive. It should be a very pretty drive as it goes along the coast line. We have a little extra time planned so we can make a few stops along the way. The



This is a little corner barbecue spot. I didn't have any money, but I said I would be back next week to buy something. Any suggestions?



This is Sister Margaret - great member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints



Here is a picture of the bikes our "walking missionaries" will be using

bikes we are picking up are Giant (brand) bikes. They look pretty sturdy and durable. I am curious to see how this little experiment works out.

[image: Inline image 1]

Photos:

- This is Sister Margaret - great member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints - This is a little corner barbecue spot. I didn't have any money, but I said I would be back next week to buy something. Any suggestions? - Here is a picture of the bikes our "walking missionaries" will be using

Have a great day honoring your covenants. What a blessing to make and keep promises we make with our Heavenly Father! It don't get no better than that!

Love,

Dad and Mom

2017

NOVEMBER 4 }

Nov_04_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We have had a long day of driving. This morning we took off for Port Alfred to pick up bikes for our walking missionaries. We left an hour earlier than what the drive time was going to be so we could stop along the way if we saw something interesting. Good thing we left early. There was so much road construction and wait time due to one lane of traffic, we made it to our destination about 20 minutes before noon.

At noon President Watson and his wife and Elder and Sister Peterson showed up and we went to a nice restaurant near the water for a quiet lunch. we had a pleasant visit and then, we loaded up the bikes and headed back home. The bikes rode just fine the whole way.

I will take them to the bike shop on

Monday for some badly-needed tune ups. Hopefully that will not be too much money. Then, the grand experiment begins. If it doesn't work out too well, at least we have spent minimal mission money to give it a try.

I have thought about the SEMA Show once or twice today. I hope there will be ample pictures to show me - Dropbox, Google Drive, somewhere.

Photos:

- Giant bicycles - large 29 inch wheels, disc brakes, front suspension
- Lawn bowling in Port Alfred
- Crochet in Port Alfred. It appears the women play crochet and the men lawn bowl.

We love you all very much. We begin our fast tonight and will remember you in our prayers and thoughts.

Dad and Mom

Lawn bowling in Port Alfred



Crochet in Port Alfred.



Giant bicycles - large 29 inch wheels, disc brakes, front suspension.



Tid Bits

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

*1. Word of the week: * "spurious," not being what it purports to be; false or fake. *Example:* The mention of BYU playing in the Rose Bowl this year is spurious at best!

2. Quote of the week: "When you are trying to be productive, you must keep one eye on the fish and one eye on the cat" -Elder Joni Koch

3. Scripture of the week:

And it came to pass in the thirty and sixth year, the people were all converted unto the Lord, upon all the face of the land, both Nephites and Lamanites, and there were no contentions and disputations among them, and every man did deal justly one with another. 4 Nephi vs. 2

4. Joke of the week:

Q: Why was the architect in a hurry to get to the jungle?

A: Because he had a dead-lion to meet.

(or)

Collision Ahead

Please divert your course 15 degrees to the North to avoid a collision.

Recommend you divert YOUR course 15 degrees to South to avoid a collision.

This is the Captain of a US Navy ship. I say again, divert YOUR course.

No. I say again, you divert YOUR course.

THIS IS THE AIRCRAFT CARRIER ENTERPRISE; WE ARE A LARGE WARSHIP OF THE US NAVY. DIVERT YOUR COURSE NOW!

This is a lighthouse. Your call.

*5. Bee's Knees Award: *This guy is simply the best. He is so smart and at the same time always very eager to learn. He plays the piano like he was David Glen Hatch. He plays the trombone like he belongs on Bourbon Street in New Orleans. He is a fantastic example of the gospel. He stands for the truth and will be a great missionary one day. He loves his family. He is kind and sensitive to the needs of others. He is one of the greatest Deacons in the church. Parker, you are the Bee's Knees,

brotha!!!

6. Gospel question of the week: Who was the 12th president of the restored church?

7. If I were you (advice to grand kids): If I were you, I would start to learn a foreign language - maybe one where the church will be sending missionaries in the near future. Try it. I think you will like it.

8. What I learned this week: Missionaries need to learn how to live on the MSF (missionary support





Mama Maluke,
Mama
Stevenson and
I.

fund) allotment they get each month in their mission. They should not get extra funds from home. They should turn in money back to the mission if they end up with extra for the month.

*9. What I am grateful for: *The smiles of little children.

10. My goal for the week: We probably hit 12 teaching lessons for the week, not exactly sure. This week, my goal is to get the bicycles up and running.

*11. Photo of the week: *Three kids having a great time!

NOV_05_2017

Dear Family,

We are grateful for the privilege and blessing we have had to attend church today and to partake of the sacrament. Once again, I get a clean slate and I will be working on being a better person, a true disciple of the Lord, Jesus Christ. How cool is that? What a blessing to keep working on

that goal.

We are also very grateful that we had quite a few of our families come to church today. Sister Kusasa bore her testimony on how grateful she is for the gospel and that Mom and I were able to help her feel the Spirit to come back and enjoy church again. It was good to see her happy and recognizing the importance of church in her life.

Here's what happens: We pay a less active family a visit. We introduce ourselves and explain we are new and getting around to meeting members of the ward. We try to find out about them. When did they join the church? What do you remember the most when the missionaries were teaching you? We ask if we can leave a message about Jesus Christ. We share that message and bear our testimonies. Then we ask if we can return and share more about how we all can strengthen our testimonies.

They start to remember some very important things. They start to feel some thing they haven't felt for a while. The Spirit is whispering to

them that what they have heard is true and what they have been missing can be theirs again. Their testimony is rekindled enough that they determine to come to church. Then, when they come back to church we hope all the members will welcome them with open arms.

Attached is a photo of Mom, Sister Maluke and I. She is sweet and tender. Her grand daughter and two great grandchildren came today. We just visited them on Friday. It is wonderful to see their smiles and to see them so happy.

We have transfers on Wednesday. That means a little running back and forth to the airport. Looks like they are splitting up the Madagascar Elders so that each has a SACTM companion.

Oh, yeah, Mom accidentally poked me in the eye the other day and then started to laugh. Isn't there something inherently wrong with that type of behavior? With weekly events like this, I am beginning to wonder if they are all so accidental? Please pray for my physical well-being.

We love you all so much. Our cup runneth over! Even though we really miss being with the family, we are enjoying our "spiritual vacation" in a far away country.

Photos:

- Mama Maluke, Mama Stevenson and I - The jungle! I believe you would really encounter a few bad animals and reptiles in such a heavily-vegetated area like this - spitting Cape Cobras, Black Mambas, Puff Adders, baboons, oversize cats that can rip you apart, etc. No thanks! We will stay on paved roads.

Love,

Dad and Mom



The jungle! I believe you would really encounter a few bad animals and reptiles in such a heavily-vegetated area like this - spitting Cape Cobras, Black Mambas, Puff Adders, baboons, oversize cats that can rip you apart, etc. No thanks! We will stay on paved roads.

Nov_06_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We have had a full day today. It started with getting over to all of our missionaries' boardings to deliver mail, hang a curtain and give each of the Elders cupcakes that Sister Stevenson baked. I also changed out the water filters at each flat.

Then, it was to Gonubie Auto Worx to get a new grill and registration (license) plate ordered. Somewhere in Mdantsane we lost it???

Then, I loaded up the bikes and took them to Cycle HQ. They will look them over and give us a quote on tuning them up and replacing needed parts. They will call us Wednesday morning and if we give them the go-ahead, they will have the bikes ready by that same Wednesday end of business.

At 12 noon, we took off for our East

London 3rd Ward friends' house, the Steenbeeks. These are the people who live out ways, close to the beach and have all the animals. Mom brought brownies and Sister Davies brought an apple pie. The main course came from Sister Steenbeek, ox tail. Attached is a photo of the bovinial meal. It was really very delicious, but a bit greasy.

We took a walk on the beach and went to the location of an old shipwreck that happened in 1957. The story is that the ship left Durban and the whole crew was drunk. They turned over the wheel to a young boy cook who ran the ship aground. The wreck is 60 years old and the metal pieces are still in tact. You would think that the salt water, the unyielding waves and the moist, humid wind would have eroded those things a long time ago.

We had a nice time visiting and real-

ly made the effort to make sure these good people are fellowshipped. They always enjoy the senior couples. As good missionaries, I asked if we could leave a message with them. We read Matthew 16 when the Savior asks His disciples, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" Of course, Peter receives direct revelation from Heavenly Father, and says, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." I explained that all of us can receive personal revelation as we have questions, need confirmations, need understanding, need direction in life, etc.

Sister Stevenson, my lovely companion, was asked to say our departing prayer. She did so, beautifully, and, without any help.

Photos are self-explanatory.

We love you all very much - a lot more than yesterday!

Dad and Mom



Old shipwreck that happened in 1957

The main course came from Sister Steenbeek, ox tail. Attached is a photo of the bovinial meal. It was really very delicious, but a bit greasy.



Nov_07_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Yesterday afternoon our car battery went dead. I had to get a jump from a stranger and made it back home. I put a battery charger on it and fortunately, it was enough to get it barely started this morning. I went non-stop from our house to the Battery Centre to have things checked out. The alternator was good, but the battery was shot. \$75 USD and I was back on the road, scaring the H. E. Double Hockey Sticks out of people!

We made a lot of visits today with our fellowships, "Shakes" or Brother Zitshu. He is a great guy, return missionary and stalwart in the ward. He walks everywhere. He home teaches 17 families! We love him and wish we could do more for him to improve his situation. Certainly, our own HT or VT lists in the USA are not that large. Additionally,

all of our families live close by. You might agree that we have very little to complain about!

We gave several messages today. One was to Sister Dkova who was recently in a hospital for about three weeks. She was at the "highway Mall" (dangerous place) and was hit by an ambulance. Unfortunately, the ambulance drivers were drunk. She was knocked to the ground and had the baby toe on her left foot amputated. We found her in good spirits and happy to receive a message and prayer. We need to get her out to church. Her daughter is the one we need to see the most, but was not there, not home from work yet.

We had rain most of the day. We are not fair weather missionaries. We got out and got wet! The feelings we received from our visits were ample compensation for braving the elements. We have more rain for the

next two days. However, that is not bad news. This area needs the rain.

Photos:

- People indiscriminately dump there garbage all over the place. It is quite disturbing, but is even worse when you see children playing in and around it. - Mom and I are thinking about seeing this medicine man next time our budget runs out!

We hope and pray all is well with you. Put the Lord first in your lives and the rest will fall in place as you

strive to do your part off the work.

Love,

Dad and Mom

Waca Waca

Dear Family,

Here is a link to view our friends, Rollo and Charlene Steenbeek, as they are in a documentary about an otter they helped rehabilitate. They are the actual characters in the film.



People indiscriminately dump there garbage all over the place. It is quite disturbing, but is even worse when you see children playing in and around it.



Mom and I are thinking about seeing this medicine man next time our budget runs out!

However, they are now about 20 years older.

Enjoy,

Dad

It is a neat story and demonstrates their love of animals. Unfortunately, Waca Waca was accidentally electrocuted when work was being done on building an electric fence around the property.

Your children will like this documentary. The otter is nothing but perpetual energy!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V7Qdmqw582Q>

Nov_08_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Another rainy day. However, we left early this morning (5:30 AM) to get to the airport and see some of our missionaries off due to transfers. We had quite a few missionaries coming and going. As senior couples, we are encouraged to see them at the airport to say "Farewell" and "Welcome." We have good missionaries.

As we waited for an arriving flight, we bought five missionaries breakfast at the Mug and Bean. They salivated all over the menu and had a great breakfast. After the missionaries arrived, we all went our separate ways until 2 PM when the next load of Elders came in.

After lunch at the Pinecreek Restaurant, we headed back to the airport only to find that the flight was an hour delayed. So, we had lots of

waiting. Mom had made some banana, oatmeal and chocolate chip muffins for the airport missionaries that disappeared quickly. As a matter of fact, so quickly that I did not get one!

Part of our job is to help new missionaries feel welcome and comfortable to our area. We smile big, shake hands, give hugs and slap them on the back. We hope they get situated quickly and can contribute as soon as possible.

When we left the airport, we went along the beach to see if we could find Sister Ivy who sells African souvenirs. She makes a lot of the jewelry, but also buys stuff from her home country in Zimbabwe. Great to see the entrepreneur spirit and that she can support herself and family with her business. She is a member of the East London 3rd Ward and we met her when we first came to East

London. We were in her ward for about two weeks, then, we were transferred out to Mdantsane.

Photos:

- A pygmy among spiritual giants!
- Mom with Ivy at her trinket display on the esplanade

We love you. We think about you. We pray for you. We love to hear from you. Be true!

Dad and Mom



A pygmy among spiritual giants!

Mom with Ivy at her trinket display on the esplanade.



Nov_09_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We have had a full day trying to do good! We hope you do too.

I went to pick up the missionary bicycles this morning only to find that the shop did not do what I wanted. That should be no surprise to anyone that lives in South Africa. I wanted tire liners for each wheel and slime put in the tubes. That was not done so I ripped their entire shop apart in a fit of rage. Well, not really. I politely asked them to add those things to the tune up and I would be back in the morning to pick up the bikes.

Mom has baked some delicious applesauce muffins for the district meetings tomorrow. We also have a big bowl of fruit we take so the missionaries will have a couple pieces to eat or take with them.

We had great visits today. However, the Fikiso Family was a "no show" again. We plan to have a serious talk with Sister Fikiso about her husband. The whole family are members except the husband and they are basically back to activity. We think it is time he paint or get off the ladder.

Below is a photo of Sister Grace Ganjana. She is 90 years old and having some health issues. She was tickled pink when we gave her a printed photo of herself. We left a message (Mosiah 2:41) and asked if we could have a prayer before leaving. She said she liked a song...then, started singing, "God Be With You Until We Meet Again." Naturally, we all chimed in and sang with her.

We met with Ayanda Nqobo who has been less active for a while. We have tried to visit him a couple times but have missed him each time. We have left two notes for him with his chil-

dren. He came to church last Sunday and we told him we would come to see him again this week. He was very glad to see us and very humble, teachable. We discussed Helaman 5:12. He seemed to really appreciate that scripture. At the close of our meeting, I asked him who he would like to say the prayer. He said that he would. He gave a very beautiful, humble prayer that reflected the feelings of his heart.

Our electricity just went off and I cannot see the keyboard.

Our last visit was to Sister Velapi. She is a new convert to the Church and one of her favorite missionaries was just transferred. She was so happy to see us. She gave each of us a big hug. We shared a scripture with her and bore our testimonies. She then shared a scripture from the Doctrine and Covenants that she said was an answer to her feelings about the gospel. It was section 100 of the Doctrine and Covenants - sharing the gospel. She was very happy and told us she is working on a goal to go the the temple.



Sister Margaret, her mother and her son. Her son is the Young Men's President and she teaches seminary, very good members of the Church. (Grandma is not a member)



Sister Grace

Photos:

- Sister Grace - Sister Margaret,
her mother and her son. Her son is
the Young Men's President and she
teaches seminary, very good mem-
bers of the Church. (Grandma is
not a member)

No lights in the house and the com-
puter battery is on its way out. We
love you,

Dad and Mom

Lights are back on so I can proof
read this email!

Thom

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

I thought you might enjoy reading some thoughts I have had about Uncle Thom. I am forwarding this email that I sent to my brothers and sisters.

Love,

Dad

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As you well know, today marks the third anniversary of Thom's graduation to the other side. It has been fun to think and ponder a little today about memories and even what he might be doing on the other side.

I have thought about growing up together. Contrary to what many people may think, we did not talk all that much about things. The main

reason why is because we both thought and believed about 90% exactly the same when it came to life, the gospel, people, work, food, etc. I felt what he felt. He felt what I felt. I'd like to believe that this closeness and similarity was an important part of our pre-earth life and will be an important part of eternity.

He loved his brothers and sisters. He loved Annette and his children. He loved people and was such a joy for people to be around. He was happy when he made other people happy. He was positive. Challenges could bother him but they never got him down to the point where he was a depressing, discouraged and down-trodden person. He loved life. His testimony of the Savior was a strong anchor when the mighty winds of the adversary blew hard to throw him off course.

I've thought of road trips like our

journey back to East L.A. for a high school reunion. We went to our old homes, schools, restaurants and church buildings. We went to Toughy's and Thom got sicker than a dog eating onion rings and a hot fudge sundae. We had a good dose of nostalgia.

I thought about our 50 hour round trip from Utah to Dallas to pick up a Porsche. No sleep, but the excitement of having a car to convert over to a small block Chevy engine kept us awake and having fun. I would call every day to ask his opinion

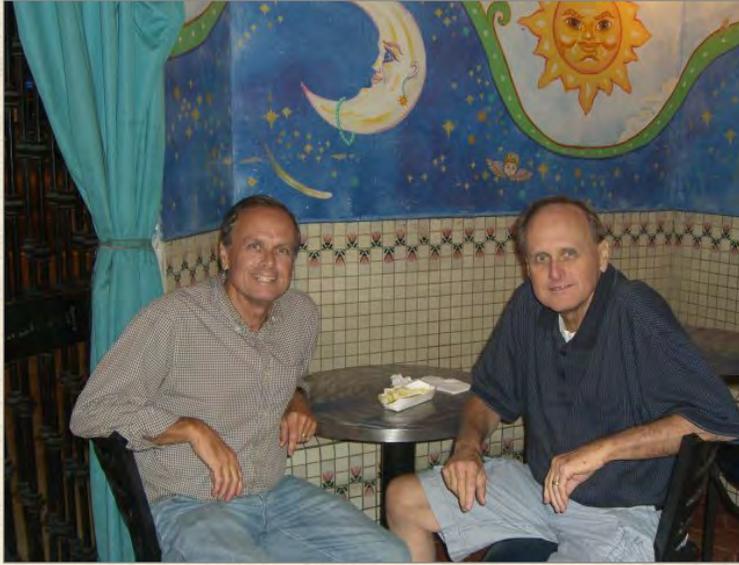
about what to do on the car. He was called on the phone so he could hear firsthand the first start of the car.

We worked together. He is the only person I think I could be in business with. We could always agree to go the same direction on issues and challenges confronting the business. There was no hesitation in saying, "That's a dumb idea." We didn't get hurt feelings too often.

So, he was a truly great brother. I'm sure all of you have similar memories of the boy.



Olvera St!



Taquitos at
Olvera St. - Los
Angeles

Nov_10_2017

Dear Family,

What a delightful day. We had district meeting this morning and even though the rain was pouring outside, it was a spiritual downpour inside. Our lesson was on feeling the Spirit as we teach and how important it is for the investigator/less active member to feel the Spirit also. We need to help that person know when the Holy Ghost is testifying and prompting them.

After the meeting we went to a paramedic/ambulance facility. One of our fellowshippers, Shakes, is thinking he would like to be a paramedic and we volunteered to chase down some information for him. He does not have a car or access to the Internet. Basically we found out that what he would like to do is probably out of his reach. He does not have the basic education to start such a career and he does not have the money to attend 4 years of training and school. After that, it is a very difficult field to get employment. To make matters worse, there is no college or univer-

sity in this area that offers the required training. He would have to go to some other major city like Cape Town or Port Elizabeth.

We are thinking of helping him get some basic first aid training through the paramedic facility and then, try to get him in the door at the hospital in Mdantsane. I will simply explain to the hospital management that my father-in-law was a U.S. Congressman and my wife is Mavis M. Stevenson. That should do the trick!

I copied some articles regarding gastric bypass operations to share with a diabetic dietitian in our nearby mall. She did an A1C blood test on me yesterday and it was all good news. My A1C 4 months ago was 6.6 which is one tick over the "diabetic" measuring stick. My A1C yesterday was 5.9. That equates to an average blood glucose measurement of 123. That is hot digity dog good!

I had a call from missionaries that while they were in a member's home, someone had stolen their hub caps. I sent a text message to all of our Elders that if they have hub caps, we need to get them secured with

I like to think that he is a very busy person on the other side of the veil. Can you imagine he and Dad being missionary companions? How about getting missionary instruction from the great prophets and apostles of days gone by? How about having fun times with Mom, Robert and so many other family members? Frankly, I think he is having too much fun!

I am so grateful for our knowledge of the great Plan of Happiness! One's passing would be so painful without that knowledge. Our separation is

but a short flick of time when compared to eternity. The big family reunion is coming!

Love,

Chris

nylon ties. That is a little insurance to help prevent hub caps from being stolen.

Mom and I spent this afternoon doing a lot of preparation for church on Sunday. I still need to read the Sunday school lesson because they have called on me the last two Sundays to teach - 5 minutes before class started. We wrote emails and read the Liahona. I spent some time sending a few notes to family about Uncle Thom since today is the third anniversary of his passing away. It has been a very good day.

We have some kind of critter that is leaving little surprises on our window sill almost daily. We cannot figure out where it is coming from???

So, today I went over to the store and got some mouse traps. I put one on the window sill and the other one behind the sofa. I'm betting it is a lizard. My studies over the years of animal fecal matter steers me in this direction. The texture, the smell, the color, the...never mind. I don't want to go into all the analysis I normally do.

Mom and I walked in the rain (more

like a drizzle) this afternoon. 10 laps = 2 miles.

We spent time with the Davies talking about what we can do for a Christmas open house with all our neighbors. We settled on a date and now we will think about some ideas of what to do. Mom had suggested a theme of, "CCCC" or "Celebrating Christ with Christmas Cookies." I did not want to hurt her feelings, so I suggested that was a good idea, but let's think of some more. She then came back with having several types of holiday breads and the theme, "Man Does Not Live By Bread Alone." That was a little better but, I think we still need to keep trying. (Mom is in a silly mood this evening.)

Photos:

- Sister Booi getting he hair done in corn rows - This home with glass cemented on top of the wall reminded me of how they protected their property in Bolivia

We love you very much! Honor your covenants and you will be very, very happy!

Dad and Mom



High School Reunion Newport Beach, California



Williams Elementary School - South San Gabriel, California



Hot Fudge Sundae from Tougheys



This home with glass cemented on top of the wall reminded me of how they protected their property in Bolivia



Sister Booi getting he hair done in corn rows.

2017 NOVEMBER 11 }

Nov_11_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Today we had two funerals. However, we only got to one half of one. We were on our way to the funeral when we received a phone call for one of our missionaries, saying they had a flat tire. So? No big deal, just change it. Well, I don't think the Elder had changed a tire before. He was telling me that he could not get the lug nut wrench on the bolts. I thought that maybe he had the wrong size wrench. But, that was not the problem. As it turned out, he could not get to the lug nuts because there was a hub cap covering them! That's when I knew we had to turn around and go help. We got there 20 minutes later and found that the landlord had pumped up their flat tire sufficiently that they could drive about five blocks to the tire repair shop.

We missed half of the funeral, but at

least the daughter and son-in-law of the man who died saw us and know we were there. BTW, we are taking dinner to them at their home this coming Friday.

We tried to go to the other funeral but ended up getting lost because the main highway was blocked off for construction. It was getting late, so we decided to turn around and head back to East London to pick up the bicycles we dropped off earlier in the week for repairs. It was still raining. Fortunately, by the time we got to the bike shop the rain had subsided some. We loaded up the bikes and headed back to Mdantsane to deliver the bikes to the walking missionaries.

It was nice to see the one funeral was LDS oriented. We have heard some funerals and the music and screaming preacher goes on and on. Attached is a photo of the funeral

program for Brother Gosa.

They were happy to get them and the weather was clearing up nicely. We explained the rules and discussed safety. I told them they were a pilot program for the rest of the mission and their feedback was very important. We'll see how it goes???

I spent some time this afternoon doing some shopping for weapons of mass lizard destruction. I bought a tube like device that goes on the bottom of your door to stop the breeze, and lizards, from coming into the house. I bought fly tape to hang from our air conditioning unit where I think the creepy lizard is dwelling. I bought a sticky trap to lay on the floor in case it ever comes down to the carpet area. I have two mouse traps with peanut butter on them - one on top of the AC unit and another one on the floor. And tonight, I am going to sit quietly in the living room with a flashlight and 12 gauge shotgun to blast the living daylights out of the pooping reptile if it is man enough to show its face. (JK about the shotgun.)

Photos:

- Missionaries on their bikes for the first day - Funeral program - As you can see, almost all women wear ducs (pronounced, "dukes")

We love you. Thank you for your prayers and support. You are great and we love and miss you.

Dad and Mom

Tid Bits

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

*1. Word of the week: * "hapless," (especially of a person) unfortunate. *Example:* By telling the truth we can avoid the hapless life of Pinocchio.

2. Quote of the week:

3. Scripture of the week:

What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken, and I excuse not myself; and though the heavens and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same.
-D&C 1:38

4. Joke of the week:

A pregnant woman gets in a car accident and falls into a deep coma. Asleep for nearly 6 months, when

she wakes up she sees that she is no longer pregnant and frantically asks the doctor about her baby.

The doctor replies, "Ma'am you had twins - a boy and a girl. Your brother came in and named them."

The woman thinks to herself, "No, not my brother... he's an idiot!" She asks the doctor, "Well, what's the girl's name?"

"Denise."

"Wow, that's not a bad name, I like it! What's the boy's name?"

"Denephew."

5. Bee's Knees Award: This kid has a great smile. He is very athletic. He is smarter than 100 scientist all crammed into an elevator. He is an excellent student. He could get a scholarship to any university if he

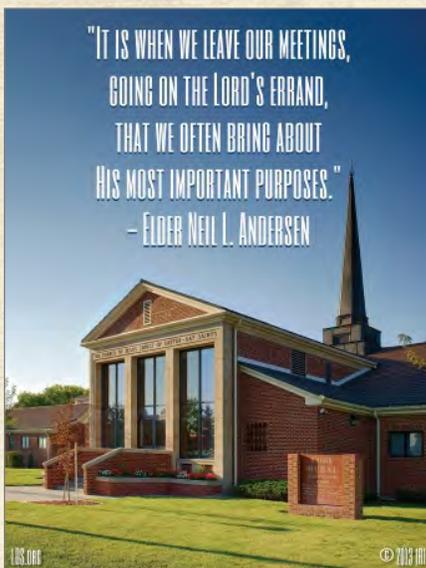
would just start making his bed. He loves his family and his family loves him. He is a responsible priesthood holder. He will make an outstanding missionary (hopefully to Bolivia).He is a great example of the gospel at home and at school. Everyone likes him and all the girls love him. Samuel, you are the Bee's Knees, Brotha!!!

*6. Gospel Question of the week: *Who was the first missionary into Prague after the restoration of the gospel in this dispensation?

7. If I were you (advice to grand kids): If I were you, I would bare my testimony frequently. The more you share your testimony, the more you will feel comfortable sharing it. Try it this coming fast Sunday. I think you will like it.

8. What I learned this week: I learned that commitment to the gospel can outweigh physical limitations. When a person is converted, they find a way to get to church to fellowship with the saints and to partake of the sacrament. I shook hands with a young lady today who





had sweaty palms. Her blouse seemed a little moist as I gave her a pat on the back. She walks a long way each Sunday to church on crutches! I so appreciate her. She is a wonderful example to me.

*9. What I am grateful for: *I love the Lord's Way of taking care of the needy. That is the best way!

*10. Goal for the week: * I will read the footnotes to Chapter 40, "The Long Night of Apostasy," in the book, "Jesus the Christ."

11. Photo of the week: I always wanted to be a dentist!

Have fun living the gospel this week!
Do good!

Love,

Dad and Mom

Missing Photos

Dear Family,

I'm trying just "Stevenson Kids" on this email to see if it will go through. If it doesn't I will get 24 "Message Blocked" notifications. No need to respond to this.

Attached are the photos that were missing from yesterday's update. I don't know what I did wrong, but I had fifty email notifications that my email failed to reach each person on the distribution list. I think it was because there was no text, just photos???

If anyone has some ideas on why, let me know.

Enjoy!

Dear Family,

We really enjoy Sundays in Mdantsane. However, by the fifth hour, I find myself dropping off and falling asleep. I need to work on that this coming week. I would rather stand at the back of the priesthood class than sit on the second row and drop my scriptures to the floor as I am dozing off!

Once again, I was called on to teach the Gospel Doctrine class. Fortunately, I had prepared ahead of time and it went well. Today, part of our lesson on continuing revelation was the historical announcement in June of 1978 that the priesthood would be extended to every worthy male in the church. That revelation has opened the doors for tens of thousands of black Africans to join the church and enjoy the full blessings of the priesthood and the temple. We see the blessings of that particular revelation every day here in South Africa.

A week ago, I was asked in class

about why Blacks were not extended the priesthood until 1978. What would you have said?

So good to see so many of our less active families at church. Mdantsane 1st Ward had a well-attended sacrament meeting. The 4th ward was good, but still needs help.

During Sunday School in the 4th Ward, they needed a teacher. I was about to volunteer because I had already given that lesson. But, fortunately, Big Brother Max was asked by the bishop to give the lesson. He did a good job for a spur of the moment crack at it. We noticed on a funeral program from yesterday that he was also one of the speakers. We believe the Lord is really touching the hearts of these people. We really want this family to go to the temple and wear those white socks we gave him!

After church we went to visit the Mdyosi family. We have been there about three times before, but only visited with the wife. She has seemed pretty bored with the church. Today we found Brother Mdyosi home. We had a good visit.

We discussed Helaman 5:12 and asked if we can return with additional messages to help us strengthen our testimonies of Christ. He said, "Yes." He is a mechanic and we hit it off well. (However, I don't bring up the fact that I have a Porsche back home.) Even his wife seemed to be more friendly. We need this family back to church!

The gospel is true. We have living prophets and apostles. What an amazing blessing! We have additional revealed scripture in our day, we have inspired talks from General Conference. What we know about the Plan of Salvation is infinitely more than what other religions believe. I hope we all realize just how blessed we are and what great light and knowledge we enjoy from the Lord.

Photos:

- Not uncommon to see roots of a tree close to the surface and spreading all over the place - I would like to see the machine that pulled this tree out of the ground. This is a huge tree with tons of roots. This photo was taken of the property right across the street from one of

our less active families.

You are great! We love you. We think of you often. We pray for you. We also pray for our house! Hope you have a great week.

Love,

Dad and Mom

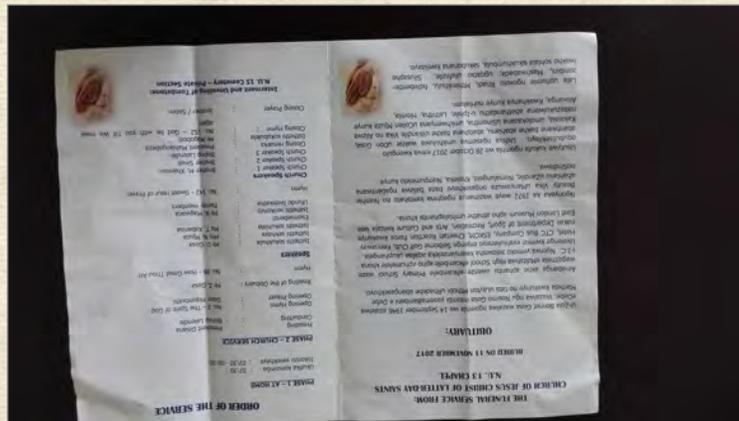


Missionaries on their bikes for the first day.



As you can see, almost all women wear ducs (pronounced, "dukes")

Funeral program



Not uncommon to see roots of a tree close to the surface and spreading all over the place



I would like to see the machine that pulled this tree out of the ground. This is a huge tree with tons of roots. This photo was taken of the property right across the street from one of our less active families.

Nov_13_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We have had a productive and relaxing Preparation Day.

Mom did some house cleaning and I cleaned the car inside and out. Right now, the car is in the garage, but it is lightning and thunder outside. We have a water shortage here, but if I wash my car everyday for a month, I think the shortage would turn into a bursting dam problem. Anytime I wash the car, you can bet it is going to rain!

The LIZARD!!! Oh, the LIZARD!!! I hate the LIZARD!!! We had done a marvelous job of setting up strategic traps to catch the repugnant reptile, but it has now moved to a new location, a different window sill to do its dirty duty. It is scary when a lizard can out think you. But please, do not feel sorry for us. We will be victorious. We will not give up until the nefarious lizard is hanging from our

perfectly positioned fly paper, or, it is flailing about as one of our mouse traps is squeezing the gizzard from the lizard. More details to come.

I took tool kits and flat tire repair kits over to the bicycle missionaries. I also got extra keys made for the shed the bikes will be stored in. After 1.5 days, no flats and the bikes are working okay. One of the missionaries is a little out of shape and having a hard time getting up the hills. We hope that will change.

On my way to the missionaries, the traffic was crawling and backed up for miles. As it turned out, people were protesting something (Electricity rates too high, No free college education, unemployment...). This is when people will set tires on fire and put them right in the highway. You have to be careful, because if there are not any police, they will start to attack the cars. Then, if they really

get riled up, they start to attack the people in the cars. When I drove by all the smoke, there were no protesters and just some grass fires and smoldering on the side of the highway.

Mom and I did some driving down to Gonubie Beach where we met Terry the life guard again. I told him I was going to have the young missionaries come visit him. He said, okay but he was hard to reach many times. I told him they would stop by the life guard house to see him.

I had a guy yesterday that works at a pizza shop tell me I looked like Michael Douglas. I thought that was interesting because Uncle Thom got that comment a lot. We struck up a conversation and I got all his contact information on a pass along card and gave it to the missionaries. I told the missionaries to tell the guy, "Michael Douglas sent us."

Mom gave me a great hair cut today! And, she made some of my favorite cookies. Can P-day get any better than that?

Anchors along the beach front.





Each weigh
over 25
pounds.



Some kind of
birds on the
rocks. I thought
they were
penguins at
first, but, I think
they are more
from the
family of
Japanese
Yellow Tail
Barn Swallows

Photos:

- Anchors along the beach front.
Each weigh over 25 pounds. - Some
kind of birds on the rocks. I thought
they were penguins at first, but, I
think they are more from the family
of Japanese Yellow Tail Barn Swal-
lows

Have a great day. We love you. Keep
doing good things! Just a warning, if
you do bad things, you will be un-
happy.

Dad and Mom

Nov_14_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Rain, rain ,rain. And, It looks like we have rain for the next two days! We are not complaining because the area needs the water. In Cape Town it is a lot worse.

Here in East London, I have become very good at the sailor's shower. Step 1 - Get wet. Step 2 - turn off shower and lather up with soap. Step 3 - Rinse and get out. I do all of this with a bucket in the shower to catch any gray water. We use this to throw on the plants outside. It is a very quick shower and saves a bunch of water.

We feel blessed today that we were able to see some families that have been elusive over the last couple months. With out going into all the details, these are people that need to come back to the Church. Their lives would be so much better and happier.

Sister Carol Jako has been inactive for years. She said she cannot come to Church for a while because she has a lot of things she has to do to get her boy ready to go to the "Bush." So, we will come back in about four weeks. The bush is an expression the more traditional people use for the rite of passage from being a boy to becoming a man. Basically, a young man will live alone in the more jungle parts of the Mdantsane area for three weeks. He is on his own and limited to very little to eat. We don't know what else happens, but at the end of it all, he is circumcised. Maybe, if he is lucky, he will faint from hunger before the knives come out! Any way you look at it, it does not seem like too much fun.

We had a very good visit and lesson with Brother Fikiso. He seemed receptive and interested in what we had to say. We reviewed the

"Restoration" brochure and then, discussed the Book of Mormon. Mom talked about the origin of the Book of Mormon and I talked about what is in the book and how we can obtain a testimony of it. We committed him to read it and to pray about it. Mom invited him to bring his family to church for stake conference on Sunday. We hope and pray he will follow through in reading and praying. He needs the gospel and his family needs to go to the temple and be sealed together.

We met with Phumlani, a returned

missionary and less active. He actually served his mission in Salt Lake City. Admittedly, he has gone down hill since his return. We are hoping he will turn the corner and make some good choices. Today was his birthday (38 years old) and on our way home, Mom said she would bake him a small birthday cake. I am a little suspicious of the guy, but what can I say, my dad was a cop. I hope I am totally wrong.

Photos:

- Children love candy. This is the bag we carry in the car to hand out



Children love candy. This is the bag we carry in the car to hand out pieces to kids along the way. On some streets we are very popular!



With all the rain, the kids love to play in the gutters. They like to float things down the stream of brown water. Not a healthy environment, but they have great fun!

pieces to kids along the way. On some streets we are very popular! - With all the rain, the kids love to play in the gutters. They like to float things down the stream of brown water. Not a healthy environment, but they have great fun!

Have a great day honoring your covenants. We love you all very much,

Dad and Mom

Nov_16_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Wow, a busy day! I don't know where to start, so maybe I will get the LIZARD report out of the way. LIZARD REPORT: We think the lizard is gone.

I'm glad that is taken care of. Now for the rest of the day. We met our Fellowship at 1:30 at the Church. He is a young man, Brother Faltein, that turns 21 years old tomorrow. We call him Brother Faltein because we can't pronounce his first name! He is polite, knows the terrain and speaks the language. He is planning on a mission and we think he will be exceptional.

Last night Mom had baked a cake for the return missionary that just turned 38 years old and considers himself to be a hip hop artist. He has been very inactive for years. He was very happy to receive the cake. We

had a good message for him and hope to see him at church. At least he said he would come.

One of the difficult things we regularly run into is people without money to buy enough food or to purchase electricity. Two homes today have been without electricity. One family for a week. They happen to be in debt, so when the father is suppose to get paid, the creditors have snatched up all the money through some type of garnishment. Paycheck = zero.

Later today, we were at the Mdantsane grocery store and saw the young boy of this family. He came up to us and got in line with us. He had two loaves of bread and a Styrofoam container of some warm food. Of course, we purchased the food for him and told him to give the money his mother gave him back to her. And, we gave him a ride home.

Please do not rat us out to the mission president. The only other people that can be in the car with us are fellowshippers. BTW, He is a great boy with a wonderful Book of Mormon name, Limhi.

Mom delivered some green, yellow and red peppers to Mama Keya so she can make a salad for the Relief Society cultural activity coming up on Saturday. While we visited with her, she asked us to also get 6 cans of baked beans. So, we did that. Then, when we delivered the beans, she asked us to get a bottle of Chut-

ney. We did that and I was waiting to see what else she was going to ask us to do. Don't get us wrong, she was not feeling well and is 76 years old. It was a lot of running around, but we were glad to help.

We tried dropping off cupcakes for the Ngalo Family without any luck. This is a family that seems to avoid us. We actually tried to visit two times today. The second time we could tell people were inside, but after several times knocking on the door, no one would answer. So we left a note we had written earlier this



Can you believe these are the same shoes that went into the mud yesterday?



It is strange, but everywhere we look, people have clothes on the line, but do not seem to worry about them when it starts raining. We go to a home and clothes, still on the line, are dripping wet with rain for days.

morning to tell them we want to visit and please give us a call when they were ready. We also told them about a RS activity on Saturday and stake conference this Sunday. We put the cupcakes back in the car. Someone will have to eat them before the go stale!!!

We met the father of the Pakati Family who is not a member. We had a short, pleasant visit and have his permission to come back and visit some more. He works 7 days a week and drives a big truck for Coca Cola - night shift. He is a very cordial

gentleman and needs to be a member of the church. He could be a great asset to the ward. His other family members are starting to come back to church.

We had other good visits and did not get back to home until 8 PM. Still raining! Before we dropped off our fellowshipping, we bought him some amaguena with "paloni" or what we would call bologna. There is just him and his grandmother at their home. We bought him 4 fat cakes (amaguena) and four paloni. Additionally, Mom gave him 4 cupcakes! One dis-

appeared before he got to his front door as an older guy approached him for something to eat.

Photos:

- Can you believe these are the same shoes that went into the mud yesterday? - It is strange, but everywhere we look, people have clothes on the line, but do not seem to worry about them when it starts raining. We go to a home and clothes, still on the line, are dripping wet with rain for days. - When you see a large tent like this, it typically means there is a funeral going on.

- Here is a big bowl of soup that Mama Keya orchestrated. In her old folks meeting hall, she feeds people this soup and bread. Each person throws in 5 R (\$0.40) and they get their own bucket to take home. The soup looks pretty scary up close.

Have a wonderful day. Please make Andrew go through the spanking machine for his birthday. We love you all very much.

Dad and Mom

Correction

Dear Family,

It was pointed out to me by my dear companion that my description of young men going to the "Bush" was not quite correct and lacking details. Mom has read a very good book called, "The Covenant," where there is some good information about this ceremony.

Here are two links that help provide a better picture of this rite:

<http://www.southafricalogue.com/features/the-xhosa-circumcision-ritual.html>

<http://magazine.africageographic.com/weekly/issue-48/xhosa-circumcision-ritual-south-africa-its-hard-to-be-a-man/>

It is interesting reading. I'm glad this is not a ritual common to the United States!

Enjoy,

Dad and Mom



Here is a big bowl of soup that Mama Keya orchestrated. In her old folks meeting hall, she feeds people this soup and bread. Each person throws in 5 R (\$0.40) and they get their own bucket to take home. The soup looks pretty scary up close.



When you see a large tent like this, it typically means there is a funeral going on.

Nov_18_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We started today by picking up Sister Davies so she could go with Mom to the stake cultural activity. Mom was asked to bring a scarf so the sisters could make her a duc. (See Photo) When we got to Mdantsane, we picked up a fellow-shipper to ride with me while Mom and Sister Davies went to the activity.

Zizi and I had a chance to catch a lot of people home. Some of these for the first time. We also found the two people who helped us get unstuck from the mud the other day. I got their names and promised them cookies when I return with Mom. I also got the shoe size of the man who lost his shoe in his attempt to help us. We plan to pick up a pair of shoes for him. We go back on Tuesday and we will get a chance to leave a message and set further teaching

appointments.

While traveling with Zizi I mentioned my gratitude for all the knowledge we have about the Plan of Salvation. I told him how very little other Christian churches knew. He told me that after his brother was stabbed to death, a pastor from another church came to see his parents. The Pastor asked, "Do you know where your son is right now?" Brother Lubelwana said, "No." The pastor told him, "He is in hell." Zizi said that was the most angry he has ever seen his father. His father went to the bedroom to get something (couldn't understand what he said it was) and came back to the preacher and told him to get out before he beat the living daylights out of him.

Six months later, the missionaries come into the life of this family and the rest is history. Can you imagine how grateful these parents were

when they were explained the great Plan of Salvation?

Later in the day, Mom and I were at a restaurant and as we were visiting, I went to tell her how thankful I am that we have this wonderful, comforting message to share with the world. I could not get the words out. I was so full of gratitude. Right there in the restaurant I started to tear up. The waitress probably thought I didn't like the food!

I got the car washed inside and out. It was pretty dirty after the rain and

muddy roads.

Photos: - Cultural event photos of some of the 90 sisters at the activity - One of our less active members working on a car. (These are his kids who were "helping" him.)

We love you all very much. Use Saturday to prepare for the Sabbath. Make the Sabbath a delight. Love one another (that goes for you too, David).

Dad and Mom



Cultural event photos of some of the 90 sisters at the activity



Saturday is a special day!

Just had to send these two other photos to you. On the way home today, Mom and I passed by some men putting up a billboard. Just ladders on unstable ground to get to the top. No safety straps. Probably 30 feet or more high. One shot is just the guys legs sticking out from behind as he works on the other side. Someone call OSHA!

Hello Children

This is my first attempt at a group email. I know you are used to hearing from Dad and he will write his update later. He is washing the car so I have access to the computer. Just want to start by saying that I love all of you so much and miss you so much. I love seeing your posts to the website and love knowing that you are all happy, healthy and working hard.

I am going to admit that I did not know that being here in Africa on a mission would be so hard emotionally. I love being here and doing what we are doing. I do not feel afraid except when we get stuck in the mud in a rainstorm and even then it was not scary just uncomfortable not knowing how we would get unstuck but that was solved very quickly by kind strangers who helped white strangers out and they were happy the whole time as they got muddy and wet to help us. We feel so blessed.

At our district meeting the closing song was "Ye Elders of Israel" As I sang tears came to my eyes and I thought this was written with Mdantsane in mind especially verse 3. Hymn # 319. I love making visits with these young fellowshippers. It is not that they have a lot to say but when they do I learn much about being more Christ like. An example... We visited an inactive family a couple of weeks ago the Mgidi's. Brother Mgidi was very loud and he yelled and pounded his chest and kept saying Jesus Christ is in me. At one point I decided to calmly bear testimony to see if we could change the

spirit that was there. He listened for a couple of minutes and I thought maybe he was listening as I felt the spirit. Then he started this very strange loud fake laughing and he said you do not need to come here again. I was really taken aback. I did not know what to say so we decided it was time to leave since we were not making any progress. As we were getting into the car I said how this man scared me a little with his yelling and laughing. As we started to drive away the fellowshipper said to me "we should not judge as usually there is another reason that the less actives are not coming rather than the reason that they give you." He was very humble and I learned that I need to be less judgmental. It was a blessing to me to share that day with Patrick.

Today was a Stake Relief Society activity. As we were driving into the parking lot we saw Sister Keya who made a "salad" for the activity. She is 76 yrs old and pretty large in size so I know it was hard for her to come and when we saw her a couple of days ago she had the flu. We had taken her many of the ingredients for the salad yesterday. (Red, green

and yellow peppers, baked beans and chutney) She was walking up the hill with a very heavy dish of the salad. We took the salad from her and she walked the rest of the way to the church. She said she made the salad yesterday and it "slept" in the refrigerator overnight. It was very delicious. I took a small serving of the salads and there was extra so I went back to the serving table to get a little more. There were no serving spoons in the dishes but I found one at the end of the table and dished up more bean's and a little potato salad. These beans were warm and spicy. I enjoyed them. There was a sister at the table who also was getting seconds but since the serving spoons were not in the bowls she just licked off her spoon so it was clean and dished up more. When we were finished eating a little girl took our plates and another woman who had come in late and the plastic utensils were all gone she took the one off of my plate to use since I was finished. Also I forgot to mention that when Sister Davies and I went through the line the plastic utensils were gone but I saw two that had fallen on the floor and they had not been used so I picked them up and we wiped them

off on our shirts and enjoyed our lunch. See how good we are about fitting in. Also we each took a scarf to the activity and a young woman tied up our ducs so we had some culture about us.

The theme of the activity was developing unity. Each of the Wards did a native dance and song. They really got into it and it was fun. It was very loud sometimes with everyone chanting and screeching and one woman had a playground whistle that she blew and blew. I wondered if part of what they did was try to make a lot of noise. The singing was really beautiful. Wish I had a video to show you but my cameraman was not with me.

When we went into the cultural hall we wrote our names on a slip of paper and later they played a game. They pulled a name from the box and the person conducting (Sister Mkeke) told 5 things that she knew about that sister who's name she pulled. Then that Sister pulled a name from the box and told 5 things about the next sister. If she did not know the sister she could ask her questions. Two of the questions fre-

quently asked were, How many children do you have and then are you married? In that order. Surprisingly many had children and were not married, maybe not surprisingly. They did that for about 15 minutes and it was fun for what I could understand. Some of it was in Xhosa so I did not understand that part. The women were all friendly and welcoming. I was glad that Sister Davies came with me to keep me company. This was something that will probably not happen in the wards/ stake that she is assigned to so she was glad to come.

I hope this is not too long or boring. I love the kindness of these people. When they conduct a meeting they will say thank you to the persons who said the prayer, lead the singing, played the organ and to the congregation for their lovely singing. . Last week Bishop Jada also said "welcome all visitors and I say unto them feel at home" I love their phraseology. It has been a great day. Love you. You are in our prayers . Hugs and Kisses, Mom, Grandma





One of our less active members working on a car. (These are his kids who were "helping" him.)



This guy's legs sticking out from behind as he works on the other side. Someone call OSHA!



Mom and I passed by some men putting up a billboard. Just ladders on unstable ground to get to the top. No safety straps. Probably 30 feet or more high.

Tid Bits

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

1. Word of the week: "superfluous," more than enough, excessive. * Example: *In teaching the gospel, the Spirit can help you find the right balance of information and words for the investigator versus being superfluous.

*2. Quote of the week: *

3. Scripture of the week: D&C 1: 31, 32-31 For I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance; 32 Nevertheless, he that repents and does the commandments of the Lord shall be forgiven;

4. Joke of the week:

Q: How can you tell they played football in the Book of Mormon?

A: "And it came to pass..."

(or)

Q: When is an LDS missionary like an elephant?

A: When he starts to get trunky.

5. Bee's Knees Award: Do you know all the cars from the movie, "Cars?" Have you ever driven in a fast car to go to Valley Market to get an ice cream cone? Do you have a huge backyard to play in? Probably not. This boy is so cool. He is handsome, intelligent and growing big. He is trying to be like Jesus. He loves his sister and always listens to his Daddy and Mommy. He is a fast runner, high jumper and a strong lifter. Christopher, you are the Bee's Knees, brotha!!!

*6. Gospel question of the week: *

Can you untangle this name of a person found in the scriptures?

SCOENUAL

7. If I were you (advice to grand kids): If I were you, I would exercise every day. Make it a habit. Try it. I think you will like it.

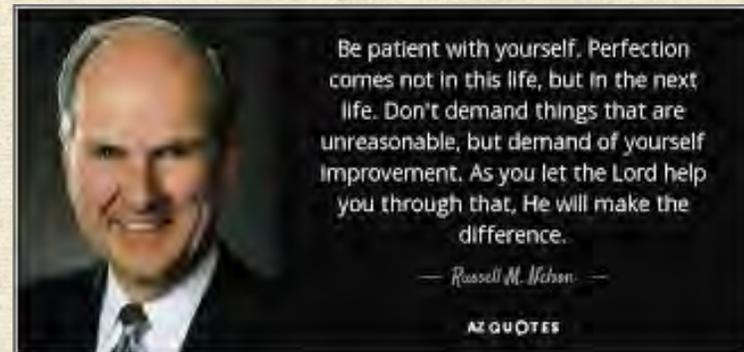
8. What I learned this week: The Holy Ghost is jealous of our companionship - he is ever so interested in being with us. He wants to be with us to bless our lives. However, he cannot be our companion if we chose to do things that offend the Spirit.

9. What I am grateful for: Our knowledge of the Plan of Salvation.

*10. My goal for the week: *I plan to have an enjoyable time with my wife on our trip to Port Alfred this coming Thursday. We will be eating a Thanksgiving feast with other senior couples.

*11. Photo of the week: * Two beautiful babies with their daddies!

Have fun living the gospel this week!
Love,
Dad and Mom



Two beautiful babies with their daddies!



Nov_19_2017

Dear Family,

Today we were a part of history! This morning we went to the very first stake conference of the Mdantsane Stake of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The first 30 minutes of the conference was stake business and then a short message from our stake president. The balance of the conference was a broadcast from Salt Lake for the Southeast Area of Africa.

The Speakers were great! Elder Carl Cook of the Seventy, who was the Area President when Uncle Greg and Aunt Sandy were on their mission, conducted the meeting. He spoke later and emphasized the importance of studying the Book of Mormon. We also heard from Elder Calister, Sister Oscarson and Elder Hamilton (presently our Area President).

Our last speaker was Elder Neal L. Anderson. His talk was outstanding for the people of Africa to hear. He talked about the gathering of Israel

and how the work was going so strongly in this part of the Lord's vineyard. He had story after story and picture after picture of Black Africans and how they have pioneered the work. I have to believe all of our Mdantsane members were so impressed and proud to be a member of the Church. They truly are the pioneers of Africa.

We stopped by a house of what we think are investigators to drop off a Bible. A member had told us to go see this family. The young missionaries had been there a time or two already. We spoke with the Elders and we are going to proceed with this family and see if there is enough interest to have the Elders come back. The Mama did not speak too much English but she seemed very happy to get a Bible for the home. We made arrangements to come back on Tuesday. We will take a fellowshipping to help us with Xhosa.

We stopped by a less active member's home, Brother Madiyosi. He is the car mechanic. Unfortunately, he was not there. We gave a short lesson on prayer to his wife and their two children. She does not speak or

understand very much English. Her husband on the other hand, speaks four languages - Xhosa, Africans, Zutho and English. We will try to see them again in about a week.

Photos:

- This is a BMW Hybrid that is a very expensive car. I don't get it, we see all these expensive cars and can't figure out how anyone can afford them. One fellowshipper told us they are up to their eye balls in debt, and, having a car is one way they can show some prestige. - Thought you might want to see our water bottles. We each try to drink at least two of these a day.

Keep doing good things. We are grateful for your support and prayers. Two very important rules for you: First - always put the gospel foremost in your life. Second - always remember the first rule.

Love,

Dad and Mom



This is a BMW Hybrid that is a very expensive car. I don't get it, we see all these expensive cars and can't figure out how anyone can afford them. One fellowshipper told us they are up to their eye balls in debt, and, having a car is one way they can show some prestige.



Thought you might want to see our water bottles. We each try to drink at least two of these a day.

Nov_20_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Today was preparation day and I had to get the car in for the 60,000 Km service. I didn't have an appointment so I just got there first thing this morning when they opened up. I got the car in, but, it was not going to be available until later in the afternoon. Fortunately, they had a shuttle to take me back to the house (25 minute drive).

We had four missionaries come over with clothes that needed to be mended by Mom. She jumped right on it. While she sewed, the missionaries had soup, toast, cookies and some botched lemon bars. They are really good a cleaning up leftovers!

Here is what I posted to Facebook with the picture that is attached below:

*These four seasoned missionaries

came over today to have Sister Stevenson mend some clothing for them. While they were here, I asked them what advice they would give young men and women just about ready to go on a mission? From left to right:*

Elder Msali (Durban, South Africa, "Don't take yourself too seriously." Elder LeBrun (Papeeti, Tahiti), "Have a desire to serve." Elder Smith (Johannesburg, South Africa), "Be ready for change." Elder Tshwane (Johannesburg, South Africa), "Be worthy and willing."

BTW, they ate food like they were starving to death! However, they were very polite and fun to be with.

When we picked up the car this afternoon, it turns out we were 25

kilometers (13 miles) over 60,000. So, they did not include the service under the pre-paid service plan! I really thought that was a cheap shot. I think in the future we will avoid this dealership as much as possible. Mom and I found Allspice at a high end grocery store. It is hard to find. We bought all the bottles on the shelf (4). Now she can make applesauce muffins for the missionaries on Friday.

We also purchased some shoes for the man that helped us out of the mud and in doing so, lost his shoe.

He never found it. I followed up with him and got his shoe size. We plan to see him and his neighbor tomorrow or Wednesday.

Thanks for being such good sons and daughters. We love you very much.

Dad and Mom



A beautiful bush just outside a neighbor's door.



Nov_21_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Today was our marathon meeting - Mission Leadership Council. We got off easy today, only 4.5 hours of actual meeting time.

We had a killer lunch that made the rest of the meeting tough to stay awake for. Enchiladas, green salad, fruit salad and chocolate chip bars.

After our meeting, Mom and I shot out to our area and had a good meeting with Sister Mkwando and some of her kids. We were prepared to talk about the doctrine of baptism. However, when we started, Mom tried to confirm that it was actually baptism we were to talk about. She said, "Yes, you know, baptisms they do in the temple." That changed our lesson plan a little. One very nice thing, Mom did all the teaching!!!

Then we went to the Mpongo Family.

They had a guy there from another church, Moses sitting there with his Bible. It looked like a set-up. However, we had already planned that we were going to talk about the first part of the Restoration up to when Christ's apostles were killed and the gospel was once more removed from the earth. If he was having any heart burn, there wasn't too much he could disagree with. We go back to see them on this Sunday to discuss the great prophet of this dispensation, Joseph Smith.

Our teaching with Brother Fikiso went okay. He did not do his reading in the Book of Mormon because, "I had a certain problem weighing me down and I couldn't get my mind right ot read the scriptures." We read favorite passages of scripture with him. He was listening. At the end, he said, "Those were very good scriptures you read." Mom made the excellent point that when we read and

pray, we can get spiritual help and answers to our problems. How cool is that!

I typed up the minutes from our big meeting this morning and got them sent off to the president. Not my favorite thing to do.

Photos:

- Mdantsane is massive. This is a very small part of the township. - You may have seen this before, but little kids love making and driving these carts. They wear the wheels down to nothing.

Enjoy your day. We love you. The Lord loves you. And, here is some election information for you:

The Lord votes for you
The devil votes against you
You cast the deciding vote!

Dad and Mom

Mdantsane is massive. This is a very small part of the township.



You may have seen this before, but little kids love making and driving these carts. They wear the wheels down to nothing.



Nov_22_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

I went back to the car dealership that would not honor the service plan because our car was 13 miles over the 60,000 Km mark. I explained to the service manager that I was not too happy with them not covering things under our pre-paid plan. As it turns out, they tried to get it covered by calling GM and getting permission. It was not the mileage that disqualified the car, it was that three year time frame was up back in the month of May. The plan goes for three years or 60,000 Km or what ever comes first. My mistake.

I ran a bunch of errands this morning while Mom knocked herself out baking and getting ready for our Port Alfred trip. She has made two kinds of dinner rolls, two kinds of cookies, applesauce muffins, etc. The cookies are for the freezer except for

the dozen or so we took to the guys that helped us out of the mud.

We drove out to meet those guys. We told them how much we appreciated their kindness and help. Then, we asked if we could come back and teach them some lessons about our church. Both guys, who live by themselves, but are next door neighbors, said, "Yes." Sunday is the best time for them. So, we are going to try this Sunday and bring the young Elders to meet them. We also got a referral for another neighbor as she was walking by and said, "hello."

We stopped by Mama Keya's house. Mom had a skirt Sister Davies gave her to give to Sister Keya. Sister Keya has some friends that would come to church but they don't have a dress. So, Mom took this skirt and we dropped it off. We'll see if it fits. Sister Keya said these girls are very big!

While we were there, she told us some sad stories about her daughter who died from HIV. She died after giving birth to a child 2 months earlier. The son had HIV also and was very sick. Everyone knew he was dying. Mama Keya promised the Lord that if He would give her this child that she would give him back to Him. Miraculously, he is now serving a mission and doing very well with his health.

On our way back to the house, we saw these mamas cutting grass that will be used to provide shelter for

their boys who are scheduled to go to the "Bush." This is the ritual that is designed to make a young man, a "Man." (See photos below)

Have a great day. The Lord is mindful of you. Remember who you are and act accordingly. Love,

Dad and Mom



Mamas cutting grass that will be used to provide shelter for their boys who are scheduled to go to the "Bush."



This is the ritual that is designed to make a young man, a "Man."



Nov_23_2017_Update(and 24th)

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Sorry there was not an update in your email yesterday. We were on the road and there was not a way to send an update. We went to a resort type town on the coast called Port Alfred. We just returned about an hour ago. It was a good trip to take. Nice to have a break from the usual routine and to visit with other senior couples.

We arrived early in Port Alfred. We left East London at 6 AM, thinking that it would take about 3 hours to get there due to construction traffic. As it turned out, no stops along the way and we arrived around 8 AM. Our hosts, the Petersons, were not quite ready for us. So, we went to a cafe and had breakfast. It was a lot of food. I had a three egg omelette that filled me right up.

We got over to Elder and Sister Pe-

terson's boarding around 9:30. President Watson (counselor in the mission presidency) was trying to set up a Skype meeting for all the senior couples in the mission plus the mission president and the AP's. The reception was so bad, we couldn't get it put together. My kind of meeting!!!

We visited and then started lunch around 1:30. We had the set of Elders that are assigned to the area also join us for dinner. Great Young men from Zimbabwe and Jo-burg. First time for them to eat turkey! (See photo).

The meal was outstanding. (See photos) Afterward Mom and I went for a walk on the beach. It was approaching sunset and the scene was post-card perfect. We were the only ones on this long stretch of beach, walking hand in hand and enjoying the beauty of it all. I never would have guessed that we would have been

there 20 years ago - walking on a beach along the Indian Ocean!

That night we watched, "The Gods Must Be Crazy." Interesting movie that I think has a theme of returning to a more simple and less stressful life. After the movie we went to our bed and breakfast. Clean room and

nice environment. This B&B was in a very nice part of the town and close to the beach. 4 star accommodations.

In the morning, Mom and I walked down to the beach and back, about a 30 minute round trip walk. Then, breakfast. I had another large omelette with toast. Very good and





great service. At 9:30 the other couples met us and we went to a town called Bathurst to walk through all their little shops and galleries. It was a nice time to see all the handiwork of the locals.

After the shopping, more food - Lunch! I was already full but then ordered some Pork Belly Roast. It was pretty tasty, but a little too much gristle for me. I could not eat it all so I had them make me a "take away" - dogie bag.

After that, we headed home. Just a

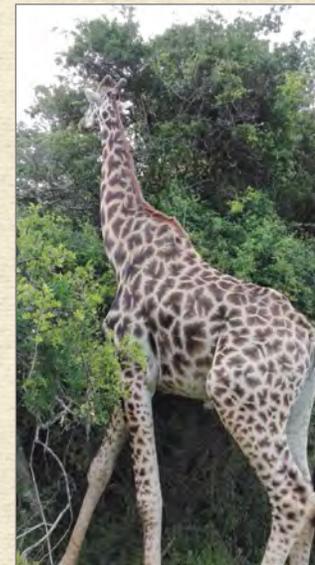
little stoppage along the way, maybe an extra fifteen minutes.

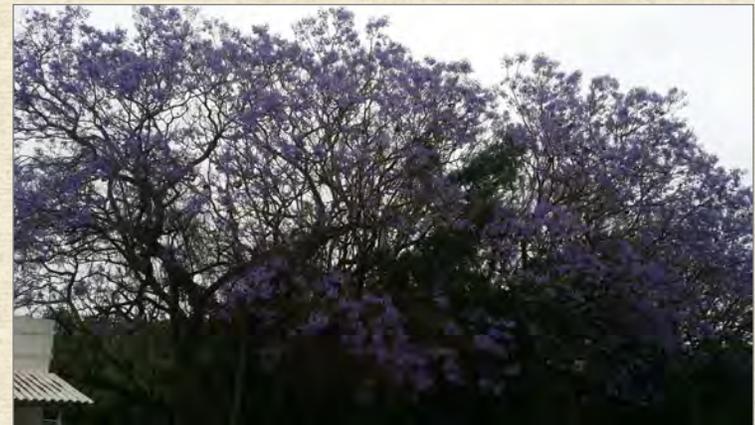
I have a lot of photos. Some are here and others are coming in another email. Some of these photos come from a drive we had through a private game reserve. The big Giraffe is quite tame, but still a wild animal and you have to be careful.

We love you very much and think of you every day. Be good. Be very good.

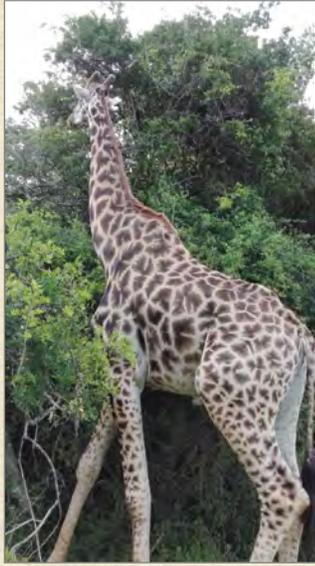
Dad and Mom











2017 NOVEMBER 24 }

For Sam

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Samuel,

We saw this embroidery piece in a craft shop and immediately thought of you. We almost bought it to send to you, but realized you don't need this. You are obedient and respectful of your parents. You want to make your bed every morning.

If you make your bed, you will:

- Have more girl friends (friends that happen to be girls)
- Play much better basketball
- your PPG will go up 34%
- Never do drugs
- Be a dynamite missionary
- Not have pimples and other complexion issues

Love,

Grandpa and Grandma Stevenson



2017

NOVEMBER 25 }

Nov_25_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Today was running around and getting some errands completed. We had some mail we needed to get to the missionaries and some banking to do. I did that while mom did some exercising and making gingerbread men cookies. She made a giant bag of them that we wanted to use in Christmas countdowns, but the molasses she used was very bitter and the cookies turned out tasting a little different than we anticipated. We have a "recycle" bag that we put things in that locals rummage through to get things they can use to make trinkets to sell. We are going to put the bag of cookies in there and hope someone might like them. We think that is better than just throwing them into the "wet" garbage bag.

We purchased a boatload of candies that we are going to use in the

countdowns. We decided we will put two candies per day and give one countdown to each companionship.

Beautiful weather today. Really only a couple of days where we had oven-like, humid weather. The climate reminds me a lot of Southern California.

I drove by some guys replacing a brick wall. The wall was straight and level. The head guy was more than happy to let me take his picture. (See attached)

Photos:

- This is what it's like to look up to a giraffe - This little open cabin in the foliage is where Prince William and his wife (girlfriend?) stayed once. If you look closely, you can see crumbs from the crumpets they had for breakfast.

Have a great day preparing for the

Sabbath. It is a great blessing to go to sacrament meeting and participate in partaking of the bread and water. We get to start the week with a new slate and have *the blessing of striving to improve ourselves*. How cool is that?!

Love,

Dad and Mom

Tid Bits

Dear Family,

1. Word of the week: "gloat," dwell on one's own success or another's misfortune with smugness or malignant pleasure. * Example:* "And this shall be a sign unto you that the wicked shall gloat over the win/loss record of the cougar in the last days." -Revelation 8:29

2. Quote of the week:



This little open cabin in the foliage is where Prince William and his wife (girlfriend?) stayed once. If you look closely, you can see crumbs from the crumpets they had for breakfast.



This is what it's like to look up to a giraffe.

3. Scripture of the week:

And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them.

4. Joke of the week:

*Diner: *Is there any soup on the menu?

*Waiter: *No, sir - there was, but I wiped it off.

(or)

Q: Why won't most cannibals eat ex-Mormons?

A: They're too bitter.

5. Bee's Knees Award: This girl is totally awesome. She is strong, athletic, and disciplined. She is more beautiful than ten beauty queens all smushed together. She is a positive thinker and a "doer." She loves her children and husband like crazy. She

is an excellent cook and interior decorator. She loves the gospel. She serves others. She is kind and sensitive to others. She is generous. Elizabeth, you are the Bee's Knees, sis-tah!!!

6. Gospel question of the week: What is the name of the mission in which Elder Gary Stevenson served as a young 19 year old Elder.

*7. If I were you (advice to grand kids): * If I were you, I would *read from the Book of Mormon every day*. Try it. I think you will like it.

8. What I learned this week: Do things the way your church leaders instruct you to do.

9. What I'm grateful for: The personal revelation each of us can enjoy if we prepare ourselves. Just the simple reassurances we get now and then, the quiet and soft witness that tells us in our hearts that things are true.

10. My goal for the week: Had a delightful time with Mom on our trip to Port Alfred. This week, I plan to do a better job of recording who we

see and what we talk about in our "Road Back Home" book.

11. Photo of the week: One of the coolest blankets in the world!

We love you all. Have fun living the gospel this week!

Dad and Mom



I drove by some guys replacing a brick wall. The wall was straight and level.



The head guy was more than happy to let me take his picture. (See attached)



The most important
of the Lord's work
you will ever do...
will be the work you do
within the walls
of your own home.
- HAROLD B. LEE

2017

NOVEMBER 26 }

Nov_26_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

What a great day at church!

We try to get to church at least 10 minutes ahead of the start time. This way we can greet members and be in our seats getting ready for the meeting. It is great to see Mom meet, greet and hug all of the sisters. Folks, they love her. That is probably because she genuinely loves them and they can sense that.

We had a joint set of meetings today for both our wards. Today was the primary program and the children did a marvelous job! They all said their parts, they sang and smiled big. The parents and other family members loved every minute. Just like home, one kid forgot their part and needed help. Another kid was scared and timid and started to cry. His mom had to come comfort him. After sitting down, he came again to the pulpit and did his part.

I took the liberty to record one of their songs during their Primary time. Here is the link if you are interested:

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1y_goPa-PZDb-sK_eeST6RYRteG6wQgUu9

After church we had a few baptisms. Two children from two different less active families we have been visiting were baptized. Brother Max Xamane baptized her daughter, Lisakhanya, and one of their neighbors, Sibabalo. It is simply amazing to us to see this brother, clothed in white and standing in the water performing these baptisms.

After the baptisms he bore his testimony. The missionary in him from past days was showing bright and strong. I spoke with his wife afterward and she began to tell me how much of a difference there is now in their family. She is so grateful we

were able to bring the gospel back into their lives. She said Mom and I have been like parents to them. I told her, with a lump in my throat, the dramatic change we have seen over the last four months and that we love them. Next step is continued progress and then, a sealing in the temple!

And, Brother Fikiso came to church today!!! What a wonderful surprise! We will be back to see him on Tuesday afternoon. He needs the gospel and his family needs him as a righteous priesthood holder. I think he

would be a great addition to the ward. We are praying and trying as hard as we can.

We watch the "Face to Face" YSA program with Elder Oaks and Ballard. Great stuff! Any adult member of the church should listen to that. It is sage advice from living apostles. For example, Elder Oaks was addressing same gender attraction and quoted someone he had spoke to, "I am not going to let my sexuality interfere with my spirituality." Or, we need to incorporate "Holy habits and righteous routines."



Sister Mbomvane's 14 year old boy. This is the family we took some groceries to. We simply could not leave their home with them going so hungry.

The Xamane Family. Max will baptize Lisakhanya



Light the World

You guys doing this?

<https://www.mormon.org/christ-mas/25-ways-25-days-calendar>

I just printed off the calendar and Mom and I are going to do it.

Love,

Dad and Mom

We met with the Mpongo Family, but just the Mama was there and she does not understand English all that well. We will go back on Wednesday with a fellowshipper to help with the language and when the rest of the family is there..

Finally, we visited Sister Stempa. She is a convert of about one year. She lives by herself and seems to be a little discouraged that the missionaries do not come by any more. She loves to sing. She would just spontaneously erupt with a song while we visited! I asked her if I could record her.

Other than getting high centered and stuck when I missed part of a driveway, it has been a wonderful day.

You are wonderful. We love you,

Dad and Mom



Another baby shot on the back of its mama

Nov_27_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

I spent some time this morning helping missionaries with their car. They had one headlight out for a while and last night the other headlight went out! Not a good idea to travel in South Africa at night without headlights! Both lamps were out and I replaced them.

I did some banking and waited in line forever to get to one of the two tellers working the counter. They remain behind bullet proof glass and the security is very, very protective. Money gets counted twice and there is always a supervisor that is looking over the tellers shoulder. Everything is under lock and key.

We had our Senior Council today. It is a conference call where we can make sure we all are singing out of the same hymn book as the younger missionaries. We received some

good instruction and direction today.

Today Mom and I started to make some Christmas countdowns. (See photo) We have on for each companionship in our zone. Each day has two candies in it. And, Mom had a really great idea. Along with the candy, we put a small piece of paper with a scripture reference on it - something that refers to the Savior. How cool is that? We'll probably hand them out tomorrow since we will not be at district meetings on Friday.

Friday, Mom and I drive about 2 1/2 hours to Grahamstown to meet President and Sister Watson. We will pick up another two bicycles and about 1,100 "Light the World" pass along cards for our missionaries in this part of the mission. Each companionship will have about 100 cards to pass out.

FYI, WHW went to Grahamstown and had good success there. It was from here that one of his baptisms was John Roper and his wife. When none of the sea captains would give passage to the Mormons, it was John Roper that sold all his land, herds of sheep, goats and cattle and then, purchased a boat, hired a captain and crew and took all the converts to England and the United States.

We took one of our countdowns over to Bishop Krull and his family this evening. He is the bishop of the East London 3rd Ward. They are a very

nice family. It's one of those families where a lot gets done in the ward because they are so dedicated to the work. They have had us over for dinner a couple of times. Good, good people. We love them! (See photo) We hope you all accept the Christmas Challenge we gave you. How far and what good can you do with \$50. The check is in the mail! We would like good reports from all of you - details, feelings, results, etc.

Love,
Dad and Mom

Christmas Countdown



We took one of our countdowns over to Bishop Krull and his family this evening. He is the bishop of the East London 3rd Ward.



Nov_28_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

*ALERT: *The lizard is back and leaving his calling card.

We will eventually get him and the picture of him flailing about on a sticky trap will go viral.

Another beautiful day in South Africa! As a matter of fact, it was warm enough that we turned on the AC unit in our house for a couple hours.

We had a teaching lesson with Brother Fikiso this afternoon. We spent some time earlier looking over the lesson on the "Plan of Salvation." As it turned out, he wasn't quite ready to hear our lesson because he had not read anything in the Book of Mormon as he said he would. So, we read some selected scripture passages from the Book of Mormon. It went well, but we still have a ways to go with this good brother. There is a

good spirit in the home when we visit.

Around 6:30 we stopped at a member's home to see if the wife could visit families with us tomorrow. While we were there, she served up two bowls of dinner for us. I immediately became worried because you never know what you are going to be eating??? We were pleasantly surprised to find that the dish was spaghetti noodles with hamburger and mixed vegetables. It tasted pretty good.

We had some other good visits and got home this evening around 8 PM.

McDonalds is surprisingly similar to the USA. The food is close, but not exactly the same. Their apple pies here are the old version they use to do in the states - deep fried! (Now, all they offer are the baked apples pies which are probably a lot more

healthy for you.) They don't have pies ready to go. You have to wait the 8 minutes it takes to cook them. You get to wait in the "Grill Bay" as you can see in the attached photo. Also, their playground is tiny. And, one thing the USA doesn't have is, home delivery!

We love you all very much. Remember, with the Lord, anything is possible.

Dad and Mom



Also, their playground is tiny.



McDonalds is surprisingly similar to the USA. The food is close, but not exactly the same. Their apple pies here are the old version they use to do in the states - deep fried! (Now, all they offer are the baked apples pies which are probably a lot more healthy for you.) They don't have pies ready to go. You have to wait the 8 minutes it takes to cook them.



You get to wait in the "Grill Bay" as you can see in the attached photo.

2017

NOVEMBER 29 }

Nov_29_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a great day meeting people we haven't visited before. The reception by these families was good. We will be back to visit them more. Today was meet, visit, leave a short message and make plans to come back again.

This morning Mom and I handed out invitations to half of our 80 neighbors for a Christmas get together the Davies and us will be hosting at the Hazy Ridge club house. The Davies handed out the other half of the invitations. The event is a 2 hour block to simply come, visit with your neighbors and help celebrate the Christmas season. Mom and Sister Davies will be making the refreshments which will be cookies and some type of punch. That Christmas get together will be Sunday, December 10th in case any of you will be in town.

When Mdantsane was created by the Apartheid Government, they began with one house and then another. The first home was #1. Below you have a picture of the very first home in Mdantsane. It is now surrounded by a block wall and barbed wire. They must have some type of business that is run out of the home.

Dogs are everywhere. Most of them are too hungry to chase you or attack you. However, in the attached picture, these dogs bark like crazy and seem mean enough that they would take a bite out of your leg if you came past the fence.

It is sad to see so many people who have joined the church and now are less active. I wish there was some magic way to open their eyes and for them to see the majesty of the gospel and what it can do for them and their families. It seems too many are easily swayed by the things of the

world. Mom and I just hope and pray every day that we can be an instrument in the hands of the Lord to help these good brothers and sisters.

Thank you so very much for your support and prayers. We love you.

Dad and Mom



Below you have a picture of the very first home in Mdantsane.



Dogs are everywhere. Most of them are too hungry to chase you or attack you. However, in the attached picture, these dogs bark like crazy and seem mean enough that they would take a bite out of your leg if you came past the fence.

Nov_30_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Great day today working with our less actives. Our first visit was to Brother Dale Ayanda Shoberg Luzipho. He is an older gentleman. A few months ago we had met him and he started to come to church. He went missing for a while because he went to visit his son in another city. We have tried to catch him a couple times over the last week without any success. Today, he was surprised to see us. He asked why we were there. We told him we had been thinking about him and wanted to visit with him. He went on to tell us that he thought we were sent by the Lord. He was recently told he might have cancer and it was not coincidence that we came by. We are the only ones that now know about him and his situation. He asked for a priesthood blessing that I was happy to give him.

We also had the chance to visit several others today for the first time. At least we found their homes. Some of these people we will see on the weekend because they are away to work or school during the week. One visit we found the grandma, but the two members were not at home. This lady was so sweet. We showed her a video about the Savior, bore testimony and then, had a prayer. She is not a member of the church, but what a sweet, little, soft-spoken grandma! Mom gave her a hug at the end of our visit and told her we loved her.

We saw Brother Max for a minute on his street while we were driving away. I want to use him to go visit a return missionary that has fallen off the deep end. The guy is 38 and has a drinking problem. He may have some other issues going on. Big Max knows him and I think can testify to him that he is on a one-way road to

hell. Max has been in the same boat as an inactive return missionary. And, Max is big enough he could beat some sense into this guy if needed. Seriously, I think Max would really share with him the transformation that can happen when you come back to church.

More good things happened today. We are just grateful we can be used in some fashion to help further the work.

I think we are starting to see our mission here with less actives a tad

more clearly. *Step one:* visit and get these good people back into activity. *Step two:* continue to visit and strengthen and reinforce their good decisions.* Step three:* Use them to go out and help reactivate the less active.

Photos:

- Mom and Sister Booi, who was riding with us the other day. She is the wife of the second counselor in the MD 4th Ward. She served a mission in England. She and her husband were sealed in the Johannesburg Temple - Me and Brother



Mom and Sister Booi, who was riding with us the other day. She is the wife of the second counselor in the MD 4th Ward. She served a mission in England. She and her husband were sealed in the Johannesburg Temple.



Me and Brother Andile Thwani. He was the first black branch president in Mdantsane. He knows all the old timer members of the church here.



This is one of the nicer high schools in the area. I'll send a picture one of these days of a bad one. Kids in America have it pretty darn nice!

Andile Thwani. He was the first black branch president in Mdantsane. He knows all the old timer members of the church here.

- This is one of the nicer high schools in the area. I'll send a picture one of these days of a bad one. Kids in America have it pretty darn nice!

Good news: we love you more today than we did yesterday! Keep the commandments. Be happy. Sing the family song at least three times a day.

Dad and Mom

Dec_01_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Today we took a road trip to Grahamstown. In a way, it is a university town. John Rhodes University is there. Rhodes was a billionaire. Some see him as a pioneer and great philanthropist. Others see him as a greedy capitalist that made money on the backs of the poor black Africans. The university was funded by the Rhodes Foundation. The trip is about 2 1/2 hours each way. Only bearable because my girlfriend came along for the ride!

Attached is a photo of one of the many churches in the town. As we drove by the churches, I wondered if any of these were there in 1854 +/- when William Holmes Walker came through town?

We met President and Sister Watson who brought us two more bicycles and Elder and Sister Peterson. Presi-

dent Watson also brought us about 1,100 "Light the World" cards. Each companionship will get about 100 to pass out to various contacts. We always enjoy the senior couples. They come from varied backgrounds, but one thing we all have in common, we want to serve the Lord and move the work forward in any way we can.

We had delicious mac 'n cheese for dinner. I will be frying the leftovers for the next few days.

Photos:

- An old church - one of many in Grahamstown - Strange plants that seem to grow straight up from the rocks. We don't know if road workers put rock all around these plants or if the plants were transplanted to this location??? - In the United States you watch for deer crossing the highway. In Africa, you watch for...



Strange plants that seem to grow straight up from the rocks. We don't know if road workers put rock all around these plants or if the plants were transplanted to this location???



An old church - one of many in Grahamstown.



In the United States you watch for deer crossing the highway. In Africa, you watch for...

Tid Bits

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

1. Word of the week: "propitiation," the action of propitiating or appeasing a god, spirit, or person. Also, atonement, especially that of Jesus Christ. *Example:* The propitiation rendered by Christ in our behalf is impossible to completely understand at this stage of our eternal progression.

2. Quote of the week:

3. Scripture of the week:

Yea, behold, I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you and which shall dwell in your heart. -D&C 8:2

4. Joke of the week:

Three friends die in a car accident and they go to an orientation in

heaven. They are all asked, "When you are in your casket and friends and family are mourning you, what would you like to hear them say about you? The first guy says, "I would like to hear them say that I was a great doctor, and a great family man." The second guy says, "I would like to hear that I was a wonderful husband and school teacher which made a huge difference in our children of tomorrow." The last guy replies, "I would like to hear them say ... "Look, He's moving!"

5. Bee's Knees Award: There are so many words that describe this person - wonderful! Awesome! Happy! Smart! Great Dancer! Great soccer player! Beautiful! This girl has it all. She loves her family so very much. She loves to play with her little sister. She does super good in school. She does excellent in sports and dance. She always tries to be like Jesus by being a good example of the gospel. She has a wonderful smile to

make others happy. Vivienne, you are the Bee's Knees, sistah!!!

6. Gospel question of the week: Lehi and his family are the descendants of of: A) Judah, B) Joseph, C) Zedekiah, D) Asher, E) Nimrod, F) Japeth, G) Aaron?

7. If I were you (advice to grand kids): If I were you, I would always express gratitude to others for their help and service. Get in the habit of saying, "Thank you" or even writing a note to someone. Try it. I think you will like it.

8. What I learned this week: It is critical that young children of the church have parental support and encouragement to attend church and eventually be baptized and receive the priesthood.

*9. What I am grateful for: *The Holy Ghost, a priceless gift that we some times take for granted.

10. My goal for the week: I did a better job of keeping our member visiting book up to date. This week I plan to get photocopies of all the drivers licenses of the missionaries





These are huge kettles that are used to cook some kind of meat. When I looked into the container they had to hold the finish product, I could not detect what it was.

and get them certified by the police department. This way they can keep the copy in their wallet and the original safe in their boarding.

11. Photo of the week: Kids everywhere!

We love you all very much. Have fun living the gospel this week!

Dad and Mom

Dec_02_2017

Dear Family,

We spent some time this morning getting the house nice and clean. We had two of our missionaries coming over for lunch and we also have the mission president to our house for dinner on Tuesday evening. Mom made some delicious cheesy chicken skillet. We also had some rolls from the freezer and Rice Krispie treats for a little desert. All very good and the missionaries enjoyed it.

I ran our two bikes we picked up yesterday over to the cycle shop for some tuning up. One big problem is that the bikes are one speed - no gears! This should be a lot of fun for the fellowshipper. (The two bikes we have had for 3 weeks are at least 21 speeds)

The purpose of the meeting with our missionaries was to go over our Mdantsane 4th Ward list. It was a very productive meeting. We identified a lot more people we need to visit and a lot of people who no longer live in the ward. So, the bottom line is that we have a lot more people to track down, meet and try to nudge into full activity.

We had a good day visiting. We took the same missionaries that came over for lunch to the dirt road where Mom and I got stuck. To make a long story short, the Elders have a teaching appointment for Sunday evening with the two main guys that helped us out of our car-stuck dilemma. We also caught up with another neighbor who the Elders will be going to visit on Tuesday.

We met with another family where

the five boys are all super cool with coming to church. They come fairly often. They range from about 12 down to 7. However, without parental support in the home, the chances of these kids making very far in the church are slim. We found out that the mother is a member and has been going to her old church for the last couple years. We left a scriptural message and got the okay to come back and visit some more with the mama. We think we just need to point out that the most important thing she can do is follow the truth and start all over with the missionary lessons.

I don't want to make anyone jealous, but I had fried mac 'n cheese this evening for dinner!!!

Photos:

- These are huge kettles that are used to cook some kind of meat. When I looked into the container they had to hold the finish product, I could not detect what it was. - I don't know if this is milk or some thing else. It might be goat milk, but far from homogenized or pasteurized! - This is a beautiful plant that grows in one of our neighbor's

yard, When we delivered an invitation to this home to come to our Christmas get together, the lady told Mom she could have a start.

Our love for you has no bounds. You are in our prayers and thoughts daily (most of those are good thoughts).

Dad and Mom



I don't know if this is milk or some thing else. It might be goat milk, but far from homogenized or pasteurized!



This is a beautiful plant that grows in one of our neighbor's yard. When we delivered an invitation to this home to come to our Christmas get together, the lady told Mom she could have a start.

Dec_03_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had our five hours of meetings today. Then, we went to a Christmas Cantata put on by the East London Stake. The music was very well done. You could tell that the choir had put in a lot of time practicing.

I gave our Sunday School lesson today. I hope this is the last time. Our mission president does not want missionaries doing any of the work when the members can be doing it. In his words, we don't want to prop the members up and then have things fall apart when the missionaries leave. I plan to contact the bishop by tomorrow to make sure he and the Sunday School president have a new teacher.

Mom and I had a nice treat today. This last week we visited a family and only found the boys at home -

five of them. So, we showed them a video in their front yard and told them we would come back another day when their mother was there. We became fast friends. We went back yesterday and had a very good visit with the mama and her sister. Even though she is less active, she said we could come back and teach some more. Well, this morning, all five of the boys show up at church in shirts and ties! Not only that, but four of them got up and bore their testimonies!

We heard a lot of good testimonies today. Nice to hear these members occupy the time. At the end of each sacrament meeting the bishop and the stake president also bore their testimonies. We are thankful for these good men who give of their precious time to help build the church in Mdantsane.

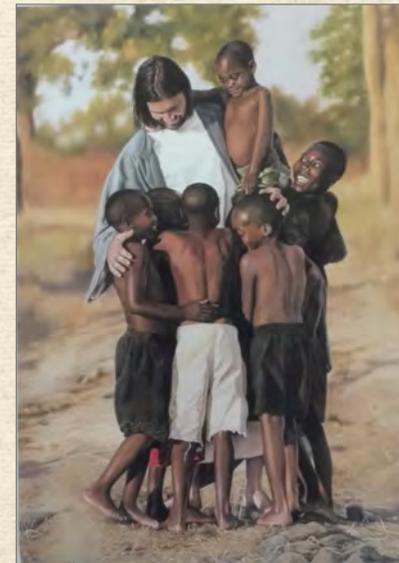
The bishop of the 4th ward and his

wife invited Mom and I over for FHE tomorrow evening. We will bring veggies, humus and a desert for the get together. FYI, in Xhosa you say grandma, maculu (maw coo lew), and, you say grandpa, tamculu (tom coo lew). Please have your children address us as such in the future.

Photos: - I love this painting of Christ and the little children. There is quite a story behind this. The photographer had her son dress up like Jesus and come into the village. She had told the children there was going to be a special visitor.

The kids all ran to him, thinking it was actually Jesus. - You may have already seen this - our invitation to our neighbors to come to a Christmas get together this coming Sunday at our club house - I get a kick out of this sign every time I see it. The guy looks like a used car sale person ready to take your money. We love you. Have a great day. Hug your children tight and tell them you love them. They are precious, priceless and they grow up quickly.

Dad and Mom



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I get a kick out of this sign every time I see it. The guy looks like a used car sale person ready to take your money.



Dec_04_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Today was a good preparation day. I did some banking and Mom did some baking. We have President Lebethoa to our house tomorrow at 7 PM and Mom has a delicious meal planned. Meat loaf, funeral potatoes and broccoli salad. I guess I will just be having meat loaf because the other items have carcinogenic mayonnaise in them. I'm a missionary and I will not take into my body anything that will defile it. However, I do plan to eat as much of the cheesecake as I can that Mom has baked.

It rained today because I washed the car.

This evening we had a Family Home Evening at Bishop Lalendle's home. Just like our previous engagement when we brought dinner to a family, we found that there were quite a few

people invited to this FHE than we thought would be there. Fortunately, your brilliant mother brought plenty of veggies, humus and chocolate chip bars. Attached is a picture of who came. The two missionaries are both from England and good, hard-working missionaries. (Elder Hawkins in the back and Elder Warren)

Of course, no one had a lesson prepared. I gave a spiritual thought about building our foundation on the Redeemer and the missionaries built a lesson on that. Mom lead all of us in the Primary song, "The Foolish Man built his house upon the sand..." which included all the hand motions.

Then, the highlight of the evening, we played, "Don't Eat Pete." It is a simple game, but the people there had not played it before and we all had a great time. My simple mind loves, comprehends and can play

simple games.

LIZARD Report: The lizard lives. Mom says it's no big deal. I don't like to disagree with my companion, but she is so wrong. Did you know that the longer a lizard lives in your house it becomes more and more venomous? Did you know that a lizard in your house will eventually make its way to your bed and lay eggs in your hair? Did you know that lizards are the number one cause of toe fungus in the world? So, as you can see, a lizard in the house is dangerous business. We have tried all

the traditional ways of catching the repulsive reptile with no success. It is as if the lecherous lizard is scoffing at us, mocking our feeble attempts to trap him.

His days are now numbered. I have come up with the way to capture and then, torture the oversized cockroach. If you want to know my secret weapon, go to this Youtube video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tu3hvHEfQTo>

Photos:



We came upon some kids in a field setting up tents. At first I thought they were dwellings for young men going into the bush. They were just kids, maybe playing like they were making dwellings for the bush.



They ran at first when I came toward them. Then, they saw I was a nice, gentle, scary white guy. They were kind enough to let me take their picture.



Here is the FHE group. There was not much light in the home, so it is difficult to make out all the faces.

- We came upon some kids in a field setting up tents. At first I thought they were dwellings for young men going into the bush. They were just kids, maybe playing like they were making dwellings for the bush. They ran at first when I came toward them. Then, they saw I was a nice, gentle, scary white guy. They were kind enough to let me take their picture. - Here is the FHE group. There was not much light in the home, so it is difficult to make out all the faces.

here with us!

Dad and Mom

We love you and wish you could be

Dec_05_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We got out to our area a little late today. Mom was making sure that all the preparations are in order for our dinner with the mission president. And, it has been raining most all of the day. And, there is rain in the forecast for tomorrow and Thursday. However, it will be sunshiny hot on Friday when we plan to go to the Venom Pit and the East London Lion Park.

Before I forget, I have had fried mac'n cheese for three days straight. There is enough leftovers for at least one more meal. Also, went to the store today and purchased a real ham. Had a real ham sandwich for lunch!

We went to the home of the 5 boys that are doing so well in coming to church. Their grandpa was the High Priest Group Leader in our ward and

then passed away a month ago. Unfortunately, there is now no adult in the household that is going to be guiding these young boys along. Mom and I like them a bunch. They are nice, respectful and wanting to do the right thing. We drafted a letter for the mission president to read that we want him to sign for each of the boys. (See attached word document)

We went to the hospital to try to find some old-style wooden crutches for one of our missionaries that broke his ankle. The aluminum ones that wrap around your forearms are not very comfortable for him. To make a long story short, we traversed this giant hospital trying to find where we could get these crutches. Mom was with me, so I think the kind, mostly female staff there liked her and we ended up with what we came for. No charge, just bring them back when we are finished. Our mission-

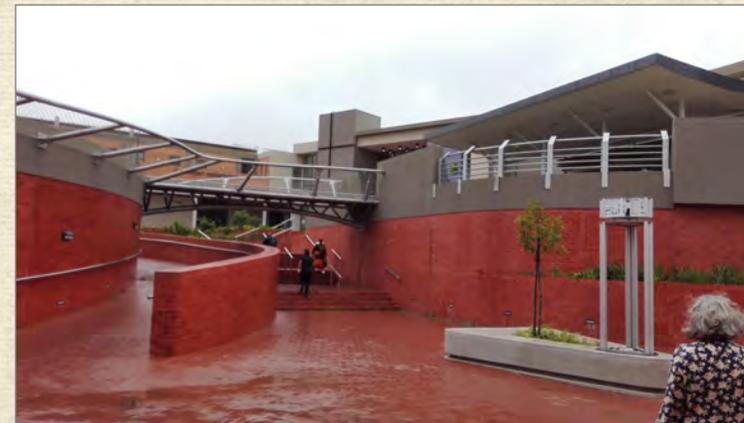
ary was very happy to get them!

We picked up our two bicycles from the shop. We will take one of them to Mdantsane tomorrow and keep one here for us to ride. I plan to check on getting a second bike for us here if we can afford it. It would be fun to go bike riding with Mom - if I can keep up with her!

We had a delightful dinner with President Lebethoa. He is energetic, an experienced church officer, full of faith, a love for his people of South Africa and dedicated to serving the

Lord. And, he answered all of our questions we had for him. Tomorrow evening he will have dinner with the Davies. How wonderful for these missionaries to be able to work with this great missionary leader!

FYI, he was more than happy to sign the letters for the boys. He asked about them to better understand who they are and what their circumstances are. He wants us to scan each letter and send it to him in case these young men meet him someday and tell him that he sent them a personal letter.



As you can see, the Mdantsane Hospital is huge and very modern-looking. Inside, it did not smell too good. And, we cannot vouch for the quality of the medical care. What you see in this picture is a small portion of the overall building.

They even
have a heliport.



*Photos: *

- As you can see, the Mdantsane Hospital is huge and very modern-looking. Inside, it did not smell too good. And, we cannot vouch for the quality of the medical care. What you see in this picture is a small portion of the overall building. - They even have a heliport.

We love you a lot!

Dad and Mom

Leather Goods

Dear Family,

We recently met a gentleman from Ft. Beaufort (where WHW spent some time), who does excellent leather work. He has quite an array of goods - everything from sandals to notebooks to belts to rifle cases. All of these items are made from Cape Buffalo, Ostrich, Alligator, rawhide, etc.

I thought I would throw some pic-

tures out to you of what he does on my Google Drive:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=11yYNeg6BsfmZ1QY79kkZlh-wGKiEU3xHJ>

Look these photos over and see if you would like anything. You can even request a custom made item if you want. I can then work a deal with him on a price.

For example, a size 38 belt made from alligator skin with a cape buffalo hide sewn on the backside is \$48. Maybe not the cheapest, but high quality stuff.

Don't feel obligated, just thought I would share with your guys and see if you might be interested.

Love,

Dad--

2017 DECEMBER 6 }

Dec_06_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Lot of errands today. We have our Christmas get together on Sunday we are trying to be ready for. I bought a couple glass containers that we will use to dispense the punch with. Mom is baking some cookies, but will do most of her cooking on Saturday for the party.

We ran one of the bicycles out to the Elders in Mdantsane. The bike is in good running condition except it is only a one speed bike. It will be hard for the fellowshiper to get up the hills and be fast enough to hang with the Elders.

One bike will remain here at our house. I plan to test drive it on Saturday. I am an accomplished cyclist. I have done 3/4 of the Levi Gran Fondo and multiple trips around Pineview Reservoir. I know bicycles like Carter knows pills. For example,

I'll bet most of you do not know if the front brake is on the right side or on the left side of the handle bars? Do you know if the white reflector goes on the front or the back of the bike? Where does the blinking red reflector go? Can you adjust the seat on a 21 gear bicycle? Without bragging, I know the answers to all of these questions.

We took Sister Davies and Elder Davies to lunch today. It is her birthday. Nice surprise, the senior special today was a buffet.

President Lebethoa signed the letters Mom and I put together for the young boys we are working with. Check out his signature. Kind of cool-looking.

Photos:

- President Lebethoa's signature. Try to forge that baby!!! - These are dwellings that young men live in for

3 to 4 weeks during their rite of passage from boy to manhood. I wanted to get up closer, but the older men at the camp area forbade to come any closer and take pictures. They seem to be very protective of the ritual.

We have zone conference tomorrow. Should be some good instruction. The Davies and us purchased large chocolate Santa Clauses for each of the missionaries. We will put them on their tables during the zone lunch.

We love you tremendously!

Dad and Mom

President Lebethoa's signature. Try to forge that baby!!!





I wanted to get up closer, but the older men at the camp area forbade to come any closer and take pictures. They seem to be very protective of the ritual.



These are dwellings that young men live in for 3 to 4 weeks during their rite of passage from boy to manhood.

Dec_07_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

I had more fried mac 'n cheese this evening. I couldn't eat it all, so I'm saving the very last bit of it for breakfast tomorrow morning. Sorry, if you were here you could have the scraps that fall to the floor.

My close friend, Arnold Cortez, is starting to bother me. He questions my authority on lizards. He don't know nothing! His mind is binary. I am sure he would change his tune if a lizard crawled up inside his computer.

This morning we had zone conference and the training by President Lebethoa was excellent. He spent about an hour plus just on D&C 20:37, the requirements for baptism into the church. He used that as a segway into what Elder Neal Anderson calls the "Conversion Funnel." This was great instruction for all the

young Elders and us old folks too. Basically, it was instruction on how to know who is progressing as an investigator and where you need to focus your attention. It recognizes that not everyone is ready at this particular point in time to join the church. They will have other opportunities.

The last portion of his training was about D&C 88:119. He specifically spent a lot of time talking about budgeting your money. He laid out the principles of prudent money management and promised the missionaries that if they would practice these important principles, they will be protected the rest of their lives. Great and very wise counsel.

I managed to get most of our Elders' drivers licenses color photocopied and then certified by the local police department. The direction from the mission office is to carry the certified copy around on your person and

keep your original securely tucked away in your boarding. I still have a couple missionaries that forgot to bring their original license this morning.

We have an investigator the Elders are teaching that needs a more detailed interview for baptism. Evidently, she has some serious things that have happened in her life that need to be heard by the mission president. Since he had to leave town, he asked me to handle the interview. I'm happy to do it, but I need some instruction on what to

ask, what to decide, how to proceed, etc? He is suppose to call me soon with that instruction.

Photos:

- The table decorations were nice for our zone luncheon. We bought the chocolate Santas on Monday and all the missionaries seemed to enjoy them. I charged the purchase on the church credit card. I hope they don't fire us! - This is some of the decoration at a local mall, Hemingways. I assume they have something like Santa Claus that comes and occupies the big chair.



The table decorations were nice for our zone luncheon. We bought the chocolate Santas on Monday and all the missionaries seemed to enjoy them. I charged the purchase on the church credit card. I hope they don't fire us!



This is some of the decoration at a local mall, Hemingways. I assume they have something like Santa Claus that comes and occupies the big chair.

Have a great day. The gospel is perfect and we are not. But...let's keep trying. As President Hinckley has said, "Each day, just a little better today than yesterday."

We love you,

Dad and Mom

2017 DECEMBER 8 }

Dec_08_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We took a little excursion today to a couple places only about 25 minutes from our home. The first stop was the "Lion Park." After that we went to "Python Park." Here is a link to some pictures and video we took today.

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1dZ3yy_2ITUt6ynPg-Jk5movCQaolrJA

The video is interesting. Zet, our guide, is working with a spitting cobra. I wish I would have showed the scenes earlier when the snake was a lot more active and aggressive. The mask he is wearing gets covered with venom spit from the cobra. The cobra is a very accurate spitter and shoots for the eyes.

The crocodiles or alligators (can't remember what they are) were active. Zet had slapped the side of their en-

closed area and one came leaping out of the water. Later he tapped the water with his snake stick and up out of the water come snapping jaws. They are quick, ugly and mean. Their favorite food is chicken.

Speaking of chickens, Mom was a yellow belly chicken. She wanted nothing to do with the friendly reptiles. Of course, you know how much I love snakes and lizards! They are so creepy!!!

Photos:

- Snakes! Lizards! These are not my favorite animals. - This tree looked so very interesting. We have named it, "Root."

We love you very much. We hope you have a great day making good choices!

Dad and Mom



These are not my favorite animals.



This tree looked so very interesting. We have named it, "Root."



Snakes!

Dec_09_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Today we went to the church to help clean. It was a good thing, because there were only a couple other people there to help. I tackled the Relief Society room and three other classrooms. Then, I swept and mopped out the kitchen. Mom was the employee of the month - she took on two men's restrooms and two lady's restrooms! Not an easy or pleasant job! We will not go into the details, but it was a herculean task.

At home, I spent time preparing my Sunday School lesson and Mom is getting some baking done for goodies to take to our Christmas get together here at Hazy Ridge tomorrow. We are planning on 80 people, but realistically, we think a dozen might show up. It would be a delightful surprise to have a lot of people. (If not, I have volunteered to take care

of all the extra cookies.)

After cleaning the church today, we were going to go visit Brother Xingashe. He is a return missionary and just now passing all his requirements to become a school teacher. He is married and has one little boy. This is the family we took dinner to a few weeks ago. Mom and I have been disappointed that we have not seen him or his family at church for weeks. I told Mom we need to go visit him and tell him in the strongest words possible that we are disappointed in him and we expect more from a guy of his caliber.

Then, Mom, said something very important. We should first tell him that we haven't seen him for a while and we have missed him. Then, ask, is everything okay? This was such great advice and something I think we learn in the temple.

When Adam and Eve transgressed, the Lord did a marvelous job of inquiring of them first before He made any judgment or punishment. He allowed them to account for themselves. Once everything was divulged, the Lord made some decisions and gave some great promises.

When we arrived at the church, Brother Xingashe just happened to be there. I told him it had been a long time and we missed him. "What have you been doing all this time?" I knew there was quite a lot of family business with his father-in-law

passing away a month or more ago that has taken some time. Then, I learned, since then he has been spending time with his father who does not live close by. And, furthermore, he was at the church to be called to a position in the ward by one of the counselors in the bishopric.

So, there you have it. Had we gone to his house and I blasted away like a knuckle head, it would have been a sorrowful mistake on my part. Hence the good advice from my companion and remembering the



This crab was hiding in some missionaries' garage. Those pincers look ferocious!



"Behold the turtle. He who never sticks out his neck will not progress."

example of the Lord.

Now, remember this as you teach, discipline and nurture your children. Let them be accountable. As they explain their behavior, they start to understand better what they have done and how they can change. Learn everything before you act with love.

Photos:

- This crab was hiding in some missionaries' garage. Those pincers look ferocious! - "Behold the turtle. He who never sticks out his neck

will not progress."

Kiddos, we love you. Remember who you are and act accordingly. The gospel must be center stage in your lives!

Dad and Mom

2017

DECEMBER 10 }

Gospel Question of the Week

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Maybe there is a tie for the correct answer to the Gospel Question of the Week, "Why is Christmas Celebrated on Dec 25th?"

Michael Stevenson was first with this answer:

Some people think it may have changed to December 25th to coincide with winter solstice and the pagan celebrations around that time. The Internet (source of all accurate knowledge) says,

After the Roman Emperor Constantine I converted to Christianity in 312 and sanctioned Christianity, church leaders made efforts to appropriate the winter-solstice holidays and thereby achieve a more seamless conversion to Christianity for the emperor's subjects. In rationalizing the celebration of Jesus' birthday in

late December, church leaders may have argued that since the world was allegedly created on the spring equinox (late March), so too would Jesus have been conceived by God on that date. The Virgin Mary, pregnant with the son of God, would hence have given birth to Jesus nine months later on the winter solstice.

Annie was second with this answer:

Christmas is celebrated in the 12/25 because a long long ago and wanted his the birth of Christ to be celebrated on his (the king's) birthday... Right?

The Internet (source of all accurate knowledge) says:

The first recorded date of *Christmas* being*celebrated* on *December* 25th was in 336, during the time of the Roman Emperor Constantine

(he was the first Christian Roman Emperor). A few years later, Pope Julius I officially declared that the birth of Jesus would be *celebrated* on the 25th *December*.

I like Annie's answer the best, but Michael's is legit and he was first to respond.

Chocolate milkshake goes to Michael!

Love,

Dad

Dec_10_2017

Dear Family,

We heard some very good talks today in church. Usually the talks are a reading of a conference address. Today we got the reading with some good commentary. And, our high councilman did a good job talking about the "Amalickiahs" in our lives and how we need to be strong members of the church like Captain Moroni.



Mom and I at Mansfield Game Reserve.



I taught Sunday School for the last time today...I think. They called a new Sunday School teacher in sacrament meeting. So, I think that means she will be teaching next week.

Our Christmas get together was a bit of a success. We had approximately 25 people come and visit. We talked about memorable Christmases, various Christmas foods, Christmas in Germany, Christmas traditions, etc. Mom had made wonderful cookies for the event. Sister Davies made some sugar cookies and set up the decorations. We had a glass contain-

er of ice water and another container with a mixture of Guava juice, White grape juice and lemon/Lime soda. It turned out to be quite tasty.

Bottom line, people left feeling really happy for coming and we think the image of the Church moved up a rung or two with our neighbors. We are glad we did it.

Photos:

- These tigers looked a little skinny, but, when you see their teeth and claws up close, you know they are capable of doing some serious dam-

age. - Mom and I at Mansfield Game Reserve

Hope you are having a great Sabbath. We love you more than goat cheese dripping in peri peri sauce. Be loyal to the Royal!

Dad and Mom

Tid Bits

Dear Family,

1. Word of the week: "escapade," any carefree episode.* Example: *Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn enjoyed escapade after escapade on the great Mississippi River.

2. Quote of the week:

3. Scripture of the week:

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. -Isiah 9:6

4. Joke of the week:

*Boyfriend: *You used to say there was something about me that you really liked.

*Girlfriend: *Yes, I did, but you've spent it all.

(or)

(Horrible joke that I think I already used before)

The local United Way office realized that it had never received a donation from the town's most successful attorney. A local volunteer calls the attorney to solicit his donation, saying, "Our research shows that even though your annual income is over a million dollars, you do not give one penny to charity! Wouldn't you like to give back to your community through The United Way?"

The lawyer thinks for a moment and asks, "First, did your research show that my mother is dying after a long, painful illness and has huge medical bills far beyond her ability to pay?"

Embarrassed, the United Way rep

mumbles, "Uh, no."

"Secondly, that my brother, a disabled veteran, is blind and confined to a wheelchair and is unable to support his wife and six children?"

The stricken United Way representative begins to stammer an apology but is cut off.

"Thirdly, that my sister's husband died in a dreadful traffic accident," the lawyer's voice rising in indignation, "leaving her penniless with a mortgage and three children?"

The humiliated United Way rep, completely beaten, says simply, "I had no idea."

The lawyer then says, "... and if I don't give any money to THEM, why should I give any to you?"

5. Bee's Knees Award: This kid has the biggest, most expressive eyes on the planet. He is always a happy little boy. He can be such a good cuddler, he gives great hugs! He loves his baby sister and loves his older sister and two brothers. He is smart. He is a fast runner, a high jumper and a

strong lifter. He helps around the house by doing his chores. He tries to be like Jesus. He is a good hiker. He loves to go to Primary. William, you are the Bee's Knees, brotha!!!

6. Gospel question of the week: Why is Christmas celebrated on December 25th?

*7. If I were you (advice to grand kids): * If I were you I would focus on the real message of Christmas and see what I could do to serve others. Check out "Light the World" on lds.org. Try it. I think you will like it.

8. What I learned this week: While I was doing my laps this week and listening to some great Mo Tab music, I thought about how well we know our children after raising them for so many years. Then, I thought, if we know our children fairly well while in our mortal probation with all of its limitations, just think how well the Creator of the Universe and our Heavenly Father must intimately know us. We can't even imagine! It gives me hope to know He will never give me a trial that is too much for me to withstand or not in my best interest.

9. What I am grateful for: The Family Proclamation! (Read Elder Oaks' conference address and try to tell me that the proclamation is simply "church policy.")

10. My goal for the week: We did do some good in our visitation area book, but we can do a lot better. I am going to keep that goal again for this week.

11. Photo of the week: Three coins in the fountain! Dang, these girls are purty!

Have fun living the gospel this week! You will be glad you did! And, it makes you feel good!

love,

Dad and Mom



Dec_11_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We did a lot of things today. Being our preparation day, I got the car washed and did yard work. Mom got a bunch of wash done and of course, baking. She is cooking down a pumpkin so we can have pumpkin muffins one of these days. And, she is saving the seeds so she can have baked and lightly salted pumpkin seeds.

I also chased down about 5 missionaries today to get certified copies of their drivers licenses. Once I had them copied, I met them at the local McDonald's and I bought them lunch. They eat a lot! They are good missionaries and we will lose some of them in a week or so to transfers.

Below are our gingerbread man entries. I really don't care about winning. I have won so many times in the past that it means nothing to me.

However, I care deeply for Mom. It would be nice if she could win just once in her life. It would make her so happy. Please do what you can to make her entry victorious. Hers is the "Lean, Clean Missionary Machine." Please make it the winner. Do it for Mom!!!

This evening we were invited to another FHE. Based on the crowd that was at last week's FHE, Mom made a couple dozen cookies, crackers, cheese and about a gallon and half of a punch drink. The food was a hit (and the only food and drink there). We think we may be getting invited because we bring snack food and deserts. That's okay. We are invited to come again next week.

It was good to see some of these YSA taking charge and having this FHE. One, Brother Faltein, gave a good spiritual thought about never looking back to our old life style before

we were baptized (Luke 17:28). Another YSA gave the lesson about remembering to always pray (3 Nephi 18:15). We sang songs and played a game. All done by Young Single Adults. At least three of these guys are close to leaving on a mission!

Photos:

- Some of the best-decorated gingerbread men on the face of the planet! - Moi washing the car - sneak shot by Mom - The green pumpkin Mom is cooking down

We love you. We miss you. We re-

member you in our prayers, hoping you will make good choices.

Dad and Mom



Some of the best-decorated gingerbread men on the face of the planet!



IMG_Some of the best-decorated gingerbread men on the face of the planet!



The green pumpkin Mom is cooking down.



Moi washing the car - sneak shot by Mom.

Dec_13_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Today turned into a half day service project. We went to our area, but first decided to stop by the church and drop off some baptismal clothes Mom washed and folded. (She found them wet, in a plastic bag in the church bathroom. They had been there for two weeks like that).

We also wanted to clean a white board in the Relief Society room. Mom went to work on one board and I went to work on another white board on wheels. We used Cutex nail polish remover because someone had written all over them in permanent marker. Even though the polish remover is strong stuff, it has taken us hours to clean them...and we are not yet finished. We stopped at 7 PM this evening. The photos below show you some of the boards. The cleanest one is the one the missionaries use.

The horizontal board is part way clean as you can see from the way it looked originally. That's after three hours of cleaning and rubbing and border line cussing.

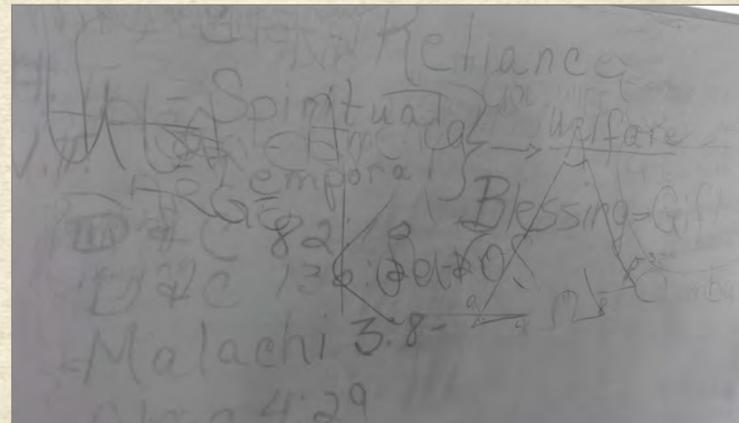
This morning we went to South Africa's Walmart, a retailer called "Game." We purchased a bicycle for Mom. (See photo below) We figured it was a good buy and that if we use the bike at least once at week, it is worth it. I have a one speed bike and will be crying all the way, trying to keep up with Mom. We look forward to taking various rides down to the beach and around the area.

Photos:

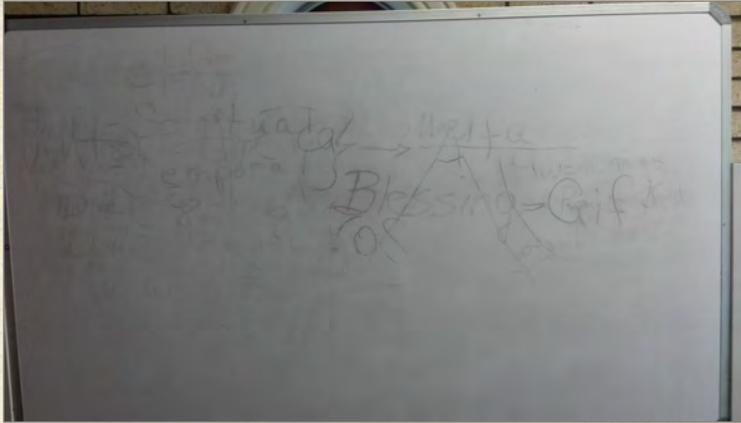
- Mom's red hot racer! - Various, interesting and exciting pictures of white boards

We love you and are thinking about you!

white boards



white boards



white boards



more white boards!



Mom's red hot racer!



Dec_14_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Today we had boarding inspections. To make a long story short, Mom flunked two of the four boardings. This means they have to go to work and do a better job of cleaning and they get NO cookies until they get a passing "thumbs Up."

Along with the boardings, we had a list of items we needed to purchase for the missionaries - bucket, bleach, "Handy Andy" cleaner, broom, mop, iron, etc. We spent the afternoon focusing on that and getting some fresh produce for district meeting tomorrow.

We also want to reward these missionaries for being good drivers. It has been 6 months without an accident (collision type). That is great. We are going to give each missionary a "Thanks for Avoiding a CRUNCH"

candy bar tomorrow. (See photo)

We are finding that missionaries take time to support. We are happy to help in any way we can, but it takes time away from very important visits to less actives. We think we can get more efficient at helping the missionaries.

I went and had the front grill put on our car - factory grill and it looks like a million bucks! While I did that, Mom has been making zucchini muffins for the meeting tomorrow. They are some of my favorite muffins. I plan to eat several.

Since we get invited to FHE's now, we purchased some plastic saucers and cups to use. This way we can avoid buying paper products every week. (See photo)

FYI, our white boards have had permanent marker on them for over 100

years. We have tried everything on them - bleach, dry erase marker, Cutex nail polish remover, regular cleaner, etc. Today I spoke with a man that owns a printer ink shop. He told us that "cloudy ammonia" will do the trick. We bought some and we will let you know if it works.

We love you a lot more than yesterday! Thank you for being good children.

Love,

Dad and Mom

Photos:

- Cool-looking bikes! (Daniel, do not laugh at mine, please) - King size Crunch bars. - Our neat mosquito FHE plastic cup and plate box!



Cool-looking bikes! (Daniel, do not laugh at mine, please)

King size
Crunch bars.



Our neat
mosquito FHE
plastic cup and
plate box!



Dec_15_2017

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Today were district meetings. We had good instruction today and we acted as investigators while two of our missionaries were role playing their part in teaching us. We asked some good questions, but overall, I thought we were golden investigators. We were ready for baptism before the visit was over.

We announced to all the missionaries at the beginning of the meetings that we appreciated their efforts in being good, safe, defensive drivers. We have not had a crash in our two zones for over 6 months and some have said, going on 9 months now. We told them that in addition to their muffin and two pieces of fruit at the end of the meeting, they were also getting a "good driving award." (See photo)

After the meeting, we came home to

get a quick bite to eat. Then, we loaded up and took a "back-up bike" out to Mdantsane for the missionaries to use. The one they had keeps throwing the chain off the sprocket. The replacement bike is the single speed I was going to be using here in Gonubie! We loaded up the broken bike and we will take it in and get it fixed on Wednesday.

We took crutches back to the Mdantsane Hospital they had loaned to us for our Elder that broke his leg. Then, we went to a less active's home and dropped off some of Mom's delicious cornbread and a big bowl of ham and beans. Ayanda, the father, opened their refrigerator to put the beans in there. It was absolutely empty with the exception of one egg. Very few of us know what it feels like to go to bed hungry or to wonder where the next meal is coming from. I hope AI never complain about food again in my life.

Then, we went to one of our families where the dad is not a member and Mom and I are teaching. The father is a tough nut, hard to read and understand because he doesn't say much. We ended up talking about Christ and trying to find out what he knows and thinks about the Savior. We bore our testimonies and showed a very good video about the life of Jesus Christ. We then challenged and committed them to read as a family the Christmas Story in the Book of Luke. We will continue to pray for them and hope things improve in our meetings with them.

It is difficult to see this good family trying to make improvements and then, have the father lagging so far behind. Mom and I want the best for them and that means Brother Fikiso doing his part to learn and acquire a testimony himself. We can take the message to him, but he is the one that needs to allow the Holy Ghost to bring the message of the restored gospel into his heart.

Photos:

- Happy, accident-free missionaries! - These were two very cute girls that had their hair all braided



The first grandchild to locate and report back to me where the monkey is in this photo gets a chocolate milkshake!



Happy,
accident-free
missionaries!



These were
two very cute
girls that had
their hair all
braided up
with colorful
yarn. (FYI, their
faces are cuter
than their hair.)

up with colorful yarn. (FYI, their faces are cuter than their hair.) - The first grandchild to locate and report back to me where the monkey is in this photo gets a chocolate milkshake!

Know that we love you and pray for your happiness and welfare continually.

Dad and Mom

2017 DECEMBER 16 }

Dec_16_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a 4th ward Christmas party today. It was to begin at 11:00 AM. When we got there, there was only a handful of people - mainly the cooks. The even got into full swing about 12:30 with lunch served around 1 PM.

This morning I had a call from one of our missionaries who was asked last night to call me and see if I would be "Father Christmas." I told them, "Sure, but who has the costume?" The answer (remember, this is 9:30 this morning) was, "No one. Can you please try to get one?" It is indicative of how things work some times around here. To make a long story short, I was able to scare up a costume and do my Santa appearance just fine. (See photos) You know what they say, "Where there is a Stevenson, there is a way."

We had a good size meal. Basically, I ate the meat which was pork, chicken and sausage, and, Mom ate the veggies and salads. So far, so good. No apparent effects of food-poisoning or sever stomach pain.

We went out to the Steenbeek's today. I set up an Ebay account for them so he could post his Boy Scout Bronze Cross for Gallantry (with red ribbon) so he can get some money to help him buy a car. Everything went okay until we got to the end of the posting and Ebay wanted a \$100. Rollo objected (I don't blame him) and now Ebay is less one customer. We had a good visit eating sweet potato bread covered with pudding, milk tart pie and some of Mom's delicious cinnamon rolls. We also saw one of their latest pets (See photo).

Photos:

- Photos of the big Christmas Party for Mdantsane 4th Ward - Elder

Warren trying to get in on a goodie bag - Is it an insect or a leaf?

We look forward to the Sabbath tomorrow. We cherish the blessing to attend our church meetings and especially to partake of the sacrament. We love you all very much. Have a great day!

Dad and Mom



Christmas Party for Mdantsane 4th Ward



Christmas Party for Mdantsane 4th Ward



Photos of the big Christmas Party for Mdantsane 4th Ward



Is it an insect or a leaf?



20171216_131503.jpg



Elder Warren trying to get in on a goodie bag.

I Spy

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Grandchildren,

Attached is a photo of our Mdantsane Christmas party. Can you tell me how many cell phones you can see in the picture?

This is not a race. Each grandchild and the Hill kids can participate.

Rules:

1. You cannot talk to others about how many you see or what you see.
2. You must submit your answer by midnight on Monday (Utah time)
3. You only get one guess
4. All who guess the correct number of cell phones (based on my count) and report via email before the deadline, get put on the chocolate milkshake list for June, 2019

Good Luck!!!

Love,

Grandpa and Grandma Stevenson

Tid Bits

Dear Family,

1. Word of the week: "impervious," Not capable of being damaged or harmed. *Example:* The proud and arrogant feel impervious to the fiery darts of the adversary.

*2. Scripture of the week: *

And thus we see that the commandments of God must be fulfilled. And if it so be that the children of men keep the commandments of God he doth nourish them, and strengthen them, and provide means whereby they can accomplish the thing which he has commanded them; wherefore, he did provide means for us while we did sojourn in the wilderness.

3. Quote of the week:

4. Joke of the week:

*Customer: *How long has that employee worked for you?

*Manager: *About four hours.

*Customer: *Really? I thought he had been here longer than that.

*Manager: *Yes, he has been here four weeks.

5. Bee's Knees Award: There is only one girl like this in the whole world. She is so awesome. She is full of energy. She likes to try new things. She loves to have a fun time. She is a good example to her

younger brothers and sister. She loves her parents and is a big helper. She loves school and loves to learn. She is smart, more beautiful than a princess and a queen all smushed together, and has a great imagination. Her eyes sparkle. Olivia May, you are the Bee's Knees, sistah!!!

6. Gospel question of the week: What is the difference between Matt 5:48 and 3 Ne 12:48?

7. If I were you (advice to grand kids): If I were you, I would learn to play a musical instrument. It will



Dec_17_2017



letterhead, telling them to keep doing the right things. Mom and I are hoping these guys will grow up and be great, powerful missionaries and priesthood holders.

Dear Family,

Lots of rain today. This definitely had an impact on the small numbers we had today at church. One of our wards had its ward conference today and we maybe had 70 people there. The instruction we had from our bishop and stake president was good. One of the themes that I noted was the need for the ward members to get more involved and help build the ward.

Photos:

- Our boys! - Mom and I eating at Pinecreek Restaurant on "Pensioner's Day." It was a delicious buffet for \$3.75 USD each!!! Beef, fish, chicken, salads, roasted veggies, roasted potatoes, two types of desert and a lovely setting

Hope you have a great Sabbath. Remember we love you and we love to see you on "Loyal to the Royal."

Love,

Dad and Mom

help you in all parts of your life. Plus, it's cool to be able to play an instrument. Try it. I think you will like it.

8. What I learned this week: Budgeting our time and our money is a spiritual matter.

*9. What I am grateful for: * I love our church buildings. What well-built, well-designed places for us to meet. I hope all of us appreciate our meeting places and we do our part to keep them clean and neat.

10. My goal for the week: I plan to study all three missionary lesson pamphlets with Mom this week.

11. Picture of the week: How about this package of sunshine!

We love you. Have fun living the gospel this week!

Dad and Mom

In our other ward, I was asked to help out on the Sunday school lesson again this week. I told the Sunday School president, I did not prepare anything and I thought a new teacher had been called. He said she had been called but wasn't ready for today. I told him he could use my teacher's manual if he wanted. He gave the lesson.

Attached is a picture of our boys! These five are grand sons of our High Priest Group Leader that passed away. Our mission president is writing a letter to them on mission

Superb Mission Advice

Dear Family,

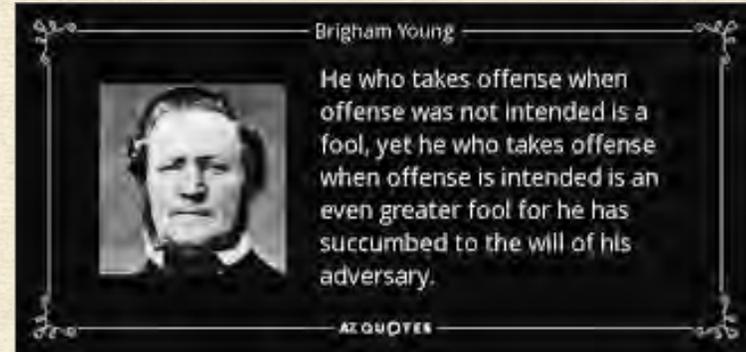
The attached talk by Elder James E. Faust is a must for anyone considering a full time mission. This is absolutely perfect for those preparing for their mission and it's coming from a pretty good source!

<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1996/04/what-i-want-my-son-to-know-before-he-leaves-on-his-mission?lang=eng>

Tell your kids they are grounded and without food until they read this.

Love,

Dad and Mom



Mom and I eating at Pinecreek Restaurant on "Pensioner's Day." It was a delicious buffet for \$3.75 USD each!!! Beef, fish, chicken, salads, roasted veggies, roasted potatoes, two types of desert and a lovely setting

Our boys!



2017

DECEMBER 18 }

Dec_18_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had pictures printed that we want to take to some of our families. We did some shopping. We did re-inspections of missionary flats. Mom made sugar cookies for our FHE this evening. I cleaned out the back of the trunk of the car where we accidentally spilled some beans. (After a few days in the heat, they began to stink up the whole car pretty bad!) I pulled weeds in a couple of our flower beds. I scanned copies of mission credit card receipts and sent them to the mission financial clerk.

So, those are a few of the things we do on preparation day.

FHE evening was lightly attended due to the rain. However, it was a good time. Mom baked sugar cookies and we brought some punch. One of the sisters made mocha muffins with

chocolate chips. We had a lesson on Ether chapter 2&3. Basically, the message was that the Brother of Jared had to do some work on his own before the Lord did his part in touching and giving the 16 stones light.

Photos:

- Elder Wabwire with Mom and I. This Elder is from Uganda. He is somewhat shy, but very friendly when you get to know him. He will return to Uganda one of these days and do a fantastic work in his country. - Christmas decorations in one of the outdoor malls. - Sugar cookies! - Our FHE group.

Do good today. The Lord loves you. We love you. That is some great support to start your day.

Dad and Mom



Elder Wabwire with Mom and I. This Elder is from Uganda. He is somewhat shy, but very friendly when you get to know him. He will return to Uganda one of these days and do a fantastic work in his country.

Our FHE group.





Christmas decorations in one of the outdoor malls.



Sugar cookies!

FHE Photo



Ultimate Handshake

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

I thought you might enjoy seeing this really cool handshake.

I think any of our grand kids in sports or anything else should copy it.

Enjoy!

Love,

Elder and Sister Stevenson

Dec_19_2017

Dear Family,

We started early today since we have transfers going on. We left the house at 5:30 AM and went to the airport. We said goodbye to some of our missionaries, mainly, Elders Msali and Warren. (See photos)

We had a bout 5 hours before we needed to go back to the airport and greet the new missionaries coming to our area. We have three new greenies that will be serving in Mdantsane. They are going to some very good missionaries who will be great trainers. Your first companion on your mission is so important! A good trainer will help set healthy habits and set a good example. It is a very important trust and assignment from the mission president.

On our way home from the airport, the Davies, Mom and I stopped at the Neo Cafe on the ocean front and had lunch. I bought a huge steak which is really three meals for me. My doggy bag ("take away", in South Africa) has enough steak in it for another two meals.

I also took some bikes into the shop - one from the mission and the other one is Mom's. We want to put tire

liners and slime in each tire.

Photos:

- Elder Msali, who was born in Mdantsane and then moved to Durban later in life. He remembers an Elder Greg Stevenson from Durban that use to barter with the natives and had a reputation for driving the mission car into three light poles, hitting one pedestrian and eluding police. Also known for wearing a yamaka at times when shopping for African souvenirs. - Elder Warren, from England, worked in one of our wards. Excellent elder. - This is

pretty much the extent to Christmas advertising in the local mall. There is not a lot of lights and glitter like the USA.

Make good choices today! We love you,

Dad and Mom



Elder Warren, from England, worked in one of our wards. Excellent elder.

Elder Msali, who was born in Mdantsane and then moved to Durban later in life. He remembers an Elder Greg Stevenson from Durban that use to barter with the natives and had a reputation for driving the mission car into three light poles, hitting one pedestrian and eluding police. Also known for wearing a yamaka at times when shopping for African souvenirs.



Dec_20_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Mom is fighting a cold today. When she gets a cold, it usually knocks her out for a few days. I spent today grocery shopping, pulling weeds, running errands and test driving Mom's bike. Tomorrow and Friday I will be working with fellowshippers and visiting our families.

Part of our lease is that we maintain the landscape around the house. So, this morning I found myself pulling weeds and digging up the soil to make it look like the temple grounds at just about any temple. The front yard is done. Next week I will concentrate on the back yard.

I checked on our Internet usage and what we have will terminate in about three days. So, early on the morning of Dec. 23rd, I need to get over to the mall and buy 20 gb more of data for

our router. We have 6 missionaries coming over on Christmas Day so we need to make sure we have air time for their skype calls to their families.

Mom is planning on having some sloppy joe fixings, salad and a cracker and humus tray. Desert has not been decided yet. We have them on a staggered schedule 5 PM and 7 PM.

I picked up the bikes from the cycle shop. When I got home, I took Mom's bike out for a test drive. I went a little over 5 miles and everything seemed to work okay with the exception of the shifting on the big sprocket. I could not get it to go down to the "Granny" gear. So, I'll get it back to the shop for some fine tuning. We have tire liners and slime in all of the bikes. I ran over broken glass today and no problems.

I was passed along the way by several other cyclists who were in much

better shape than me. They make it look so easy. I didn't mind them passing me. but it was their laughter that really hurt!

Photos:

- Moi, ready for the big ride. Some call it the Gonubie Gran Fondo, one of the toughest rides in South Africa. This ride would make Daniel go crying to his mommy! - Carjackings and truck stealing are problems in South Africa. On the back of this truck, you can see the notice that says, "We ain't stoppin for nobody. We're going right to the police

station if you try anything." Also, the "80" with a circle around it, means the truck has a legal maximum speed limit of 80 Km per hour.

We continue to love you. You are precious to us. Keep doing good things!

Dad and Mom



Carjackings and truck stealing are problems in South Africa. On the back of this truck, you can see the notice that says, "We ain't stoppin for nobody. We're going right to the police station if you try anything."

Moi, ready for the big ride. Some call it the Gonubie Gran Fondo, one of the toughest rides in South Africa. This ride would make Daniel go crying to his mommy!



2017

DECEMBER 21 }

Dec_21_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Mom has been knocking herself out, baking small loaves of banana nut bread, zucchini bread and chocolate chip pumpkin bread for various less active families we visit and other members of the ward. So far she has baked, wrapped and tied up with a ribbon 42 loaves. In total, we will need somewhere around 55 loaves. All of this when she is not feeling well!!!

Mom is such a trooper! I love her. Definitely the best missionary companion I have ever had!

I made about 12 visits today with one of our fellowshippers, Shakes. It was so good to be in the various homes, deliver some bread with a Christmas Card of sorts and leave a message about the Savior's birth. Truly a spiritually uplifting day for me! I will be doing the same tomorrow.

We like to show this very beautiful video, "A Savior is Born," when we leave a message with each family: <https://www.mormonchannel.org/watch/collection/christmas/a-savior-is-born>

FYI, I did another bike ride this morning - different route. It was nice and pretty flat. My kind of a ride. Coming back I fought gale force winds that would probably qualify as a Category 4 or 5 hurricane.

Photos:

- This is Salizwa Fikiso. She is an active young woman in our MD 1st Ward. She is a sweet girl. I asked her how long it took to do her hair. Answer: 10 hours! - People will use any old junk they can get their hands on. What is trash to one person is a gold mine to another. - I have been impressed with some of the brick-laying we have seen - level, square and straight. Some other work we

have seen is pretty bad.

We love you all very much. Have a great day doing good!

Dad and Mom



This is Salizwa Fikiso. She is an active young woman in our MD 1st Ward. She is a sweet girl. I asked her how long it took to do her hair. Answer: 10 hours!



I have been impressed with some of the brick-laying we have seen - level, square and straight. Some other work we have seen is pretty bad.



People will use any old junk they can get their hands on. What is trash to one person is a gold mine to another.

Dec_22_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Tandikhaya and I delivered about 19 loaves of bread today. We finished about 8:15 tonight. We saw a lot of people and hopefully cheered up a few families.

At one point tonight, it was dark and we were having a difficult time finding an address. After driving around several blocks in this one neighborhood, Tandikhaya suggested we stop the car and have a prayer. What a great idea! I offered the prayer and we resumed our search. We asked a lady nearby and within a minute or so, three other people jumped in to help with directions.

We were one street off from where we needed to be. Once we got onto that street I remembered exactly where the house was. It turned out to be a very good visit.

There were a few homes where the lights were off but the side door of the home (the one you always go to) was open. We are approaching the end of the month and many people run out of electricity. When we go to the door of the home we typically see that they are using a candle or a kerosene lamp.

At one such home, the mama and her two children were home. There, in the dark, we discussed the real meaning of Christmas. It was obvious that there was no food in the house and that there would be no Christmas presents to speak of. The most light (pun intended) in the house came from the video, "A Savior is Born." As we talked about the life of the Savior and His gifts to us, this little family humbly agreed that we have much to be thankful for.

We have no gold or silver to give them, but we do have the greatest

message in the world that can help them meet the most difficult of problems. There is joy in knowing the Savior was born and that he has opened up the way for us to be resurrected and to live with Heavenly Parents again.

Photos:

- The Fikiso family. Dad is lagging behind. We are teaching him, but he is not following through on commitments. - Ayanda and his children, Kelly and JD - been less active, but now coming around. He is working and the kids are left alone a

lot. He also has to work on Sundays a lot.

Have a great day. We love you,

Dad and Mom



Ayanda and his children, Kelly and JD - been less active, but now coming around. He is working and the kids are left alone a lot. He also has to work on Sundays a lot.

The Fikiso family. Dad is lagging behind. We are teaching him, but he is not following through on commitments.



Dec_23_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Are you ready for Christmas?

We have had a busy day getting Christmas care packages put together for our 12 missionaries. Honestly, I have done a little of the work, but Mom has been working like maniac!

Here is what they get in their Christmas-decorated bag per companionship:

- One bag of roasted peanuts
- One bag of rice krispie treats (two squares each)
- Two loaves of bread
- Pumpkin, banana or zucchini
- Two oranges
- Two plastic drink bottles, each filled with small size, wrapped candy
- Six Kit Kat candy bars
- Two Lindt chocolate truffle-like candy
- Two printed stories of the "Christmas Orange" (See attachment)

We plan to drop off the packages

tonight when they get back from their work areas.

Mom is still feeling under the weather. She will go to deliver Christmas packages tonight, but stay in the car. When she gets a cold, it seems to stick with her for at least a week.

Our missionaries have been told to be careful on Christmas Eve and on New Years Eve they need to be back to their flats by 6 PM. I was in the township last night and the drinking has already started pretty heavy. It is sad as you drive along the roads and you see a fair number of stumbling drunks. A better idea might be to purchase food for your family!

I heard a statistic yesterday on the radio about automobile-related fatalities for 2017 in South Africa. If I heard correctly, 38% involved pedestrians. I believe it. Every time we travel home from Mdantsane in the

dark, we always see a handful of pedestrians walking along the roadside with cars going 60 MPH. When you add alcohol to that equation, you always have bad results. Even more disturbing is the number of children that play in the busy streets of the township. Not every motorist is careful and these little children are at risk.

FYI, Mdantsane is the second largest township in South Africa. That's good. That means a lot of potential!

We love our missionaries. They are a

good group of Elders. Well, actually, there might be one or two we wonder about. One just had his driving privileges suspended by the mission president for "excessive speeding." We will have 6 of our zone missionaries here on Christmas Day at different times to call/Skype their families. Mom will have plenty of food for them to consume.

Photos:

- I bought some data this morning for our Internet/router. The line was about 1,000 hours long. Anyway, they don't say, "Form a Line Here."



Here is a cute little bug we found on our patio this morning.



I bought some data this morning for our Internet/router. The line was about 1,000 hours long. Anyway, they don't say, "Form a Line Here." They say "Queue" instead of "line."

They say "Queue" instead of "line."
- Here is a cute little bug we found on our patio this morning.

We love you. Have a great day!

Tid Bits

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

1. Word of the week: "insidious," proceeding in a gradual, subtle way, but with very harmful effects.* Example:* Satan's insidious strategy is to lead us down the path of sin and sorrow with a flaxen cord until he can bind us with the heavy chains of hell.

2. Quote of the week:

3. Scripture of the week:

And it came to pass that we lived after the manner of happiness. -2 Ne 5 :27

4. Joke of the week:

Q: Why do hummingbirds hum?

A: Because they don't know the words.

5. Bee's Knees Award: This guy is a

gem. He loves his family. He loves and adores his wife. He is an outdoor guy that is trapped inside the confines of dark rooms watching movies all day. He is a super father that enjoys doing things with his children. He is a good provider and is frugal, driving a 4 cylinder Honda Accord when he could be driving a Porsche 911 V8 conversion with A/C. He is firm in the gospel and dedicated to honoring covenants. He can grow a really cool beard. His super reliable. He is solid good. Michael Stevenson, you are the Bee's Knees, brotha!!!

*6. Gospel question of the week: *Who was the Jewish leader Jesus was taken to prior to His Crucifixion?

7. What I learned this week: Man is that he might have joy. That is the main focus of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. And...that is what needs to be our objective when teaching

and working with our children.

*8. What I am grateful for: * People who are good examples of the gospel.

*9. If I were you (advice to grand kids): * If I were you, I would limit the time I spend on electronic devices - phones, computers, tablets, etc. Try it. I think you will like it.

10. My goal for the week: Mom and I will have read all three missionary lesson pamphlets by midnight tonight. This week, we plan to

deliver more bread and do a good job of preparing for teaching Brother Fikiso.

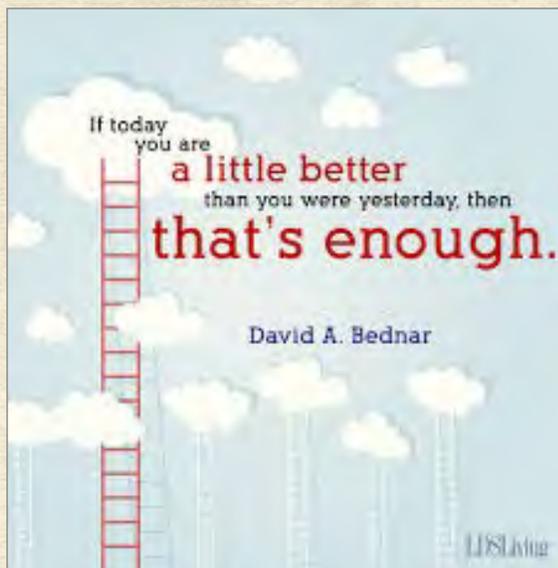
*11. Photo of the week: * Lining up for the big race!

We love you. Have fun living the gospel this week!

Dad and Mom



Family reunion Bear Lake



Dear Family,

Can you believe it is Christmas Eve? Ready or not, Christmas will be here bright and early tomorrow morning. We will miss being with you, but at the same time we are so happy to be on the Lord's errand. Our first Christmas away from family, yet enjoying it with a new family and friends.

Our church, like other places around

the world, was only one hour. In the 1st ward, they had speakers lined up and they spoke about service, keeping the Sabbath Day holy and being good examples to children. Not a whole lot about the birth of the Savior and His life.

The 4th ward didn't seem too prepared. They either did not assign talks or those that were assigned did not show up. So, the bishopric gave the talks today. One of the speakers had a Christmas theme to his remarks.

No matter what, it was good to be in sacrament meeting and to have the blessing of receiving the bread and water.

After church, Mom and I and the Davies went out to the Steenbeek's for a late lunch and a visit. They are very generous and hospitable. And, they treat their animals the same way. They have the run of the house. Cats lay on the dinner table and a puppy dog does what he wants. Then, there are the 5 dogs outside on the deck barking and shedding hair. The chair I sat on was loaded with cat hair. Flies were abundant. But, the meal was very good. Mom brought her dinner rolls and yum-mie potatoes. Sister Davies brought an apple pie. Don't get us wrong, we are grateful for their kindness and invitation.

On the beach, Sister Steenbeek showed us a Blue Bottle Jelly Fish. They are also called a Portuguese Man O War. Evidently, they can really make you sick when they sting you. Rollo said they can grow much larger and their stingers/tentacles can get as long as 10 meters (about 30 feet). On our way back to their

home, we saw a centipede-looking animal with red legs. Don't eat them, they are poisonous.

Good luck with getting all the gifts wrapped and under the Christmas tree. We hope you have a wonderful Christmas and remember the birth of the Savior as the reason for the season!

Photos:

- A small Blue Bottle Jelly Fish - but still can pack a punch if they get their stingers wrapped around you. - Beautiful flowers near the Steenbeek's home - Rollo playing the piano. He plays very well.

We love you all very much. Because of the Savior we all will resurrect and all have the opportunity to repent, receive forgiveness, become clean and return to live with our Heavenly Parents. That is the best deal on planet earth!

Dad and Mom

*Special Note, Reminder: Tomorrow I will be sending out an "I Spy" photo. Good luck to any grandchildren that think they can win a chocolate milk-

shake! Expect this every Monday.*



Rollo playing the piano



A small Blue Bottle Jelly Fish - but still can pack a punch if they get their stingers wrapped around you



Beautiful flowers near the Steenbeek's home



2017 DECEMBER 26 }

Dec_26_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Today was a slow day - running some errands and even taking a nap! I'm afraid that is a habit I could get use to very easily!

Mom is still feeling the effects of her cold and probably needs one more day to fully recuperate. So, tomorrow I will use a fellowshipper to go visit and deliver the Bread of Life and some banana nut bread to boot. We have added about 15 more people to our list we need to visit and give bread to.

Mom was a little surprised when she opened the oven today and found the casserole of yummie potatoes still in the oven from yesterday when she was going to serve them to the missionaries with their sloppy joes! Fortunately, she had turned off the oven yesterday but simply forgot to pull the casserole out of the oven. She

was preoccupied with a lot of other food items she was preparing.

This is a tough week for missionary work. Lots of people are gone to visit family or have family coming to visit them. Some times they come unannounced! "Hey, we're here. Do you have any food?" And, of course, there is a little consumption of alcoholic beverages going on.

Photos:

- Would you buy clothes at this store? - How about some delicious chicken parts for the holidays?

I'm sorry I did not get the I Spy photo out yesterday. I sent it today. If we find out that adults are helping their children locate things in the photos, they will be written out of the family will, which could mean dozens and dozens of dollars!

We love you!

Dad and Mom

I Spy

Dear Grandchildren,

Good luck with this week's I Spy Photo!

How many whales do you see in this photo?

All winners will be added to the chocolate milkshake list for June, 2019.

I need all guesses in by midnight on Wednesday.

Love,

Grandpa and Grandma Stevenson

Would you buy clothes at this store?





How about some delicious chicken parts for the holidays?



How many whales do you see in this photo?

Dec_27_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Mom is feeling much better. We decided one more day could make a huge difference. So, I went out with Thandikhaya and she stayed home and did some more baking. We need about 17 more loaves of bread to complete our *expanded* list. Of course, Mom is knocking it out of the park...again!!

The first home we went to was that of a return missionary who is now less active, drinking, smoking and evidently enjoying a girlfriend or two. He is in his forties. When we pulled up to the home, we noticed that the bedroom curtain was moved aside and our good brother's head popped up. When we went to the door, he answered with just a pair of shorts on and a T-shirt in his hands. Smoke reeked the front room. Needless to say, he was a little surprised.

After we sat down to talk, he basically confessed he was doing all these things and needed to change. Then, he said, let me get my girlfriend out here before we have a message. Well, she comes out from the bedroom and thank goodness, fully clothed. She did not say anything the whole time we were there. I shared the message from 2 Nephi, chapter 2 where it says man is free to chose liberty and eternal life or evil and captivity.

He said he needs to make changes and that he needs Sister Stevenson and I to continue to visit him and help him. We'll see. I hope we can do some good there. *However, there is an important lesson here for all of us. If we do not do our part to safe guard our testimonies, any one of us can be susceptible to falling away from the Church*.

The basics are so *vitally important*

- study the scriptures daily and especially to read in the Book of Mormon daily, Sincere, earnest prayer as individuals and as families, Attend church to worship and commune with God, Serve others by following the life and example of the Savior. Now, just do it!

Other visits went very well. I love to share the video about the birth of the Savior. I love to share my testimony of the Savior with these good people. I remind them there is a lot to rejoice about, but mainly two things; 1) the Resurrection, and, 2)

the way for us to repent and be clean so we can live with our Heavenly Father again. We plan to do a lot of visiting after the holidays.

Photos:

- This is a grotesque sneak photo of me napping, taken by Mom without my permission. FYI, I usually put a pillow under my shirt for warmth and comfort. - This young man, Siya, is one of our fellowshippers and just received his mission call. He will let everyone know about it on Saturday. - This is a South African Lady Bug. After



This is a grotesque sneak photo of me napping, taken by Mom without my permission



This young man, Siya, is one of our fellowshippers and just received his mission call



This is a South African Lady Bug. After Apartheid, all the lady bugs in South Africa turned black and white; a combining of the races.

Apartheid, all the lady bugs in South Africa turned black and white; a combining of the races.

We love you very much and keep you in our prayers and thoughts.

Dad and Mom and the LIZARD

2017 DECEMBER 28 }

Dec_28_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

It was so good to get out and see families today with Mom.

We delivered bread, showed our "A Savior is Born" video, shared our testimonies and had a prayer. Those ingredients make for a good day!

Mom may have a sore neck today and throughout our time in the mission. It seems that on every street corner there is a man urinating in plain view of the public. This type of activity is most frequent near taverns. When she suspects someone is relieving themselves, she has to violently jerk her head around to avoid the disgusting sight!

One of our fellowshippers could not keep his mission call a secret any longer. He told everyone today that he has been called to the South Africa Johannesburg Mission. He seems so genuinely happy! He will be

a good missionary and learn a lot. We hope he returns to be a strong asset to the Mdantsane 1st Ward.

As we get to visit both active and less active members of the church this time of the year, it is so plain to see the happiness that emanates from those homes where families embrace and practice the principles of the gospel. They do better all around, in every aspect of their lives. How cool is that!

Photos:

- We went to the "Veg and Fruit Market" today. This is Mom's type of store - tons and tons of vegetables!!! - The entrance to this home has a bunch of cut mirrors. When the sun hits it, there is quite a sparkle.

Have a great day. Mom and I are going to watch Phantom of the Opera tonight, read the Book of Mormon,

have companionship prayer and go to bed!

We love you all very much!

Dad and Mom



"Veg and Fruit Market"



Mom's type of store - tons and tons of vegetables!!!



The entrance to this home has a bunch of cut mirrors. When the sun hits it, there is quite a sparkle.

Dec_30_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

As of 9 AM this morning, we still did not know if there really was going to be a funeral for someone who we had heard passed away in the 4th ward. Around 10 AM, we called the missionaries to see if they knew anything. They did not know anything. So, we headed out to the church to see firsthand what the situation was. False alarm, no funeral at the church.

Mom and I spent the next 4 hours visiting less active members and dropping off the last of the homemade bread. We had some very good visits. One sister in particular, about 25 years old, was especially happy to see us and to get a chance to meet Mom. She works in East London during the week and is only available on weekends for us to visit. She said she would be at church on Sunday.

We also, visited Sister Lulama Dlova. We have visited her and her family off and on over the last few months. Unbeknownst to me, she was at church last Sunday. Mom was sick or else Mom would have noticed her. She is very nice and said she would be at church again tomorrow. Her mother was also there and is a sweet old lady. She is the one who had her foot ran over by drunken ambulance drivers. She said as we were leaving, "You have brought us God and Jesus and heaven to our home."

People have already set up tents and gotten an early start to drinking for New Year's Eve. In addition to celebrating the new year, many young men are coming home from the bush and there is always a big celebration for them - lots of people and lots of drinking. As a matter of fact, the young men coming back from the bush are encouraged to drink. What a horrible way to start manhood! So

many turn into alcoholics.

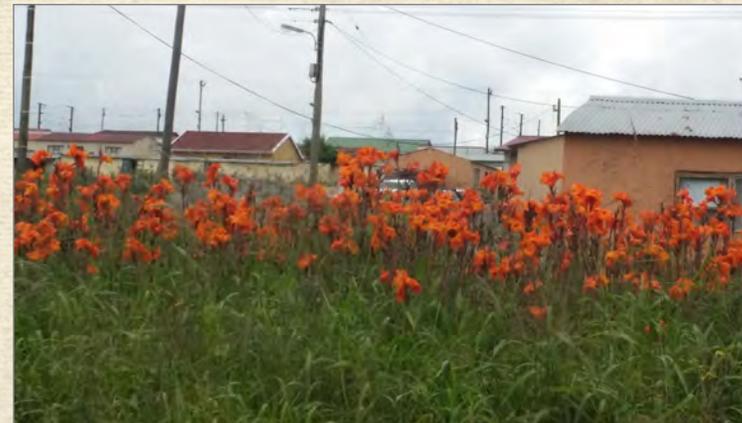
Photos:

- These beautiful flowers are a stark contrast to the poverty so prevalent in the township - rare sight. - Here is a sign in our compound warning us to be aware of dangerous pedestrians and children that could attack us at any moment. - This single bush with such pretty flowers is just around the corner from our house.

We are about to start a new year. What are good goals to have for 2018.

What changes do we want to make in our lives? We love you. Have a great day!

Dad and Mom



These beautiful flowers are a stark contrast to the poverty so prevalent in the township - rare sight.



Here is a sign in our compound warning us to be aware of dangerous pedestrians and children that could attack us at any moment.



This single bush with such pretty flowers is just around the corner from our house.

Dec_31_2017_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a pretty good attendance at both of our sacrament meetings today. Also, we have heard that in January the numbers start to look a lot better.

Our 4th ward did not have speakers assigned for today. One of the counselors caught our young Elders at the beginning of church and asked them to speak. The first missionary is brand new (one week) and spoke for about 5 minutes.

The next missionary has been out for over a year. He began his talk by telling everyone that a few months back, he and his previous companion were called on the way to church and asked to speak. Then, he went on to say, that this morning he and his companion had even less warning to prepare some remarks. The body language and words depicted

some frustration on his part. During this elaboration he glances back once or twice at the bishopric. I could tell they were very uncomfortable.

I felt so sorry for the bishop. I motioned to one of his counselors that I would like to take a few minutes. I hate to see people criticize and point out shortfalls and then, do nothing about it. I spoke of how I was a bishop once and had a busy career, a family to care for and other pressures. More than once we found ourselves racing to get speakers at the last minute in our ward.

I suggested we all do two things as a way to support the bishopric:

1) Go home today and write a talk. Have a talk ready at all times so that if the bishopric needs you to fill in for a sacrament meeting talk, you can do it. (My talk is on 'Faith.')

2) All of us should report to the bishop and say, "Bishop, I am ready to serve in any position you feel inspired to call me to."

Then, I cited D&C 58:26-27, where the Lord says we need to be anxiously engaged in a good cause. We don't need to be commanded in all things.

Bottom line, I hope the bishopric felt a little better and that all of us will do a better job of supporting them.

Photos:

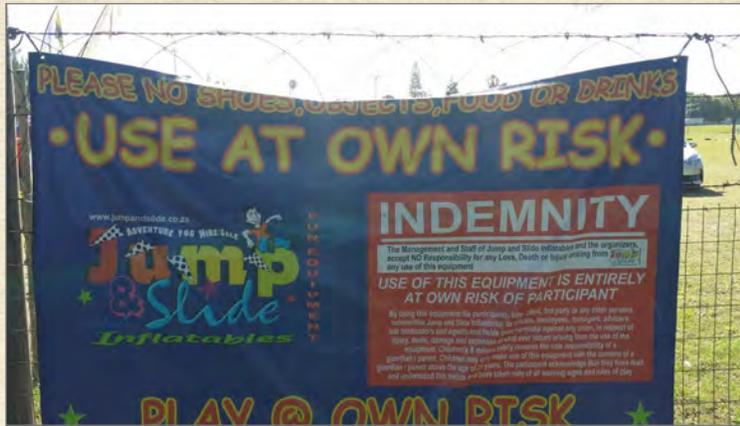
- It was interesting to see a Masonic Lodge here in Gonubie - It was odd to see all these inflatables on New Year's Eve and see no one using them. Maybe they are scheduled for tomorrow?

Have a safe and fun New Year's Eve. We love you,

Dad and Mom



It was interesting to see a Masonic Lodge here in Gonubie



It was odd to see all these inflatables on New Year's Eve and see no one using them.

A student was sitting at her desk with her feet stretched far out in the aisle. She was also noisily chewing gum.

The annoyed teacher called out, "Mary!"

"Yes?" responded the student.

"Take that gum out of your mouth and put your feet in."

*5. Bee's Knees Award: (Traditionally, this is for family members. However, this week, I would like to award this prestigious honor to someone outside our immediate family.)

This guy has a heart of gold. He is kind. He is polite. He is smarter than ten rocket scientists all smushed together. He is built like a German outhouse - big and strong. He is generous and would give you the shirt off his back. He faces his challenges in life head on which have made him stronger. He is a good friend to those lucky enough to know him. He has a testimony of the gospel and tries his best to live it every day. Simply put, he is a great

guy. Kason. you are the Bee's Knees. brotha!!!

*6. Gospel question of the week: *When was the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles organized in this dispensation?

- August 17, 1835 - February 14, 1835 - July 20, 1831

*7. If I were you (advice to grand kids): * If I were you, I would sing the Stevenson Family Motto Song in opera style three times this week. Try it. I think you will like it.

*8. What I learned this week: * Falling down and staying down is failure. Falling down and getting back up is progress.

*9. What I am grateful for: * I am grateful for the constant, continual positive and cheerful attitudes of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. They are so aware of the problems facing the members and yet they are so bold, strong and happy.

*10. My goal for the week: * We still haven't met with Brother Fikiso yet. But we did get all the bread deliv-

Tid Bits

Dear Family,

*1. Word of the week: * "bifurcation," the division of something into two branches or parts. *Example: * The rise of the Porsche 911 V8 conversion car is a bifurcation of design and automotive philosophy.

2. Quote of the week:

3. Scripture of the week:

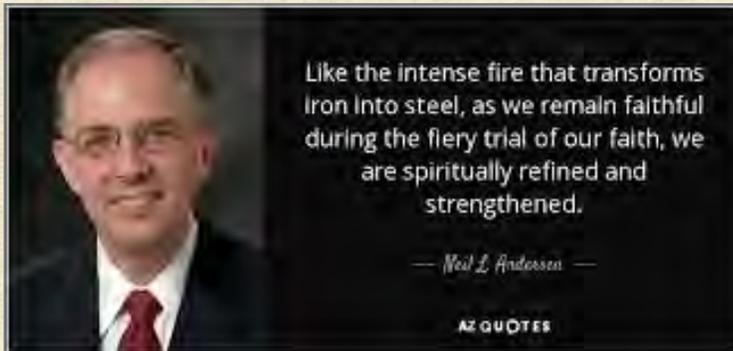
Wherefore, how great the importance to make these things known unto the inhabitants of the earth, that they may know that there is no flesh that can dwell in the presence of God, save it be through the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah, who layeth down his life according to the flesh, and taketh it again by the power of the Spirit, that he may bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, being the first that should rise. -2 Ne 2:8

4. Joke of the week:

ered. Mom is going to bake another half dozen loaves that we will deliver this week. My goal this week is to write down the goals I have for 2018 and how I am going to achieve them.

*11. Photo of the week: * This girl even smiles when she is having a seizure!

Maybe they are scheduled for tomorrow?



This girl even smiles when she is having a seizure!

2018 JANUARY 1 }

Jan_01_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Preparation Day! Guess what Mom did? Yep, that's right, she baked. Believe me, I am not forcing her to do this. She is doing it because she knows it will bring some level of joy to those we give the bread to. 19 more loaves today.

But, oh no, that was not enough! She baked about 6 dozen cookies and put them in snack baggies with 3 cookies per bag. That is so tomorrow, the Young Men's President and I can go around to a lot of less active Aaronic Priesthood holders and when we invite them to come to church, we also give them a bag of cookies.

At 8:30 this morning, Mom and I went to Bishop Krull's home. I owed chocolate milkshakes to their family after losing a wager to their 10 year old kid a week ago. He is in the picture next to me and you can see two

little horns sticking up from his head! He received a dart gun for Christmas and I told him if he could hit a certain target from a certain distance within three shots, I would make chocolate milkshakes for his whole family. It was an impossible shot for a kid his age and an erratic dart gun. The little devil did it! I sound bitter, but, I really enjoy rewarding kids like him. This is a great family that does so much for the church.

Tonight, Mom and I went to downtown East London and saw the Christmas lights. It was quite nice and frankly, a lot more decoration than we had anticipated. You just don't see a lot of festive Christmas activity at homes or along the roads.

Photos:

- The master milkshake maker and the Krull family - Benjamin Krull drinking his shake through a

straw he formed into glasses and then around his neck - This is the 12th Article of Faith building - Christmas lights along the ocean front or what they call the Esplanade

Happy New Year to each of you. We love you more this year than last!

Dad and Mom



This is the 12th Article of Faith building

Christmas lights along the ocean front or what they call the Esplanade



The master milkshake maker and the Krull family



Benjamin Krull drinking his shake through a straw he formed into glasses and then around his neck



Jan_02_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

What a great day! *I was a taxi driver*. I picked up Brother Lucky Sandran in an area unknown to me called, Reston. This is a small township development just outside of Mdantsane. He has been called to be the Young Men's President in our MD 1st Ward. The objective today: get to as many of the 25 Aaronic Priesthood holders as possible so he can meet them and make sure they are issued a challenge to come to church. As we met these young men, we gave them each a bag of cookies that Mom had baked yesterday.

This brother is great. He did all the work and I did all the driving. It was so refreshing to see this guy get into these homes, meet the young men, build some rapport and then, commit them to reading the Book of Mormon, Coming early to church to help with the sacrament preparation

and to come on Saturdays to their Mutual activities. How cool is that?

Brother Sandran is from Zambia and joined the church in 2007. He tried to avoid the missionaries that kept coming around. They kept talking to him about baptism, which he said he was not interested in. He would even try to hide from them. They gave him a Book of Mormon and the rest is history. He read it cover to cover in 2 weeks and was ready to be baptized. He served a mission from 2010 to 2012 in Zimbabwe.

Oh, how we wish there were more people like him to really understand their callings and do their best to magnify them. We will go out soon and do some more visiting. He is married and has only been in Mdantsane for about a month. His wife will be coming in another month or so to be with him.

Mom was able to stay home and get some things done around the house - preparation for tomorrow's Mission Leader Council meal, some housework she wanted to get done, wash, etc. During the week it is hard to get to these things. So, it was nice for her to have some time to jump on these things.

Morning Ride with Mom:

This morning Mom mounted her Raleigh mountain bike (29 inch frame, disc brakes, 21 gears, front suspension ,etc.) and set out for her

first ride. I was on the small frame, one speed bike. We did what we call the "quick ride" (5.5 miles that takes about 35 minutes). *She rode like a pro*! At first I was leading out like the Alpha Dawg I some times think I am. After a couple miles, Mom pulls up along side of me. I thought, how nice, riding side by side in the cool of the morning.

That lasted about 15 seconds. Then, she started to pull away. I was startled that she felt like she needed to take the lead. I was already pumping my tired little legs like crazy. Did she



Mom, ready for her maiden voyage on the Red Barron.

expect me to try and keep up? Honestly, I felt a little discouraged but knew she would eventually let me catch up.

We reached the half way point and started back together. I led out once again. It felt so good. There I was, leader of the pack! Before I knew it, Mom was coming up next to me and passing me again. What made matters worse was the smile on her face! I know quite a bit about psychology. Experts say the smile is a sign of suppressed laughter. Some psychologists will tell you that it is deemed worse than laughing right in some one's face.

It did not take long for my view of her to become smaller and smaller as she blazed her way back to our house and I lagged behind. I was panting and gasping for oxygen. Fortunately, a block or so from home she had slowed down and we were able to ride back into our compound together. It was great because none of our neighbors knew what really happened on the ride. All they could see was a cute, loving couple riding in unison, madly in love with each other.

Photos:

- Mom, ready for her maiden voyage on the Red Barron.

We love you all very much. Keep the commandments, please.

Dad and Mom

2018 JANUARY 3 }

Jan_03_2018

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had Mission Leadership Council (MLC) today. It started at 10 AM and goes to about 2:45 PM. We have a 45 minute lunch break in there around noon. It is a long meeting, but very important. This is a time for the president and his assistants to provide some good direction and training for zone leaders. If the ZL's are doing their jobs correctly, the water gets all the way from the irrigation canal to the last tree in the row!

Mom and Sister Davies did an amazing job on lunch for all of us as they usually do. Of course, they sit in on the meeting and make sure they know what's going on in the mission.

Mom made a wacky cake for desert. I bought some custard pudding to pour over the cake. It is a very popular topping here in South Africa. It is

said that William Holmes Walker brought the recipe for the pudding to South Africa from Utah back in 1853.

Photos:

- We just bought some ant traps. I don't know where the ants come from, but they appear in mass if you leave one little crumb on the kitchen counter
 - Custard pudding, great on chocolate wacky cake!
 - Just a few of the magnificent loaves of bread that Mom baked.
- More deliveries tomorrow.

We think about you often. We love to read "Loyal to the Royal" postings. We pray for your safety and welfare.

Love,

Dad and Mom



Custard pudding, great on chocolate wacky cake!



We just bought some ant traps. I don't know where the ants come from, but they appear in mass if you leave one little crumb on the kitchen counter.



Just a few of the magnificent loaves of bread that Mom baked.

Jan_04_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a busy and productive day. It was hot and we perspired profusely in the homes where we taught. But, we were able to leave good messages, share our testimonies, drop off bread and pray for a blessing upon their homes.

We went to one home where at our last visit there a week ago, the mother ducked out of sight because she was drinking with her friends. She yelled from the back room she couldn't see us at that time. She was embarrassed. Today, while I played with the children from around the neighborhood, Mom had a chance to visit with this sister, share a video and share her heart-felt feelings about the gospel. Mom told her that Heavenly Father will always love her no matter what. Mom was crying and so was Sister Mbomvane.

This is such a classic example of where a righteous sister can have such a positive impact on someone like Sister Mbomvane. What Mom was able to do was so much more than any of the young missionaries or a senior male missionary. She reached her heart. We hope this good sister will make changes in her life. But, if she does not, she will always know that Sister Stevenson loves her and cares for her.

We were in a one room shack today that was as hot as an oven. Sweat runs down your forehead and you can feel the dripping down your back. We met with a new convert to the church and her activity in the church is somewhat tenuous. We plan to visit her every week or two and help her along. Mom seems to have a bit of a connection to her and we will try to nourish that relationship.

Our last visit of the day was in a shack with Nompumlelo, a young lady, maybe 25 years old. She has been a member for about 5 years. She is on crutches (possibly a birth defect?). She recently obtained a job in East London and is absolutely thrilled. Imagine, you leave the shack at 6 AM and take public transportation to your job so you can be there by 7:30 AM. You work until 5 PM and then you return home by 6 or 6:30. All the time she is moving, she is dragging her legs. Yet, she has the greatest smile and attitude in the world. She is grateful for her bless-

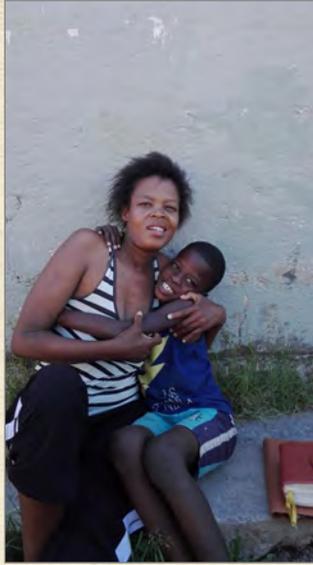
ings!

We meet people every day that struggle. And, when they are church members and not living the gospel, it seems especially difficult for them. We want to impress upon them as strongly as possible the importance of honoring their covenants and when they do, the Lord will bless them. We see that as the case in so many of the lives of righteous members in the wards.

LIZARD Report:

Me and some of the neighborhood kids.





Sister
Mbomvane
and one of her
boys

I hate to weary you good people about the lizard. I am deeply saddened to report that the lizard has crossed a bright red line; he has come into our private space, our bedroom. Mom was reading in bed last night when she called to me and said the lizard was in our bedroom.

I grabbed the broom and located the perverted peeping-tom. My intent was to jab the cocky little critter and hold him helplessly pinned against the wall. I hit him, but instead of having him pinned, he fell 7 feet to the floor. I went to jab him again, but

he dashed behind the nightstand. When I moved the nightstand, he was no where to be found.

I shined the flashlight under the bed. Nothing! Where was he? Was he under one of our pillows? In our covers? Into our closet? This is totally unacceptable, bad behavior. What's next? Am I going to have some lewd lizard lurking in our bathroom as I shower my massive, Herculean body? How gross is that (the lizard, not my body)?

I know I shouldn't talk like this, but I

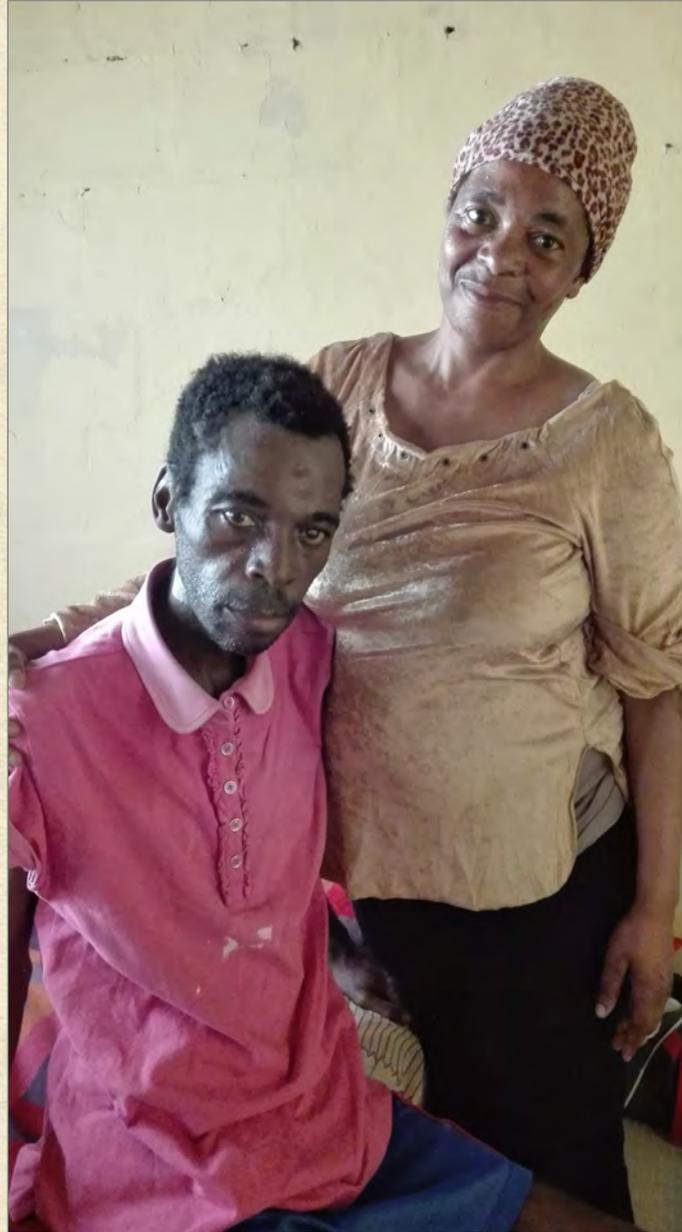
hate the lizard.

Photos:

- Sister Mbomvane and one of her boys - Me and some of the neighborhood kids. I would have one them touch my nose and then, I would push the button on my car keys so that the blade of the key would pop open as if my nose was magic. They had great fun doing this. Before I knew it, I had ten kids trying to touch my nose, some of their fingers accidentally going into my mouth. - This is the daughter and son of a 90 year old grandma we visited today. The son, David, has a stomach disorder and just lays in bed all day. His sister gets him up during to day to walk him around the room. He is very frail. I helped her by holding him on one side. It was a rich experience for me.

We love you, plain and simple.
Thanks for making good choices!

Dad and Mom



This is the daughter and son of a 90 year old grandma we visited today. The son, David, has a stomach disorder and just lays in bed all day. His sister gets him up during to day to walk him around the room. He is very frail. I helped her by holding him on one side. It was a rich experience for me.

2018

JANUARY 5 }

Jan_05_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had our district meeting today and it was very instructive. We did a role play in which Mom and I were the investigators. The objective was to show the importance of using the scriptures. We started the role play with a real prayer. Then, the missionaries asked if we had been reading the Book of Mormon. Mom said, "yes." I said I read the Introduction.

Then they asked if we had any questions. I said I did. "What was this business about gold plates? Really, gold plates? That sounds a little fishy to me. A fairy tale."

How do you counter that with the scriptures? Elder Tucker had some inspiration. He went to Enos and talked about how important the plates were and how they needed to be preserved until these modern

days. Gold plates have that kind of lasting power. It was a good example of how personal study can allow the Holy Ghost to bring these you have read to remembrance.

We needed to run home after district meeting because I have been selected to be the minutes taker for our Mission Leadership Council. I have to get those typed up before the office gets mad and sends me home. It took some time, but glad I got it done while some of those things were fresh in my mind.

We had more visits today. Mom had messages all put together for our appointments. She did a great job addressing the Doctrine of Christ as outlined in 2 Nephi 31. They were meaningful visits for the people we saw, one of which is in the process of repentance and meeting with the bishop.

Photos:

- Please, I do not want to make any one jealous, but I had some fried Mac n Cheese this evening. FYI, this is the main course they serve in the Celestial Kingdom. Baked cheesecake is the main desert. - These hogs are enjoying a delicious meal in one of Mdantsane's outdoor restaurants. Not sure we want to eat any more pork!

We love you more than pork rinds boiled in oil.

Dad and Mom



These hogs are enjoying a delicious meal in one of Mdantsane's outdoor restaurants. Not sure we want to eat any more pork!

Mac n Cheese this evening.



2018

JANUARY 6 }

Jan_06_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We hurried this morning to get ready to run some errands for missionaries and then over to the church to help clean at 10 AM. This month is the 4th ward's responsibility to clean. After taking care of the missionaries, we rushed over to the church only to find it locked up and no one there. We decided to deliver some bread and then, come back later.

We made our way over to Bishop Jada's home who lives quite a ways outside the 1st Ward boundaries. He has a large and nice house when compared to others in Mdantsane. He and his wife were very cordial and we had a good visit. After he finishes his tour of duty as the bishop of the ward, he and his wife would like to go on a mission. Good people!

When we returned to the church, it

was still locked up. What do you do when something like that happens? You go to the Fruit and Veggie Store. Mom salivates when we walk into that place. Today we picked up some good pears, green and red peppers, carrots, potatoes, bananas, celery, zucchini and nectarines.

And, since there is a McDonald's close by, I had to pick up a Big Mac and an apple pie. I still am amazed that their product taste pretty close to the USA. A few hours later, Mom was kind enough to fry me up some Mac n Cheese.

We have started our fast, the car is washed, Mom washed the whites and hung them up to dry and we are going to watch a movie prior to hitting the sack. A few nights ago we watched "My Fair Lady." Last night we watched a thriller, "State of Play" with Russell Crowe and Ben Affleck. Tonight, "Top Hat" with Fred Astaire

and Ginger Rogers.

I am thinking of a new strategy with the lizard. Basically, it is this. We start to set a place at the breakfast, lunch and dinner table for him. His chair will be elevated so he can reach any food with his tacky little tongue. There will be a few delicious-looking, dead flies on his plate. A name plate will say, "Our Family Lizard." We want him to think we like him and want to be social with him. What he will not know is that we are going to lace his food with the most toxic poison we can find.

How cool is that?

Photos:

- Mom with Sister Jada. We were in our work clothes so we could help clean the church.

We love you all very much. Make good choices!

Dad and Mom



Mom with Sister Jada. We were in our work clothes so we could help clean the church.

Jan_07_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

It was a blessing to fast and pray today for those leaders of our church who will be making callings in the near future to two priesthood holders to become the next members of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Our prayers are that they will unequivocally know the will of the Lord in extending these sacred callings.

We rejoice as we saw a couple of our less active members at church this morning. One such member was Sister Carol Jako. I think this is the first time she has been to church the whole time we have been here.

When we saw her on one of our visits about a month ago, she was too busy with getting her son ready to go to the "bush." December is one of the couple times during the year where young men are sent to the bush to

become a man.

It is a Xhosa ritual stemming back generations that is still very common and practiced today. It is a month-long event and can be quite expensive for families to experience. Here is a link that does a very good job of explaining the process:

<http://magazine.africageographic.com/weekly/issue-48/xhosa-circumcision-ritual-south-africa-its-hard-to-be-a-man/>

One of the challenges we have in South Africa, and I would imagine in other parts of the world, is what should members of the church do when tradition conflicts with what the gospel teaches?

One good example is "Labola." This is the money that a suitor must come up with and pay to the family of his girlfriend before he can marry her. The amount of the money is deter-

mined by family members of the bride-to-be. The church has published a statement on this that says it is a practice that conflicts with and helps prevent the principle of finding a spouse and marrying that person when the time is right. Labola is a huge obstacle for young single adults getting married in South Africa where some families still insist on a dowry.

Photos:

- Young men during the bush ritual - Young men who have been through the ritual and are now

roaming the community with their new clothes, making the statement that they are now men - This is the type of hut/dwelling a young man will live in for the month-long ordeal

We love you!!!

Dad and Mom



This is the type of hut/dwelling a young man will live in for the month-long ordeal



Young men during the bush ritual

I Spy

Dear Grandchildren,

Good luck with the attached I Spy photo!

HOW MANY HORSES CAN YOU SEE IN THIS PHOTO?

New rule: All answers must be submitted by TUESDAY midnight (Utah time).

Love,

Grandpa and Grandma Stevenson

Tid Bits

Dear Family,

*1. Word of the week: "proclivity," a tendency to choose or do something regularly; an inclination or predisposition towards a particular thing. * Example: Samuel Stevenson has a proclivity to make his bed each and every morning so he will get better grades in school, have even more girls like him, and, he will be an out-

standing missionary.

2. Quote of the week:

3. Scripture of the week:

Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have *joy*.
2 Nephi 2:25

4. Joke of the week:

Q: What did the cannibal get when he deep-fried Santa Claus?

A: Crisp Cringle.

*5. Bee's Knees Award: *This girl loves to play with her sisters and tries to be like them. She has a vivid imagination and a mind of her own. She wears big girl under pants like her sisters, her mommy and her grandmas. She is smart. She is so pretty that Prince Hans wants to marry her. She loves Primary and is always trying to be like Jesus. She loves her family and is a good worker to help around the house. She can climb rock walls like a lizard. Juliet, you are the Bee's Knees, sistah!!!

*6. Gospel question of the week: * Who were the first two apostles

called by Jesus?

*7. What I learned this week: * Addictions are so difficult to overcome and it is so important that we understand the Atonement of Jesus Christ can aid us in mastering our lives and putting debilitating habits behind us.

*8. What I am grateful for: * I am so thankful for members of the church that take seriously their callings and go forth to serve and bless the lives of others.

*9. My goal for the week: * To have personal scripture study at least one hour a day.

*10. If I were you (advice to grand kids): * If I were you, I would learn how to cook meals and help out in the kitchen. These are skills you will need to know for a mission and marriage. Learn these skills now. Try it. I think you will like it.

*11. Photo of the week: * One of the great, all-time La cross players of the world!



Young men who have been through the ritual and are now roaming the community with their new clothes, making the statement that they are now men.



HOW MANY HORSES CAN YOU SEE IN THIS PHOTO?



Happy New Year 2018

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Loved Ones,

As you know Dad pretty much covers our day to day activities but I thought I would occasionally contribute a few thoughts. They are pretty random but here goes...

Dad shared a photo a few weeks ago of Brother Booi and Brother Mkeke grilling for a ward activity. Dad showed the photo to Brother Mkeke's wife and asked if she recognized anyone. Sister Mkeke stated "yes, my husband, tall, dark and handsome". For some reason that just struck me as funny for a black person to use that phrase.

One day last week Dad and I had been in the township and visited some members and completed some errands and as we were driving home I had the thought that serving a mission is really fun. I often reflect on our day and sometimes think if there is something that I could share

about our day when we come home to report and the thought of that day was, it is fun to serve a mission with your eternal companion. We share more about our thoughts and feelings and I think I have learned to be more humble and grateful for my fabulous companions many wonderful, Christlike traits and diligence in getting up and getting to work on the day and what needs to be done.

I cannot remember if we have shared this experience or not so sorry if this is a repeat.

We visited Sister George and some of her grand-daughters were at her house with a few of their friends. They said they were going to some one's house to read scriptures. They take turns sharing a scripture. The Grand-daughters are not church members. We asked if any of them had any questions that we might answer. One of the girls asked if anyone had seen Christ. We thought for

a minute and said something about modern day prophets might have seen Christ but we were not sure. We should have asked more questions before answering because what she really wanted to know was who had taken the photo of Christ. So that was easy to explain that there is not a photo of Christ but the pictures that we see of Christ are paintings of what an artist believes he looks like. I thought that was an interesting question from a young woman.

This past Sunday was fast a testimo-

ny meeting. Some of the members gave their testimony in English or at least part of it in English which is nice for us. A few stated that they had many challenges in 2017 and hoped 2018 will be a better year for them. One person bore testimony that the Lord answers prayers by saying yes, no or wait. She said she was told that the answer to her prayers in 2017 was to wait so she is hoping that in 2018 the answer will be yes. Another person was talking about his challenges and said "when you are in your dark corner there does not seem to be any answers and



Sister Zimbini
and her son,
Kamva



Kamva, now
one of my
close friends

it is a sad time". Then he said through his trials in life he has found that he can learn from his trials until he found himself at home in the church."

Another Sister shared that she was less active and a senior couple kept coming to her home and she would hide. Then one day her young son told her that he was not going to lie for her any more. She decided to come back to church and she is very happy that she did.

I am excited about this year to see

what happens here in Mdantsane. There is hope from the Stake President that the area will grow quickly so that they can divide the Stake. Our mission President meets regularly with the Stake Presidents and has asked them what the Wards and members are going to commit to do to help the meet this goal. It will be great to see more father led families come into the church.

We gave a photo to a woman of herself and 3 other sisters dressed in their cultural dresses and she jumped up and down with excite-

ment. What to us is a simple thing that gave someone such joy.

Have a wonderful week and I wish each of you the best of 2018. You are always in our prayers. Hugs and Kisses,
Mom

Jan_08_2018

Dear Family,

Being Preparation Day we were able to get quite a few errands and tasks completed. But, there are three things that I want to specifically share today:

1. Sunday, Mom had a young single adult sister pull her aside and talk to her about a situation she is having with a return missionary. She was a little concerned because of some of the actions of this brother that were obviously heading in the wrong direction. (She was more detailed with Mom about what was going on.) Mom was able to give her some very good counsel. The missionary is fortunate Mom does not know his identity because she would really like to

deck him! This evening, Mom was able to give her a printed section from "For the Strength of Youth" regarding sexual purity. This is a good example of how effective a senior sister missionary can be. No if's, and's or but's about it, people love Mom.

2. We had FHE at the 4th ward bishop's home. It was sparsely attended, but we were delighted that one of our less actives was there with her little 7 year old boy. Both of them are very timid and I was elated that I was able to become fast friends with Kamva, the little boy (see photo). Mom brought bread, drinks and chips with "Cowboy Caviar." The bishop gave the lesson. Even though it seemed like a last minute stab at having a meaningful lesson, we have to give this bishop credit for him trying to do the right thing. It will be people like him and his family that will be the mortar for holding the church together during this generation. We all can learn a valuable lesson from his example.

3. I had a call from President Lebethoa this morning. He informed me that one of our new missionaries

(less than two weeks) will be going home. Evidently, he and the stake president have been trying to work with this missionary, but he insists on going home. I am not sure all the reasons, but it must be very frustrating for a lot of people when this happens. I think of all the time, effort, money and work to have him here and then, he's going home. If it is just because he is home sick, I feel sorry for him because he will regret this decision the rest of his life. If it is due to unworthiness, I hope he gets things straightened out and can be a faithful, productive member the rest of his life. However, don't come on a mission if you are not clean, dedicated, willing to work hard and have great desire.

Photos:

- Kamva, now one of my close friends - Sister Zimbini and her son, Kamva

Love,

Dad and Mom

Jan_09_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We got up early this morning and headed out with the Davies for a private game reserve called Inkwenkweni. It is only about 35 minutes from our house. To make a long story short, it was an amazing adventure.

I never knew Giraffes could be so dangerous. The vet for this reserve was put into the hospital for 5 months with broken ribs and a host of other issues when a giraffe threw him through the air over 100 feet.

I never knew wildebeest could kill three sheep hustlers trying to steal from a farmer. Their bodies were so badly trampled by the wildebeest that they could only be identified through dental records.

I never knew poaching for rhinos was such a huge problem in Africa.

Our guide was shot in the ankle by a poacher they were closing in on.

I never knew Lions could run 100 meters in about 6 seconds. I never knew they had such huge claws. I never thought I would be just 6 feet away from a pride of lions and live to tell about it. These lions had just gorged themselves on a cow carcass and were not interested in eating us. Our guide never took his eyes off of them and had one hand on his 45 caliber pistol at all times.

I never knew that elephants had such incredible memories, no knees in their hind legs, over 240 muscles in the nose, very fine hair all over its body, 5 sets of molars during its life, big flapping ears can cool down the body temperature 1-2 degrees, etc.

Anyway, great day with wildlife. And, a great lunch in a very nice restaurant.

However, for me, the greatest event of the day was to interview David Amadi for baptism. He is an investigator from East London and President Lebethoa asked me to interview him. This usually happens when someone answers baptismal question #4 with a "yes." - "Have you ever committed a serious crime? If so, are you now on probation or parole? Have you ever participated in an abortion? a homosexual relationship?"

After interviewing him and finding him repentant, happy to have found the gospel, willing to press forward on the straight and narrow, I have recommended to President Lebethoa that we proceed with the baptism.

He seems genuinely happy and is looking forward to baptism. Mom and I will try to attend if we can get away from our work area in Mdantsane.

Photos: Here is a link to my Google drive where you can see some of today's photos:
<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1U3abobUgjGDPKHOxi6y6Oh7edzRu-VWpo>

(You might have to copy this link and put it into your search field)

I am so sorry some of these photos are sideways. I thought I had corrected them on my computer before I created and uploaded the folder in my Google Drive.

We love you very much. You are very precious to us - more precious than rubies!

2018

JANUARY 10 }

Jan_10_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

I wrote an email to the mission president and his counselors today about bicycles in the Mdantsane area. I recommended we terminate the use of the bicycles for various reasons, mainly the steep terrain and the time, cost and man hours in maintaining the bikes. We'll see what they say about it.

We ran out of "data" on our Internet service. This means I have to go purchase a certain amount of air time for our router. If we don't use the total amount (20 gigabytes) in 30 days, then the service stops and you have to buy more. If You use the 20 gigs before 30 days, you are out of luck again and you have to go buy some more. Few people in the world can estimate exactly how much data they need in exactly 30 days. Quite the racket!

We had good visits today. One of our families (Mkwando) is always so nice to visit. They have sincere questions, are trying to be active in church and they have their eyes set on the temple for some time in the future. We feel very comfortable with them, even in their very humble, shack-like dwelling. We always have an enjoyable time visiting them.

Below is a photo of Mom holding a little baby of a young lady that is presently less active and who has had this baby out of wedlock. She and her grandmother are always very nice when we come to visit and I think it is only a matter of time before we will see her back to church. The other photo is of the young mother braiding the hair of her sister.

It can be a hard life here for so many. One of the real problems is the breakdown of the family over the

years. Some pin the problem on Apartheid (parents had to leave the townships to go find work in the big cities). I am sure that was part of it, but somewhere along the line, parents got the idea it was okay to leave your kids to the care of their grandmother and then, disappear from their children's life for the most part. Men seem to think it is acceptable to get a girl pregnant and then, move on as if you have no responsibility. Unacceptable. Fortunately, we see some of our members are breaking that cycle.

Photos:

- This little baby cried like the dickens last time Mom tried to hold her. Today she cried when Mom tried to give her back to the grandma. - Braiding hair like this is almost an all day activity. She will probably keep her hair like this for 2 to 3 months.

We love you,

Dad and Mom



Braiding hair like this is almost an all day activity.



This little baby cried like the dickens last time Mom tried to hold her. Today she cried when Mom tried to give her back to the grandma.

DONATION

Dear Family,

We have a young man in one of our wards that has received his mission call to the South Africa Johannesburg Mission. He is excited to go and we think he will be a good missionary.

As you can imagine, these young men are not financially equipped to purchase everything they need for their mission - socks, shoes, slacks,

shirts, ties, etc. They are very poor.

The bishop informed us that members of the ward will pitch in what they can to help him get items on his missionary check list. We do not expect that they will be able to do a lot. We asked if it would be appropriate for us to help out. He gave us an enthusiastic "yes." Senior missionaries helped him (the bishop) out a great deal when he left for his mission.

*We would like to extend the opportunity and blessing to other family members to pitch in if they would

like to also help this young man*. No obligation whatsoever. And, there is no specific amount recommended. Your donation is a direct way to help someone we work with on a weekly basis. And, it is such a worthy cause.

Dad and Mom

Mom and I will be going out with him to help shop for some of his clothing needs. If we should end up with excess funds, they will be saved for the next missionary to go out.

Please send a check payable to:

Grace Stevenson
20 Bountiful Blvd.
Bountiful, Utah 84010

Thanks for considering this. If you do this, you might want to call Grace to let her know if something is coming. Her number is, *206-390-9629*. FYI, this is an event that will probably happen 5 or 6 times throughout our mission.

Attached is a photo of the newly-called missionary, Siya. Right now he is an assistant ward clerk and will be sorely missed by the bishopric.

Love,



Newly-called missionary, Siya. Right now he is an assistant ward clerk and will be sorely missed by the bishopric.

2018 JANUARY 11 }

Jan_11_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had an enjoyable time helping one of our future missionaries purchase some clothing today. We are happy to report we made a dent into his list, but he still has a long way to go. Depending on the financial contributions from our family, we might be able to help some more.

His mother is going to buy him a suit which is a major expense for them. However, that will be good for them to do. They will feel better when they are trying to do as much as they can themselves. FYI, no father in the home and he is the only member of the church.

Photos:

- You can buy just about anything from a cow in the supermarkets here. I hope this does not diminish your appetite for beef.

Have a great day. Make good choices and you will feel really, really good! We promise!

Love,

Dad and Mom



You can buy just about anything from a cow in the supermarkets here.



Jan_12_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

What an interesting day!

We had district meeting this morning and in our training session with one of the district leaders we discussed how the Atonement of Jesus Christ should permeate every lesson we teach. Many times we teach about what we need to do - study the scriptures, pray, attend church, etc. We also need to explain "why" we do these things. And, for the most part, it is to bring the beauty and benefits of the Atonement into our lives.

We delivered some bread to the Mgi-di Family. The last time we went there was about two months ago. We had quite a rousing, shouting lecture from the father that all you had to do was to have "Jesus inside" and everything is alright. This guy actually scared Mom a lot with his shouting.

Today he humbly allowed us in and then, apologized for his actions during our last visit. We were very surprised. We have the go ahead to come again and visit. I am glad Mom had the inspiration to go there again.

We went to the one room shack of a recent convert. The good news, we found her at home. The bad news, she was laying down and didn't feel like seeing us. We were told to come back another time. The shack was burning hot and it is amazing how they will lay on a bed with their warm clothing on. Today was one of those "dripping perspiration" hot days. We might be seeing more of these the rest of this month and February.

We stopped by to visit a less active return missionary that has fallen off the deep end. We got down to some very frank conversation. He has issues with some of the members and

their hypocrisy. What he needs to remember is that he did not make covenants with the members, it was his Heavenly Father. He said this is his year to change. We'll see and we'll keep visiting and praying for him. He has some serious repenting to do.

Photos:

- People that live in the shacks need electricity. They will run wiring down from the power lines that goes to the government houses and "steal" electricity. The wires just run on the ground and over to the

shacks. You have to be careful if you are walking barefoot in the rain!

With great love and affection,

Dad and Mom



People that live in the shacks need electricity. They will run wiring down from the power lines that goes to the government houses and "steal" electricity. The wires just run on the ground and over to the shacks.

You have to be careful if
you are walking
barefoot in the rain!



2018 JANUARY 13 }

Jan_13_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had plans to go to the church today to help clean.

Unfortunately, no one could confirm that someone would be there and the day just kind of slipped away as we waited to hear something.

We were able to get a lot of little things accomplished, but not the most productive missionary day. However, we did watch the funeral services for President Monson. He will be missed. What a stellar example of service and love for others.

It will be interesting to see the message from Elder Nelson on Tuesday. I love Elder Nelson. In my mind, he is one of the most Christ-like people I know of. He will be a great president of the church. Who will be his counselors?

Photos:

- Can you pick out the white guy in this photo? - I have grown to dislike small trailers they have in South Africa. By the time you put in a couple beach towels and some flip flops, you are out of room. - This truck was full of workers. Unfortunately, trucks do get into accidents and the results are catastrophic for those riding in the back of the truck. I have seen much smaller trucks with just about as many people in them.

Have a great day getting ready for the Sabbath. We love you,

Dad and Mom



This truck was full of workers. Unfortunately, trucks do get into accidents and the results are catastrophic for those riding in the back of the truck. I have seen much smaller trucks with just about as many people in them.



I have grown to dislike small trailers they have in South Africa.

Can you pick out the white guy in this photo?



Tid Bits

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

*1. Word of the week: * "benighted," in a state of pitiful or contemptible intellectual or moral ignorance. *Example:* The Lamanites lived a benighted lifestyle without the light of the gospel in their lives.

2. Quote of the week:

3. Scripture of the week:

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. -Isiah 9:6

4. Joke of the week:

Brother Smith: My home teachers are so good they come on the first

day of every month.

Brother Jones: Oh yeah? My home teachers are so good, they come the day before that.

*5. Bee's Knees Award: *This kid is tall, has a great smile, is a great artist, can run like the wind and is just an all around cool guy! He takes his duties seriously in the Aaronic Priesthood. He is a sharp dresser. He is a good example of the gospel in his home and in public. He is an Eagle Scout. He does his part around the house. He makes his bed. He will be a great missionary. Girls love him because he is so handsome. He tries hard at everything he does. Jacod, you are the Bee's Knees, brotha!!!

*6. Gospel question of the week: * In the Old Testament, who is Leah's son: A) Joseph B) Reuben C) Dan D) Naphtali

*7. What I learned this week: * There

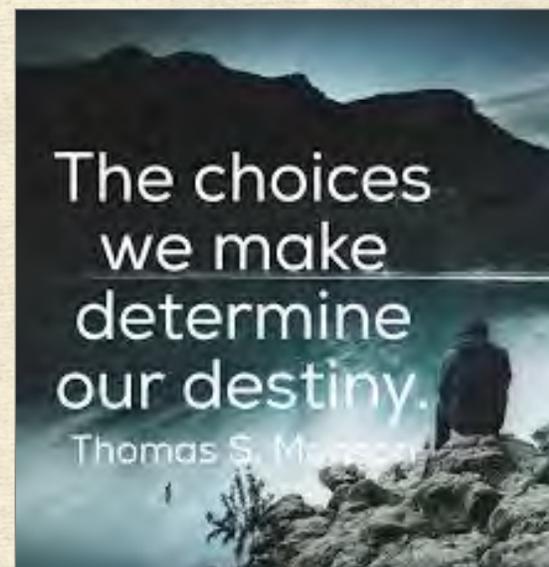
are solid, mature, hard-working missionaries, and, there are those that allow themselves to get easily distracted from the work because they are still immature, don't know how to stay focused and may not have that strong of a testimony.

*8. What I am grateful for: * My missionary companion. Mom is by far the best missionary companion I have ever had. Can you imagine, a companion that works hard at blessing the lives of the families we teach, cooks meals for you, does the lion share of the housework (I make the

bed 85% of the time) and even irons shirts for you. I hope and pray the mission president never transfers me!

9. If I were you (advice to grand kids): If I were you, I would learn how to stick to a job until it sticks to you. Learn to work hard and see a job or project through until the end. Try it. I think you will like it.

*10. My goal for the week: * Scripture chain the Plan of Salvation lesson scriptures from PMG.





*11. Photo of the week: * Golf Pro!

We love you. Have fun living the gospel this week!

Dad and Mom

Jan_14_2018_Update

Dear Family,

We have enjoyed a delightful Sabbath. Miracle: we had speakers lined up for both sacrament meetings! However, in the 4th ward, the speakers left about 20 minutes of time and the counselor conducting the meeting filled in extemporaneously. He did okay and at least we had speakers. FYI, I have written my sacrament meeting talk just in case the bishop calls on me to help out some

time.

It was good to see Sister Jako at church again - two weeks in a row. Today, her son also attended. He seems like a good young man. Fortunately, it appears we have a good Young Men's President in our 1st ward that will make a big difference. We will do some more visits at the Jako home this week to help reinforce their good choices.

We slipped out of church a little early to go see Sister Grace Ganjana. Her son, David (the very frail, sickly gentleman with his sister in the Facebook photo I posted), died. She has had two children die in the last two months. Mom and I visited and taught about the great blessings that come from the Savior- - the resurrection and the fact that all will have the opportunity to hear and accept the gospel. No one is sent to hell just because they have never had the chance to hear about the gospel of Jesus Christ. We think it helped them, comforted them.

It was her and her twin sister (90 years old) and her daughter. The daughter is the one that has been

helping with David's day to day needs since November.

Funerals can be very expensive for these families too. Mom and I contributed R 100 (\$7.50 USD) to help. Normally, some of the young people in the neighborhood will go door to door collecting money from the locals to help with the funeral services. Part of the funeral activities is to purchase a cow, kill it, and cook it up for all that come to the funeral.

We just heard today that another young man received his mission call. He reports to Johannesburg in about a month. We are planning to take him out the first week in March to help him with some of his clothing needs. So, if any of you that want to help, contact Grace and she will coordinate getting the money into an account earmarked for this. Our last outing to help another missionary hurt, but we are glad we can contribute.

We went to a baptism today in the East London 3rd Ward for David Amadi. He is a Nigerian that has come to South Africa to find work. I interviewed him last week for bap-

tism and he is so excited to be baptized and become a member of the church. He is in Bishop Krull's ward and it was good to see some of our friends in that ward. If you remember, we were assigned to that ward for the first 2 weeks or so at the beginning of our mission.

Photos:

- This is an Inkwenkezi walking stick that our guide gave me at the end of our safari. Cool stick. It has a few cracks in it. I am going to put wood glue in the cracks and then close them up with some clamps. - This is China Town! Anytime you need something inexpensive, this is the place to go. You can buy anything from tools to luggage to lighting to fabric, etc. here. It is similar to having a Harbor Freight close by.

We love you. Have a truly great week ahead of you.

Dad and Mom

This is China Town!



This is an Inkwenkezi walking stick that our guide gave me at the end of our safari.

I Spy

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Grandchildren,

Here are two I Spy photos:

1. Can you find the white guy in this photo with all the children in it?
2. For grand kids that can count to fifty. This is a photo of fence poles. Some of them have a metal tag on the bottom. How many fence poles can you count that have metal tags?
3. For grand kids that *cannot* count to fifty. (Fewer poles in this photo.) How many fence poles can you count that have metal tags on the bottom?

Good luck! You have until Tuesday midnight to submit your answers. Winners will automatically be added to the chocolate milkshake list for June 2019.

Love,

Grandpa and Grandma Stevenson

Jan_15_2018_Update

Dear Family,

Today was preparation day and we did a lot of preparing! Mom washed all the windows in the house, inside and out! And, a little bit of a miracle. I cleaned both bathrooms and they passed the Mavis McKay Stevenson inspection. You don't know how much I was sweating the inspection.

Anyway, the house is pretty clean and ready for the mission president who will be at our house tomorrow evening for dinner. We invited him to come at 6 PM, if he wants, to watch the live broadcast with President Nelson. Will they also announce two new apostles? Who will be the counselors to President Nelson? It all will be very interesting.

A relative of our family lizard showed up last night in one of our bathrooms (see attached photo). Probably a nephew or younger sibling. Without going into the details of the encounter, the little fellow has expired. He has gone to the big rock pile in the sky. Sister Stevenson suggested I was too brutal and mean. She said I could have simply guided it back out the open window it came through. What? Give me a break. Don't stick up for a detestable, vile, foul, disgusting lizard when I'm putting my life on the line!

We have a few cars going into the body shop this week. As long as the repairs are under \$500 per car I can pretty much get the cars fixed anywhere I want. So far, Gonubie Auto Worx has been the all star performer in terms of quality of work, turn around time and expense. They are amazingly fair on their pricing. Maybe Mom's cookies have something to do with it.

Photos:

- This scaly sneaker has since gone straight to Spirit Prison with everyone else that has lead an evil



Can you find the white guy in this photo with all the children in it?



For grand kids that can count to fifty. This is a photo of fence poles. Some of them have a metal tag on the bottom. How many fence poles can you count that have metal tags?



For grand kids that *cannot* count to fifty. (Fewer poles in this photo.) How many fence poles can you count that have metal tags on the bottom?

life. - This kitty can lick the flesh right off your bones if you let him!
- This elephant will grow to be twice as big as it is now.

We love you very much. Keep doing good things!

Dad and Mom



This scaly sneaker has since gone straight to Spirit Prison with everyone else that has lead an evil life.



This kitty can lick the flesh right off your bones if you let him!



This elephant will grow to be twice as big as it is now.

Jan_16_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

What a great message from President Nelson! I love that man. I don't know him personally, but, his testimony, humility and desire to serve the Lord tirelessly speaks to my heart and spirit. Mom and I sustain him, his counselors and the present 10 members of the Twelve with all of our hearts. It is our hope and prayer that all of us will keep our eyes on these, the living prophets and apostles. They will lead us in the way of life and salvation.

We had a small window of time to get out and visit today. However, we thoroughly enjoyed our visits. We met with a recent convert, Asisipho, that lives in a very destitute situation. Back in December, they were thrown out of their home and needed to find some other living arrangements. To make a long story short,

after three days on the street, they moved into a shack. She lives there with her mother, an aunt and a couple other people. As far as we can see, it is a one room, corrugated tin shack - they cook, eat and sleep in that room.

She dropped off the radar map shortly after baptism. Maybe the relocation had something to do with it. Our last visit there we were not all that welcomed. It was a quick hello at the door and then, no time to meet with us. Today we read from the Book of Mormon about Nephi returning to Jerusalem to retrieve the Plates of Brass. Then, we discussed obeying commandments. We should see her at church on Sunday. And, we think there might be some interest on the part of her non-member mother.

We went to see Luthando. This is a 15 year old young man that has become

less active. It was a good visit and we were surprised that he is reading the Book of Mormon and is on Mosiah, chapter 10. We need him at church and preparing to go on a mission when he is 18 years old. There are so many in this same category. They can benefit so much from the gospel and can be mighty tools in the hands of the Lord to help build up the church in this area.

We had a delightful dinner this evening with President Lebthoa. Mom made a pastry type bread in a circle and then had a white sauce

with chicken, peas and potatoes in the middle. It was delicious and the president had three servings. He is an energetic man with a wealth of good church service. Part of his vision for our mission, in addition to the proselyting work, is that these missionaries eventually go home and contribute to the kingdom. He wants them to be "powerful priesthood holders" that can help lead the church wherever they may be.

Photos

- One of the more popular pizza companys, Debonaire's Pizza," will



Next time you think work is hard, just bring up this picture. What made this even more difficult for the guy was a stiff head wind.



This is just a quick snap shot of the Debonaire's pizza. FYI

I Spy Answers

Dear Grandchildren,

Here are the results of the I spy photo of the week:

1. When we sent you the photo of Grandpa and all the little black children, we were thinking only "one white guy." But, many of you said there were two white guys because of the little boy with white on his face. Grandma and I think that is the correct answer, "two white guys," or the answer "yes."

2. The photo with the most poles in it: 52 (Did you count the one by itself all the way to the left on the ground?)

3. The photo with the smaller amount of poles: 31

Fantastic job, you guys!

Love,

Grandpa and Grandma Stevenson

deliver your pizza with guys like this on scooters. I had a short but good gospel discussion with these guys. They asked me to leave them a "good word." I shared with them that our church answers the great questions of where we came from, our purpose on earth and where we will go after this life. Mosana (guy on the left) asked for my phone number and wants to know more. - This is just a quick snap shot of the Debonaire's pizza. FYI - Next time you think work is hard, just bring up this picture. What made this even more difficult for the guy was a stiff

head wind.

Have a great day and don't forget you are in our prayers and thoughts every day. We love you!

Dad and Mom



One of the more popular pizza companys, Debonaire's Pizza," will deliver your pizza with guys like this on scooters. I had a short but good gospel discussion with these guys. They asked me to leave them a "good word." I shared with them that our church answers the great questions of where we came from, our purpose on earth and where we will go after this life. Mosana (guy on the left) asked for my phone number and wants to know more.

2018

JANUARY 17 }

Jan_17_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We got an early start today because we had to get some of our walking missionaries set up with a new "Public Transport Program." This is where the missionaries will use taxis and walking instead of cars or bicycles. They get an advance to their missionary fund for transportation expenses. Then, keep a log of all the money they spend on public transportation to get around their area.

Cars will begin to be more and more scarce in our mission. We have over fifty vehicles in our mission. Other missions in Africa might have 5 - 10. We think the mission president will also be looking at having the missionaries live in the township. That would be a crazy, eye-popping, whole new experience! We'll see what happens.

We had good visits today. One gentleman is 31 years old and a fairly new convert to the church. The last couple times we have visited him, he has seemed a little quiet and reserved. We don't know exactly what is happening, but we will continue to visit and see what we can do to help.

We visited Toni, a new member and had a very good visit. We discussed commandments and how they come from a Heavenly Father that loves us and wants us to be safe and happy. We reviewed Mosiah 18 regarding baptismal covenants.

We had a visit to Notutu - she speaks very little English. We showed a video to about 5 little ones there about the birth of the Savior. The good news, a neighbor, man, came to visit and we got his contact information so the missionaries can call on him.

We had a teaching appointment with Brother Fikiso. We read 2 Nephi chapter 31 with him. Mom lead the discussion. The visit went okay. We learned that reading is difficult for him and he doesn't understand the writing style/language of the Book of Mormon. However, it was so good to hear him say, "But, I will keep soldiering on." That was music to our ears!!! Next visit, on Monday.

We picked up the bicycles from our walking missionaries. They will be using the public transport from now on. We will get these bikes tuned up

and Mom and I will probably use them until there are needed in another part of the mission.

Photos:

- Beautiful sunset, looking from Hazy Ridge! - This is a sign you see once in a while that designates a Dutch Reformed Church is nearby - They get the craziest-looking trees around here. Can you see the balls of fruit they produce?

Thanks for your love and support. We love you very much!



They get the craziest-looking trees around here. Can you see the balls of fruit they produce?



Beautiful sunset, looking from Hazy Ridge!



This is a sign you see once in a while that designates a Dutch Reformed Church is nearby

Dad and Mom

2018

JANUARY 18 }

Jan_18_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Wonderful day serving as missionaries in South Africa!

This morning we had zone training and a two-zone conference with President Lebethoa. We received good instruction on having a VISION, setting GOALS and then, making good PLANS. I especially enjoyed this because so many times people will make goals with little thought as to how they will accomplish them.

President Lebethoa gave us some excellent counsel on learning, applying and becoming. When he bore his testimony at the end of the conference, he said, "We are on the forefront of teaching people how to live."

I hope our missionaries grasp onto the training today. Goal setting and earnestly going to work to accomplish them can change their life and

help them beyond their greatest imagination throughout their lives. Employers all over the world are looking for doers. They want people who can have a vision, set goals and then, go get it done! Not to mention how the church will benefit from powerful priesthood holders that will be the next leaders of the church.

We delivered letters today to "our boys" who are such troopers to come to church each Sunday. They were truly excited to get a letter from President Lebethoa. (See photos). These young guys are exactly the ones that need special attention from the bishop and others to set them on a pathway to being full time missionaries 5-7 years from now.

Our visit to the Mkwando family has made us think we really need to teach the Temple Preparedness Course to them. They want to go to

the temple. They are thirsting for more information about the temple. This is an important goal for them. With the bishop's permission, we will start on Wednesday.

Dad and Mom

Photos:

- The whiteboard after President Lebethoa's training
- A zone conference shot of two zones, East London and Mdantsane
- A beautiful tree in East London
- Hlomla Gosa and his brother, Hlalumi Gosa
- Ephraim Xabanisa

Have a wonderful day. We love you.



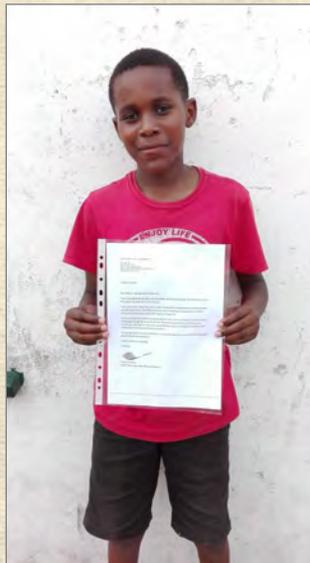
East London and Mdantsane zones



The whiteboard after President Lebethoa's training.



Hlalumi Gosa and Ephraim Xabanisa



A beautiful tree in East London.

2018

JANUARY 19 }

Jan_19_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

While we lived in Racine, Wisconsin, a young lady in our ward, Sylvia Voigt Lyon took care of Daniel, Michael, Elizabeth and Amanda while Mom and I toured Europe in 1982 or 1983. She has a daughter by the name of Katie that served a mission in Zimbabwe. The missionary daughter had some companions and others that are from South Africa. She asked us to look them up and meet them, partly because she doesn't know if they are all active right now or not.

Today we found one of her companions that lives in East London. Of course, we took her cookies! She was very happy to see us and we set up a time to visit her next week. She lives less than a mile from the stake center. We look forward to getting to know her.

Over the last couple days, we have visited a few people that have been down with colds. So, Sister Stevenson made some chicken soup and we delivered it to two different families. It is good, hearty soup with carrots, chicken and other veggies. I'm sure they will love it since most of what they eat is simply beans and potatoes.

One of the things we plan to work on with our less active families is the reason coming to church is so important for them personally. Some times I wonder if they think that's all they need to do, just walk through the doors of the chapel. We can do a better job of letting them know about repentance and the meaning of partaking of the sacrament. We need to explain the "why" better to them.

We had dinner with the Davies tonight. Mom baked some potatoes,

put together a fruit tray, made snicker doodle cookies and tapioca pudding. Sister Davies provided the veggie tray and all the toppings for the baked potatoes. They had some friends over from their ward and we watched "Beautiful People" which is a video about wildlife in Africa. A bit of a sleeper.

Photos:

- These two guys cut wood in the morning and then, it seems they wait most of the day for people to stop and buy a bundle/bag from them (\$ 1.50 USD). - These are

bird nests. They are built at the end of tiny branches to protect the little babies from snakes. The nest is upside down. If a snake tries to venture out that far and enter from the bottom, it would probably fall and die or at least get a bad headache.

Thank you for your FB postings, your love and your support. Be true!

Love,

Dad and Mom



These are bird nests. They are built at the end of tiny branches to protect the little babies from snakes. The nest is upside down. If a snake tries to venture out that far and enter from the bottom, it would probably fall and die or at least get a bad headache.



These two guys cut wood in the morning and then, it seems they wait most of the day for people to stop and buy a bundle/bag from them (\$ 1.50 USD).

2018 JANUARY 20 }

Jan_20_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

I am perspiring as I write this. I just turned on the A/C in the house and I am patiently waiting for it to get to the office in the rear of our home. But, please, do not worry about me. Don't cry for me , Argentina, or Huntsville, or Ontario, or Tampa...

Our bicycle experiment has come to an end. Instead of riding bicycles in Mdantsane, missionaries will be using public transportation, i.e., taxis. Mom and I retrieved the bikes a couple days ago. I took them in to the bike shop this morning to have them tuned up, new chains to replace the broken ones, brake and gear adjustments, etc.

Mom and I will probably ride them once a week until they are sent to another part of the mission. I saw a guy doing some jumps on a motor-

cycle today and thought maybe I could join him with one of these missionary bicycles. Here is a link to a poor video I took of the guy doing a jump:

https://www.dropbox.com/s/lmnp29k2bms6t9l/20180120_095629.mp4?dl=0

Our visits today were good. Since this is Saturday, we can get to some families we can't see during the week due to their work schedule, schooling, etc. On some of these visits we showed a video about the Sabbath Day being a holy day. Mom would reference a scripture in Mosiah about keeping the Sabbath Day holy. Those that have been coming on Sunday, we patted them on the back. Those that needed some prodding, we encouraged them to come and enjoy the blessings of church attendance.

I enjoyed President Nelson's com-

ments during the press conference where he said, he can hardly wait to wake up in the morning to see what exciting things there were going to happen that day (paraphrase). What a great attitude! And, just like Elder Wirthlin, "Come what may and love it."

Photos:

- Once in a while you see a sign like this which means the land has been loaned out to a certain person for a productive use, i.e. a community garden. - Any porta-potty would be an upgrade from what

people in the township use now. A V.I.P. porta-potty would be like dying and going to heaven. - Dirty, broken bicycles going into the shop for a beauty makeover

We love you a bunch! Have a good, productive, happy day!

Dad and Mom



Once in a while you see a sign like this which means the land has been loaned out to a certain person for a productive use, i.e. a community garden.



Any porta-potty would be an upgrade from what people in the township use now. A V.I.P. porta-potty would be like dying and going to heaven.



Dirty, broken bicycles going into the shop for a beauty makeover.

Tid Bits

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

*1. Word of the week: *"Progeny," a descendant or the descendants of a person, animal, or plant; offspring.* Example:* The progeny of Father Abraham will exceed the sands of the sea.

2. Quote of the week:

3. Scripture of the week:

I say unto you, can ye look up to God at that day with a pure heart and clean hands? I say unto you, can you look up, having the image of God engraven upon your countenances?
-Alma 5:19

4. Joke of the week:

Q: Why do bagpipe players walk while they are playing?

A: They're trying to get away from the noise.

(or)

Q: What do inmates use to call each other?

A: Cell phones.

5. Bee's Knees Award: Wow, this kid is the best! He is pure cowboy, sheep rancher and bucking bronco rider. He loves being with his dad and loves everyone in his family. He is the best example of living the commandments. He has a tender heart. He loves all animals. He is very smart. He does NOT smoke in the boy's room at school or chase girls at recess. He will be a great missionary because he is a hard worker and loves his Heavenly Father. He helps out around the house and ranch all the time. Burke, you are the Bee's Knees, brotha!!!

6. Gospel question of the week: What does the word, "Irreantum" mean in English?

*7. If I were you (Advice to grand kids): * If I were you, I would try to learn a foreign language. I would look for a language that will be needed as the church goes forward into new parts of the world. For example, Chinese. The church will someday be in mainland China. The Lord will need missionaries that can speak Chinese. Try it. I think you will like it.

8. What I am grateful for: I love how much information and doctrine we have in the church when you consider everything contained in the

four standard works. I Googled once what other religions believe regarding pre-mortal life. No one shows up on the radar map except The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

9. What I learned this week: "No." is a complete sentence. Also, separate topic, many of the people here in South Africa have the lineage of Ephraim declared when they receive their patriarchal blessing.

10. My goal for the week: I did scripture chain the Plan of Salvation scriptures. This week I plan to re-





look, re-evaluate, re-organize our area book. We need to make it more easy to update and to reference.

11. Photo of the week: The Ontario Eskimos!!!

We love you all so very much. Have fun living the gospel this week,

Dad and Mom

Jan_21_2018_Update

Dear Family,

We left for church today to get us there in plenty of time. However, and this happens maybe once every 6 weeks, the on-ramps to the freeway were closed. Consequently, we had to take a rather circuitous route that made us 20 minutes late for church.

Meetings went well. We had speakers for both sacrament meetings. I

realized I had written a talk as a backup plan in case the bishopric needed a spare of the moment speaker. However, I had not put it in my suit coat pocket. A lot of good that does! It will be there next Sunday just in case.

We sent a photo the other day of a couple of guys that were selling wood by the bag full on the highway. During that "photo session" they asked about where the church was. I told them and they seemed to understand the location of the church. Mom and I were surprised this morning when, one of the fellows, Patrick, came up to us and said, "Hello, do you remember me?" It was good to see him. I introduced him to a brother in our ward that lives in the same area as him. They sat together in Sunday School class. The missionaries have an appointment to see him on Wednesday.

Mom made a delicious roast beast dinner for us - gravy, roasted veggies and potatoes. It was very, very good! And, you cannot have roast without chocolate whacky cake and ice cream!

Photos:

- Patrick is the guy on the left. -
If you are drunk, you have a hard time finding the right house. They all look the same!

Have a truly great day! We love you,

Dad and Mom

I Spy

Dear Grandchildren,

Good luck with this week's I Spy photo!

How many houses can you count in this photo?

All answers must be in before midnight on Tuesday (Utah time).

Love,

Grandpa and Grandma Stevenson



Patrick is the guy on the left.



If you are drunk, you have a hard time finding the right house. They all look the same!



How many houses can you count in this photo?

2018 JANUARY 22 }

Jan_22_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had some good time this morning (P-day) to get errands and odd jobs done. But, we had to be out to our work area by 3 PM or so to give a Plan of Salvation lesson to Brother Fikiso. His family was there and it was a good meeting. We will return on Friday and start a discussion on the Atonement of Christ. We are optimistic. We think things are happening there, but very slowly.

We both agree that this brother is much more open, willing to talk and receptive than the first meetings we had with the family. We are hoping that some of this doctrine will sink into his mind and his heart and that he will recognize the great blessings that can come to him and his family.

At 6 PM we went to the 4th ward bishop's home, Bishop Lelendle, for

FHE. It had been raining hard for a couple hours and as it turned out, we were the only people that showed up. We shared favorite scriptures, visited, ate some of Mom's cookies and then left. We had a good visit with them. They are just a good, wonderful, humble family.

I entered the phone number of Two Brothers Pizza in my cell phone. When we left Mdantsane, I called them and ordered two large pizzas - one pepperoni and the other bar-b-que chicken. They were ready right when we pulled up to the pizza shop 15 minutes later. This is the best pizza so far that we have found, but oh how we miss Little Caesar's!!!

Photos:

- These are some homemade weights that I try to use 6 days a week. They weigh 51.4 pounds. I struggle to do 6 reps of curls. I want to work up to 3 sets of 10 reps each.

Why am I hearing Andrew and David laughing in my mind? - I told Uncle Greg we bought this Coca Cola so we could win a trip to Durban. We would like to see all the wonderful things he and Aunt Sandy did in that town.

With great love and appreciation,

Dad and Mom

Jan_23_2018

Dear Family,

Mom and I just finished a lovely 2 mile+ walk around our compound about an hour ago. The weather was perfect for a walk. Once again, we solved many of the world's problems during our conversations.

You might not believe this, but, Mom made chocolate chip cookies this morning. She has them in glad bags to hand out to the missionaries that



I told Uncle Greg we bought this Coca Cola so we could win a trip to Durban.



These are some homemade weights that I try to use 6 days a week. They weigh 51.4 pounds.

pass their white-glove boarding inspection tomorrow. This is not Mom's favorite thing to do because she believes missionaries should just keep a clean flat no matter what. She is a good sport about it.

Good visits today. On one of our visits we taught the first lesson of the Temple Preparedness Course. What an absolute joy to teach this wonderful family that wants to go to the temple and have about 6 grandchildren sealed to them! (We are checking with the temple in Johannesburg to make sure that can even happen.)

They are raising the children because the parents in one case are dead, in another case no interest in the children, and yet another case where the father is unknown and the mother pretty much out of the picture. Sad picture, but how great for these grandparents that want to pull everyone together.

We visited another sister that is having a terrible time with alcohol. She is attending a weekly AA meeting and realizes that her habit is having a horrible, negative effect on her family (no father in the home). We

explained the importance of 1) surrounding herself with good friends that will support her desire to quit drinking, and, 2) Including the Lord in her efforts to overcome this addiction. We testified that with the Lord she could put this behind her. She will be in our prayers!

Photos:

- I thought it was so cute to see how one of these bugs was helping the other one with a piggy back ride! They are just darling! - We see these advertisements along the main highway in Mdantsane. One is in Xhosa. These are two of the most popular newspapers in the area.

Love,

Dad and Mom



These are two of the most popular newspapers in the area.



We see these advertisements along the main highway in Mdantsane. One is in Xhosa.



I thought it was so cute to see how one of these bugs was helping the other one with a piggy back ride! They are just darling!

2018

JANUARY 23 }

Jan_23_2018_Update_Resend

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Fortunately, we have had some good rain yesterday and today. However, what we get here does not benefit Cape Town in the least bit. We are 1,000 kilometers away. They are undergoing a very severe drought. Please try to remember Cape Town in your prayers.

This morning Mom worked on mending and fixing missionary clothing. There is a sewing machine that she and Sister Davies share. Of course, Mom does great work and the missionaries get some badly-needed help on their wardrobe. For example, one missionary needs his white shirt taken in because it is too baggy on him. Another burnt a hole in his pant leg and Mom needs to doctor it up so he can still use them.

I worked on the yard today. As you can see from the attached picture, it

appears weed-free and beautiful. We are glad we got rain yesterday and today because we had a lot of plants that were showing some distress from lack of water.

We had good visits today. One young man, Luthando, is 14, a relatively new member of the church and an avid runner. He reads the Book of Mormon regularly and is presently in Mosiah, chapter 23. Mom and I read chapter 22 with him today. But, he isn't coming to church yet like he should. He said he had a headache this last Sunday. The bishop and I are going to visit him next Tuesday. This is exactly the type of kid that needs to be active in the Aaronic Priesthood, going to Seminary and preparing for a mission. We can't let this kid become a statistic!

We visited Asisipho again today in her family's shack. There were 6 of us in this tiny shack made of corru-

gated tin. We shared a message of revelation and how personal it can be for each of us. Mom read Matthew 16:13-18. I shared examples of when the Lord has given revelation to men and used their personal name in the process - Nephi, Enos, Isiah, Moses, Abraham, Joseph Smith, etc. The message: the Lord

knows each of us personally and he will answer our prayers in His own due time with revelation.

Mom and I are grateful to be on our mission and in our own little way contribute to the greatest work on the face of the planet. We are honored that we can be a part of it all.



Our meticulously manicured front yard.



2 Brothers Pizza is not that good, but the best we have found so far.



Just not the same as the good old USA.

Photos:

- 2 Brothers Pizza is not that good, but the best we have found so far. Just not the same as the good old USA. - This is the front door of a home we went to visit today. - Our meticulously manicured front yard

Have a good day honoring your covenants. We love you!

Dad and Mom



This is the front door of a home we went to visit today.

Jan_25_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We never made it to our work area today. Please do not rat us out to our mission president. We don't want to be sent home just yet!

We had boarding inspections this morning. For the most part, the missionaries did a good job. They have improved since the last visit. Three of the four boardings received some of Mom's delicious chocolate chip cookies. We will re-inspect the failed boarding on Monday. There are no cookies for re-inspections. That's the way the cookie crumbles!

After the inspections, there were several errands we needed to do and didn't get home until about 1 PM. We had some lunch and then, I decided to have a headache and lay down for a bit. About an hour and a half later I woke up. I took some Ibuprofen and then went to do some banking. I ar-

rived at the bank at 3:31. The bank closed at 3:30.

I have run out of Calcium Citrate, which is one of the mandatory minerals I need to take daily into my fragile, little body. The calcium is the stuff that binds to oxylate and then is expelled from the body via natural means. We have been having a difficult time finding it. However, I got lucky and found a bottle at the local pharmacy, Clicks. Clicks is similar to a Walgreen's in the USA.

I then went and looked at raincoats. One of our bishops works out in the weather frequently and was saying what a hard time it was to have a good raincoat that wouldn't rip or get torn so easy. We may have found some solutions for him. I will be working with him on Tuesday. I think we will go first thing in the morning and check out some rain gear. We would like to see if we can

help him out a little.

I forget to mention something each time I write. A couple of observations:

1. Mom is probably the only white woman in a total population of 300,000 people when we go into the township. Needless to say, she gets a lot of looks.
2. People find her hair very unusual. When we visit the Fikiso family, they feel comfortable enough with us that they like to feel Mom's hair. "It's so

soft!," they will say.

Photos:

- Gas is about 13.93 Rand a liter. The conversion rate for Rand to dollars is about \$1.00 equals 13.85 Rand. *I want Samuel Stevenson to tell me what a gallon of gasoline would cost in the United States at the same pricing for gas in South Africa. Good luck. If you cannot answer the question correctly, you will have to make your bed every day for a month*! (Arnold, do the math and send me the answer, please.) - Mom has found a new fabric store.



Gas is about 13.93 Rand a liter. The conversion rate for Rand to dollars is about \$1.00 equals 13.85 Rand.



Mom has found a new fabric store. Better prices and more selection. And, the store is named after her grandmother, Bessie McKay

Better prices and more selection.
And, the store is named after her
grandmother, Bessie McKay

We love each of you so very much.
Be good. Sing the Stevenson Family
Song three times every morning for
extra horsepower through the day!

Dad and Mom

2018

JANUARY 26 }

Jan_26_2018

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had our district meeting this morning. The training was interesting. I guess I was not completely in sync with what was being taught. Mom had some good input during our discussion that I think helped. Her comments centered around the idea that "when we share our testimony, we don't lose any of it. We share it and both the person hearing it and yourself as the person speaking it, are edified."

After our meeting Mom and I went to visit Zimkhitha Mbele. This is a missionary companion of Katie Lyon who is the daughter of our old friends from Wisconsin, the Voigts. It was good to visit with her and to find out that she is active in church and serving as a counselor in the Stake Young Women's presidency. A very nice young lady who is going to school and studying IT, but wants to

change to nursing.

We did some banking and then, went to McDonald's. Mom had a chicken salad. I had the bad boy meal of a Big Mac, diet Coke and french fries. Oh, and I also had one of their deep-fried apple pies!

Unfortunately, our Fikiso lesson fell through. We will have to reschedule. We continue to pray for this good brother. He needs the gospel in his life and to head up his family as a strong priesthood holder. More details to come.

We had some good visits today. Maybe, one of the lessons we learned today is that even when people are being critical and gossiping, we don't have to be. We can counteract with good, positive statements like, "Yes, but things are coming together and everything will work out okay."

Photos:

- An interesting black caterpillar, most likely related to the deadly Black Mamba. - Mom caught me in the act of buying a fat cake at the Red Star! - Mom, Zimkhitha Mbele and her mother

With great love, respect, admiration, fondness and jubilant memories,

Dad and Mom

Jan_26_2018

Dear Family,

A little bit on the warm side today. However, that was until about 3 PM. After that we had some cool breezes and a little rain to cool things off.

I went to pick up the missionary bikes today at Sportsman's Warehouse. They looked a lot better than when I dropped them off. I got them home and did a 30 second ride on each one with no issues.



An interesting black caterpillar, most likely related to the deadly Black Mamba

Mom,
Zimkhitha
Mbele and her
mother.



Mom and I went to the church to clean today. Miracle! People were there to help. All Mom did was clean two men's restrooms and two women's restroom and some work in the kitchen. I did vacuuming. As usual I did most of the hard work, the heavy lifting, the lion's share, the jobs no one else wants to do.

We were going to go visit some people that are only around on the weekends. We both were drenched with perspiration and didn't feel to presentable to go visiting. We plan to see them tomorrow.

When we got home, we decided to go for a quick 5 mile ride on the bikes. The weather was very pleasant, but the bikes were far from operating correctly. My main sprocket derailer was bent and wouldn't let me shift up or down from the middle gear. I think the derailer got caught on the sprocket and bent it. Mom's rear tire was low so we pumped it up. By the time we got back from our ride, it was low again.

I hooked up the bike rack and took the bikes right back to the shop. Joey, the department manager and

someone I have made friends with over the last couple months, apologized profusely and called his guys, "bush mechanics." Anyway, I think he will make sure things are done right and we can pick them up on Monday.

All of this was handled in a very polite and cordial manner on my part. When I returned home, I read an article about Elder Gary Stevenson speaking at BYU-Idaho. He spoke about the orderly transition from President Monson to President Nelson. During his remarks, he talked about how Christ-like President Nelson was in every phase of his life. Whether he is correcting, teaching, criticizing, praising, etc., it is always done in such a fashion to make others know he loves and respects them. I am going to try to be more like President Nelson!

Photos:

- I was thinking about using this photo as an "I Spy" photo - count the number of green peppers! But, I figured that would drive too many people crazy!!! - We are hoping and praying that Brother Fikiso comes to church tomorrow with

his family. His wife and children would be so happy about that!

We love you and pray for you every day!

Dad and Mom



Mom caught me in the act of buying a fat cake at the Red Star!



I was thinking about using this photo as an "I Spy" photo - count the number of green peppers! But, I figured that would drive too many people crazy!!!



We are hoping and praying that Brother Fikiso comes to church tomorrow with his family. His wife and children would be so happy about that!

Jan_28_2018

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Siya, the young man Mom and I took shopping a few weeks ago, spoke in sacrament meeting today. He had on a very nice suit that we think his mother purchased for him. He delivered a fine talk and shared some things we did not know about.

First, during the time for which he was making his decision about serving a mission, he was offered a job at Mercedes Benz. This type of a job offer is extremely rare and is the type of job everyone dreams about. Just having a job is a wonderful blessing, but working at a company like Mercedes Benz would also mean getting paid very well.

Secondly, Siya is a very good soccer player. He had sent a video into a professional team in Cape Town about playing for them. He was sent

an email saying they wanted him and how much he would get paid. He turned it down as he had made up his mind to serve a mission for the church.

Missionary work has its great moments and it also has its share of disappointments. One of our families that started to come back into activity has had a serious problem. The father has returned to drinking. One day last week, while inebriated, he had a physical altercation with his wife. She showed up today at church with a neck brace on and some bruising. She stayed one day this last week at the hospital for observation. He was off to the village where his father lives.

Mom was able to talk with her and listen to her story. She and Mom have a good friendship. Mom is a good listener and has empathy for someone like this good sister.

So, we still keep trying. We still keep praying and visiting. Some times the road back to activity has Satan-devised hazards and detours. However, we know the power of the gospel and the miracle of the Atonement of Christ can overcome all obstacles. We don't give up.

On Friday at our district meetings, Elder Shaw from Idaho mentioned he too had an ancestor that was one of the first missionaries into Cape Town. He pulled out from a large envelope photocopies of the missionary journal of William Holmes

Walker. I recognized the print and form of the photocopies immediately. His ancestor is also WHW. So, now I just call him "cousin" as well as Elder Shaw.

Photos:

- Mom fell over on her bicycle and got a boo boo! When she went to stop, she didn't realize that her feet did not touch the ground while she was sitting on the bike. - This type of container store is so common in the township. I just thought the painted "Cheap Cheap" signage was funny.



This type of container store is so common in the township. I just thought the painted "Cheap Cheap" signage was funny.



Mom fell over on her bicycle and got a boo boo! When she went to stop, she didn't realize that her feet did not touch the ground while she was sitting on the bike.

Enjoy the Sabbath Day! We love you very much,

Dad and Mom

For some reason, my email is getting blocked by most of the intended recipients?)

Dear Family,

1. Word of the week: "filial," relating to or due from a son or daughter.

*Example: *Andrew has a filial responsibility to safeguard the Porsche from all harm, theft and accident.

*2. Scripture of the week: *

If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. John 7:17

3. Quote of the week:

[image: Inline image 2]

"STAY ON THE COVENANT PATH"

4. Joke of the week:

Q. Why do ducks have flat feet?

A. From stomping out forest fires!

Q. Why do elephants have flat feet?

A. From stomping out burning ducks!

5. Bee's Knees Award: This guy is one of the finest young men on the face of the planet. He is polite, intelligent, happy and kind-hearted. He can play basketball like a professional. He is a monster to handle on the floor, but a gentle giant off the court. He is a responsible priesthood holder, setting a good example for his family and friends. He has great goals in life and is on his way. He will be an awesome missionary as he shares his testimony. B-dawg, you are the Bee's Knees, brotha!!!

6. Gospel question of the week: Who was it that slayed Gideon in the Book of Mormon?

*7. If I were you (advice to grand kids): * If I were you, I would prepare a church talk ahead of time just in case you get called on to speak

without a lot of time for preparation. Try it. I think you will like it.

8. What I learned this week: It is so important to savor the moment! Enjoy every second of the present. Take time to learn as you go. The future will get here soon enough. Soak it all in. Mentally record great memories. Ask yourself, what am I learning?

*9. What I am grateful for: *I love how the Lord has instituted a process whereby the senior apostle in the church will always be the next president and prophet of the church.

*10. My goal for the week: * I did not get our area book revamped. I'll keep that goal for this week.

1*1. Photo of the week: * Would you ride on a motorcycle with this guy?

We love you all very much. Have fun living the gospel this week!

Dad and Mom



"STAY ON THE COVENANT PATH"



Would you ride on a motorcycle with this guy?

2018

JANUARY 29 }

Jan_29_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

When your children go on missions, please teach them to be responsible so that when they are going to be somewhere, they really will be there or at least, call and notify people if plans change or you are going to be late. Simply put, they need to be considerate of other people's time.

Today we had called missionaries about coming to their boardings to deliver mail and other things. At two of the boarding, no one was there at the designated times. I don't think we are expecting too much to receive a phone call if plans change. We are not angry, just a little disappointed that they are not as considerate as they should be.

The car was washed today, Mom made cookies, we did errands, had photocopies made, etc., etc. Mom

sent out some emails today that she has wanted to send for some time now. It takes her a while because she puts a lot of thought and consideration into what she writes. Actually, it would be so much better if she wrote the daily update!

There is nothing sweeter than sitting in someone's home and teaching them the truths of the restored gospel. Some of you will remember Musona, the pizza delivery man. We sent a photo of him and another gentleman that deliver for Debonaire's Pizza. We met with him this evening and gave the first discussion re: The Restoration. Mom knocked it out of the park on her parts of the discussion.

This man is from Zimbabwe. He is married and has two girls and a boy. His family is back in Zimbabwe for now. He loves his children and wife and anticipates the day when they

can come to join him here in South Africa. He is a Humble man that rents a flat behind a government house in a township close by to Gonubie. He does not drink or smoke. He is a believer in Jesus Christ. He is looking for God here in East London.

We were quite pleased as he repeated back to us the main chunks of what we taught him. At the end of our lesson, he volunteered to say the prayer - beautifully said from his heart. We challenged him to read the Restoration pamphlet and pray to

know the truth. We have another appointment with him on Thursday morning when we will introduce him to the young missionaries for this area.

We bore him our testimonies that what we taught him was the truth. I told him that our meeting was no accident. God guided our lives to meet and to have him hear this message.

Photos:

- This guy makes all kinds of stuff from wooden pallets. However, he



This guy makes all kinds of stuff from wooden pallets...



...however, he cannot hold a candle to the exquisite work of Michael Stevenson!

cannot hold a candle to the exquisite work of Michael Stevenson! – We love the palm trees in our front yard, but man, they can make a mess! – Musona is the person on the left in this photo of the two pizza delivery guys

We love you! Be good and make good choices. KTC, CTR, WITL, FTP, RWH, SCP***

Dad and Mom

** Stay on the Covenant Path (Great advice from President Russell M.

Nelson)*

Gospel Question

Dear Family,

We had two responses back on the Gospel Question of the Week, Michael Beckstead (1st) and, Daniel (2nd). Both answered "Nehor"

I am pleased to announce that Michael Beckstead will be added again to the chocolate milkshake list, AGAIN.

I have heard that Michael Beckstead does not sleep the night before Tid Bits. He is up all night waiting for the email. Sleepless in Tampa!

Who will step up and challenge the Fulbright Scholar from Florida?

Good luck next week,

Love,

Dad and Mom

I Spy

Dear Grandchildren,

Good luck with this new I Spy photo!

How many donkeys in this photo?

Be careful to look everywhere, the trees, behind trucks, behind bushes...everywhere.

Love,

Grandpa and Grandma Stevenson

Jan 30 2018 Update

Dear Family,

An interesting day! Instead of having Mom on our visits today, I took Bishop Lalendle with me. He is new to his bishop calling and has just been home from his mission about 4 years. He is a busy guy with a lot of hours spent at work, a hardware store where they do a lot of manual labor loading trucks with construction materials.

We managed to see several people in the ward he did not know. It was good for him to see them and for them to see him. We visited one brother mom and I have been trying to see for a couple months without any luck. This brother is married with a couple of children. His wife is very nice and is a school teacher. She has 45 students in her class!

He was baptized in 1992 and has been less active for over 20 years! Before we left I made sure he was okay with Mom and I making visits there. Then, I challenged him to read some passages from the Book of

Mormon: Mosiah 18 (baptismal covenants, 2 Nephi 31:17-21 (baptism is the gate to the covenant path). He didn't know where his Book of Mormon was, so I went to the car and retrieved one for him. Our follow-up with him should be very interesting.

I am hoping this is the beginning of his road back to activity. I do not believe it has just been coincidence that our paths have crossed. The Lord is extending another opportunity for this good brother to come back into the fold. Our vision for him is he baptizing his wife and children, being actively involved in the ward and preparing his family to go to the temple.

Everything we do in life counts! Smiling at someone, offering a helping hand, compliments, sincere prayer, looking clean cut, taching a lesson...everything!

Photos: No photos today, just a link to a fun video

Here's a link to some girls that were dancing in the street and I asked if I could take a video of them:
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/k19k9u>

fegud5n5y/VID_20180130_162139.mp4?dl=0

I showed them the video and they all went crazy! Famous movie stars!

We love you guys very much. We think of you often and pray for your welfare. Just always remember:

The Lord votes for you
The devil votes against you
And you cast the deciding vote!

Dad and Mom



...but man, they can make a mess!



We love the palm trees in our front yard..



Musona is the person on the left in this photo of the two pizza delivery guys



How many donkeys in this photo?

2018

JANUARY 31 }

Jan_31_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Transfer day! Mom baked about 30 apple muffins to take to the airport where we saw off several missionaries and picked up some new ones to the area. The muffins did not last long. Any extras were inconspicuously consumed by me!

We had several missionaries that had been reassigned to our mission, when the Church temporarily closed down the Madagascar Mission, leave today to return to their original field of labor. They leave with mixed feelings. We grow a bit attached to the missionaries and it is hard to say goodbye some times.

We took the Davies to lunch at Pinecreek Restaurant. Always good groceries there (including deserts) for a great price. After lunch, it was back to the airport to pick up some

more missionaries. We feel it is important that when these missionaries come into this area that we try to make them feel as comfortable and welcome as possible. We always greet them with a smile and a slap on the back.

I have been working on our "area book" the passed few days. Mom and I believe it is really important to have some type of record for any one new taking our places some day. We have tried to make it easy to note who we saw, when and what we did. If we ever get hit by a train, at least there is something to look at so the work can move forward.

Our AC does great for our living room and dining area. However, in the back room/office it can get quite warm. We broke down and purchased a fan and it makes a big difference.

Photos:

- Elder Dlokova (Madagascar), the Davies, Mom and I - Elder LeBrun from Tahiti who was fun to joke with, i.e., "Do they have cars in Tahiti?" - Elder Palavi and Elder Smith with Mom and I - Elder Tshwane (Black Elder from Jo-burg) - The beautiful East London Airport on a grey, rainy day.

Have a good day doing good things!
We love you!

Dad and Mom



Elder Dlokova (Madagascar), the Davies, Mom and I.

Elder Palavi and Elder Smith with Mom and I.



Elder LeBrun from Tahiti who was fun to joke with, i.e., "Do they have cars in Tahiti?"



Elder Tshwane (Black Elder from Jo-burg)



The beautiful East London Airport on a grey, rainy day.

