



And moreover, I would desire that ye should consider on the blessed and happy state of those that keep the commandments of God. For behold, they are blessed in all things, both temporal and spiritual; and if they hold out faithful to the end they are received into heaven, that thereby they may dwell with God in a state of never-ending happiness. O remember, remember that these things are true; for the Lord God hath spoken it.

MOSIAH 2:41



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CHRIS AND MAVIS STEVENSON | 2



SACTM: SOUTH AFRICA CAPE TOWN MISSION



CHRIS AND MAVIS STEVENSON | 2

*SACTM: South Africa Cape Town Mission*

February 1, 2018 - August 19, 2018 - Book 2 of 4





**CHRIS AND MAVIS STEVENSON | 2**

*SCATM: South Africa Cape Town Mission*

**February 1, 2018 - August 19, 2018 - Book 2 of 4**



**MISSIONARY  
MEMORIES**

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**CHRIS AND MAVIS STEVENSON | 2**

*SCATM: South Africa Cape Town Mission*



2018

FEBRUARY 1 }

# Feb\_01\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Arnold's basketball joke has put me in a sour mood all day.

I hope he shows up in East London so I can beat the heck out of him in a little "Juan on Juan" game. That way I will have at least two victories to brag about. The last win Arnold had was just before he turned off his Play Station 3. I think he needs a little "elbow to the head" behavior modification.

Thank you for your contributions to helping our missionaries get ready to hit the MTC. Mom and I went with Mapopo today and put a dent into his list of clothes to bring. This is what we bought:

- 3 Long sleeve shirts - 6 Short sleeve shirts - 3 pair of slacks - 1 suit

He was very happy and very thankful for the help. Great Job! He will be a

good missionary. When he gets home, he is going to continue his studies at the university in IT. But, right now, it's all about the mission.

Our shopping took longer than we had planned. We spent quite a bit of time trying to find some good missionary shoes. We found some, but they were way too expensive. Good leather shoes are hard to come by. Everything seems to be PVC and made in China. The shoes do not breathe and they are basically glued together verses stitching.

We had to go late to two of our appointments and reschedule them.

Today is the first day of the month. That means people get their government checks and it is a zoo anywhere you go. The banks have lines a half block long. People are buying air time for their phones and computers, buying satellite TV time, Liquor,

food...everything you can imagine. By the end of the month many are out of cash and just waiting for their next government check.

One thing we learn from our local leaders is that if people really want to come to church on Sunday and they need taxi money, they can do it if they want to. They all have phones and buy airtime. They buy other things that are not necessarily "needs." If they need taxi money, they can find it if they really are converted and have the desire to come.

\*Photos:\* - Some "genuine leather" shoes. However, when you look at them closely, something doesn't look right compared to the real stuff. Maybe just the tag was real leather and not the shoe??? These shoes were about \$37.00. PVC shoes run about \$16. The real deal leather shoes are around \$80 to \$100. - This is how you protect your garden from crazy taxi drivers and drunks.

Thanks again for your help with Mapopo! We love you,

Dad and Mom



This is how you protect your garden from crazy taxi drivers and drunks.



Some "genuine leather" shoes. However, when you look at them closely, something doesn't look right compared to the real stuff.



Maybe just the tag was real leather and not the shoe???

# Feb\_02\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a good district meeting today. I would have to say that the theme of the meeting was showing love for the ward you are assigned to, showing love for your companion and your investigators, and then, the ward will love and trust you.

Mom and I were asked what has helped us the most to stay married for 43 years. I said, 1) temple attendance, 2) studying the scriptures daily together, 3) praying together, and 4) serving together. Then, we were asked how many times a day we pray? Unfortunately, we said only two times a day. We actually do a little more, but we have both decided that from now on we are going to do a lot more. For example, we will pray each time before we give a lesson or visit.

We have one member we visit about once a week. He is older, has had a severe auto accident that has slowed him down mentally, he drools a lot, slurs his words so that he is hard to understand and is usually very unkempt when we visit. I thought Mom was going to die when we first greeted him today. He had just wiped his mouth that was dripping with drool and then shook our hands!

Now, as bad as that all sounds, let us be the first to tell you that our visits and the visits of the other missionaries mean a lot to him. We are glad we can visit and make a difference for this good brother. Granted, not the most pleasant of circumstances, but we count these visits as important and valuable. (We always carry hand sanitizer in the car)

We met with the Mkwando family that is looking to go to the temple some day. We were able to put to-

gether some important family information about who is related to who. We are checking into how the grandchildren might be able to be sealed to the grandparents. Outside of adoption, this might require the approval of the First Presidency. Honest. The handbook literally says these types of sealing must be approved by the First Presidency.

FYI, the biological parents for these grandchildren are either deceased, unknown or intentionally out of the picture for their children. The grandparents are raising them.

FYI, our first discussion with Mursiona (pizza man delivery guy) went well. We know this because on our second visit, which was me and the young missionaries, he had studied the "Restoration" pamphlet and was asking questions about the Book of Mormon. The Elders did a good job of describing the background for the Book of Mormon and I fished a highlighted version of the Book of Mormon out of the trunk of the car.

He accepted the challenge to read and sincerely pray about what we taught him. Mom and I will continue



Taxis will carry 16 passengers in their vans. Total of 18 with the driver and co-pilot.



I took this picture up close so that you can see what kind of company Michael Beckstead works for. Could you work for a company that kills kids in seconds? Then, of all things, the company pledges to protect you after the dastardly deed!

to visit him and nurture along a friendship and answer questions, and, the missionaries will continue to teach lessons.

\*Photos:\*

- Taxis will carry 16 passengers in their vans. Total of 18 with the driver and co-pilot. If and when these taxis crash on the highways between large cities, it is usually a pretty ugly news story. - I took this picture up close so that you can see what kind of company Michael Beckstead works for. Could you work for a company that kills kids

in seconds? Then, of all things, the company pledges to protect you after the dastardly deed!

Have a wonderful day. Love,

Dad and Mom

2018

FEBRUARY 3 }

# Feb\_03\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We were able to teach lessons to two of our investigators today. Patrick (the wood cutter from on the highway) was first. He lives in an isolated part of Mdantsane called Reston. Fortunately, we have a member of the ward that also lives there, Brother Lucky Sandran. We asked him to come with us to teach Patrick. We all went to Patrick's shack. As you can imagine, it was one room, dirt floor with old, worn carpeting and bugs. The lesson on the restoration went well and Brother Lucky was able to help make sure he understood everything.

We hope and pray he was able to catch the message. Fortunately, Brother Lucky did a visual demonstration of making a little building/church with a foundation out of magazines and books Patrick had in the shack. When the foundation

(prophets and apostles) was pulled out from under the rest of the church, everything came tumbling down. You could see Patrick's eyes light up and you knew he understood.

We left him a restoration pamphlet with the challenge to study it and sincerely pray to know it is true. He said he would and said he likes to pray. We will take the young missionaries in next time and pass off the baton.

We also taught the Fikiso family. Brother Fikiso was late getting there, so we asked his wife a little bit about what he is thinking and doing with the information we are sharing with him. His wife mentioned he is reading and he is praying in the morning and at night! Wow, that is more than we thought he was doing. That gives us some encouragement. Today's lesson was on "The Gospel of Jesus

Christ." (2 Nephi 31: 17-21)

We had the afternoon/adult session of stake conference today. We heard a very good talk from one of the young fathers that goes to our 1st Ward. He did a great job talking about 1) telling our family members we love them, 2) sharing testimony with our family and loved ones, and 3) being consistent doing these things - make it an every day habit.

We are pretty inexperienced at teaching the investigator lessons, but we love the great messages they

contain and to bear our testimonies of their truthfulness. We love the gospel. It brings such meaning and value to our lives.

\*Photos:\*

- This is part of the path Mom and I ride with our bikes. As you can see, it is wide, flat and safe from traffic. - This is how the church disposes of its garbage. They try to keep it up high so dogs can't rip open the trash bags. - The LIZARD trap. I have this up near the place we believe the little demon is living. I think I need to put a bunch of fresh



This is part of the path Mom and I ride with our bikes. As you can see, it is wide, flat and safe from traffic.



The LIZARD trap. I have this up near the place we believe the little demon is living. I think I need to put a bunch of fresh bugs in there to better attract him. If this fails, we will probably demolish the house and build a new one!

bugs in there to better attract him.  
If this fails, we will probably demolish the house and build a new one!

Love,

Dad and Mom



This is how the church disposes of its garbage. They try to keep it up high so dogs can't rip open the trash bags.

# Tid Bits

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

\*1. Word of the week:\* "novitiate," the period or state of being a novice, especially in a religious order. \*Example:\* Mom and I have a 23 month novitiate as senior missionaries.

\*2. Quote of the week:\*

\*3. Scripture of the week:\* I say unto you, if ye have come to a knowledge of the goodness of God, and his matchless power, and his wisdom, and his patience, and his long-suffering towards the children of men; and also, the atonement which has been prepared from the foundation of the world, that thereby salvation might come to him that should put his trust in the Lord, and should be diligent in keeping his commandments, and continue in the faith even unto the end of his life, I mean the life of the mortal body—

I say, that this is the man who re-

ceiveth salvation, through the atonement which was prepared from the foundation of the world for all mankind, which ever were since the fall of Adam, or who are, or who ever shall be, even unto the end of the world. -Mosiah 4:6-7

\*Joke of the week:\*

A physician had just moved to Utah and was meeting with his first patient in his new clinic. Here's how the conversation went:

\*Doctor\*: "Well, Mrs. Smith, we've talked about your high blood pressure and your medications. Are you experiencing any particular stress in your life?"

\*Patient\*: "Oh, yes! It's the Sunbeams. They're driving me crazy."

\*Doctor\* (surprised): "The sunbeams?"

\*Patient\*: "Yes. I've never had trouble with them before, but this group won't sit still. They bounce all over

the room, and run out the door and down the hall."

\*Doctor\* (reaching for a pen): "Have you told anyone about this?"

\*Patient\*: "Of course. I told the president."

\*Doctor\*: "Really! What did the president tell you?"

\*Patient\*: "She said Sunbeams are like that. I'm just going to have to learn to deal with them."

\*Doctor\* (concerned that he may be missing something): "I know people who are sensitive to sun beams. Do they cause you a rash or anything?"

\*Patient\* (confused): "A rash? No."

\*Doctor\*: "What's the biggest problem they're creating?"

\*Patient\*: "It's the noise. They just won't quit talking."

\*Doctor\* (astonished): "The sun beams are talking to you?"

\*Patient\*: "Well, yes. But mostly they talk to each other."

\*Doctor\* (scribbling furiously in the chart): "I see. Can anyone else hear them talking?"

\*Patient\* (after a moment of stunned silence): "You're not LDS, are you?"

\*5. Bee's Knees Award:\* Not every-



Olivia May



one can make lemonade out of lemons. Not everyone can make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. This girl is so positive about life and is always smiling. She doesn't complain and looks for the good in others all the time. She is an artist extraordinaire. She beautifies her home with fun and creativity. She loves her children - she prays for them, sacrifices for them and blesses their lives. Simply put, this girl is beautiful in every sense of the word. She loves and supports her husband. She takes her church callings seriously. She has a deep and abiding testimony of the

gospel. She is known throughout the world as "Female Slim." Amanda, you are the Bee's Knees, sistah!!!

\*6. If I were you (advice to grand kids): \* If I were you, I would read, read, read. Make sure you read the Book of Mormon each day, but also, get in the habit of reading other good books. Reading is so important now and throughout your life. Try it. I think you will like it.

\*7. Gospel question of the week:\* How old was Adam when he died?

\*8. What I learned this week: \*Each and every day I have room for repentance.

\*9. What I am grateful for:\* The strength of the living prophets and apostles in the face of today's critics and enemies of the church.

\*10. My goal for the week:\* I put a dent in the area book and will finish it today. This week, I will confirm reservations for a Mercedes Benz plant tour for our next senior missionary excursion.

\*11. Photo of the week: \* Can you believe this little baby named, Olivia, is now a baptized member of the church. They grow up fast! Love them, hug them, teach them!

Have fun living the gospel this week!

We love you,

Dad and Mom

## Feb\_4\_2018\_Update

Dear Family,

We had a very good stake conference this morning. We received a lot of good instruction. Here are a couple of points that stand out in our minds:

- Even though Mdantsane is a new stake in Zion, proselyting work started in earnest here around 1991. The new members of the church at that time were called on to home teach other members that lived miles and miles away from each other...and, no cars to take them. They walked. What was a handful of faithful saints has now grown into a stake with two beautiful church buildings and members that filled the chapel and cultural hall today. - No whining, no complaining, no crying about our circumstances in the United States. We have it so easy. There is no excuse for us not to do our part and then some. - Read the Book of Mormon every day! Ponder it. Pray about it. Every day, every day, every day. - "Learn what you are suppose to learn. Do what you are

suppose to do. Be what you are suppose to be." - The Lord is mindful of our situations. This morning there was no power to the building for conference. Leaders who were at another meeting earlier, but in the same building, prayed for the power to come back on. When Mom and I came to the meeting at 9:45, the stop light near the church was out and not working. When our stake leaders came into the church for the start of conference, the power to the building came back on.

President Lebethoa and his wife came to our stake conference from Cape Town. They both spoke briefly yesterday and President Lebethoa spoke briefly this morning. These two are powerful servants for the Lord. They have done and will continue to do so much good here in Africa. It is inspiring to see how the Lord is using good, capable, faithful saints to accomplish his work in this part of His vineyard. Sister Lebethoa said how nice it was to take a shower and not have to worry so much about how the water she was using. As you know, Cape Town is heading for zero water on approximately

April 16th. Your prayers are needed.

Lots of love from this side of the world!

Dad and Mom

## I Spy

Dear Grandchildren,

Good luck with this week's I Spy photo, \*you'll need it\*! How many tires do you see in this photo? Camden, Joseph, Eli, Ice Man, Olivia, Brayden, let's hear from you guys too! (If you can count that high?)

**\*ALL ANSWERS MUST BE IN BY TUESDAY MIDNIGHT. I THINK IT IS OKAY FOR PARENTS TO HELP THE LITTLE ONES WHEN THEY NEED IT.\***

Love,  
Grandpa and Grandma Stevenson



Mom and I with President and Sister Lebethoa



How many tires do you see in this photo?

# Feb\_05\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Today has been a good preparation day. But the best thing about today was the Family Home Evening we had at the Mgijima home. You may not believe this, but Mom did some baking today - a pineapple upside down cake for our Mission Leadership Council for tomorrow. She also baked an apple spice cake for the FHE we held this evening. She did wash - towels, whites, sheets, etc. She cooked breakfast. She did her exercising. She did grocery shopping. She bought things to make a "Quiet Book" for little kids at church. She...Mom is the Energizer Bunny! She is always doing good things.

I took my shoes to the repair shop for some half soles. We had invited ourselves a few weeks ago to come to a ward member's home for FHE today. This is a young family that we

have noticed from the beginning of our time here and one we wanted to get to know better. Brother Mgijima spoke in conference on Saturday and did a fine job. He is a return missionary from Uganda and speaks well in English. He knows his scriptures.

What I admire the most is that after his mission, we have heard he made a few mistakes. That has not stopped he and his wife from getting back on their feet and marching hand in hand up the strait and narrow path. As a matter of fact, our lesson this evening was on what we need to do to remain on that strait and narrow path.

We also had the young missionaries there as well as the Primary President who is a close by neighbor. And, our bishop from the other ward showed up and he sat in too. We had a very good discussion with input

from all.

Today we went to the Fruit and Veggie Market. I normally don't enjoy this excursion all that much. Mom will ask me questions about this fruit or that veggie and frankly, I don't care. I am not an expert on these types of things like I am on lizards. But today was different. I picked out a bunch of peaches and got Mom to agree to cook some peach cobbler for me. Now I love to shop at the Fruit and Veggie Market!

\*Photos:\*



This is the type of bugs we try to keep out of the house! I think it is a dead cockroach. I would gladly take a family of lizards over a family of cockroaches living in our house any day!

- This is the type of bugs we try to keep out of the house! I think it is a dead cockroach. I would gladly take a family of lizards over a family of cockroaches living in our house any day! - We bought a plastic pail today at Mambos - a huge store with anything and everything for storage you can think of that is made of plastic. This is just one aisle of maybe a dozen like it.

We love you all very much. "No empty chairs on the other side!"  
Dad and Mom



We bought a plastic pail today at Mambos - a huge store with anything and everything for storage you can think of that is made of plastic. This is just one aisle of maybe a dozen like it.

# Feb\_06\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We have had a busy day. We started this morning with our Mission Leadership Council. This is a marathon meeting, but very important. There is a lot of follow-up in this meeting as well as inspired instruction, goal-setting, sharing, Q&A, etc. I think one of the biggest challenges for any mission is to make sure the "water gets to the end of the row."

Being a farmer for many years in Huntsville, I have learned that the plants nearest the irrigation ditch are usually the healthiest. For great production and a hearty harvest, you need to get water all the way down the row to the last plant. Somehow, in a mission, you want to make sure that all this vital information from our mission president is getting all the way down to the individual missionary level.

We made several visits this afternoon. One was to the Mkwando family for a temple preparation lesson. We discussed moral cleanliness and tithing. Mom and I were touched when one of the older girls, who is unemployed (the whole family is) thoughtfully asked if she could give one tenth of what they grow in their garden to count as tithing. What a humble, great attitude!

We met with our good old pal and fellowshipper, Thandikhaya, this evening. We haven't seen him for quite a while. We have been worried about him. As it turns out, he has been very busy and pressured with a business he has started. He is trying to get everything in order before he leaves on his mission in May. We were relieved. Mom pointed out to him that Satan does not want to see him on a mission and that he needs to be very careful, to keep his guard up at all times.

We hope and pray our visits are doing good. We met Sister Gobeni this afternoon and had a very nice visit with her about keeping the Sabbath Day holy. Fortunately, it appears she will get a job that will not require her to work on Sundays. This way she can come to church and make sure she brings her two boys with her. She is a good example of the type of family that really needs the church in their lives right now. Her boys are young and impressionable.

\*Photos:\*

- Mom and I eating with

Thandikhaya at Wimpy - food is marginal at best - We met these two LDS ladies in the booth next to us. They introduced themselves to us. They are in the Mdantdsane 3rd Ward. We had a good visit. Mom and I picked up the bill on their ice cream. - Everything Counts! Everything good that we do is important. Acts 10:38, Jesus..."went about doing good."

We love you, plain and simple,

Dad and Mom



We met these two LDS ladies in the booth next to us. They introduced themselves to us. They are in the Mdantdsane 3rd Ward.



Mom and I eating with Thandikhaya at Wimpy - food is marginal at best.



Everything Counts!  
Everything good that we do is important. Acts 10:38, Jesus..."went about doing good."

2018 FEBRUARY 7 }

# Feb\_07\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Today turn out to be quite the administration day. It's stuff that has to get done. We would much rather be in our area visiting members and finding father-led families for our missionaries to teach.

\*Here is the list of things today\*:  
- Skyped in to our Senior Council meeting - a telephone conference with senior couples and the mission presidency - Went to missionary boarding to inspect car that was in a fender bender - Traveled to Mercedes Benz factory to check on a plant tour for our senior couples on Feb. 19th. Turned out to be a futile trip, but, finally did get an email from the tour scheduler to confirm our date and tour. - Met the missionaries at the "panel-beaters" to have them look at the car and tell us how much to fix. - Typed up the Mission Leadership

Council minutes for the mission history (massive undertaking) - Emailed financial clerk on some of our walking missionaries funds issues - Emailed accident report and pictures and recommendation to Elder Courtright re: damaged car - Did shopping with Mom for supplies

As you are doing a great job raising your children, you might want to consider the idea that we help these wonderful kids, LEARN, APPLY, GROW, BECOME. They need to be prepared for the world and the best place to get that instruction is in your homes.

\*Photos\*  
- Gary and Lindz from Gonubie Auto Wors. They do good work and beat the pants off any one else when it comes to pricing. Their cool dog is, "Sky." Note the gold chain around his neck. - The missionary car that bumped into a pick up

truck. No damage to pick-up. No one hurt. Under \$500 of damage, so we don't need to report this to the area office. We just pay for it with our fleet card for that car. - This is the only red licorice I have found in South Africa. At the airport, this bag is about \$4.00. At the local drug store, about \$2.70. It's soft and delicious.

We love you. Hang in there and *"\*SCP"\** (Stay on the Covenant Path).

Dad and Mom



Gary and Lindz from Gonubie Auto Wors. Their cool dog is, "Sky." Note the gold chain around his neck.



The missionary car that bumped into a pick up truck. No damage to pick-up. No one hurt.



This is the only red licorice I have found in South Africa. At the airport, this bag is about \$4.00. At the local drug store, about \$2.70. It's soft and delicious.

2018 FEBRUARY 8 }

# Feb\_08\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Today has been another day of paperwork and a very long lunch.

We receive a phone call mid morning about a senior couple coming from Queenstown to get their car tracking unit fixed. It's about a two hour trip for them. They wanted to meet the Davies, Mom and I for lunch. What was going to be a quick lunch at noon ended up being a long wait for the couple to show up and then, out the restaurant door close to 3:30 PM. It was not going to give us enough time to get to our area and do much visiting.

We had a good visit with the senior couple, Elder and Sister Bell, who are now on their second mission. Their first mission was to Houston, Texas. We did get some more admin stuff done today, but no visiting to

the spiritually sick and weary.

\*Photos:\*

- This is where we get our keys made and shoes repaired. I just had a pair of shoes half soled for \$6.80 USD. The owner is the twin brother of the guy (Gary) that does a lot of our auto body work. - This is Gary's little cooper. He calls it a go kart on steroids. He bears strong testimony that it is a lot of fun to drive.

We love you. Have a fantastic, great day!

Dad and Mom



This is Gary's little cooper. He calls it a go kart on steroids. He bears strong testimony that it is a lot of fun to drive.



This is where we get our keys made and shoes repaired. I just had a pair of shoes half soled for \$6.80 USD. The owner is the twin brother of the guy (Gary) that does a lot of our auto body work.

2018

FEBRUARY 9 }

# Feb\_09\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We have had an interesting day. Late last night I received a phone call from President Lebethoa. He told us that we have an emergency transfer we needed to help facilitate. We had a missionary that needed to go home the next day.

All the arrangements were made last night for this elder and one of our zone leaders to fly to Cape Town today. Elder Mauerman will be flying home to the states tomorrow. Another missionary, Elder Sibiya, is going to Cape Town to serve as an Assistant to the President. One of our assistants lost his father who was a member of the Quorum of Seventy and only 57 years old. You may have read about it on lds.org, Elder Keetch.

We hate to see missionaries return to their homes for any reason before

their normal, designated completion date. In these situations, everything is kept quiet among the zone. The only people that knew were the zone leaders and Mom and I.

We had a good district meeting among those of us involved in the transfer. It was primarily sharing testimonies. It was a tender moment for me when I told this elder that we loved him and that we would miss him. We are not sure, but we think there are some repentance issues he needs to get resolved (strictly a guess). Mom and I drove him and the new assistant to the airport.

They checked in early, so we went upstairs to a nice restaurant called the Mug and Bean. We had a good lunch and visit. When I gave Elder Mauerman a hug before he boarded the plane, he said, "We'll see you in a few months." We hope so. He needs to finish this mission for the Lord,

himself, his family and his posterity.

Elder Sibiya has an interesting story to his life. He was born in South Africa (Pretoria) and moved to Botswana when he was 8 years old. He loves and adores his mother, but has no idea who his father is. His mother became a nurse and saw a better life for the family in Ireland. She moved the family there and worked as a nurse. Elder Sibiya developed into a very good rugby player. He was good enough to get a contract and to join a team in England. While there he started listening to

the missionaries.

Fortunately, the bishop of the ward where he would attend church was an international rugby player. He had a great influence on Elder Sibiya, to the point where he joined the church and gave up professional rugby to go on a mission. He is a convert of two years. He is a dedicated, hard-working missionary.

Mom drove the extra car we now have in the zone home from the church parking lot. She did an exceptional job \*except\* when she



would switch on the windshield wipers, thinking she was turning on the blinkers.

\*Photos:\*

- This is a bad picture of a wind chime where the artist has used old cable wire and beads. They get very creative. - Here is a recording of a "Squawking Ibis" (my name for the bird). They are all around us and they make an annoying, squawking noise.

Love,

Dad and Mom

2018

FEBRUARY 10 }

# Feb\_10\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We did primarily two things today:

1. Had a pleasant visit with the Elder and Sister Fowers, Senior couple that served in South Africa between 2011 and 2013. They are presently returning to the United States via East London from their second mission in Barcelona, Spain. Very nice people and from what Mom and I have gleaned from the locals, great missionaries while they were here.

They sold their homes in the San Diego area and moved to Mountain Green, just over the hill from us! They live 1.25 miles from the Sinclair gas station. They will be here for about 5 days and will go visiting with us Monday - Wednesday. We have them coming to dinner tomorrow here at our house.

It was good to talk about mutual families we know here in Mdantsane. They were instrumental in helping our 4th ward bishop get out the door for his mission. One of their relatives actually funded his whole mission. The relatives plumbing business was struggling - one truck operation. But, they contributed anyway. After that, the business took off like crazy - now over 40 trucks.

2. I completed about 95% of our U.S. and State of Utah tax returns and will submit them on Monday. Mom knocked out rolls for tomorrow, muffins, mending missionary pants, and, tailoring a suit coat for one of our newly called missionaries.

I have thought of running a hose from our car tail pipe up to where the LIZARD lives behind the AC unit. Then, pump carbon dioxide to the little guy's reptilian respiratory sys-

tem. It would be too noisy during the day, so I thought I would do it while we are sleeping in the next room.

One of my greatest fears while in South Africa is Mom converting me over to Cauliflower and mayonnaise. She now has me eating cucumber, cabbage and pumpkin squash without complaint. It's scary, very scary.

Shopping with Mom can be challenging. The other day, after groceries, Mom wanted to buy some diapers and a little baby outfit for a new mother that was investigating

the church a while back. Then, she wanted to buy a bunch of other stuff to make a "quiet book" for a little toddler that comes to church with his mother and cries a lot. Great. very nice. Very kind and thoughtful. Then, she needed to buy some fabric for a suit she is tailoring where she needs to shorten the sleeves. I guess being a kind, nice person takes time and money.

I thought it was interesting on the radio the other day when an announcement came on the airwaves for people to pray to God for rain in



Annie Triathlon



Cape Town. I also heard that someone is organizing a hike to the top of Table Mountain where they will offer up prayers for rain. It will be interesting to see what happens as we get closer and closer to Day Zero when there will be not water at the taps - April 16th +/- . Keep praying for rain, please.

\*Photos:\*

- This is probably what the missionary department doesn't want to hit social media. This is the last little part of the Haka by two of our missionaries at the East London Air-

port. All missions recently received a letter stating missionaries need to be very careful about what they allow photos and videos of. Anything can hit social media in minutes.

We love you guys very much. Have a great Sabbath!

Dad and Mom

## Tid Bits

Dear Family,

\*1. Word of the week:\* "dichotomy," a division or contrast between two things that are or are represented as being opposed or entirely different. \* Example:\* The dichotomy of a Porsche conversion car freak is the desire for European engineering and American muscle.

\*2. Quote of the week:\*

\*3. Scripture of the week:\*

All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb so he opened not his mouth. Mosiah 14:6,7

\*4. Joke of the week:\*

(You may have already heard this joke, but I like it.)

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. Interested 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:\* This guy is a tremendous father. He loves to be with his children and make sure they have lots and lots of fun. He is a hard worker and loves being self-employed. He works hard. He is stronger than ten body-builders all smushed together. He has a solid testimony of the gospel. He has a tender heart, he is kind. He is honest. He is an honorable priesthood holder. He is a family man. He keeps the commandments. David, you are

the Bee's Knees. brotha!!!

\*6. Gospel question of the week:\*  
What was the name of the book from which the 116 pages came that Martin Harris lost?

\*7. What I learned this week:\* Do your best and don't worry. The Lord is in control and what you cannot deliver, He will fill in the gaps.

\*8. What I am grateful for: \* Mission presidents! Wow, they have a big job and it is very time-consuming.

\*9. If I were you (advice to grand kids): \* If I were you, I would write down at least three things you want to do each day. Then, scratch them off your list as you do them. Try it. I think you will like it.

\*10. My goal for the week: \* The area book is all put together and up to date. We will now make our entries every day for each visit we make. My goal this week is to resurface the "Meet the Mormons" Mdantsane big screen, primer showing as a missionary tool for the members to the mission president.

\*11. Photo of the week: \* Annie does the Desert Shark Triathlon!

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

Dad and Mom

## Clarification

All,

Of course we were just joking about the hose leading from the car tail pipe to the home of the lizard. Just want to clarify so no one gets too excited and calls our mission president.

I may not be the sharpest pencil in the box, but I would never do something like that. Dynamite, yes. Carbon Dioxide, no.

We love you. Thank you for your support and prayers

Chris and Mavis.

# Feb\_11\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had an enjoyable fast Sunday today. We heard good testimonies, had good instruction in our classes and renewed our covenants. We are ready for an exciting, productive week ahead of us.

Tomorrow I will help the Fowers get some packages sent off through DHL. Long story made short, they were charged \$1,500 for extra weight when they came to South Africa. He tried for hours to get things straightened out and even had the top executives from the airline company and the ticketing company arguing back and forth. No one was going to budge. When he gets home he is going to do a formal protest/challenge on his American Express Card.

We had a delicious dinner at our house with the Fowers and the

Davies. Mom's roast beef, potatoes, carrots and dinner rolls were a smash hit! Sister Davies brought some cake with peaches and whipped cream. We definitely are not starving over here!

We had an enjoyable evening talking about senior missionary stuff.

The other day I went to several drug stores looking for rubbing alcohol. I thought it so strange that no one seemed to have such a commonly-used item. Well, you have to ask for things using the correct name. If I had said "surgical spirit" they would have known immediately what I wanted.

\*Photos:\*

- Elder and Sister Fowers with Mom and I. They had a delightful time seeing so many of the people they became friends with 6 years ago. - A little dove that likes the

shade from our plants in the front of the house. - This is the valley that our compound looks over. From where I took this picture, another 50 feet in front of me and there is a very steep cliff.

We love you and hope you have a great week,

Dad and Mom  
--



A little dove that likes the shade from our plants in the front of the house.



This is the valley that our compound looks over. From where I took this picture, another 50 feet in front of me and there is a very steep cliff.



Elder and Sister Fowers with Mom and I.

# Feb\_13\_2018\_Update

FROM: Elder and Sister Stevenson



Dear Family,

Rain today. This has turned out to be a rather strange summer for us. We have had a handful of those hot, sticky, sweaty days, but for the most part, we have enjoyed the weather.

We had a very good correlation meeting this morning with Elders Hawkins and Smith (ZL's). We discussed many different people in our two wards and how Mom and I can help, especially with the less actives. We have some good names for us to go visit. We look forward to it. Mom made hamburger rolls, salad, veggies for the missionaries to eat. Then, she sent them on their way with a bag full of cookies.

But, here's the deal. Mom and I can go visit as many people as possible all week long and have some success. However, we want to the members

to have the success and to build those relationships. The Fowers shared with us a program they have used in the past that has been successful in finding lost sheep. We think a hybrid version of that program might be something valuable to implement here in our wards/stake. Details to follow.

The Fowers fireside went very well this evening. We had 40 or more people there. That is very good since it was raining and a lot of people have to walk. The message was good for our members here. "We are the light" and we are the ones that will have to take that light to the other people of Mdantsane.

Mom made a boatload of cookies for this evening and I also bought three large bags of cookies (maybe 50 - 75 per bag). THE COOKIES BLEW OFF THE TABLE! I think there were an awful lot of hungry people there

tonight.

\*Photos:\*

- This is our cousin, Elder Shaw - turns out that his mother sent him copies of the missionary journal of WHW who is one of his relatives! - Cool truck about to take some pictures for Tom Tom - Our missionary fireside tonight was without power. Fortunately, the Fowers had enough juice in their computer and small, portable projector, that they could do a slide show..

All of our love, thoughts and prayers!

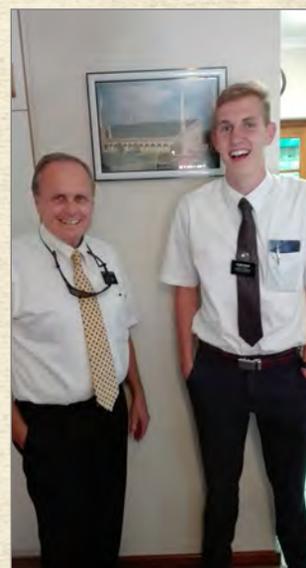
Dad and Mom

## Valentine's Day

\*Happy Valentine's Day!!!\*

This, of course, is the celebration of St. Valentine chasing all the snakes out of Ireland. Do you think he would contract for a lizard job?

Actually, I think St. Valentine was the one that first discovered America on the Pinta, Nina and Santa Valentinna.



This is our cousin, Elder Shaw - turns out that his mother sent him copies of the missionary journal of WHW who is one of his relatives!



Cool truck about to take some pictures for Tom Tom.



Our missionary fireside tonight was without power. Fortunately, the Fowers had enough juice in their computer and small, portable projector, that they could do a slide show.

Ooops, I mean, St. Valentine was a Book of Mormon prophet? Not sure about that one? (Maybe a good gospel question of the week)

St. Valentine was the owner of the first asphalt sealing company in Italy, Valentino's Seal Pro, Inc.

My final answer, St. Valentine was one of our ancestors - a nephew of our great, great, great, great, great grandfather, Pope Pious the III.

\*Okay, our history might be a mess, but make no mistake about it, we

love you all and beg for you all to be our valentines!\*

Love,

Dad and Mom, Aunt and Uncle, Grandpa and Grandma

# Feb\_15\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Full day today! We made one of our first stops at the Total Gas Station in Mdantsane. We followed up on a guy that use to be a good member of the church and then went on a mission. After two weeks he came home. He was embarrassed and fell into inactivity. The Fowers, who helped him out initially, met him two days ago at the gas station where he works. It was a very sweet reunion. We arranged to have a meeting with him on this Saturday. He is committed to coming back to church, getting married in October to an LDS girl and eventually going to the temple. It will be great working with this brother.

We met with a semi-less active single girl today in her shack. The bishop just called her recently to be the ward librarian. Mom gave her a lesson while I played a matching game

with her little niece on Mom's tablet. Her name is Enam.

When we went to visit another less active lady (that we had never met yet after a couple attempts). As it turned out, her grandmother just passed away and she had gone to our church house to set up for the funeral on Saturday morning. After some one passes away like this, people come to the house for the week preceding the funeral to visit the family. We were invited in as people thought we knew the deceased. Well, we asked why all the people were there and why so many chairs were set up. They told us the house was open due to the upcoming funeral.

To make a long story short, we were asked to preach to the group. Our tablet battery died, so I shared the message from the Bible and a great message by Elder F. Whitney Clayton in a church video, "Whatsoever he

saith unto you, see that you do it." No baptisms from our preaching, but very good exposure for the church. Everything counts!

Here's a link to the video:  
<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2017/04/whatsoever-he-saith-unto-you-do-it?lang=eng>

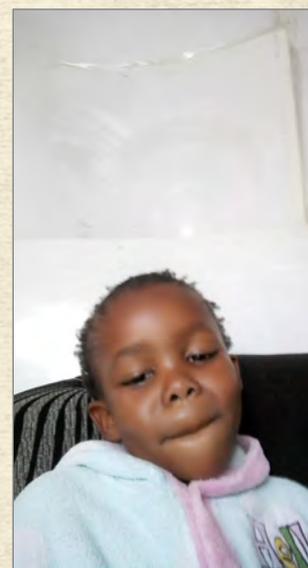
On our way home, we stopped by Sister Velapi's home. She is a very sweet, happy new convert to the church. She loves Mom! Mom shared a verse from the Doctrine and Covenants, D&C 19:23. She is our

gospel doctrine Sunday school teacher and as a new member, doing a good job fulfilling her calling.

We got home late and studied Preach My Gospel in preparation for our zone conference tomorrow. Good to hit the pillow tired in the service of the Lord.

\*Photos:\* - Sister Velapi, Hlelo and Mom - Enam - Mom and a bunch of grandmas at the wake

Love,  
Dad and Mom



Enam

Mom and a bunch of grandmas at the wake.



Sister Velapi, Hlelo and Mom.



# Feb\_17\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

There was a funeral this morning. The family of the deceased set up chairs yesterday and asked us a couple of times if the church would be open in the morning for friends and family to come in for the service. We told them, "Yes." Yesterday evening, We made sure the bishop understood that the church needed to be opened by about 7:30 or so.

The bishop dropped his keys off at a counselor's home who lives next to the church early this morning so that he could open up the church while our bishop was at work. Some thing went wrong and we had people waiting outside the church for a long while before it actually was opened. Not good.

We came to the church later in the morning. When we arrived, the fu-

neral was over and people were filing out of the church. There was a boatload of people! And, it was good to see the members from the deceased's church cleaning up everything. They left things in good shape.

We had a baptism today, Sister Olwethu Gwai. She has a little boy and seems ready to start this new chapter in her life. We were a little disappointed that we did not have more members out to the service. It is so vital to have members there to embrace the new member and make them feel welcome. We think things will work out well for her.

We have two young men that have received their mission calls. One, Mapopo (nick name) will be leaving mid March for Johannesburg. This is the young man you have helped us be able to purchase him some of his missionary clothes. Thandikhaya leaves in May. Mom and I taught

them the first lesson of the Temple Preparation Course. It went well. Unfortunately, no one in the ward has been thinking about the importance of getting these guys prepared for receiving their endowment. Normally, we wouldn't do this, but we think it is very important and needs to be done ASAP.

We visited with a man by the name of Sinethemba Toli. He is a fellow that went on his mission and came home just after two weeks. The Fowers know him and met with him last week. He said he simply had his

prayers confirmed with that visit and that now is the time to get back on the covenant path. We had a very pleasant meeting with him and his girlfriend/fiance. She is also a member. They will come to church tomorrow to meet with the bishop and continue his repentance process. Presently, he is disfellowshipped. It will be a treat to teach him and his fiance and see them become active in the church again.

\*Photos:\*

- This truck is a fairly common sight in South Africa. If it isn't



Elders Smith (in white) and Hawkins and the new member, Olwethu Gwai.



Hamburgers delivered by scooters! KFC and McDonald's do the same thing.



This truck is a fairly common sight in South Africa. If it isn't garbage, then, you usually have 15 workers stacked in the back.

garbage, then, you usually have 15 workers stacked in the back. - Hamburgers delivered by scooters! KFC and McDonald's do the same thing. - Elders Smith (in white) and Hawkins and the new member, Olwethu Gwai.

We love all of you so much! Hang in there and be prepared for a great Sabbath tomorrow.

Dad and Mom

# Feb\_18\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

A long day. But, we were doing good things the whole time!

When we arrived at church, it was starting to be hot. As church progressed over the next 5 hours, it got a lot hotter. The high was 91 degrees, but the humidity was 82%. That makes for an uncomfortable 5 hours as the air conditioning was not working today!

I met with the bishop from the 4th ward and the Elder's Quorum President, Melikhaya, to discuss where things were in the process of setting up the home teaching. The bishop explained to the EQ president that he would like me to jump in and help out any way I can. I need to strike a careful balance so the president feels like he is doing his job and I am not stepping on anyone's toes.

I see two huge steps for this ward.

First, organize the home teaching the best we can and train the brethren on what their job is. Second, have a "finding activity" where we get every priesthood holder and Visiting teacher to blitz our ward membership and find out who is dead, moved, less active, hiding, etc. We want to find people so we can minister to the individual. If we can move records so others can find and bless these people, great.

After church we visited a number of people that are usually good to catch on the weekend. We first went to the home that held the funeral yesterday. Everything was getting back to normal with the exception of several people still at the home, probably family that hasn't left yet. We delivered photos of the grandmas we met the other day. Wow, people here really love to see pictures of themselves.

We went to the home of Sister Ndarana. She is a less active that we have been trying to see for four months. We finally met her today. It was like a sauna in her home. Both Mom and I were dripping by the time we left. We will be going back to visit this week.

We met with others and had some good visits, but the heat kept hammering down. When we were ready to leave Mdantsane, Rain clouds were developing and the temperature was dropping. 25 minutes later, we were pulling into our garage and

the rain started to pour. Great thunder and lightening, too.

We had a telephone call this evening from President Lebethoa. He wants Mom and I to move to Port Elizabeth. That is a bout a 3 hour drive from here going toward Cape Town. Of course, we are happy to serve wherever the president assigns us, but we really thought we were going to be in Mdantsane for the whole time. More details to follow.

The church is having a more difficult time getting senior missionaries to



These guys are building a house pretty close to one of our members. Chad would get a chuckle out of how they do things down here. Everything is cement and blocks with the exception of some skinny trusses for the roof.

serve. President Lebethoa said it was about 50% of what it use to be. Our mission has 9 senior couples, more than any other mission in the area. The president is pretty sure he will not be getting any more couples for a while. He needs a senior couple in Port Elizabeth since there are two zones there and a stake that wants to split.

\*Photos:\*

- These guys are building a house pretty close to one of our members. Chad would get a chuckle out of how they do things down here. Everything is cement and blocks with the exception of some skinny trusses for the roof. - Here is a link to a map of Port Elizabeth so you can see where it is in relation to East London and Cape Town:

<https://www.google.co.za/maps/place/Port+Elizabeth/@-33.9614236,22.8277245,6.25z/data=!4m5!3m4!1sox1e7b290045ffd62b:ox86fd2337cd894226!8m2!3d-33.7139247!4d25.5207358>

We love you. You are in our prayers daily!

Dad and Mom

# Feb\_19\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

It appears to be final. We will be transferring to Port Elizabeth around the 9th of March. We will miss many good friends we have made here in Mdantsane. Based on what the mission president has told us over the last couple months, we thought we were going to be in this area for our entire mission. Unfortunately, we have told that to several people. It will be difficult to let them know we are leaving.

This morning we met the Peterson's from Port Alfred, the Watson's from Port Elizabeth and the Beal's from Port Elizabeth at the Mercedes Benz, East London Plant. Mom and I were able to secure a tour of the factory. This is something a number of them have wanted to do for some time. The tour was very good and extremely riveting (excuse the pun). Someone do the math: 530 industrial

robots, each costing anywhere from R 750,000 to R 1,000,000. Any one's math will prove that is a lot of money. Arnold, translate that into USD, please.

The robots are awesome. The final product coming off the assembly line is a beautiful sight. I think we should buy Mom a blue sedan. She likes that color. I guess I will stay with my old, beater, daily-driver, 1977 piece of junk.

After the tour we went to the Davies house for Hawaiian Haystacks and apple pie al mode. The food was delicious and the company even better.

Also, this morning we had a phone call from our zone leaders about a break-in to their boarding last night while they were asleep. Apparently, two burglars came in through a living room window after forcing free a security bar. It appears they were in

and out fairly quick. Even though they neglected to see car keys and cash in the open on a study table, they took a DVD player, a pair of leisure shoes and two scripture bags. One scripture bag had an external hard drive in it and a jump drive. The missionaries were most upset about their scriptures being taken and then, left in the corner of the back yard in the rain. Scriptures and notebooks are basically ruined. Fortunately, the missionaries are doing fine. The Church's area professional contacted them and worked with them over the phone. It

can be rather unsettling and disturbing to have unwanted visitors like that in the middle of the night.

\*Photos:\* - We arrived at the Mercedes plant early, so we took some photos of the various plants Mercedes had around the parking lot. We were not allowed to take photos inside the plant.

The gospel is true and the only sure path to great joy and happiness in this life. No discussion. No debate. Fact. We love you, Dad and Mom



Mercedes plant



We were not allowed to take photos inside the plant.



2018

FEBRUARY 20 }

# Feb\_20\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

No lizard report. No funny stories. No photos. We just want to share a sweet moment that made our day extra special.

We visited the Mloka family today. It was Asisipho's birthday. She is around 20 years old. Her mother, sister, brother and a small child were there with her. She became so happy when we presented her with 8 chocolate cupcakes and Mom and I sang her happy birthday.

This family lives in a shack and has had some very challenging, difficult times. I believe we told you before, but they were evicted from their house and lived on the street for three days. They found this shack by way of a friend that told them about it. Very little food and maybe the only income is a slim pensioner (like Social Security) check the first of

each month. Water leaks through their roof. A mud puddle protrudes half way into their house. Dirt floor. Kitchen, sleeping and living area all in a 10 foot by 10 foot area. One bed.

We began our lesson by telling them how impressed we were with their family. That through all the hard times they have had, they stuck together. They were together to help each other. We told them that they were a good example to us of how families help each other.

We taught that families were instituted by God. Then, we showed a video. "Mountains to Climb," with a voice over being a conference talk by President Henry B. Eyring. The main message was the absolute need to have faith in Christ when we face the challenges of life. It was a very emotional moment for everyone in that shack. The Spirit we felt in that little space was as sacred as the Spirit we

have felt in the temple. Asisipho was crying, Mama Mloka could not talk she was so choked up with emotion. She had buried her face in the bed. I stood up and reached over and squeezed her hand. Tears welled up in my eyes and spilled over.

Each person had a chance to share what that video meant to them and what they learned. The tears flowed as they spoke and echoed the message of the video, having faith in Christ. We hope and pray that this 30 minute slice of heaven visit will help them manage their difficulties and be able to exercise their faith in Christ so they can move forward.

We had other great visits today, but I would rather not discuss them today. We just want to savor the beauty and richness we experienced today with the Mloka family. We want to go to bed with the images of their sweet faces fresh on our minds. It is great spiritual energy for the work we will get to do tomorrow.

\*Video:\* Here is a link to the video we showed:

- <https://www.mormonchannel.org/watch/series/mormon-mes->

sages/mountains-to-climb-2

We love you,

Dad and Mom

# Tid Bits

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



\*NOTE:\* Sorry, I thought I had sent this out on Sunday!

Dear Family,

\*1. Word of the week:\* "demur," raise objections or show reluctance.

\*Example:

\*Michael Beckstead began to demur when I told him Johnson and Johnson was owned by John Wax.

\*2. Quote of the week:\*

\*3. Scripture of the week: \*

I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise. -D&C 82:10

\*4. Joke of the week:\*

Mary had a little lamb, a little pork, a little ham...  
And then she passed her plate again,

And had a little more.

\*(or)\*

Mary had a little lamb.  
(The doctor was surprised.)  
When Old McDonald had a farm,  
The doctor nearly died.

\*5. Bee's Knees Award:\* This girl is the best. She is sweet, considerate, loving and sensitive to the feelings of others. She is always trying to be like Jesus and succeeding. She loves being a mother. The gospel means everything to her - she loves it, she lives it. She loves to laugh. She loves her husband. She loves old movies. She loves her mother and is one of her best friends. She has a strong testimony of the gospel. She is fun to be around. Michelle, you are the Bee's Knees, Sistah!!!

\*6. Gospel question of the week:\*  
How many times did Noah send

forth the dove from the ark to see if there was dry land?

\*7. If I were you (advice to grand kids):\* If I were you, I would make it a habit to always be on time. Use this rule, "If you are not ten minutes early to church, you are late." Try it. I think you will like it.

\*8. What I learned this week:\* Do not compare yourself with others. If you do, you will usually find one of these two outcomes: 1) You see yourself as better than others. You develop pride, the wrong kind of pride,

or, 2) You see yourself as inadequate, below average, not measuring up. Hence, you become discouraged and depressed.\* Measure yourself against your potential and how you are progressing\*.

\*9. What I am grateful for: \* I am grateful for mission presidents and all they do to help make a mission run efficiently and effectively.

\*10. My goal for the week:\* I had the goal of talking with our mission president about having a big, silver screen primer of "Meet the Mor-



Family reunion bear



mons." I got the okay from him to speak with the stake president and get his input and check his interest level.

\*11. Photo of the week:\* Daniel on his way to 500 sit-ups! (5 a day for 100 days)

We love you. We pray for you and think of you often. Have fun living the gospel this week!

Dad and Mom

## Feb21\_2018\_Update

Dear Family,

We learned the other day that our friend, the pizza delivery man, Musa, had been in an accident and was in the hospital. We did not know how serious things were, so we found out which hospital and went to visit him today. He is in good spirits, no broken bones and will be released tomorrow. We hope our visit helps him to know we care about him. We also took him a little care

package with a cup cake, cookies, candy, granola bars and a banana.

We had a very nice visit with Zikhona and one of her girlfriends. She is about 20 years old and was less active. She has started to come back to church more regularly. The bishop called her to be the Assistant Ward Librarian. Tonight we discussed "covenants." I sat back and the birthday girl did all the teaching. My big part was to switch on the video that we showed at the end.

No exaggeration, these girls really love Sister Stevenson. Mom brought her some cup cakes. They found out it was Mom's birthday and went crazy when Mom told them she was 66 years old. They thought she was in her forties. They went even more crazy when we told them we had been married for 43 years. Then, they went completely insane when we told them we have eight children and 32+ grandchildren. Mom is a rock star in their eyes.

Earlier in the day we waited 45 minutes for the Relief Society President to show up to do some visiting teaching visits with Mom. This is

Africa. Things do not always work out the way they have been planned (if planned at all).

\*Some other points of interest\*:

- Last night Mom had beets and cabbage for dinner. I had pizza.
- It has been difficult to break the news to members that we will be leaving for our new assignment - much harder than I thought it would be.
- We will be moving from a queen size bed to a king size in Port Elizabeth.
- We visited Sinethemba Toli yesterday. He is a "returned" missionary, meaning he lasted two weeks in the mission field and came home to do some repenting. What a humble man who is now determined to come back to church, repent, get married and get back on the covenant path. It was a great teaching appointment with him and his fiance. We challenged both of them to come to church and they did. They met with the bishop and it appears things are on the way for them.
- We have been teaching a young man (maybe 13 years old) for a number of weeks now. He is very attentive and agreeable during our discussions, but does not follow through on commitments. He is a

runner with medals all over his house. Maybe I should run a half marathon with him? Somehow we have to get into his head and help he see the light.

**\*Photos:\***

- This lady is carrying a lot. Notice that she also has on a backpack. It was warm and when I touched her arm to say, "Engosi," (thank you) she was perspiring quite a bit. - This is the buffet we hit a couple times a month. Always a good meal. - Geese at the restaurant.

We love you. We pray for your daily. Have a great day!

Dad and Mom



This lady is carrying a lot. Notice that she also has on a backpack. It was warm and when I touched her arm to say, "Engosi," (thank you) she was perspiring quite a bit.



Geese at the restaurant.



This is the buffet we hit a couple times a month.

# Gospel Question of the Week

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

I am pleased to announce that Grace was the first to correctly answer the Gospel Question of the Week.

The correct answer is 3 times with a dove, but, before the doves, he sent forth a raven.

Congratulations to Grace, who is now officially on the chocolate milkshake list!

Special recognition to Michael Beckstead and Slammin Jammin Manda who took respectable 2nd and 3rd place finishes.

Love,

Dad and Mom

## Feb22\_2018\_Update

Dear Family,

Wow, got a lot of administrative things done today. About every two weeks I have to reconcile any expenditures I have made with the mission credit card. Presently, I am trying to justify the new Ferrari 458 Special I purchased earlier this week.

Then, I created Emergency Contact Information sheets for 9 different boardings.

Then, I scanned and emailed all the police report documents and pictures from a break-in at one of the boardings of our missionaries. We had burglars break-in around midnight while the Elders were sleeping! It was a quick in and out job. The passed by the money and car keys on the table, but, took their scripture

bags, DVD player and a pair of shoes. In one of the bags was an external hard drive and thumb drive. They took that stuff and dumped everything else in the corner of the back year in the rain.

Then, I re-looked at our tax return. I plan to send that end by Saturday midnight.

I drove Mom out to visit with a Relief Society president from the MD 4th Ward. She talked with her about organizing, delegating and becoming more efficient. Mom was sure to tell

her what a great job she was doing and that she was just throwing out some ideas she has learned from being in that same position before.

Ayanda Gqobo wanted to meet with us. He was out of food and had not been paid by his employer. We put together a care package and some muffins. He is leaving in a few days for a job that is about 150 miles from here for a month at a time. His kids have not come back home after going to stay with his ex-wife in East London. He is worried because the school is inquiring where the chil-





Since we are on a mission, we will call this a "praying" Mantis.

dren are. He also needs to set them up to stay in his house while he is gone. He says his neighbor will look in after them. Any way you look at it, a very bad situation.

Immediately, you start thinking of ways to help and fix the problem. So, what do you do? You don't do anything. That is exactly the type of hornet's nest you leave alone. He is going to have to think it through and get things fixed by himself. Our advice was to think it through carefully and make a plan of action. If he doesn't make some decisions, time

will make those decisions for him. He asked for a blessing, which I was happy to give him.

I am having a real struggle with something about my companion. First, she elevates the LIZARD to a pedestal, defending the rights of a lowly lizard over her companion of 43 years. Then, she spies a large bug in the corner of our bathroom. She runs to get some insecticide to kill it. The poor creature did not die from the poison. I believe it was the half can of bug juice she sprayed on the thing - it died, pure and simple,

from a drowning! If you love a lizard, why can't you be at one with a bug? Our U. S. Constitution provides for equal application of the law.

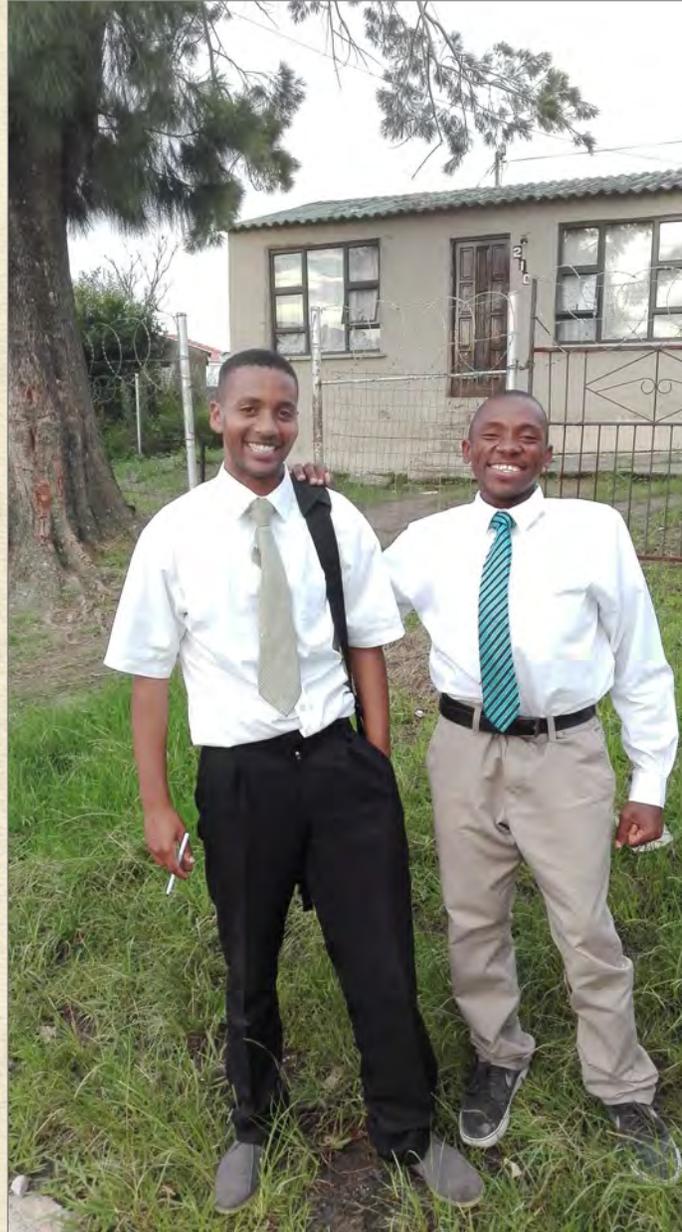
\*Photos:\*

- Since we are on a mission, we will call this a "praying" Mantis - Here are two great home teachers. I am so proud of these guys. They went out yesterday and home taught 3 families. Today they were walking and trying to catch 4 more families. They walk a long, long way to get their home teaching done! So, no whining! No complaining! No crying! Get out and do your home teaching. And, do it well. Make sure those people know you love them.

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

Dad and Mom

Sorry, I attached the wrong photo. The attached photo is of Nkululeko and "Shakes." They are both return missionaries and are strong members of the church. They are converted, committed champions of the gospel!



Nkululeko and "Shakes."  
They are both return missionaries and are strong members of the church. They are converted, committed champions of the gospel!

2018

FEBRUARY 23 }

# Feb\_23\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We escaped a bullet today. The forecast said it would be a high of 93 degrees. Fortunately, we had some overcast skies and good breezes. Today was a piece of cake.

We had a good district meeting today. The instructor was Elder Tucker from Bountiful, Utah. Our training was on using the Book of Mormon in every lesson we give and how to ask questions to help your investigator better understand the Book of Mormon. In the lessons we give to less actives, Mom is always good at getting the member to find and open their scriptures so they can actually look up the verses themselves.

We met Sister Krull from the East London 3rd ward at her bank in Vincent Mall. She was kind enough to take some U.S. currency we had and get it exchanged for Rand. This is

money that Elder and Sister Fowers gave us to manage so we can help certain people they know in the ward with upcoming missions, education and upgrading employment. We could not do it because you need your actual/original passport. Those are kept under lock and key in the mission office. We carry certified copies for ID purposes.

We met two young men from the ward at the church house so they could try on some suits that Elder Fowers left behind. With some substantial alterations on one, Mom can make it kind of fit. The other suit fit pretty good and does not need alterations. The young men were pretty happy. They also got two white shirts each.

We visited the Mbomvane family to say good bye. This was one of our turn around members, but has since gone back to drinking. Her son is a

bright spot who was baptized a few months ago. We hope and pray for her and hope and pray that this young man, who is an Aaronic Priesthood holder, will stay strong and become a powerful missionary for the Lord.

Then, a goodbye to Sister Nandi Xamane. This lady loves Mom and has had a difficult time with a rough marriage. I will long remember her when she came back to church and said to Mom, "I am so happy. I am here because you are here." It was a tearful farewell. Mom gave her a

sweater that she admired a long time ago. We will miss her.

\*Photos:\*

- Mom and Nandi. - On this block I usually get mobbed by the kids. - A look up the street toward our house. I don't like to brag, but we have the biggest palm tree in the compound. - Tell me this doesn't look like David when he was a little boy. This was a picture on the front of a KFC counter advertising kid meals.

We love you guys. Be good. Be very



A look up the street toward our house. I don't like to brag, but we have the biggest palm tree in the compound.



Tell me this doesn't look like David when he was a little boy.



Mom and Nandi.

good. You will be very happy as you do the right things.

Dad and Mom



On this block I usually get mobbed by the kids.

2018

FEBRUARY 24 }

# Feb\_24\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

**\*WARNING:\*** Plumbing can be dangerous to your spiritual health.

We had planned to go over to the church a little early today to fix some toilets that kept running. Obviously, this is a waste of water and we wanted to fix them. I told mom, no worries, it's a 15 minute job for each stall and we can focus on preparing for our Temple Preparation Course we were to give today.

We were at the hardware store at noon and then, at the church by 12:30. I was still working on the running toilets after 3:30. Fortunately, the Bishop Jada's sons came and helped out. We fixed one of the toilets, but finally had to give up on the other until Monday. I could not leave the job and walk away, so Mom taught the Temple preparation class

by herself.

The frustration level was running high and the urge to cuss and swear was intense. Hence, the warning.

At 4 PM we met with Sinethemba and his girlfriend, Zine. We shared information about the church's pathway program and the Perpetual Education Fund. These are things he wants to do. He is interested in improving his education and employment. From what I could tell online, the church has made this very accessible and affordable for members all over the world. It really is a wonderful way for people to improve their station in life.

We went over the "The Family, A Proclamation to the World." It hit squarely on one of his big questions, "What does the Lord expect of me as a father." We had a good discussion and we look forward to a few more

before we leave town. He and his girlfriend have met with the bishop and are making strides to live in accordance with gospel principles and commandments.

**\*Photos:\***

- This is a Debonaire's triple decker pizza. We have never ordered one since we are not fans of their product. But, can you believe, only 3 calories in each piece? - Isn't this a cool car. Shaped like a Mercedes, but only a wire structure with thousands and thousands of Xhosa beads. These are the senior couples that

came on the tour of the plant. - Hlumelo and his younger cousin, Luthando. (Sorry if I already sent this one to you) Hlumelo is about 15 years old and a very active member of the church. Luthando is not coming to church. We continue to visit and reach him.

Love,

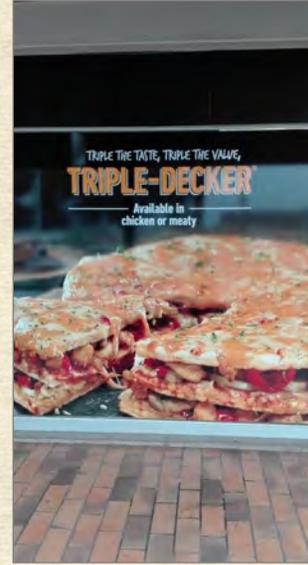
Dad and Mom



Isn't this a cool car. Shaped like a Mercedes, but only a wire structure with thousands and thousands of Xhosa beads. These are the senior couples that came on the tour of the plant.



Hlumelo and his younger cousin, Luthando. (Sorry if I already sent this one to you) Hlumelo is about 15 years old and a very active member of the church. Luthando is not coming to church. We continue to visit and reach him.



This is a Debonaire's triple decker pizza. We have never ordered one since we are not fans of their product. But, can you believe, only 3 calories in each piece?

2018

FEBRUARY 25 }

# Feb\_25\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had an enjoyable time at our church meetings today. As I sat through these meetings, I had the reassuring feeling that both of these wards were going to do just fine. They will continue to struggle, but in that struggle comes great resolve, stronger testimonies and wonderful memories. Mom and I are blessed to have been a very small part of their history.

Bishop Lelendle of the Mdantsane 4th Ward asked us to speak in church on March 11th, our last Sunday here. He said any topic we want to speak on. Do any of you have suggestions for us?

After church we took time to help distribute some money that the Fowers gave us for various members of the ward who are planning missions, getting more education and

upgrading their employment. The money will help tremendously. We are grateful to the delivery boy and girl.

*\*Special Note:\** Can anyone find us a laptop computer to send over to our neck of the woods. Arnold Cortez might be coming this way in June and if we catch him on a good day, he might agree to bring it with him. We have a wonderful young, return missionary that could use a laptop or tablet so he can participate in the Pathway Education Program. We love this guy and would like to see him get every advantage he can here in South Africa.

*\*Video:\** (Forgive me if I have sent this to you before. If you listen carefully, you can hear Mom helping them with some words when they got stuck)

- <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1RQoU34yud1GQVjv4jbr->

sP1GYFd7Iae7A

We love you very much, more than yesterday if you can imagine that.

Dad and Mom

## Tid Bits

Dear Family,

\*1. Word of the week: \* "dire," extremely serious or urgent. \*Example:\* Cape Town is in dire need of continuous rainfall.

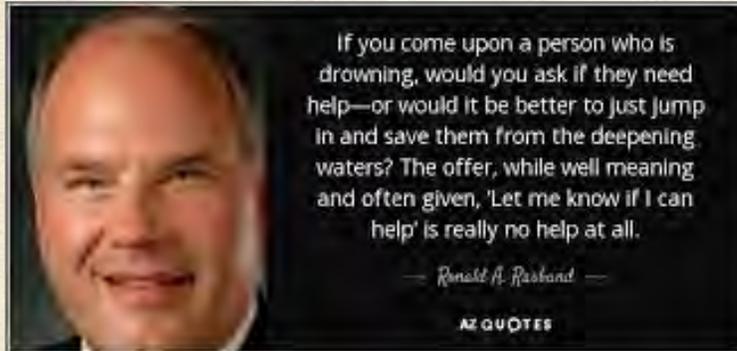
\*2. Quote of the week: \*

\*3. Scripture of the week:\*

Yea, and as often as my people repent will I forgive them their tres-



Do any fo these people look familiar?



passes against me. -Alma 26:30

\*4. Joke of the week: \* (Riddles)

\*Q:\* What goes up a chimney down, but can't go down a chimney up?

\*A:\* An umbrella.

(or)

\*Q:\* What word in the dictionary is always spelled wrong?

\*A:\* WRONG

\*5. Bee's Knees Award: \*This is one of the sweetest girls on the face of

the planet. She has a beautiful smile and is a beautiful young lady. She is a great soccer player. She is brave to try daring feats like jumping off a high dive when she was only 2 months old (well, I mean she was young). She has a strong testimony of the gospel and is always trying to do the right things. She is smart. She is a very good student in school. She makes her bed. Everyone just thinks she is plain awesome. Adelaide, you are the Bee's Knees, sistah!!!

\*6. Gospel question of the week:\* When Christ cast demons out of a

possessed man and into swine, how many swine ran off a cliff and died?

\*7. If I were you (advice to grand kids): \* If I were you, I would get into an exercise routine every day except Sunday and maybe, Saturday. Physical activity is good for your body. Try it. I think you will like it.

\*8. What I learned this week:\* Stay in the ark. No doubt life on the ark with Noah and all the animals had its challenges. But, staying on the ark was a much better choice than joining the others outside of the ark. In the church and in our homes we have challenges. We can deal with those and survive a lot better than throwing ourselves to the world.

\*9. What I am grateful for:\* I love and I am so thankful for faithful, dedicated, caring home teachers.

\*10. My goal for the week: \*Our Mercedes plant tour went very well. The lunch after was very nice. My goal this week is to make a comprehensive list of the people we plan to visit before we leave town. We want to focus on a lot of the faithful and give them a big pat on the back and

tell them to keep up the good work.

\*11. Photo of the week: \* Do any of these people look familiar?

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

Dad and Mom

2018

FEBRUARY 26 }

# Feb\_26\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Mom had her hands full today, altering some pants for a very skinny young man in our ward. He is a relatively new member of the church, but just an outstanding person. He is about 18 years old and is presently teaching our Elder's Quorum class. The suit coat is okay if you do not look too closely. Mom took the pants in as far as she could and they will still need a tight belt to keep them up where they should be. Nevertheless, the young man is very grateful!

Mom also made a short sleeve shirt from an long sleeve shirt for one of our missionaries. She also added a shirt pocket to it. Looks great and the missionary is a happy camper. Mom can make a silk purse from a sow's ear!

We shot out to visit Sinethemba Toli

and his fiance for a 1 PM appointment. Unfortunately, we were running late and arrived at their place 45 minutes late. They were gone. Either they got tired of waiting and went somewhere, or, they weren't there in the first place. We left a note on the door and will reschedule.

I had forgot to bring in the chicken I bought earlier in the morning and it was in the trunk of the car. If we left it there all afternoon, the heat would spoil it. We were 15 minutes down the road and had to turn around to taken the chicken back to the fridge. My fault! I really do not like to be late!

Today is Monday, so I bought two large pepperoni pizzas for about \$7.00 USD. Not too bad. And, this pizza is the closest we have found to USA Little Caesar's Pizza.

Got the car washed and vacuumed.

We purchased 75 packets of pencils (ten per packet) for the Pakamile Elementary School. We plan to give them paper and pencils to help out. It is simply amazing how little they have and how overcrowded they are with children!

We went to "Uncle Paul's" to buy the pencils. The proprietor is a Chinese man so I knew negotiating was going to be a chore. Each packet was R 15. I started out with 20 packets at R 10 each. After jawing back and forth, he went to a 10% discount. No good! That is only R 13.5. This was unac-

ceptable and I knew my Rabbi brother, Gregor Stevenstein, would be very disappointed if we settled for that slim of a discount. I went to R 12. He was having a conniption. I had originally told him 20 packets. When I told him we would do 75 at R 12 he finally conceded. Even after reading our name tags, the gentleman accused me of being Jewish.

\*Photos:\*

- These are some old locomotives that have been sent to the grave yard. The ones they actually use, don't look too much different than



These are some old locomotives that have been sent to the grave yard. The ones they actually use, don't look too much different than these.

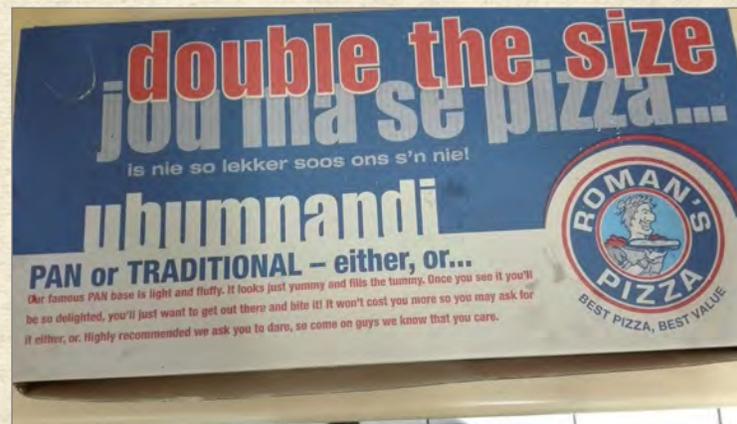


these. – This is good pizza, but the sell copy on the box is the dumbest advertising I have ever seen. It seems so juvenile.

We love you all so much. Make good choices!

Dad and Mom

This is good pizza, but the sell copy on the box is the dumbest advertising I have ever seen. It seems so juvenile.



2018

FEBRUARY 27 }

# Feb\_27\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had our zone leaders over to our home this morning for a 10 AM correlation meeting. This will be our last one with them since we will be leaving here soon. We were able to go over a number of things and then, Mom had a delicious lunch of chicken and noodles in a pesto sauce, toss green salad, butternut squash and wacky cake for desert with vanilla ice cream. All very good groceries!

We did a lot of visiting today to active members. We want to get to them as well as a lot of our less active members. We want to active members to know we appreciate all they do and their good examples. We encourage them to carry on. Our less actives are encouraged to step it up. They know what is right and they need to start enjoying the blessings of the gospel. (Attached is the hand-

out we printed to summarize our message and used as a "leave-behind for each family)

One of our last families was without food, electricity and water. They have a daughter the missionaries are teaching. After a pleasant visit with them and a prayer, we left to go home. However, we could not leave knowing their situation and not doing something to help. We bought them some potatoes, onions, tomatoes, soup mix, rice and bread. We also picked up some burner fluid for their single burner gas stove. Our fellowshipping pulled together some empty plastic gallon bottles from his house and filled them with water. We will all sleep better tonight for having done this.

\*Photos:\*

- In the order you see them:  
Brother Hongana and wife - Brother and Sister gogwana - Great

grandma Maluke and granddaughter, Olivia and her two girls - Sandile Heaveystone Mkwando and his wife and two nieces - Sister Moyake and her daughter Anam and oldest son

Love,

Dad and Mom



Brother Hongana and wife.

Brother and  
Sister  
Gogwana.



Great grandma  
Maluke and  
granddaughter,  
Olivia and her  
two girls.



Sandile  
Heaveystone  
Mkwando and  
his wife and  
two nieces.



Sister Moyake  
and her  
daughter  
Anam and  
oldest son.



2018

FEBRUARY 28 }

# Feb\_28th\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Mom finished mending some missionary pants this morning and I took way too much time trying to complete some "Emergency Contact Information" cards. These are laminated sheets that are kept in missionary boardings and their cars with contact numbers and addresses for medical hospitals, fire, police, etc.

Our first appointment today was teaching the Temple Preparation Course to two recently called missionaries. One leaves in less than two weeks, so we are trying to get through all the lessons before then. They are good listeners and anxious to learn.

I then met with Bishop Jada of the Mdantsane 1st Ward. He and his wife are interested in going on a mission. His wife retires in February and he is

already retired. We went through a number of topics today, i.e., where to serve, how much a mission might cost, missionary portal to complete application, etc. He is a good man and desirous to serve. Hopefully there are funds available somewhere to help them since their combined income would not be enough to maintain them in the mission field.

We met with the Fikiso family this afternoon. We discussed the importance of "doing" as part of coming to know the truth and developing a testimony of the gospel. Used Matthew 7:21 and John 7:17 to help underscore the importance of doing. We showed a great little video to help illustrate the blessings this good brother is missing out on for both him and his family:

<https://www.mormonchannel.org/watch/series/mormon-messages/your-potential-your-privileges-1>

This brother has some issues he is hanging on to in the world. He said he has to let go of those first before he can join the church. He said, "I am a man of principle," and when he joins, it will be 110%, not on a whim and then, fade away. I say, good for him. I think someday he will become a member. I hope it will be in the next 18 months and that Mom and I can come back to Mdantsane to witness it.

\*Photos:\*

- We see some beautiful billowing clouds here from time to time.

We love you,  
Dad and Mom



We see some beautiful billowing clouds here from time to time.

# Mar\_02\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

District meeting this morning. We had some good discussion on what we all can do to improve our teaching. I mentioned that I can be too superficial in my scripture study. I can do a better job of drilling down on certain doctrinal topics and then, scripture chain the key verses together.

We came home after our meeting so I could work on putting together some recommendations for home teaching for our Elder's Quorum President, Melikhaya. I met him in Mdantsane at 3:30 and Mom stayed home to do some preparation for a Relief Society activity tomorrow and then, a meeting with the Young Women's Presidency on what they need to do for the YW's program in our ward. Mom will be a big help to them.

I went on a home teaching visit with Melikhaya and then, dropped him off at his house. Then, off to the Veggie and Fruit store to get some items for Mom. She is bringing a vegetable tray and some cookies to the Relief Society activity tomorrow.

As Mom and I work with different ward leaders, we have found a good formula:

1. \*Compliment\* people on the good work they are presently doing
2. \*Share\* what we have learned from our experiences in the church as "something you might want to consider" - provide tangible examples, materials, success stories, etc.
3. Make yourself \*available\* for questions and further help should they have questions or need assistance

Yesterday and today we have had some spectacular thunder and light-

ning and lot of rain. The thunder is awesome. Maybe louder than that black Porsche Targa I had. We are certainly getting a lot of rain. It is a shame we can't send any of this water over to Cape Town which continues to have a very serious situation.

\*Note:\* Any one have a line on a laptop for one of our return missionaries here. He wants to get into the church's Pathways Program.

\*Photos:\*

- This is the scene in one of the kitchens of a home we visit. This

may be the worst we have seen. A lot of kitchens are not fancy, but clean and neat. - This lady had a little business doing flowers for funerals and weddings. She worked in the business for others for 23 years and then, decided to go off on her own. Great for her! She operates out of this small room behind a house.

Be especially good today. Love,

Dad and Mom



This is the scene in one of the kitchens of a home we visit. This may be the worst we have seen. A lot of kitchens are not fancy, but clean and neat.



This lady had a little business doing flowers for funerals and weddings. She worked in the business for others for 23 years and then, decided to go off on her own. Great for her! She operates out of this small room behind a house.

2018 MARCH 3 }

# Mar\_03\_2018

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Mom had a Relief Society activity this afternoon. There were 15 sisters there and a focus on visiting teaching. Afterward, refreshments and food. Mom's cookies disappeared quickly, as did her veggie tray and humus.

I taught a Temple Preparation class to Thandikhaya and Mapopo. It went well. We will wrap up on Wednesday, combining 2 lessons. We have to squeeze two together because we are leaving and Mapopo flies to the Johannesburg MTC on the 15th.

While Mom was still at her RS activity, I went with the Young Men's president and we visited a few boys. The president is a great guy, Lucky Sandran. He takes his calling seriously and does a good job with the boys. One kid we visited just finished his "Bush" experience and has waited

the specified 3 months of wearing certain post-bush clothing. He was not home, but we saw him with some other guys at a tavern on the corner of his street. Not a good sign. We said, "hello," to him. He said he would come to church tomorrow. I am not betting any money on that one!

Alcohol, like in so many other countries, is a huge problem. There seems to be a tavern on every other block. It is sad to see money spent on booze when families are going without food. Satan is very experienced at hurting and breaking up families.

\*Photos:\*

- The money transport trucks here are antiques. They look like something out of "Mad Max" - While one person goes to retrieve money, another stands guard with some pretty serious weaponry. -

This poor man was digging in the trash can of a local grocery store and eating what he found and liked. Hard to imagine what a life he is experiencing day after day? We can all look forward to the establishment of Zion when there will be no poor among us!

Make the gospel front and center in your lives. We love you,

Dad and Mom





The money transport trucks here are antiques.



This poor man was digging in the trash can of a local grocery store and eating what he found and liked. Hard to imagine what a life he is experiencing day after day? We can all look forward to the establishment of Zion when there will be no poor among us!

# Mar\_04\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had good meetings today. We heard testimonies, partook of the sacrament and fellowshiped with the saints. I bore my testimony in both sacrament meetings. There was an audible, positive reaction to the news that we will be staying in Mdantsane and not transferring to Port Elizabeth.

I did not want to use testimony meeting as a forum to only announce the news that we were staying, so I tried to share a spiritual message from our "transfer experience."

Someone told me during the week that we should look at the transfer this way, "We are all on the same team. We just need to go and do what our coach asks us to do." I thought that was a very good way to look at our move. I shared that thought with the congregation.

I also went on to say that the "Great Coach" is the Savior, our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Do we have the right attitude when He asks us to do certain things? Callings? Living the commandments? Be a witness of the Savior at all times? If we listen to the coach and do our part, great blessings will follow. We will win the game. We will be the victors!

After church, we went out to the Steenbeek's for a dinner and visit. They thought we were leaving for Port Elizabeth and wanted to have one last get together. We had ox tail stew again. Very oily, but the meat was so very tender. But, please, just don't tell me what part of the tail I was eating!

They were very gracious and generous to invite us. They are unique people, but aren't we all. I was surprised that Mom did not offer to hold Sister Steenbeek's little hamster

when she brought it out to show us all.

Please do not be angry or jealous, but, tonight I had fried mac 'n cheese.

\*Photos:\*

- This is a missionary car that backed up into a Mercedes Benz. Minor damage all around, but we are waiting to hear how much the Mercedes is going to cost. It all depends on if the sensors in the bumper of the Mercedes have been damaged. - I went to the grocery

store the other day. The Lion's Club women were making and selling "pancakes." Well, I ordered 3 at about 48 cents each. I thought they were tasteless and doughy. Klave's crepes with peach sauce are 1 to 2 million times better!

Do what is right, let the consequences follow! We love you!

Dad and Mom



This is a missionary car that backed up into a Mercedes Benz. Minor damage all around, but we are waiting to hear how much the Mercedes is going to cost. It all depends on if the sensors in the bumper of the Mercedes have been damaged.



I went to the grocery store the other day. The Lion's Club women were making and selling "pancakes." Well, I ordered 3 at about 48 cents each. I thought they were tasteless and doughy.

## Tid Bits

Dear Family,

\*1. Word of the week: \* "exonerate," (of an official body) absolve (someone) from blame for a fault or wrongdoing. \*Example:\* The Porsche Club of America will never exonerate those who bastardize the sacred standard of racing by converting it to operate with a small block Chevy engine.

\*2. Quote of the week: \*

\*3. Scripture of the week:\*

And now behold, I say unto you, my brethren, if ye have experienced a change of heart, and if ye have felt to sing the song of redeeming love, I would ask, can ye feel so now?

-Alma5:26

\*4. Joke of the week:\* \*(Especially for Brayden)\*

A young man is set apart as a missionary. After the setting apart, his stake president reminds him that he is now a missionary and must act as

a missionary. The young man is troubled and asks the president, "You know I have a girl friend. Will it be okay to give her a good-bye kiss at the airport?"

The stake president considers this and then says, "I'll tell you what, you can kiss her at the airport if you kiss her the same way you kiss your mother."

The young man thinks for a moment and then asks, "Can I warn my mother first?"

\*5. Bee's Knees Award: \*How fast and how good can you ride a bicycle? This kid loves to ride his bike. He knows how to ski. He has some really cool cars that he plays with. He a good example of being kind and loving. He learns about Jesus in Primary and always tries to be like him. He loves his family and is a big helper around the house. He loves to hang out with his Daddy. He is strong. He is a happy boy. Walker, you are the Bee's Knees, brotha!!!

\*6. Gospel question of the week:\* On what side of the Hill Cummorah did Joseph Smith find the Golden

Plates? (North, South, East, or, West)

\*7. If I were you (Advice to grand kids): \* If I were you, I would not litter. I would make sure I put all trash in a trash bin. I would also make it a point to pick up other people's trash from the ground and throw it in a trash container. Try it. I think you will like it.

\*8. What I learned this week:\* The Church will continue to grow and fill the whole earth...with us or without us.

\*9. What I am grateful for: \* We are so blessed to be able to covenant with our Heavenly Father. That is such an awesome and incredibly important privilege.

\*10. My goal for the week:\* Work with Mom to clean our boarding before we move.

\*11. Photo of the week:\* Three Sisters!!!



Klave's crepes with peach sauce are 1 to 2 million times better!



Italy 2002

# March 2018

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Children,  
Since you are all receiving the daily updates from Dad I am going to just give a little more detail on a couple of his bullet points.

Two weeks ago Sunday I received a text from the Relief Society Pres. of the Fourth Ward stating she missed seeing me in R.S on Sunday and she had announced that there would be a R.S. activity on the following Saturday. She had asked the sisters to bring some eats and asked if I would be able to also. I let her know that I would be coming to the activity and would be happy to bring eats as well.

On Saturday we met at the church at 2:00 and the meeting began about 2:30 when enough Sisters were there to begin. I made a veggie tray with Hummus dip and a few dozen Snicker Doodle cookies. The other eats that the sisters brought were the usual fare that is served for meals consisting of baked chicken thighs

and drumsticks, what they call African salad (which is baked beans with cut up red and yellow peppers, onions and Chutney) and yellow rice with small pieces of cooked carrots and a few peas. The chicken was the only warm part of the meal. The meeting began with a song, prayer and a spiritual thought. Then we ate. After the eating and visiting there was a small talk by the R.S. president which I did not understand because it was in Xhosa. I picked up a few words about fasting and prayer but I did not specifically know what or if they had something that they were fasting for. I was called on to offer a comment so I just bore testimony that there is power in prayer and fasting and when we do this as a group there is great strength. Then shared my testimony about the truthfulness of the church. We then knelt down and a prayer was offered. At the end of the prayer Sister Booi who offered the prayer in

Xhosa said to the Sisters in English that they should expect miracles. I was still unaware of what they were praying for exactly and I should have asked but I was supposed to meet with the YW presidency to talk about the Young Women's program and plan the new beginnings program which they have not had yet. The Sisters decided to help clean the church and asked if we could meet on Sunday for a few minutes as the YW president did not come to the RS meeting. Elder Stevenson and I often help clean the building but we were in our missionary clothes and

there were many members at the chapel to help clean that day so we left. The next day, Sunday, the RS lesson was about unity. Again I did not understand most of what was said and again was called on to offer a comment about unity. It would be easier if I understood the comments that other sisters had made but I gave a general thought about caring for each other and supporting each other and not gossiping about each other. After the R.S. meeting the RS president asked if I would help out by offering the prayer to end their fast. So at that time I asked her what



Li, the bishop's son, and I. We are close friends. Good buddies!

Professional treatment at the car wash.



they were praying for specifically and she told it was about visiting teaching. I always have a prayer in my heart that I will understand enough to contribute something meaningful and that the spirit will help we to say what needs to be said. I had a few minutes to think while a table was brought into the room and some trays of muffins, apples, juice and chips. (Chips seem to be a favorite as they are served at all functions and children are snacking on small bags of chips during almost all meetings) When the food was set up and the Primary and YW leaders

joined us then we had the prayer to end the fast and the eating commenced. Elder Stevenson and I left as we had another appointment. I had missed the announcement that they would be breaking their fast together.

A few weeks ago the first ward Primary President asked if I would help her with music as she said she does not sing. Elder Smith a young Elder with great music ability had helped for a week or two but could not help any longer. Our mission president

has instructed us not to take over anything and if we are asked to help with something then it is to train someone but not to do it. Our mission President is very big on self reliance and wants the people of South Africa to step up and take care of themselves and not rely on the government nor the church nor the missionaries to take care of them. An example, if no one stands up to lead the music in Sacrament meeting then we are to just sit and sing along and the hope is a member of the Ward will step up. That actually does happen most of the time. I asked the Primary president if there was someone I could help teach the music to and she said no, there is no one. I went in for two weeks to help with the music and one week I was the only other adult in Primary and she was so happy that I could take care of the music so she could clean up the room and get ready for the next ward to come in. The week I had gone missing from Relief Society in the fourth ward I had gone into the Primary room to see how things were going. The primary president was there with about 20 or so children and no other adults. She had taught them all a lesson and was

trying to keep them all occupied as no other adults showed up. One teacher/counselor (I am not sure which as the words seem to mean the same to them) had to go to school (she is 18 and in 12th grade) (school can be held on Saturday and Sunday. The teachers had been striking because they were not getting paid so they had to make up some time with the students. Hence school on Saturday and Sunday) Her other counselor had to work. So I volunteered to teach the children the song "I know that my Heavenly Father loves me" The one they were supposed to learn in February. They do not have a pianist nor a chorister in either of the Wards so the Primary president pretty much does everything, but there is an electric keyboard in the Primary room. I was able to find the cords to turn it on (they are kept locked in the clerks office) I was able to play the song for them so they could get the tune and then worked on memorizing the words. We figured out a few actions that helped them remember the words and have a little fun as we did not have any visual aids. They were fantastic. I had done the same thing in First ward the week before so I

was kind of prepared. They were very attentive and love to sing. I wanted to sing some other songs with them so I suggested Book of Mormon stories. I was shocked that they did not know the song. I was going to play it on the piano but the music desk was broken and so I had to set the book on the keyboard and try to read the music. It did not work very well as I could not read the music and play the keys under the book so I just did the best I could to teach them the song with actions. There is a great need of more active, committed members to help shoulder the load. The other difficulty for me in helping with primary is that most of the children do not speak English. They sing the songs in English but everything else is spoken in Xhosa. I do not speak Xhosa. They have the most beautiful smiles and are eager to learn. They begin learning English in school in the third grade. Elder Smith is trying to start a beginning piano course. I hope many will try to learn and I might need to seek out and encourage a few on my own.

Two weeks ago our mission president asked us to move to Port Elizabeth which is about a 3 hr or so dri-

ve from East London. There are two mission couples leaving that area in the next couple of months and since the Davies are in East London he asked if we would be willing to move. We are willing to do what ever needs doing so we spent 10 days to 2 weeks visiting members letting them know about the upcoming change and encouraging them to carry on in building the church in Mdantsane. We wanted them to know we were sad to be leaving and that we appreciate all that they do to serve in the church and their good examples. Saturday evening we had a call from the mission president and he said he had just learned a new couple is being sent to our mission so he would like us to stay where we are and he will assign the new couple to Port Elizabeth. We were both happy to be able to stay but disappointed about not getting to know another area in the mission. So we sent a text to the zone leaders, the Bishops and also to the Fourth Ward home evening group that we have been meeting with letting them know of the change of plans. During testimony meeting in First Ward Elder Stevenson bore his testimony and stated to the Ward that we

would be staying after all and there was an audible sound of surprise and happiness that made us feel very loved. Throughout the day members told us how happy they were that we were staying as they have only known us a small amount of time and that their prayers had been answered. It is a heavy responsibility to know that you might be an answer to someones prayers.

There seems to be a lot of work to do here so it is sometimes hard to determine where to begin. We are hoping to help train and encourage

the leadership and the members and in time the church will grow here in strength and numbers. We have less missionaries coming to South Africa because there are visa problems with the change in government leadership. More and more the members need to step up and bring their friends and neighbors and more fully live and share the gospel and the church will grow here. Last week we were asked to speak in both wards next week when the Bishops thought we would be leaving. So we have talks to write.



I thought I saw a dandelion in our neighbor's yard. Mom says it is not. It is just part of the grass or maybe, an African Daisy.

Interesting phrases: Sister using a white board marker that is running out of ink stated "this one is tired"

"When you come to yourself you come to Heavenly Father"

Definition for budget. It is a plan to tell your money where it should go."

I love you all and miss you terribly whenever I think of you. I hope you have a great week. Keep up the good work. Thanks for sharing your days and events and photos on the family website.

Love, Sister Stevenson

## Mar5\_2018\_Update

Dear Family,

Someone should start a plastic container store in the USA. We have one in East London and it is awesome. Any container you want, made from plastic. For example, I bought a tool chest from there. Perfect for a small set of tools to keep in the back of the car. Seriously, someone do this and get me in on the ground floor.

I had another LIZARD encounter this evening. I will spare you the ugly details of yet another defeat on my part. Suffice it to say, Scoreboard to date: Lizard 5, Mormon Boy 0.

I found out that we can charge a car wash to our fleet cards once a month. I had our car washed, dried, vacuumed inside, vacuumed the trunk, clean the tires and each wheel (custom rims). Looked pretty good. Cost, about \$7 USD. The missionaries informed us that there is another place that does all of that plus a wax job for less money. Next month.

We had a Family Home Evening tonight. Only about a dozen of us there. The young men that headed up tonight's effort are just now waiting for their mission calls. We know one of them has had his call assigned. So, I made a little wager with them. If Brayden gets his call opened before them, they buy me a Lamborghini. If they get the call opened before Brayden, Mom will make them a chocolate cake.

Our lesson was on the Book of Mormon as a conversion tools. What an awesome book of scripture. I hope

our whole family is ready, studying, pondering this great book every day as directed by President Nelson.

\*Photos:\*

- Li, the bishop's son, and I. We are close friends. Good buddies! - I thought I saw a dandelion in our neighbor's yard. Mom says it is not. It is just part of the grass or maybe, an African Daisy - Professional treatment at the car wash

Make good choices. Be smart. We love you,

Dad and Mom

2018 MARCH 6 }

# Mar\_06\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had our marathon Missionary Leadership Council today. I normally complain about this meeting. However, I decided I would change my attitude and come to the meeting to listen and learn. Great things happened.

It was good to see inspiration reign in the meeting. Our baptismal numbers have been very low. Part of the reason may be that missionaries are always in their cars and the exposure to the community is not that great. One zone in Cape Town decided they would park their cars at an appointment and then walk to their next appointments. This garnered them much more exposure and availability to contact others. As a result of their efforts, their numbers in all key areas have increased.

President Lebethoa used Matt. 5:7-16

to emphasize that we are the "salt of the earth" and "we are the light of the world." \*We need to be seen\*. When that happens, we will be able to reach the elect that are looking for the truth.

President Lebethoa promised that if we will do this, the Lord will use us as instruments to find people we otherwise would never meet. We will find the elect and they will find us.

\*Our attitudes about meetings and anything else in life can change as we change our way of thinking\*.

I forgot to tell you I had fried mac and cheese last night. I also had some for lunch today.

\*Photos:\*

- This is the little diesel truck our Gonubie body shop has - cool machine - This is just two pages of the 5 pages of notes I take during Mis-

sionary Leadership Council. It is a laborious task to write up the minutes. I have decided to ask for a raise in pay!

We love you!

Dad and Mom



This is the little diesel truck our Gonubie body shop has - cool machine.

This is just two pages of the 5 pages of notes I take during Missionary Leadership Council. It is a laborious task to write up the minutes. I have decided to ask for a raise in pay!

Zone Car

2L SHARING

PLS more people contacting - more investigating  
 failed - new contacts - SAC → DATE →  
 Part of Confirmation

- Spend time out of the car
- set apart. close to other → walk
- # in est. incr. →

CS zone shares from last zone car  
 remaining atm w/ intensity →

Q why w/ zone areas - bids people  
 3100

WD 7:00-8:00 - planning with activities

EL use 8:00 more in conversation - use script randomly  
 1. 5:00-6:00 for area

KB aim bring's spirit - watermarked ahead of both. intensity  
 dropped app → went to L.A. → walk w/ us to find.

PE intensity went to school → intensity to help find streets  
 be 8:00 - teaching - person making & talking with him how  
 to find things.

CW deal with providing exciting subject  
 listen in a stream conversation. → need to go to church -

CS what do you want to teach about? - how to teach/teach  
 some script. what can we do now to help them

CP - encourage to work w/ water council -  
 share some of work - w.c. came to  
 meet visit

Plan of B.M. - writing it - no in remaining &  
 planning follow up on leaving back  
 w/c - use them to be precise intensity.  
 - set up water council - inviting who wants to serve  
 side by side - read B.M. by inviting  
 to just get in go, B.M. & P.L.O.

DISCUSSION

P.L. = mic is to share success, to cross regenerate

DEB. what did we learn from C.S.

- get out of car
- struggle to reach people - common? from mission
- A-7B out of car time - only counts  
 if you contact at least 1 person
- miss. attitude critical to success -  
 need good att about getting out of car
- exercise faith

"Feet of Promises" >

DISCUSSION FROM PL / MISSION

Improvements from practicals PISO

Q DYM - Ask for DYS from - intensity  
 not able to convert people to miss -  
 build more on back

WD "strategic" invited in - giving param to give  
 be flexible - pamphlet / use reports

KB out of car start script - what is mentioned surprising  
 be flexible - more accountable

PE help miss. more accountable  
 fill hours teaching by focus on studying  
 at things into our schedule

CW pray for adaptation or how to reach miss. the zone  
 CS be efficient & effective in working - more consistent

CP

P.L. Thanks for thoughts

- use our talents
- be more effective

Matt 5: 14  
 Light of the earth  
 Light to the world  
 "we need to be seen"  
 don't don't know where to find us  
 DFL 123 12

when we do our part - the Lord will do his  
 - we still work & focus on work, rest. - but  
 we still can be seen - not two  
 sep. / mutually exclusive

Promise: we are looking to do our part  
 the world will use us to be  
 instrument to reach people we otherwise  
 we would not meet. we will reach  
 the next. - we'll find people!

- 1- us lkg. for them
- 2- then seeing us

Go & do the things the Lord requires you to do

2018 MARCH 7 }

# Mar\_07\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a very good Senior Council this morning. The writing seems to be on the wall. The chances of building our numbers back up with senior missionaries are very slim. There is a shortage all over the world and first priority will be office missionaries. We have nine couples today, but we lose two of them in the next 25 days. Then, one in June and another in October.

We will gradually be making the transition where the zone leaders will be doing more and more of what the senior couples do, i.e., ordering and receiving supplies, mail, car maintenance, etc. I just feel sorry for the zone leaders when they start to sew and cook for the Elders!

We taught our temple preparation class today. We combined a couple of lessons to make sure we got it all in

before one of our young men takes off for the MTC next week. He will be a good missionary. \*Thanks to all who have helped him get his clothes and other things in order\*. At least now, the trip to the Johannesburg Temple will not be so mind-boggling. He now has a good idea of what to expect.

One of our visits this afternoon was to Nandi Xamane. She didn't come to church on Sunday and we thought it might have something to do with her thinking we have moved to Port Elizabeth. As it turns out, that was not the case. She did not have money for "transport." Her one son can probably walk the whole way, but the other, "Joy" she has to carry on her back. He is a big toddler! She has money now and will be at church on Sunday.

She is so happy we have not moved. She said she was crying and praying

so hard! She was not the only one and we feel that their prayers have been heard. We are glad to be where we can be of the most help.

Dad and Mom

\*Photos:\*

- Our waitress at Pinecreek Restaurant, Musa, which means "From God" in Xhosa - Mom and I posing in the restaurant garden area. It was perfect weather for an outdoor lunch. - The beautiful Sister Stevenson putting to shame the pretty flowers in the background

Keep the commandments! Love,



The beautiful Sister Stevenson putting to shame the pretty flowers in the background.



Our waitress at  
Pinecreek  
Restaurant,  
Musa, which  
means "From  
God" in  
Xhosa.



Mom and I  
posing in the  
restaurant  
garden area. It  
was perfect  
weather for an  
outdoor lunch.

2018 MARCH 8 }

# Mar\_08\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We stayed home most of the day. Mom worked on her sacrament meeting talk for Sunday and made the most delicious cinnamon rolls for our district meetings tomorrow. I put some finishing touches on my talk.

Mom's talk is on "Drawing Closer to Jesus Christ" and mine is, "Stay on the Covenant Path."

This afternoon we went to the Fruit and Veg market and bought a bunch of produce, some of which is for our missionaries tomorrow. The rule is this:

- Two pieces of fruit each - One cinnamon roll each

Please do not be angry or jealous with me, but right now I am frying up some mac and cheese. Sorry!

We are so excited about Brayden receiving his mission call. We hope to be a part of the "grand opening." If he comes to our mission, we may have to extend for two more years.

\*Photos:\*

- I think little pick-up trucks are stupid! - No one seems to have big families here. The "trolleys" at the grocery stores are small and don't carry a lot. They also have bigger ones, though - Question of the century, "If taxi drivers are notoriously crazy and bad drivers, why do so many of their rigs look so nice?"

Love,

Dad and Mom



Question of the century, "If taxi drivers are notoriously crazy and bad drivers, why do so many of their rigs look so nice?"



I think little pick-up trucks are stupid!



The "trolleys" at the grocery stores are small and don't carry a lot. They also have bigger ones, though.

# Mar\_09\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We can talk about spiritual experiences others have had. We can dream of spiritual experiences. We can imagine miracles. We can wish for certain events to happen. But, the fact of the matter is this, we do not personally experience the spiritual until we \*do\* something.

Today we visited Sister Gobeni. She is always a very pleasant person and always a good visit. Today we were discussing the importance of staying on the covenant path as President Nelson has urged us all to do. Mom read from 2 Nephi 31:20 to help emphasize what we need to do after we have entered the strait and narrow path.

She was very surprised when Mom asked her what that passage of scripture meant to her. She said each night she randomly selects

verses from the scriptures to read. Last night as she was retiring to bed, she opened her Book of Mormon to 2 Nephi and read that very verse Mom read.

She said, "I think the Lord is trying to tell me something." We committed her to come to church with her two boys this Sunday. She said she would be there.

Maybe the lesson learned here is that had we stayed in our boarding and never ventured out among our less actives, we never would have had that spiritual experience. More importantly, and devastating, Sister Gobeni never would have had that message so forcibly delivered to her.

When we serve in the church, we need to \*do\*. Then great miracles and spiritual experiences happen. I remember a general conference address many years ago where the

speaker said, (paraphrasing) "When we roll up our sleeves and go to work is when we really start to feel the Spirit."

Those spiritual experiences and our opportunity to be instruments in the hands of the Lord are out there. However, we need to get out the door and \*do\*! We need to do home teaching, visiting teaching, attend our church meetings, participate in service projects, be missionary-minded, visit the sick and the needy....we have to \*do\*.

\*Photos:\*

- Mom's delicious cinnamon rolls. They were a major, smash hit today at district meeting! - Fortunately, I have duplicate keys for all the cars in our zone. In the last month, we have had two different companionships that have locked their keys in the trunks of their cars. - We received our Emergency Action Plan booklet. In case of political unrest, civil disturbance, natural disaster, etc., we now know what to do! This is an important item to have in every boarding. You just never know when you might have to lay low for a



Fortunately, I have duplicate keys for all the cars in our zone. In the last month, we have had two different companionships that have locked their keys in the trunks of their cars.



We received our Emergency Action Plan booklet. In case of political unrest, civil disturbance, natural disaster, etc., we now know what to do! This is an important item to have in every boarding. You just never know when you might have to lay low for a few days or even if you might need to evacuate the country.



Mom's delicious cinnamon rolls.

few days or even if you might need to evacuate the country.

Be good all day today! Love,

Dad and Mom

# Mar\_10\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We went to the church this morning because one of our missionaries is teaching piano lessons. He might be transferred this next week or on the next transfer. Mom wanted to see what he was doing so she could step in if necessary. Even though a dozen or so had signed up for the lessons, no one came this morning except Mom.

So, if no lessons to learn or give, we started to clean the church, believing that others would soon arrive. The ward clerk came. About an hour later, two young men appeared. But, that was it for the next three hours. We did have a little help from our zone leaders.

We have a beautiful church building in Mdansane. It is a blessing to be able to help clean and maintain it. When we actively take part in main-

taining the building, we gain a greater respect for the blessing of such a nice building in which to meet. We need to help others in the ward to recognize what they are missing.

I hope any of us that are called upon to help clean one of the Lord's church building will appreciate it as an opportunity to serve the Lord. How nice to attend sacrament meeting in a clean and orderly chapel.

I made a wager with a couple young men waiting for their mission calls. One had been assigned but had not yet received his envelope. I told him and his brother that if they open their mission call before Brayden, we will bake them a chocolate cake. If Brayden were to open his first, they would owe me a Lamborghini. Our South African friend's envelope came and he opened it today. He is going to Johannesburg. They imme-

diately called me to collect on the cake. Because Brayden is out of town, I have lost a very important bet!

On the matter of exercise. I exercise every morning except for Sunday. I don't mind it except for two serious problems:

1. \*Muscle Damage\* - When you are doing push ups, sit ups, riding a bike, or, doing curls with weights, you can feel your muscles fatigue and even burn. This cannot be good for your body! We are probably killing vital muscle cells when we

mistreat our bodies like that. 2. \*Perspiration\* - Who likes to sweat? It would be kind of nice if you didn't have perspiration dripping off your whole body during a workout. This certainly dehydrates your body and cannot be good for your health. And, you start to stink after a while.

We have found two baby lizards in our bedroom in the last week. This is not a good sign. One accidentally died as a broom came crashing down on his tiny little body. The other is hiding under our bed. The big daddy still rules the living room. One would



Look at how beautiful our chapel is. We need to show more appreciation with many more ward members doing their part.



White board miracle. While cleaning a white board today, Thandikhaya found a some very fine steel wool in the janitor closet.



We sprayed the board with white board cleaner and hit it with the steel wool. Like magic, it cleaned up wonderfully. Probably not the best way to do it, but we were desperate. Mom says we now have to go over the board with car wax.

think we are running a hotel for lizards.

**\*Photos:\***

- Look at how beautiful our chapel is. We need to show more appreciation with many more ward members doing their part. - White board miracle. While cleaning a white board today, Thandikhaya found a some very fine steel wool in the janitor closet. We sprayed the board with white board cleaner and hit it with the steel wool. Like magic, it cleaned up wonderfully. Probably not the best way to do it, but we

were desperate. Mom says we now have to go over the board with car wax.

We love you. Have a great day preparing for the Sabbath.

Dad and Mom

2018

MARCH 11 }

# Mar\_11\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Mom and I practiced our talks one last time before heading out to church. We arrived a little early and took our places on the stand. A couple minutes prior to the start of the meeting, the counselor conducting the meeting asked if we were suppose to speak today. He had three other speakers down for the meeting.

As it turns out, the bishop decided we wouldn't talk since we are not really leaving and going to Port Elizabeth. However, he did not mention that to us! We were happy to sit down with the congregation and enjoy the speakers they had lined up. Folks, this is Africa. You can't get upset about things like this. The church operates a little bit differently here.

After the meeting, we were asked to give our talks on next Sunday. (That

was the 1st Ward).

In the 4th ward, that begins 2 hours later, we gave our talks. That went well and now, I guess we will call it a trial run for next week. I am enclosing our talks as attachments to this email. Please do not feel like you need to read them. I am attaching them since these emails are serving as a missionary journal of sorts for Mom and I.

I plan to cut my talk back quite a bit. I ramble on way too long. Mom's was timed just right.

\*Photos:\*

- These ladies are cooking sheep intestines and liver kabobs. I ended up buying some stuff so that I could justify taking a photo. We gave the purchased items to a gentleman riding a bicycle along the highway. He looked poor and hungry.  
- Here is a picture of the sweet shop

we frequent. They do a very good, crisp business. We will be visiting one of the ladies that works there at her government house to teach the first missionary lesson.

Hope you have a great Sabbath. We love you!

Dad and Mom

## Tid Bits

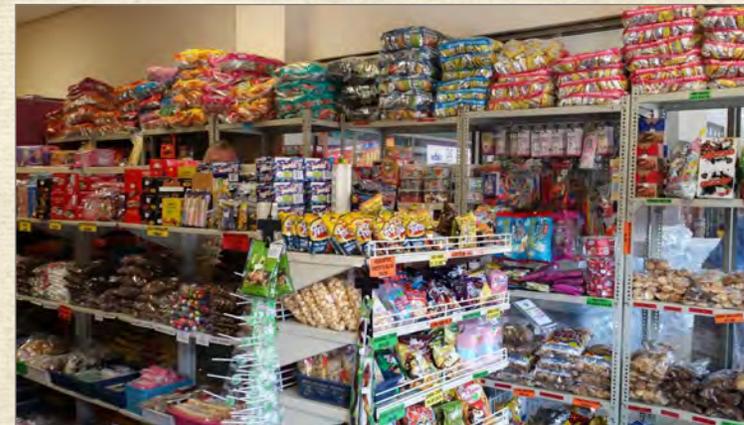
Dear Family,

\*1. Word of the week: \*"incipient," beginning to happen or develop.

\*Example:

\*One wonders if there will even be an incipient dialogue between the South African government and the farmers from whom they wish to expropriate land without compensation.

\*2. Quote of the week:\*



Here is a picture of the sweet shop we frequent. They do a very good, crisp business. We will be visiting one of the ladies that works there at her government house to teach the first missionary lesson.



These ladies are cooking sheep intestines and liver kabobs. I ended up buying some stuff so that I could justify taking a photo. We gave the purchased items to a gentleman riding a bicycle along the highway. He looked poor and hungry.

**\*3. Scripture of the week:\***

Nevertheless, I did harden my heart, for I was called many times and I would not hear; therefore I knew concerning these things, yet I would not know; therefore I went on rebelling against God, in the wickedness of my heart,...

-Alma 10:6

**\*4. Joke of the week:\***

**\*Q:\*** How do you get rid of the Mormon missionaries?

**\*A:\*** A chalk outline and a few Book

of Mormons scattered around.

**\*(or)\***

The primary teacher asked her class to draw pictures of their favorite bible stories.

She was puzzled by one primary kid's picture which showed four people on an airplane, so she asked him which story it was meant to represent.

"The flight to Egypt," said the primary kid.

"I see... And that must be Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus," the teacher said. "But who's the fourth person?"

"Oh, that's Pontius -- the Pilot"

**\*5. Bee's Knees Award:\*** Wow, this kid is sharp! Are you good at math? Probably not. He is a great mathematician. He loves cars. He can play the piano like a maniac. He is a handsome dawg. He is a fast runner. He loves his family and likes to be with them. He is a great help around the house and is obedient to his parents. He is a very good example of the gospel to his family and friends. He just does the right things. He is sensitive to the feelings of others. Jojo, you are the Bee's Knees, brotha!!!

**\*6. Gospel question of the week:\*** Who was it that translated the writing that was written by the finger of the Lord on the temple wall?

**\*7. If I were you (advice to grand kids):\*** If I were you, I would learn how our religion is different than other religions. Try it. I think you will like it.

**\*8. What I learned this week:\*** Be careful with humor. You never know if some one is going to take offense at something you say, even when it is said with the intent to be humorous.

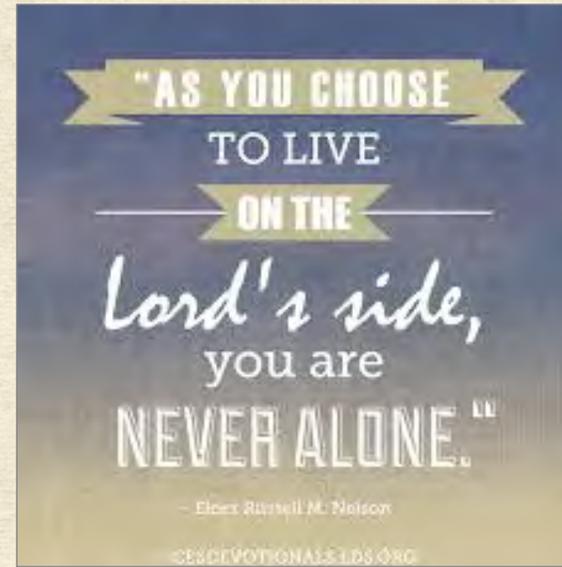
**\*9. What I am grateful for:\*** I am grateful to expend some of my energy in helping to clean the church building. I am grateful for beautiful buildings in which we get to meet and partake of the sacrament.

**\*10. My goal for the week:\*** Go to the East London Zoo with Mom (and try to avoid the chimpanzee that likes to spit on people).

**11. Photo of the week:** Chris and Chris!



Chris



# Mar\_12\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Great news about Brayden! If I am not mistaken, I guessed the Guayaquil North Ecuador Mission. He will be a fantastic missionary!

We did our usual bike ride this morning. That means Mom and I start out at the same time, but within minutes, she is shrinking image as she cranked out some speed ahead of me. When we were finished, Mom was coming back toward me and decided she had so much fun, she was going to do it again!

Today was our preparation day. I spent the whole day outside doing yard work. We have had a lot of rain and the bushes, vines and hedges were all overgrown. Next Monday I will pull weeds.

You may not believe this, but Mom

baked cookies and "Healthy Oatmeal and Peanut Butter Bars." We took them to a FHE at the church where several YSA people met to say goodbye to Mapopo who is leaving on his mission Thursday morning. It was a nice activity where people were able to say nice things about him, give him counsel and wish him a wonderful mission. He is going to Johannesburg.

We saw something very good this evening. This was a ward and friends sending off one of their own. We saw people that are return missionaries, married, holding important positions in the ward, there with their children, and sitting by their wives. One can imagine this young man and about 5 others that will be back in two years and hopefully following the good example of these slightly older members of the church. This is one way how the strength of the church will grow in Mdantsane.

The oatmeal peanut butter bars were by far the most popular item. The group also had baked chicken, bread and drinks.

\*Photos:\*

- Mom and I with Mapopo. He will be a good missionary. You helped him get a lot of his needed missionary clothes. - The cameo shot is of Ovayo Mgijima. He is the new first counselor in the 1st ward bishopric. Kind of a clown, but such a good man to have in helping the ward to operate better. He and his wife are strong members. - This

giant grasshopper lunged at me while I was pruning and had my whole head in his mouth. I tickled him on his belly, he laughed and then, let me go. - We had some bushes that were very overgrown. They had branches that were as high as the top of our bedroom window. I cut them back a wee bit. Mom came outside and was horrified that I had probably killed the bushes! She fails to recognize that I know a lot about pruning plants. I am a husband. She is not. I know all about husbandry. She does not. She is a wife and cannot compre-



grasshopper



hend husbandry.

Keep the commandments! Remember your covenants! Have fun living the gospel!

Love,

Dad and Mom

--



2018 MARCH 13 }

# Mar\_13\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

On Sunday we had a desperate text message from one of our semi-less active families, the Fikiso family. Sister Fiskiso was begging to have a sister to sister visit with Mom and only Mom. She said she needed Mom's help and could she come on Tuesday at 2 PM. Mom responded, "Yes, gladly!!!"

Today we went to the appointment so I could drop Mom off to visit with her and I was going to do some home teaching with one of our members. When we got there at 2 PM, Sister Fikiso said she couldn't visit today because she was slaughtering chickens. She said she had texted us the scheduling problem (she did, 4 minutes before the appointment).

You have to remember, this is Africa and things do not operate exactly the

way you would see things operate in the states. Mom rescheduled for this coming Thursday at 2 PM. Sister Fikiso said, "The devil is trying to take me and my family." Mom will listen and do a great job sharing sound counsel and advice.

We did some more visiting until 5 PM when there was another farewell/send-off for Mapopo. Two of the families we have visited explained they were going to be seeing the bishop and getting ready to go to the temple next month. That is great news, but these people are not the most active people in the ward. Their meeting attendance is spotty at best. Hopefully, it all works out fine in the end.

The farewell was long, hot and stuffy. We brought our plastic plates and cups and about 7 dozen cookies and a tray of brownies. They went quickly along with the other food the

Relief Society had there. The one great thing about this send-off was that Mapopo's mother, grandmother and siblings were there. I think they are proud of this big step he is taking.

No empty chairs!

Love,

Dad and Mom

\*Photos:\*

- This is Mapopo and his family (note the lack of a father in the photo, very common) - This is a return missionary, Elder Mvinqi and his fiance, Zikhona. Elder Mvinqi served in the same ward as Uncle Greg and Aunt Sandy in Durban



This is a return missionary, Elder Mvinqi and his fiance, Zikhona. Elder Mvinqi served in the same ward as Uncle Greg and Aunt Sandy in Durban)



This is a return missionary, Elder Mvinqi and his fiancée, Zikhona. Elder Mvinqi served in the same ward as Uncle Greg and Aunt Sandy in Durban.

# Mar\_14\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Wow, what a busy day. We had transfers today and we have done quite a bit of driving. We started at 5:15 this morning to head for the airport. We went back this evening to pick up some missionaries coming in from Cape Town. Their flight was delayed 30 minutes, so in addition to a lot of driving, we have done a lot of waiting. We arrive home around 8:30 PM.

In between the sitting and driving, we went to lunch with the Davies, got some work done on repairing missionary cars and also made a run out to our work area to teach a temple prep lesson to the Mkwando family.

Some times in our lives we see people experience difficult challenges. We wonder why such problems and suffering have to take place. As Mom

and I read in Alma 14, horrible things happened to the believers! Even though we do not always understand the reasons why the Lord will let some things happen, we do know for a fact that the Lord loves us and that in the end, the Atonement of Christ will level all things out. At the judgment bar of God, no one will complain and all will see the exquisite mercy, fairness and justice of the Lord. In difficult times, the one thing none of us should ever do, is question or become angry with God. This is the time when we double down on our faith and show our determination to follow Him at all cost.

The Lord lives and he is mindful of each and every one of us. As we can see in the scriptures with others, He knows us by name.

I like to eat the bread rolls we can buy in the grocery stores. They are chewy. And, I like the toasted

sesame seeds.

\*Photos:\*

- Some of our missionaries we said good bye to: Elders Shaw (Idaho), Tucker (Bountiful), Hawkins (England) and Smith (Johannesburg). Elder Smith is going back to Madagascar. If you recall, we had received about 10 missionaries from there when they had the "plague" outbreak.

We love you people!

Dad and Mom



Elder Shaw



Elder Tucker



Elder Hawkins



Elder Smith

2018 MARCH 17 }

## Mar\_17\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

I was in the cell phone shop the other day and had one of the workers approach me and say, "Ah, Jesus Christ. Your name is Jesus Christ?" He was looking at my name tag. I pointed out my real name and said that the name "Jesus Christ" is large and in the center of the tag because he is the center and focal point of our religion. I said, "We want people to see the name Jesus Christ."

I know who he is and will make my way back to him when I am not in such a hurry. It would be good to talk with him for a while.

We went to clean the church today. We had our work clothes on, but, had a set of our proselyting clothes in the car. We cleaned and cleaned. Unfortunately, the ward members are not too good at cleaning up after themselves. We plan to bring this up

at a future ward council meeting. Really, ants and maggots in the kitchen because no one cleaned up after the missionary "send off" we had on Tuesday night! This is something members really need to work at - more respect for our church building.

I took Mom to a Relief Society activity at the one other chapel they have in Mdantsane. I waited in the car and prepared part of a temple preparation lesson we gave later in the day.

Around 3:30 we went to see our missionary boys - the Gosa boys. We gave them each a CTR ring. Then, with the permission of their mother, we gave them a small container full of small coins. Each one represents one tenth of a Rand - less than a U.S. penny. The point was that people pass these coins up all the time. They do not even pick them up off the ground. Yet, if you had enough of

them, you could start to do something to grow and save money for important things like a mission. Maybe these boys can make R 10 grow into R 15...until they have enough money to get them off on their missions.

They accepted the challenge and will give us a report once in a while. We also gave them instructions to pay tithing on the initial amount and then, profit from thereafter. We left them with a very nice Bic pen and a notebook to keep track of things.

Our temple prep class went well with the Mkwando family. We have three more lessons with them. We love each and every one of you. You are in our prayers daily!

Dad and Mom



Even though people just build a shack randomly in a squatter village, they still try to have some type of house numbering to help identify where they live. For example, the one in this photo is SV09 for "Squatter Village # 9"



People will hang specific plants or branches of bushes from their roof. They believe it will prevent lightning from striking their house.

# Mar\_18\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

A rich and rewarding day! It was so good to see some of our less actives at church today. One of our attendees is a return missionary I had mentally written off over a month ago. He has been off the strait and narrow path for so long and so unresponsive to any of our visits, I thought he was a lost cause. Lesson learned (maybe re-learned): Don't ever write off anyone. You just never know what can happen and when. You have to keep loving, caring, being kind and praying.

One of our less actives was a sacrament meeting speaker. He spoke about the Restoration and did an admirable job. In talking with the bishop, it looks like he will get married this year and be to the temple for a sealing next year.

We had a young single adult brother

and his sister that came to church today for the first time. They are not members. We met and we will be visiting them this week. His English may not be the best, but his sister speaks very well. I introduced them to the young full time missionaries and they will begin visiting them also.

Mom and I spoke in church today (the 1st ward). As I listened to Mom speak, I thought she displayed such a sincere interest in our ward members. Her advice, teaching and testimony were heart-felt. People genuinely love her because she radiates love and caring for them.

Our missionary boys were all smiles today. The small container we dropped off to them a few days ago actually had 28 Rand! I had guessed 16, their mother 8 and the boys around 12 -15. They are anxious to go to work and see what they can do.

Mom had baked a birthday cake last night and we delivered it to a young lady in our ward who had a birthday yesterday. She and her family are very happy to have it.

\*Photos:\*

- Examples of what locals do with wood, branches and twigs

We love you very much and hope you have a wonderful Sabbath day!

Dad and Mom

## Tid Bits

Dear Family,

1. Word of the week: "Perfidy," the state of being deceitful and untrustworthy. Example: Some say that the perfidy of President Trump is so blatantly obvious.

2. Quote of the week:

3. Scripture of the week:

And it came to pass that the Lord did



Examples of what locals do with wood, branches and twigs:



visit them with his Spirit, and said unto them: Be comforted. And they were comforted.

-Alma 17:10

\*4. Joke of the week:\*

\*Q:\* What was Laman and Lemuel's favorite TV show?

\*A:\* Diagnosis Murmur.

\*5. Bee's Knees Award: \* Do you have beautiful hair? Can you sing like the angels? Can you dance like a maniac? Probably not. This girl is totally awesome. She helps her mother

with cooking and will also work hard doing yard work. She loves her sisters and to do what they do. She has her own mind, she is very independent. She loves to watch movies. Her hair is more beautiful than Queen Elsa and Princess Anna put together. She loves her family and sends text messages to her daddy at work. She tries to be like Jesus. Juliet, you are the Bee's Knees, sistah!!!

\*6. Gospel question of the week: \* What did Jesus promise the "Poor in spirit?"

\*7. If I were you (Advice for grand kids): \* If I were you, I would write a talk so that you will always have one ready if you are ever called on in short notice. Try it. I think you will like it.

\*8. What I learned this week: \* We need to always keep front and center in our lives the amazing spiritual birthright we have as members of the church. We can't sell our birthright like Esau of old for the things of the world. Additionally, how selfish if we do not think of our posterity when it comes to the birthright.

\*9. What I am grateful for: \* I love and appreciate my companion. Other missionaries may complain or have issues with their companion, but I do not. I pray the Rosary every day that the mission president never transfers my companion.

\*10. My goal for the week: \* I need to keep the goal of going to the East London Zoo.

\*11. Photo of the week: \* We are all enlisted!



As I agonized over my inadequacies this week, I received a distinct impression which both chastened and comforted me: to focus not on what I can't do, but rather on what I CAN DO. I can testify of the plain and precious truths of the gospel.

*Gary E. Stevenson*



We are all enlisted!



# Mar\_19\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Preparation Day! I washed the car which means it will rain sometime in the next 24 hours.

Mom put together a great meal that we took out to the Dinana family in NU 9. President Dinana is the first counselor in the stake presidency. They are a young couple, around 35 years old with two darling children. They are good examples of the pioneers in Mdantsane. They carry a big load, great people.

We had roast, potatoes, carrots and onions all slow cooked in a crock pot. Also, the world famous dinner rolls. Mom made a delicious upside down apple cake on which we had ample whipped cream. They loved it. I loved it.

Our lesson was about Jesus appearing to the Nephites and how he loved

the little children. We showed a short video depicting his appearance in the Americas:  
<https://www.lds.org/media-library/video/2015-06-1020-mormon-temples?category=topics/temples&lang=eng>

After the lesson, we played, "Don't Eat Pete!" It was a smash hit!

We bounced the "Meet the Mormons" movie night off of President Dinana. He really likes it. I am going to get him a handout of how it might happen in the stake and he is going to float it by the stake presidency. Lights, camera, action!

In the way of a LIZARD report, I am happy to say that there is not empirical evidence of a healthy, operating digestive tract from our cowardly lizard on the window sills of our house for the last two days. This is good news. I think it means one of

the following:

1. The creature has left our home before we entombed his dwelling place 2. He is dead 3. The insidious intruder is trapped in his own sarcophagus and is withering away from lack of yummy bugs and flies to eat

\*Photos:\*

- Cabbage is very inexpensive here. These heads are BIG and they amount to about 53 cents each. - They have several Autozones in the country - don't know if they are connected in any way with the USA

chain. But, they seem to have a good inventory of items. Bought a headlight bulb for one of the missionary cars there, a Chevy Aveo.

We love you and think about you often!

Dad and Mom



They have several Autozones in the country - don't know if they are connected in any way with the USA chain. But, they seem to have a good inventory of items. Bought a headlight bulb for one of the missionary cars there, a Chevy Aveo.



Cabbage is very inexpensive here. These heads are BIG and they amount to about 53 cents each.

# Mar\_21\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

It was a busy morning on the computer. I had taken the 20 pages of the ward directory and scanned them into my computer.

Then, I set up a little cut 'n paste operation where I could literally make sure that every person on the directory was assigned to a home teaching companionship. This is so we can get to each one of these families and determine if they are even living here.

I will deliver route information to the EQ President and the bishop for them to review and edit how they please. Then, I will make a final draft of who visits who and set a time for the EQ president to train companionships on what information to go looking for when they visit. We are trying to get to each address and confirm what the status is. This will help us clean up our records big

time.

Attached is the form we will use to blitz the ward and collect valuable information.

We visited Brother Gadlela this afternoon. He has had a serious accident where he was hit by a car years ago and has been left very incapacitated mentally. He drools and is very unkempt. He is difficult to understand. We usually see him each week. And, yes, we immediately use the hand sanitizer as soon as we get back on the road. The day will come when we will see him in a glorified, resurrected state and it will be a wonderful reunion. We hope we make a difference for this good brother when we visit.

We taught the Mkwando family another temple prep class this afternoon. Then, we met with the Fikiso family as we were leaving the area.

Tata (father) Fikiso came toward the end of our meeting and Mom decided we should leave a message. Always a good idea. She told the story of Ammon protecting the King's flocks of sheep as they were being watered by him and the King's other servants. Make good choices!

Love,

Dad and Mom

## Tid Bits

Dear Family,

1. Word of the week: "filial," relating to or due from a son or daughter. Example: Upon our return home, our children will be released from their filial duties with the house.
2. Quote of the week:
3. Scripture of the week: 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;



Playing jacks with small rocks



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; -D&C 58:26-27

4. Joke of the week: \*You might be a Mormon if...\*

all of your serving dishes have your name written on masking tape on them.

(or)

\*You might be a Mormon if...\*

while teaching a lesson in Relief Society, you've ever apologized for not preparing a centerpiece.

\*or if...\*

while teaching a lesson in Elder's Quorum, you've ever apologized for not preparing a lesson.

5. Bee's Knees Award: This guy is dynamite on water, snow or in the air. boogie boarding, snow boarding or flying high with a drone is his kind of day. He loves the outdoor life. He fights crime day and night to keep the streets of Ogden safe. He is an awesome ward membership clerk and can even help run the nursery. He is a tender and fun father and a good husband. He is an excellent, in-

valuable and highly-decorated employee. He loves the gospel and knows it is the way to eternal exaltation. Josh, you are the Bee's Knees, brotha!!!

6. Gospel question of the week: Who was the son of Corom?

7. If I were you (advice to grand kids): If I were you, I would carefully read and apply the advice you get in Tid Bits every week. Try it. I think you will like it.

8. What I learned this week: Hypocrites find ways to defend their hypocrisy.

9. What I am grateful for: A righteous posterity.

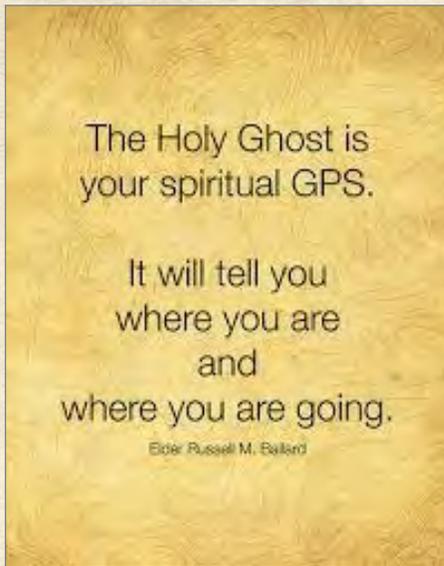
the administration office. There is a very small classroom to the far left and behind the administration office. The two existing foundations and future sites of the classrooms are at the top of the photo. On part of the long foundation, there is a tin building that was erected as a child care center. This will remain in place.

We can discuss more when we get on the phone if you have any questions.

Love,  
Dad and Mom

## Aerial Shot

Here is an aerial shot of the Phakamile School. The two longest buildings are classrooms. The long building that is bordered by trees is the restrooms. The long building perpendicular to the classrooms is the kitchen and eating area (This would be the building to the farthest right in the photo). The smaller building at the left of the photo and perpendicular to the classrooms is



Phakamile  
School Aerial



Phakamile  
School Photos





# Mar\_22\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Two main things today worth noting:

1. \*Phakamile Junior Elementary School\* - Mom and I went to the school this morning to discuss their needs for additional classrooms. This is their number 1 problem and cannot get any funding from the Department of Education. However, the department will let a school go about building extra classrooms if they provide the funding, materials and labor to put it together.

We explained that we \*might\* be able to help them with the funding part. However, we also want to make sure there is a reliable, honest contractor (preferably LDS) that will handle the job. And, a contractor that will allow the members from the two wards and the parents of the school children to help with volun-

teer labor.

First step is for them to have the Department of Works come and tell them where they can build and how to build. They would possibly provide the plans.

We are hoping that funding would come from fundraisers at schools in the USA where our grandchildren attend, money generated from the families of the local Phakamile school students, and, matching funds from corporations. It is a big order to fill, but we think it is possible.

2. \*Thandikhaya Christian Goje\* - This is the third of the three young men that are going on missions and for whom you have provided some funds to get them part of their initial clothing, etc. It was good to go shopping with him. He will be an outstanding missionary. We bought 6

short sleeve shirts, three slacks, one pair of nice leather sandals (going to Zimbabwe), three ties, socks, pajamas and lunch at KFC. Mom was there the whole way to make sure things fit and they were good merchandise.

\*Thandikhaya asked that we pass along his heart-felt thanks for everyone's generosity. We were able to put a good dent into his initial clothing requirements\*.

\*Photos:\*

- This is an interesting tree just

outside the administration office of the Phakamile School. The buildings at the school date back to 1965. - Thandikhaya likes to stack french fries (chips) in his mini loaf of bread for a delicious french fry sandwich! This guy is skinny, but can he pack away the food - 4 pieces of chicken, 3 mini loaves of bread, french fries and a can of juice.

We love you very much. Do good!

Dad and Mom



This is an interesting tree just outside the administration office of the Phakamile School. The buildings at the school date back to 1965.



Thandikhaya likes to stack french fries (chips) in his mini loaf of bread for a delicious french fry sandwich! This guy is skinny, but can he pack away the food - 4 pieces of chicken, 3 mini loaves of bread, french fries and a can of juice.

# Mar\_23\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a very good district meeting this morning. Our district leader, Elder Paskett was well-prepared and achieved a lot of involvement from everyone in the training - lot's of role-playing. Today we discussed "finding" investigators. In my opinion, a great topic and one that is really needed among the missionaries. After the meeting, Mom and I went to a cement block company to check on the cost of building block. The guy we need to speak with won't be back in the office until Monday. Good thing we went there which is only about five minutes from where our district meeting is held. We had a set of missionaries that had a flat tire in the parking lot. When they went to change the tire they discovered the spare tire was also flat and they had no jack. They were the last missionaries at the building. Mom and I were able to

come to their rescue. They are now duly warned to get their jack back in their trunk and always check their spare.

We went out to see a less active family about 40 minutes from the church house. It is out in a village that is all dirt roads. Getting to his house was four wheel drive country. We finally arrived at the family shack and had a delightful visit. This is a brother that is a return missionary, married in the temple, previous high councilman, etc. Somewhere along the line, he fell off the wagon and took up drinking and smoking. We hope that is behind him now.

He was at church last week and we told him we wanted to come visit him. We are glad we did. It was a very good visit and we think he and his wife felt the Spirit. We think they realize it is time to come back into the fold. We hope so. He and his wife

would be valuable assets to the ward.

One lesson that is so very important for all of us to learn and remember, we are never so far off the strait and narrow way that we cannot take advantage of the atonement of Christ and come back to enjoy the full light of the gospel in our lives. Just like the father in the parable of the prodigal son, he is looking for us. He will come running to us. His arms are always outstretched toward us. And, when we repent, He remembers our sins no more.

\*Photos:\* - I don't think you get full service like this at your gas station. It is not uncommon the hear guys filling up your gas tank or washing your windows while singing away like they were on American Idol. This guy's name is Monday. Let me know if you like it and I will pass your comments along to him. - I was doing my sit-ups this morning after I took our shower bucket out to dump on the front yard. I had my Crocs on and must have step in some mud along the way. While exercising, I did not realize that I was grinding mud into



I was doing my sit-ups this morning after I took our shower bucket out to dump on the front yard. I had my Crocs on and must have step in some mud along the way. While exercising, I did not realize that I was grinding mud into the carpet with each ab-crunching sit-up. The plan is to let it dry and then try to vacuum it up.

the carpet with each ab-crunching  
sit-up. The plan is to let it dry and  
then try to vacuum it up.

The Book is Blue The gospel is true  
We love you, and, Now say adieu

Dad and Mom

2018 MARCH 24 }

# Mar\_24\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a busy day today and it was all at the church house:

\*1. Clean the Church - \* I vacuumed and Mom did a super job on a very dirty kitchen. She cleaned the oven which took about an hour or more. We did get some good help to finish the work - 4 young men were there to give us a hand. The big problem is that we should be helping them, not them helping us. We will work on fixing that.

\*2. Lasagna - \* Mom has been preparing for two days to teach a group of young women how to make lasagna. This morning, Mom put everything in a large plastic storage container. The activity was a smash hit. There were around 10 young women and two adult leaders. The young women all jumped in and did some of the work. They also had

some of Mom's homemade French bread and a salad. The final result was outstanding. The good news is that they learned how to make a delicious meal. The bad news is that none of them can afford to make it. Mom and I each had the last two pieces for dinner tonight.

\*3. 1st Ward Baptism - \* We had the baptism of a fine young man who is the brother of one of our strong priesthood holders. It was so good to see a member of the ward doing the baptism. Mom was asked to give a talk on the Holy Ghost. She did a marvelous job.

\*4. 4th Ward Baptism - \* Aphive is a university student and became interested in the church by his cousin who was just baptized last year. He is a good young man and we hope will continue firm in the faith. He was baptized by one of the fellow-shippers that routinely goes with the

missionaries. Once again, good to see the members doing the baptizing.

The work of the Lord rolls forward! When I was a young missionary in Bolivia, I thought to myself, "No way. The church isn't going to work here." Few spoke English, they were poor and uneducated. Today there is a Temple in Bolivia, 4 or 5 missions and stakes all over. The same will happen here. Stakes will dot South Africa and more temples will be erected. Take it to the bank! As Joseph Smith said, the church will fill all of North and South America and the whole world.

We had one heck of a thunder storm when we arrived home. Mom was in the house and I was unpacking some things from the trunk of the car. The garage door was shut, but I was right next to it. We had an incredibly loud burst of thunder that sounded as if it was just a few feet away! It left both Mom and I shaking. I was very close to standing in a pool of my own naturally processed water!

\*Photos:\*

- We have several photos from to-

day. Here's a link so you can see some of them:

[https://www.dropbox.com/home/Baptism\\_Lasagna](https://www.dropbox.com/home/Baptism_Lasagna)

Love,

Dad and Mom

2018

MARCH 25 }

# Mar\_25\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

A long day at church. Good news, we did not teach any classes.

At 2 PM or so, the Young Women had New Beginnings. It was not the same as the States, but how great that they had the program and 9 young women were there! This is compared to 5 months ago when they did not even have a Young Women's Presidency in the ward. Each of the girls participated with a short talk or message. A member of the bishopric spoke to them. And then, we had some delicious refreshments courtesy of Sister Stevenson! They brought the drinks. We brought cookies and muffins. The muffins were fresh and the cookies came from the freezer.

We will get to watch two sessions of conference live - Saturday morning

and Sunday morning. The other sessions will be tape delayed. We look forward with great anticipation for conference and especially the Solemn Assembly. We have been counselled to come fasting for that meeting.

It has been over a week since we taped up the LIZARD's home. We think he has passed on to that big rock pile in the sky, or, has left our home in search for more hospitable hosts. Now, all we have to worry about is the baby lizard that we think is living under our bed.

Forgive me if I have mentioned this in the past, but there is a large scale recall of processed meat in this country. There have been over 200 deaths attributed to listeria with many other reported cases of people turning ill. We avoid processed meat like the plague. It doesn't look good. It doesn't smell good. Therefore, it

can kill you.

Here's a link to a video and article that explains a little about Listeria: <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/03/05/health/south-africa-listeria-out-break/index.html>

\*Photos:\*

- These two sisters are our seminary teachers for our two wards. Problem is, they haven't held any classes yet! They should have started in January. - The young women and leaders of the Mdantsane 4th Ward.

Have a wonderful Sabbath. We love you very much,

Dad and Mom



These two sisters are our seminary teachers for our two wards. Problem is, they haven't held any classes yet! They should have started in January.



The young women and leaders of the Mdantsane 4th Ward.

2018

MARCH 26 }

# Mar\_26\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We went to the East London Zoo today. Wow, you would not believe it, but Mom and I were the only ones there. Really! One of the pictures in the link I will provide shows you the parking lot - empty, except for our car. \$4 (USD) for the two of us!

The zoo is fairly run down, but we did see some interesting stuff. Here is a link to some of the photos:

[https://www.dropbox.com/sh/acu7z70zus4byi7/AADQSA8kOgbYCxN-FO\\_QLtTpa?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/acu7z70zus4byi7/AADQSA8kOgbYCxN-FO_QLtTpa?dl=0)

Going to the zoo with Mom is interesting. I found it interesting to watch and observe the lions, the jaguar, the tiger, the crocodile, the wolves, etc. Mom did not seem very interested in these beautiful creatures of nature. When we came to the birds, she would stop and read the information

signs and carefully look for each bird. She would note the pretty colors and bright feathers. Really? Birds? Any way, it was a good day at the zoo and a good time to be together doing something a little different.

Sunday, a wonderful sister sat behind us. She is a dedicated, faithful member. And, she loves to sing the hymns of Zion. However, there are only three things that disturb me. 1) Wow, does she sing loud! 2) I thought I was a horrible, monotone singer. But, nothing compared to this wonderful lady. She was way off key. 3) Her timing was a beat or two off everyone else. I hope I did not hurt her feelings as I clasped my hands to my ears and rolled to the ground in throbbing pain, blood streaming from my ears.

Please do not be angry with me or insanely jealous, but I had fried mac

and cheese again tonight.

Bishop Jada of the Mdantsane 1st Ward stood at the pulpit on Sunday and instructed the members to feed the missionaries, "Anything, they will eat it." Mom wrote in my day timer, "I will not eat tripe." Just the day before, we had been offered dinner by some members and the meal was boiled tripe.

We love each of you very much. Have a great day!

Dad and Mom

2018 MARCH 27 }

# Mar\_27\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

A little bit of a slow day but we still got a lot done.

We had our zone leaders over for a correlation meeting and lunch. Mom spent time with some badly needed wash, ironing and learning some new tricks on the mission sewing machine. I asked the missionaries to attend a meeting we will be having on Friday where we are dividing up the ward directory, planning, designing, training and eventually going out to physically find every single person on our records. We will be using Home Teachers and the Relief Society to knock out this project.

I spent quite a bit of time researching the process of building classrooms for an elementary school. I found designs and spoke with Rollo Steenbeek, our friend that has all the animals and lives near the beach. He

is an architect. He appears to have a wealth of knowledge and has done design work for a school classroom recently.

I visited a block making company and negotiated one heck of a good price with the owner on blocks "delivered" to the construction site. No commitment by either party, just a verbal quote. Of course, this only matters if this is a project we move forward on. I called the Department of Public Works three times today. No answer! I will go see them in person tomorrow. Not only did I have fried mac and cheese this evening, but I also had Mom's famous and very delicious oatmeal cake. That is definitely one of my favorite deserts. And, with all that oatmeal, it has to be healthy for you!

We love you,

Dad and Mom



This tower is also downtown. You can see this from all over the area. I think it primarily for radio, cell and microwave.



Even though South Africa has less than 500K Muslims in the country, we do see a presence. This is a mosque in downtown East London.

2018

MARCH 28 }

# Mar\_28\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Our first stop today was to the Department of Public Works.

As you might expect, the person we wanted to speak with was not there. They would be back after 2 PM. So, we went to the church and there did some repairs on small classroom desks that were missing bolts to keep the tops fastened down. We fixed four of them.

Then, we took Thandikhaya with us to go back to the Department of Public Works. The person that was going to be back after 2 PM was not there and was not coming back today. However, we did encounter the assistant to the Regional Director. She was very helpful. Basically, the elementary school needs to write a letter telling the department what they want. She was kind enough to provide us with the contact information we would need to address the

letter to the director.

When we had first arrived at the department and parked the car, I was halfway out the door when Thandikhaya suggested we have a prayer first. Mom gave a very sweet and simple prayer. I think this helped us meet a good person that was able to at least give us some pertinent and helpful information. I need to remember 2 Nephi 32:8-9!

We visited a man and his wife who were baptized back in August and have since fallen into inactivity. He was in a serious car accident that has left him with a fractured hip and bad knee. This has been a bit of his excuse for not attending church. However, another issue surfaced today that we will be addressing in subsequent meetins with him and his wife. His father told him as he was growing up that once a person dies, the living do not have any con-

nection with them - they should for-  
get them.

This is a classic example where traditions and cultural beliefs are in conflict with the restored gospel. Members have to learn that whatever they have learned or practiced prior to baptism in the Lord's church, needs to be held up to the template of the gospel. That is the truth and when we discover the truth, we need to follow it at all cost.

\*Photos:\*

- This is the cement block-making

plant from where we might source building blocks in an effort to provide some classrooms for the Phakamile Elementary School.

We love you and think about you daily. You are in our prayers!

Dad and Mom



This is the cement block-making plant from where we might source building blocks in an effort to provide some classrooms for the Phakamile Elementary School.

# Mar\_29\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

South Africa is a nice place to visit, but don't drink the water. Well, don't drink it unless it has been filtered. This morning, Mom and I made the rounds to the various boardings in our Mdantsane Zone and changed out the filters in the units we have set up in each flat. This is important since you can't always trust the municipality to do their job.

When we have baptisms in East London or in Mdantsane, the baptismal water has either a green or brown hue to it. We do not think it is healthy to drink. Someone please send us a two year supply of Huntsville water!

We went to the Fruit and Veg store to pick up some things for our district meeting tomorrow. We pretty much stayed on task to just get mis-

sionary fruit. However, Mom saw some cucumber. Then she saw some cantaloupe. Then, mangoes. Oh yeah, then some peppers.... Really, that was about it. All good stuff to eat.

We also got some grocery shopping out of the way. However, the last of the month when people get paid is the worse time to be in the stores. They become very crowded with long check-out lines.

I have been reading Jesus the Christ by James Talmage. I think my timing is going to be very close to reading about the resurrection around the same time as Easter Day. It has been a goal of mine to read this book before June. I think I will plan to read it again before the end of the year, but this time go into my scriptures and do some marginal notes and scripture chaining as I follow the commentary in the book.

\*Photos:\*

- These people had the parking lot roped off and were dancing and singing and having a good old time. I never found out what the occasion was, but as I got close to take a picture, one of the participants gave me the "no, no" signal. - We have no idea what type of fruit or veggie this is. There was no sign. I should have asked one of the workers. Next time.

Decisions determine destiny! We love you,

Dad and Mom

# Mar\_30\_2018\_Update

Dear Family,

We had a very good district meeting this morning. I would estimate that at least half of it was role play. Our district leader, Elder Pasket, did an outstanding job and is a good trainer. One of our general authorities that toured the mission, Elder Koch, instructed the missionaries to employ role playing as much as possible in training and learning - that reve-



These people had the parking lot roped off and were dancing and singing and having a good old time. I never found out what the occasion was, but as I got close to take a picture, one of the participants gave me the "no, no" signal.



We have no idea what type of fruit or veggie this is. There was no sign. I should have asked one of the workers. Next time.

lation on how to act and teach would come to them.

We met with several members today, two of which are young women leaders in the 4th ward. Mom wanted to especially visit them to tell them what a fantastic job they did with New Beginnings. Needless to say, they both love Mom. One says she sees "Sister Stevenson" as her mother. She knows Mom will be a straight shooter with her and tell her what she needs to know. We also had pictures printed of them and all the girls. These people love to have

printed photos.

We stopped at the home of a non member and her brother who came to church two weeks ago. It appears that the young missionaries will be visiting them tomorrow. We scheduled a visit for Tuesday evening. Should be interesting.

A lot of people were going to church today being Good Friday. And, as you would expect, a lot of people getting started at the taverns. However, we are encouraged as we see many people "going to church." We think this

means they have some basic belief and that religion is important to them. We need to be more diligent in them. We need to be more diligent in OYM - "Open Your Mouth" (D&C 33:8-10).

**\*SPECIAL NOTE:\*** Please take advantage of this General Conference to listen to the living prophets and apostles. And, a solemn assembly where we can show our sustaining vote for President Nelson. We can promise you that what you will hear will be the word and the will of the Lord. How can anyone afford NOT to listen to conference. Brethren, go to general priesthood meeting! All the boys should get together and enjoy that great meeting together. That is one thing I truly miss.

Enjoy Conference! Soak up every little morsel of spiritual food. We love you,

Dad and Mom



Someone is burning tires. This doesn't look like very dark and black smoke, but it was. It was billowing up and coming from a place just below Hazy Ridge.



We see clouds like this all the time rolling in from the ocean. We will probably get some good rain out of the. Too bad we can't send some of our rain to Cape Town!



2018

MARCH 31 }

## Mar\_31\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

One of the big questions of the day was if we would have all of our ward leadership at the church for our 'Find the Lost Sheep' activity planning. Good news, we had the Bishop, Elders Quorum President and the Relief Society President, Mom and I. We were able to make some good progress. Tomorrow, after the first session of conference, we will all sit down with our specific teams and discuss how we are going to generate all this information regarding the ward.

The Saturday morning session of conference was excellent. It was an honor and a privilege to stand and show my sustaining vote for President Nelson and the other general authorities. If I can have half the energy that President Nelson has when I am 73, I will be very happy.

What a wonderful feeling to know we have living prophets and apostles on the earth today who speak the mind and will of the Lord. As a family, I hope we all listen and apply their counsel and direction. Follow the prophets!!!

Photos:

- Mom was kind enough to bake up a bunch of muffins for our "Finding the lost Sheep" instruction meeting tomorrow.

Love,

Dad and Mom

## Apr\_1\_2018\_Update

Dear Family,

So far we have seen and participated in the Solemn Assembly and watched General Priesthood meeting. Instead of going back to the church at 6 PM out time, for the Sunday morning live stream of conference, Mom and I are going to watch it from our house here in Hazy Ridge.

I cannot help but love the kindness,

genuineness and humility of President Nelson. I so enjoyed his talk to the priesthood brethren. Through all that kindness and humility you also receive straight forward gospel messages and direction. His is a life time example of "doing."

I loved Elder Andersen's comments about him when he quoted President Nelson as saying at one time (paraphrasing), "I make it a practice not to put question marks behind the prophet's statements. I like to put exclamation marks." How important for all of us to follow that good ex-



Mom was kind enough to bake up a bunch of muffins for our "Finding the lost Sheep" instruction meeting tomorrow.



ample. It is vitally important that we follow the prophets, "They know the way."

It was good to see cousin Kyle called as a General Authority Seventy. He is young and has the energy and testimony to contribute much to the work. Even though he went to the wrong high school in Bountiful, we can still sustain and support him in his new calling.

\*Photos:\*

- As some of you know, the lizard is now in captivity. Go to my Google

Drive to see the photographic evidence of his final capture:

[https://drive.google.com/open?id=1LRXq-EgNRR\\_lFTYtfq2zwrMIS2qL-BYv](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1LRXq-EgNRR_lFTYtfq2zwrMIS2qL-BYv)

- You have seen this photo before from New Beginnings, but not with Mom in it. They think Mom is great. - I sent this photo before, but I did not know why these people were gathering and making a scene. These people are actually demonstrating against the grocery store chain, Shoprite. Shoprite has

the reputation of making people work long hours and not at the best of wages and under the best of conditions.

We love you guys very much!!!

Dad and Mom

## Tid Bits

Dear Family,

\*1. Word of the week:\* "recreant," cowardly. \*Example: \*I do not like to brag, but I truly feel that if I were to challenge Brayden and David Walker to a basketball game - just me against the two of them, the recreant athletes would find a way to back out of the challenge.

\*2. Quote of the week: \*

\*3. Scripture of the week:\*

And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. Numbers 12:7

\*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?

\*5. Bee's Knees Award: \*This girl is so awesome! She is fun. She is a good friend. She is determined. She loves cow girl boots. She loves sheep dogs. She has a beautiful singing voice. She is a great performer, she shares her talents. She is a good example of the gospel. She likes to do good things. She is a big help around the house and the sheep ranch. Lucy, you are the Bee's Knees, sistah!!!

\*6. Gospel question of the week:

\*What did Paul say we should shod our feet with?

\*7. If I were you (Advice to grand kids):\* If I were you, I would develop a love for this beautiful earth and try to keep it clean and pretty. Try it. I think you will like it.

\*8. What I learned this week:\*

Throughout the scriptures, the Lord teaches we need to learn patience. I think the reason why is because

when the day comes that we will be in a position of Godhood, patience is such an important virtue. We will need perfect patience as we observe our spirit children coming to earth and experiencing mortality. Given man's propensity to do boneheaded things, perfect patience will be a mandatory pre-requisite to Godhood.

\*9. What I am grateful for:\* Old fashioned baked cheesecake!

\*10. My goal for the week:\* Visit at least 15 of the families we will have on our "Find the Lost Sheep" activity.

\*11. Photo of the week:\* Wow, good-looking babe!!!

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

Dad and Mom



Wow, good-looking babe!!!

A photograph of a person standing on a beach at sunset. The person is silhouetted against the bright orange and yellow sky. The sun is low on the horizon, and its reflection is visible in the wet sand. The background shows a calm sea and a distant landmass under a hazy sky. The quote is overlaid in white text on the right side of the image.

"God cares a lot more about who we are, and who we are becoming, than about who we once were."

Dale G. Renlund

2018 APRIL 1 }

# Lizard in Captivity!

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

What a glorious day! the cockroach on steroids, the repugnant reptile, the lowest lizard of all, the cocky, creepy creature of mental cruelty is now in captivity awaiting trial and judgment.

Check out these pictures on my Google Drive:  
[https://drive.google.com/open?id=1LRXq-EgNRR\\_IFTYtfgq2zwrMIS2qL-BYv](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1LRXq-EgNRR_IFTYtfgq2zwrMIS2qL-BYv)

Let me know what you think? Does he die a magnanimous death or should he be freed into his natural habitat?

Love,

Dad

## Apr\_2\_2018\_Update

Dear Family,

I washed our car this morning and it rained this evening. No surprise!

Today was very laid back. We did banking, some shopping and even parked out by the ocean to view the waves come crashing in and held hands. The air was cool and very nice along the shore of the Indian Ocean. Something like this never entered our minds or imagination when we were first married over 43 years ago!

I just finished reading about the trial of Jesus in the book, Jesus the Christ. It is amazing at how threatened the Jewish leaders were and at what lengths they went to rush through the "trial" and crucifixion of the Savior. Their recreant behavior has re-

sulted in centuries of struggle and sorrow for them and generations that have followed.

Tonight Mom and I had "movie night" and a big bowl of popcorn.

\*Photos:\*

- This is a photo from our bike ride this morning. All these white birds are waiting for the cattle to deposit some recycled pasture with its attendant bugs, worms and flies.

\*I Spy Photo:\*



many white birds can you count in the attached photo?

We love you all. Have a great day! Remember who you are and act accordingly!

Dad and Mom

Grandchildren, how many white birds can you count in the attached photo?

2018 APRIL 3 }

# April\_03\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We started early today with some missionary car problems. While one car is in for service, I carted the companionship over to our neighborhood to use a spare car. Unfortunately, that car was on the rack getting four new shock absorbers. So, we let the missionaries use our car and then, we used the Davies car since they don't really get out and into a specific work area.

Mom fixed the missionaries a very nice breakfast and then, hurried up and got ready for the next wave of missionaries, our zone leaders who come on Tuesdays for a correlation meeting. When the meeting was over, we had white bean soup with chunks of ham, cornbread, and, ice cream and cookies for desert. Needless to say, the ZL's love to come to our place for this meeting!

This correlation meeting is important as we can cross pollinate ideas, coordinate who we will see, discuss less actives, how to work with the bishops, etc. Elder Kaden Smith is from St. George. Elder Senikuraciri is from Fiji. Good Elders!

We met Thandikaya in East London where he was trying to finish up some vaccinations for his mission. He has been to this place a couple times now. Today, he had to bring a proof of payment that his needed shots had been paid for by the church. There was about an hour and a half of red tape that had to get unraveled before we actually got him in the chair for his shots.

He was going to come with us to visit a less active family that speaks primarily Xhosa. Unfortunately, we never made it to that home given all the delays with getting his shots. Additionally, we had to go chase down

toner cartridges for the printer at the church. We went to 5 different stores. We had no real luck with that. The best we could do is order some refilled cartridges that would take at least two days to get here. However, good thing we found this place. The cartridges new are R 550. The refills are R 300. Quite a savings.

\*Photos:\*

- Elders Smith and Senikuraciri

We love you. Have a great day living the gospel!

Dad and Mom



Elders Smith and Senikuraciri.

2018

APRIL 4 }

# Apr 04 2018 Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

More car issues today with some of our missionaries. I oversee a dozen cars in this part of the mission, but I can't imagine the task for the entire mission. We have over 50 cars. That means a lot of maintenance and gasoline expense. Today I picked up a car that went in for a routine service. It is over the service contract kilometers, so we pay for the whole thing. By the time they add it all up, about \$320. It's a killer. I really dislike taking our cars into the dealer. I'm going to look at other options.

We had a text message on our phone that the toner for the church cartridges were in. We picked those up and then, took them to the church. While I was there, computer problems! They are trying to set up a new clerks office for our new Mdantsane 4th Ward and things are not going

well. I kind of knew there was a problem when they had the printer plugged into the display monitor. Without going into all the details, I believe it is a driver issue within the computer. A whole bunch of rain today. It seems that every time President Lebethoa comes to town, he brings rain. He should stay in Cape Town where they really need it! He will be here within 30 minutes for dinner. Always a pleasant visit. \*2 hours later:\* FYI, the visit with our mission president went well. Mom prepared a delicious meal and top things off with baked cheesecake.

\*Photos:\* - Our Seminary teachers for our two wards - Sister Mgijima and Sister Margaret

We love you all very much. Knock it out of the park today!  
Dad and Mom



Sister Mgijima



Sister Margaret

# Apr 05 2018 Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Long day today. We put a dent into our "Finding the Lost Sheep" program. We actually met one or two less actives that we have not visited before and had good first meetings. I think we will meet our goal of finding at least 15 lost sheep this week.

We met with Vuyisa Booi today. Here's a man that is about 47 years old and has not been back to church for years. He is separated from his wife and their two children. It was a good meeting and he mentioned at how impressed he was with us coming to a foreign land, risking the threat of crime and danger, spending our own money, to teach the gospel. We have another visit scheduled with him on Tuesday. This man needs the gospel back in his life more than he knows. He is living well beneath his privileges!

We handed out a Book of Mormon to our customer service lady at the Chevy dealership. She is very nice and loves mom's baking. She would be a nice Relief Society President some day!

We met a gentleman that was walking today in our area and we asked him some directions to find a house number. We visited and we placed a Book of Mormon with him. His name is Emanuel. We have his contact information and will follow up in a day or two.

We also met with Brother Ndumiso Radu. He has been less active for at least a decade. He use to be in a bishopric. He is married to a lovely wife and has two children. He is living well below his privileges. We showed him that video that centers around a talk by Elder Uchtdorf. He got the message. We are back to see him and his family on Wednesday.

Good guy. Nice guy. He accepted the challenge to read from the Book of Mormon each day.

We want these good people back in the church to enjoy that greatest blessings available to mankind! \*They are living well below their privileges\*:

Here is a link to some young men that were playing some horns in front of their house. They are practicing for the church they attend. I think the hymn is "Nearer My God to Thee?"

We spent about 3 hours tonight bailing out missionaries with a car problem. Their car stopped running. Being an ace mechanic, I first checked the turn signal reservoir to see if it had enough fluid. Ultimately, it looks like a fuel delivery problem. We called the church's towing service and had the car hauled off to the dealership. We were home by 9 PM. We love you very, very much!

Dad and Mom



They are doing some asphalt repairs around our complex. We were shocked at how thin the asphalt layer was. I am hoping to get David and Andrew over here on a seal coat contract!



2018 APRIL 6 }

# Apr\_06\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Today was our Zone Conference with President Lebethoa. These are always great meetings. We enjoy his teaching as he is good at "peeling" away layers of scripture to derive deeper meaning and appreciation. Today's doctrinal discussion was on D&C 100: 2-8. Basically, we need to open our mouths everywhere we might be!

The luncheon was very good as usual. This is a catered event. Mom will be taking over the arrangements for the catering at zone conference once the Davies leave at the end of August. Mom will do a great job attending to details.

Sister Davies has been our mission nurse. Does anyone know of a great nurse that might want to come to South Africa? We really need someone by August.

This afternoon was spent chasing down information about potential vehicle maintenance shops to take care of our 11 cars in this area. We are going to avoid the dealership since they have a habit of charging a king's ransom to get an oil change. I really want to do this since we are talking about tithing money here and I hate to see that type of sacred money wasted on overpriced services.

\*Photos:\*

- The wind was blowing pretty hard today!

Love,

Dad and Mom



The wind was blowing pretty hard today!

2018 APRIL 7 }

# Senior Couples

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Bishop Bowen,

Hope all is going well for you. We miss Huntsville and our dear friends, but recognize there is work to do here in South Africa and we are happy to do our part.

We need senior missionaries here in South Africa Cape Town Mission. In August, we will be down to five couples, two of which are in the mission office. If we have any members of our ward or any other members you might know of, let's encourage them to come to beautiful South Africa!

We especially need a nurse, since our mission nurse is going home at the end of August.

Please feel free to have any body contact us if they desire more information. No shoveling snow! No sprinkler systems to fix! Southern California type weather! But, most

importantly, sheep to feed!

If you secure five or more couples for our mission, you will be added to the official Chocolate Milkshake Party of June 2019. Five is no big deal. You can do it!

Sincerely,

Elder and Sister Stevenson

\*P.S.\* Stevenson Family, if you know of other couples that can go on a mission, send them our way.

## Apr 07 2018 Update

Dear Family,

We fear that our daily emails are a little boring. Who cares if we went to McDonald's today, or, if I got a hair cut, or, Mom wore her hair in a pony tail? We think it would be better and more valuable to relate faith-promoting experiences and what our feelings have been.

For example: I was feeling ill, almost nauseated, the other day when we

had President Lebethoa over for dinner. It didn't come on until about 30 minutes before he left. It was what I'll call an hour long flu. Then, I was better.

Yesterday, at zone conference, I apologized to him if it seemed like we were trying to speed him out the door. He said he didn't feel that way, but more like he, personally, was overstaying his visit. I mentioned to him that I wasn't feeling well. Then, he said something very important to me, "You should have said something and I would have given you a bless-



I took a bunch of photos today of the existing foundations at the Phakamile Junior Primary School. A big question is if classrooms can be constructed on them. As you can see, there is some significant settling that has taken place.



ing." How wonderful we have a priesthood holder that is not timid about righteously using the priesthood.

So, fathers and young men, let's not be timid about offering to exercise the priesthood in behalf of our loved ones or others that are in need. I am sure it can and does mean a lot to those desiring some special assistance. It is okay for us to ask.

As husbands, let's be sensitive to the needs of our wives. We can always ask them if they desire a blessing.

We should be mindful of our children facing challenging situations, going back to school, not feeling well, going on a mission, facing an important exam, etc. We need to ask.

The priesthood is real and simply by the mere fact of laying our hands on the head of someone in need and pronouncing it being done by the authority of the priesthood, it will open the heavens for any special blessings that person should receive according to the mind and will of the Lord.

I promise this will strengthen family relationships, increase testimony, develop greater respect for the priesthood and bring joy into our families.

**\*LET'S REMEMBER TO DO THIS\*.**

Long hours today cleaning the church. Mom and I are going to emphasize in ward councils the importance of the members shouldering this job.

**\*Photos:\*** - I took a bunch of photos today of the existing foundations at the Phakamile Junior Primary School. A big question is if classrooms can be constructed on them. As you can see, there is some significant settling that has taken place. - Also, a picture of some of the classrooms already in use.

We love you all very much. We pray every day for your happiness and welfare. Make good choices today!

Dad and Mom

Also, a picture of some of the classrooms already in use.



# Tid Bits

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

\*1. Word of the week:\* "accretion," growth or increase by the gradual accumulation of additional layers or matter. \*Example:\* The accretion of knowledge as we study, "Preach My Gospel," provides a solid foundation for missionary work.

\*2. Quote of the week: \*

\*3. Scripture of the week: \* Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

-Matthew 7:21

\*4. Joke of the week:\*

On one occasion, Heber C. Kimball was praying fervently for several individuals. Suddenly, he burst in to laughter, which greatly surprised the others participating in the prayer. Regaining his composure, he continued with his prayer by remarking,

"Lord, if makes me laugh to pray about some people."

\*5. Bee's Knees Award: \*This girl is simply spectacular. She is always happy and energetic. She is not only a friendly person, but more importantly, she is a good friend to people. She has a testimony from reading the Book of Mormon and other scriptures. She has a good sense of humor. She is kind. She lives the gospel, it is part of her personal make up. She knows who she is, a daughter of Heavenly Parents. She loves going to the temple. Nadine, you are the Bee's Knees, sistah!!!

\*6. Gospel question of the week:\* What was the first of seven utterances Jesus said while being crucified?

\*7. If I were you (Advice to grand kids): \* If I were you, I would be very aware of my personal hygiene. That means I would always try to have clean, combed/brushed hair, have a daily shower or bath, use deodorant,

brush my teeth, have clean-smelling breath, etc. Try it. I think you will like it. (And, others will too!)

\*8. What I learned this week:\* It is interesting to think about the magnitude of the missionary program here on the earth. With 60,000 missionaries and an incredible budget dedicated to spreading the gospel, it is small in comparison with the time, effort and scope of the missionary work being carried on in the Spirit World.

\*9. What I'm grateful for: \* The positive, energetic attitude of President Russell M. Nelson!

\*10. My goal for the week:\* I suggested a week ago that our grand kids memorize the Article of Faith. I plan to also memorize the Articles of Faith this week. I will pass them off to Mom and thus qualify myself for the Chocolate Milkshake Party of June 2019.

\*11. Photo of the week: \*Uncle Thom frustrated at how to use complicated weight lifting equipment. I love and miss this boy!

We love you very much. You are in our daily thoughts and prayers. Have fun living the gospel this week!



Uncle Thom frustrated at how to use complicated weight lifting equipment. I love and miss this boy!



I neglected to take any photos while we were out today, so I have taken shots of our pantry and the inside of our refrigerator.

Dad and Mom

## Apr\_8\_2018\_Update

Dear Family,

Here is an example of how things can go in Africa: - Last Sunday - Plan is to show two more sessions of General Conference, tape delayed at 10 AM and 1 PM. No regular church services. - Two days ago - There will be joint sacrament meeting at 9 AM and then, show the conference sessions - This morn-

ing (Sunday) at the beginning of the meeting - According to a member of the stake presidency, there will be regular church services and then, show the sessions of conference. The bishops look at each other in surprise.

Some times the level of communication is lacking. However, we enjoyed our time in sacrament meeting and the testimonies that were born. Always a privilege to partake of the sacrament and contemplate our lives and the upcoming week; how we can become more like the Savior. What a

blessing to work on that each week!

We watched conference at our house since the bulb for the projector at the church was burnt out. Those that stayed at the church probably could only listen to the audio.

Prior to heading home, we stopped at the home of Brother Phumlani. This is our wayward return missionary that is hopefully making some changes in his life. We believe his intentions are good, but the world is tugging pretty hard at him. We left a message of the importance of "doing." (See Ether 12:6, John 7:17, Matthew 7:21). He is in our prayers and thoughts frequently. At the end of the day, he is the one that must make the correct decisions to reap the attendant blessings.

\*Photos:\* - I neglected to take any photos while we were out today, so I have taken shots of our pantry and the inside of our refrigerator.

We love you very much!

Dad and Mom



The inside of our refrigerator.

2018

APRIL 9 }

# Apr\_09\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We have had a good day preparing ourselves for the upcoming week. We are learning that Preparation Day is important because there are many things that can distract you during the week if you are not careful. We feel like cars, cleaning the church, meetings, etc. have diminished our time to actually get in front of people.

Our zone leaders had a fender scrapper last night. It was very minor, to the point that I think we can just have some of the paint from the other car buffed off and our vehicle will be just fine. The other car seems to have had some previous damage and I am concerned they are going to suggest our missionary car did more damage than what really happened.

The main lesson we want our mis-

sionaries to walk away with is that in these situations, \*you be as honest and forthright as possible and civil - we are representatives of the Lord's church and we need to make sure we get this straightened out amicably\*. On Wednesday we will file an accident report with the police department, turn over our insurance information to the other driver and tell them we are sorry for the mishap. From that point they can duke it out with the insurance company. That might be a whole different story, but \*at least the owner of the other car will have a good impression of the church from our interaction with him\*.

I was able to meet a retired mechanic today who really doesn't want to retire. He sold his shop about two years ago and was so bored he has opened up a garage with a lift and just does work on cars to stay busy. We will give him a try on a few of our

cars for regular maintenance items, i.e., oil change, filters, spark plugs, etc. I think we will end up saving the mission one to two billion dollars. Going to the local dealership is like driving them to your nearest ATM, handing over your credit card and providing them your PIN.

Dad and Mom

\*Photos:\*

- East London and Mdantsane Zones with President Lebethoa during zone conference.

We love you all,



East London and Mdantsane Zones with President Lebethoa during zone conference.

# Apr\_10\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had our Mission Leadership Council today. Yes, it is a long meeting. And, yes, I am the one that gets to take and type up the minutes. But, as Mom and I sat with the two sets of zone leaders from our area, I could not help but feel honored to be surrounded by such outstanding young priesthood holders. We love them and we hope and pray that what they learn on this mission will be an enduring foundation for them and their posterity for generations to come.

We are so pleased that Brayden will be joining the ranks of this elite group of priesthood holders. He will become an integral part of the most important work on the face of the earth. I think we are learning that missionary work is an awful lot about the development of the missionary more than a lot of other

things. Converts are important, but what develops as a fully-converted, spiritually-experienced, totally-dedicated missionary will have an impact and influence on people for decades.

During our visits this afternoon, we met with Sinethemba Toli. He and his fiancée have both made great strides at coming back into the fold. They plan to get married in the near future. Right now, he has the formidable task of meeting the family of his fiancée and hammering out a financial deal to marry her. It is called "La Bola." We hope all goes well.

They both recently lost their jobs. Our visit was to teach that when hard times hit, those that have faith in Jesus Christ find ways to weather the storms. The message was well-received. They are in our prayers and we know things will work out for them. They plan to go to the Jo-

hannesburg Temple in one year to be sealed.

\*Photos:\*

- The little fender scrap the ZL's had last night amounts to very little damage. Just a little red paint from the other car. I think this will actually buff out and look just fine. - Our zone leaders enjoying a delicious lunch before we go back into our MLC meeting. Left to right: Elder Stevens (Carlsbad, Calif.), Elder Monoalibe (Johannesburg), Elder Kyles (Blanding, Utah), and, Elder Kaden Smith (St. George, Utah).

We love you!

Dad and Mom



The little fender scrap the ZL's had last night amounts to very little damage. Just a little red paint from the other car. I think this will actually buff out and look just fine.



# Apr\_11\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

One thing our mission president would like to see among our young missionaries is that they become responsible. Obviously, that is one part of being an outstanding missionary. This includes calling us senior missionaries when your electricity is getting low, not when the meter is all the way down to zero. Such was the phone call we had this morning. One of our companionships was completely out of electricity.

I made an agreement with them The next time they call me for electricity, it cannot be below 100 (kilowatts?). That gives us time to get some more onto their meter without dropping everything we are doing just to go pay for some more electricity for them.

I was able to complete the minutes

from our Mission Leadership Council. I write up about three and half hours of notes from the meeting. I was told it is important because it goes into our mission history record. I was thinking about burying the Pledge of Allegiance in the middle of it to see if anyone really reads and/or edits the minutes!

We had some good visits today. We met with Ndumiso Radu. He is a member that has not been back to church for a very long time. We were hoping we would catch his wife and two children, but, she and their boy went to her church where they are learning about "how to preach." We need the energy of this non-member wife and her children in the church! We hope to befriend her and then, start to see if we can leave messages and have lessons.

You may remember our "missionary boys," the five young men that walk

three miles to church on Sunday. The ones President Lebethoa wrote letters to. Well, Mom and I have been picking up small little coins off the street and parking lots for the last 6 months. The value of a single coin is almost nothing. People walk by them all day long. We were accumulating them in a small container. We delivered the container to these boys telling them that saving now and trying to earn money for a mission is important. It is never too early to start saving.

We all guessed how much money

was in the container. I said 16 Rand. Their mother said 8 Rand. As it turns out, it was 28 Rand. We just found out the other day that they have grown that to 58 Rand. We hope this is a powerful lesson for them on how they can grow their money and how it can pay for a mission years down the road.

\*Photos:\*

- We just found four bottles of prune juice in the garage! - Here are the license (registration) plates of the cars we manage. Memorize them for a quiz some time in the fu-



Here are the license (registration) plates of the cars we manage. Memorize them for a quiz some time in the future.

We just found  
four bottles of  
prune juice in  
the garage!



ture.

Have a great day living the gospel.  
You deserve it! We love you,

Dad and Mom

# Apr\_12\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a very productive meeting with an LDS contractor who happens to be a recently-called bishop in East London. He and his company were responsible for the designing and construction of the new, big league hospital in Mdansane. Even though he wouldn't be a contractor on something like classrooms for the Phacamile Elementary School, he has extensive contacts and subcontractors that he said would help and donate. To give you an idea of how valuable he would be if this project were to proceed, he has an architect that will draw up the plans for free. He has other contractors (one of which is the Stake President in Mdantsane) that would be very good and honest to work with. He said he could get the plans approved by the city in one week! He is going to meet us at the school tomorrow to look things over.

The biggest problem is going to be the price tag. After showing him some photos, his first impression is that the existing foundations will not work. Ripping out old stuff and pouring new concrete is expensive. That jacks the cost up significantly. A better picture of the price will come once we see some plans. We were able to find the home of a man from one of our street contacting efforts. Unfortunately, the man was not home. We will go back tomorrow. We are feeling pretty arrogant since we were able to find this house when our fellowshipper could not yesterday. However, he was at a slight disadvantage as it started to get dark on us after awhile.

We had a very good planning meeting with the Ward Mission Leader this morning. Here's what we get a chance to be a part of: Our Zone Leaders are there along with the WML. The WML opens the meeting

and we all kneel in prayer. One of the ZL's shares a spiritual thought. The WML begins to go down through a number of items, including the names of some potential ward missionaries he wants to give to the bishop. He reviews the Investigator Progress Report with the ZL's. Everyone provides input. We close with kneeling prayer. It is so good to have one of the locals take charge like this. How cool is that? Please do not be angry or jealous, but I had fried GOULASH this evening for dinner.

\*Photos:\* - This is a photo of Sister Ndrana. She has a really cool broom she purchased from some street peddlers from Zimbabwe. They will go up and down the streets selling their wares. She said their brooms and mops are really good. This sister has been to the temple, but has been less active for quite some time. We had a very good meeting with her and we hope she will follow through on the commitments we gave her.

We love you!  
Dad and Mom



This is a photo of Sister Ndrana. She has a really cool broom she purchased from some street peddlers from Zimbabwe. They will go up and down the streets selling their wares. She said their brooms and mops are really good. This sister has been to the temple, but has been less active for quite some time. We had a very good meeting with her and we hope she will follow through on the

# Apr\_13\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We received word that a package has been delivered to the mission home for us. It is a package brought over to South Africa by colleagues of Mike Johnson who are in Cape Town for business. Our cost to get it here on our doorstep from the mission office, \$4.64 (USD). That is one heck of a great deal!!!

We had an excellent district meeting this morning. Mom was asked to share an experience she has had from our zone conference training where we were instructed to lift up our voices "here." She told of a referral she developed when we were out trying to find a less active family. When we discovered the family we were looking for did not live at that address, I was ready to leave. I was half way out the door when Mom started asking questions. "Do you know anything about our Church?"

"Do you know where our church is located?" "Would you like to learn more about our church?" We jotted down her contact information and have given it to our young missionaries to follow up.

I was asked to share some thoughts about General Conference. I loved when Elder Anderson was quoting President Nelson about his habit over the years of "not putting question marks behind the statements of the prophet. He likes to put exclamation points."

We met our LDS contractor at the Phacamile School to examine the foundations that are there for possible new classrooms. He felt they needed to all come out. Later he said, there is a way to use the existing foundations and that is to put down wooden floors. This would be a major savings. Anyway, we are going to have plans drawn up free of

charge and then see what the actual price tag would be. Unfortunately, it might be out of reach.

We spent time with a less active member father today who works out of town (150 miles) and has two children here in Mdantsane. He was back in town this week and was so concerned about his 13 year old boy and 11 year old daughter. The mother, who is divorced from the father and living with a boy friend, told the boy he could not live with her any more. He had to move out. Basically, he was kicked out of the house. The

daughter is still with the mother and she is provided taxi money to travel to Mdantsane to attend school.

The children have not been in school this week and it will be a problem for the boy when he returns, especially as his father will have returned to his place of work. So, Mom and I will be going with him to visit with his school principal on Monday morning. The principal needs to know that the boy is not making up some story so he could stay out of school a few days.



This is our District Leader, Elder Paskett. He is trying on a very large hand-me-down coat from a previous missionary. He wants to send this photo to his mother and tell her he has lost 50 pounds since being on his mission!



We are suspecting that both Michael Stevenson and Michael Johnson have joined forces to capitalize on the nation's drinking problem. Shame on them!

Johnson have joined forces to capitalize on the nation's drinking problem. Shame on them!

Love,

Dad and Mom

We had an exquisite meeting with Sinethemba Toli and Zine, his fiancée, this afternoon. We discussed some of the qualities we need to personally develop in order to have a good marriage. They are a less active boyfriend/girlfriend couple that have made great strides over the last couple months. Come heck or high water, they will be getting married in June. She is telling her family, it's not about the money they want to exact from her fiancée, it's about her happiness. Whether they can agree to something or not, she's getting married. One year later, they will go to

the temple.

Sorry, but I had fried goulash again this evening. And, Mom put a little extra shredded cheese in my serving.

\*Photos:\*

- This is our District Leader, Elder Paskett. He is trying on a very large hand-me-down coat from a previous missionary. He wants to send this photo to his mother and tell her he has lost 50 pounds since being on his mission! - We are suspecting that both Michael Stevenson and Michael

2018 APRIL 14 }

# Apr\_14\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

After we finished our bicycle ride this morning, Mom and I decided to head north on N2 (main highway) to a town called Butterworth. We had never been there and it was just a little over an hour to get there. It was very wet and overcast all the way there and back. When we got there, we drove around and did not feel too excited about getting out of the car and walking around. So, we headed back home. Very nice scenery all along our road trip.

We spent some time on "lesson preparation" today. Mom and I will be going to the Phacamile Elementary School on Wednesdays each week to help the children with reading and math. We will spend 2 hours from 9 AM to 11 AM. I have downloaded some addition and subtraction flash cards to get printed and laminated. The principal at the

school said they have some reader books for Mom to use.

We are also preparing some remarks we have been asked to give in a fire-side tomorrow after church about "Finding the Lost Sheep." I'm going to take five minutes to address why we look for the lost sheep and Mom is going to take five minutes to speak on how we can do this. I guess you can call us the youth speakers.

We spoke with a member recently who travels back and forth between East London and Mthatha. He said the taxi cab war is very serious. The association of licensed taxi cab drivers are upset with the Uber and private taxi cab drivers that are cutting into their business. Our member friend works in the hospital and said there have been about 10 deaths as a result of people shooting at the Uber/Private taxis and both drivers and passengers are injured and

some killed.

It is simply appalling at how cheap life can be some times here in South Africa. There is a level of street justice that can be meted out and guess what, there is no appeal court. The group, mob or thugs become the law, judge, jury and executioner.

\*Photos:\*

- This highway sign is at the intersection of N2 (the major highway going from Cape Town to the north end of the country) and the main road going into Gonubie where we

live. Note the sign that indicates not setting up a roadside shop to sell things there. - Every once in a while you see a giant wind turbine. They are huge! - We saw this sign on our little boondoggle this morning. The lush foliage and trees actually reminded us of Maryland.

We love you all so very much. Have a great day! \*RWYA\* (Remember Who You Are)

Dad and Mom



This highway sign is at the intersection of N2 (the major highway going from Cape Town to the north end of the country) and the main road going into Gonubie where we live. Note the sign that indicates not setting up a roadside shop to sell things there.



Every once in a while you see a giant wind turbine. They are huge!



We saw this sign on our little boondoggle this morning. The lush foliage and trees actually reminded us of Maryland.

# Tid Bits

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

\*1. Word of the week:\* "fakir," a Muslim (or, loosely, a Hindu) religious ascetic who lives solely on alms. . \*Example:\* David Stevenson is known as the "Fakir of SEMA" as he seems to live on the free merchandise offered from booth to booth.

\*2. Quote of the week:\*

\*3. Scripture of the week:\*

And he said: Thus saith the Lord God—Cursed shall be the land, yea, this land, unto every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, unto destruction, which do wickedly, when they are fully ripe; and as I have said so shall it be; for this is the cursing and the blessing of God upon the land, for the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance. -Alma 45:16

\*4. Joke of the week:\*

Recently, Carter Roberts was hiking in Yellowstone Park and had to use the outdoor restroom. Suddenly he was being chased by a grizzly bear. He was able to safely reach a ranger station only to be arrested by park rangers.

Apparently, it is illegal to run through the park with a bear behind.

\*5. Bee's Knees Award:\* You have not lived until you have the opportunity to meet and get to know this incredibly cute girl. She is funny and a bit of a ham. She is independent, don't try to boss her around. She may have inherited some accident genes from one of her parents. She has a pretty smile. She loves her brothers and sisters. She is a helper around the house. She is so very, very beautiful. Claire, you are the Bee's Knees, sistah!!!

\*6. Gospel Question of the week:\* Where did the Mountain Meadows massacre take place?:

1. Tijuana, Mexico
2. Martin's Cove, Wyoming
3. Caldwell County, Missouri
4. Far West, Missouri
5. Cedar City, Utah
6. St. George, Utah
7. Donner's Pass, California
8. Tampa, Florida
9. Meadows, Utah

\*7. If I were you (Advice to grand kids): \*If I were you, I would start very young to learn a foreign language. Pick a language you might like and start to learn it. Stat with

vocabulary, then, phrases, then, verbs. Try it. I think you will like it.

\*8. What I learned this week:\* I have often wondered about the expression, "Let thy bowels be full of charity toward all men." In the bowels or intestines, the serious work of digestion takes place. Nutrients are extracted and distributed to the entire body. If our intestines are full of charity, it will disbursed out to our entire person. "The Pure Love of Christ" will permeate our thoughts, words and actions!



Can you believe this little girl has grown up to be such a beautiful, intelligent, hard-working, wonderful young lady so soon?



Mom and I are standing on an old rusty bridge, maybe the one that was used prior to the new highway bridge you see in one of the photos. I told Mom that the bridge we were on didn't seem that sturdy with everything so rusty. She started to jump up and down to test it out! Kinda crazy, I think.

\*9. What I am grateful for:\* Little Caesar's Pizza. We have found one pizza maker around here that does a pretty good job, but nothing like our good friends at Little Caesar's.

\*10. My goal for the week: \*I think we came close to our goal (15) of finding our "Lost Sheep." We still have a ways to go to finish our list. This week, my goal is to get an architect to the Phakamile school to do measurements and to start classroom design drawings.

\*11. Photo of the week: \* Can you

believe this little girl has grown up to be such a beautiful, intelligent, hard-working, wonderful young lady so soon?

We love you all very much. Keep up the good work. Have fun living the gospel this week!

Dad and Mom

## Apr15\_2018\_Update

Dear Family,

We had a lovely time at church today. We are grateful to attend two sacrament meetings and partake of the sacrament twice.

I did a baptismal interview today with a sister, Nothemba Nyanga, who has been very faithful in coming to church and learning from our full time missionaries. Last Sunday she stood up and bore her testimony in church. She will be baptized on April 21st.

We have been trying to track down some of our "Lost Sheep" on Facebook. That is one of the steps (social media) you need to complete before you can move the record out to the Church's "Cannot Locate" file. We desperately want to know where they reside so we can have the local unit find them and minister to them.

\*Photos:\*

- Mom and I are standing on an old rusty bridge, maybe the one that was used prior to the new highway

bridge you see in one of the photos. I told Mom that the bridge we were on didn't seem that sturdy with everything so rusty. She started to jump up and down to test it out! Kinda crazy, I think.

Hope you have a delightful Sabbath! Love,

Dad and Mom

## Eagle Projects

Chad and Liz,

It would be interesting if there was a way for your boys to have an Eagle Project that helped raise money for some school classrooms here in Mdantsane. Do you think they might be interested in doing something like that?

I would be happy to send you as much information as possible so that it could be used in writing up the Eagle Project proposal.

It appears that we cannot use the concrete foundation that is presently in place to build new classrooms.

There has been a fair amount of settling. We have an architect coming on Tuesday to look at the place and start putting together drawings. Then, we can try to consider what the real price tag might be.

Dad and Mom

My thinking is that if your boys and then, maybe Sam could do some fund-raising as their Eagle Projects, we could find people and corporations to make matching-type contributions. For example, If your boys, Sam and the families of the students here in Mdantsane could come up with \$5,000 (USD) total, maybe we can get some companies to match their efforts 2 to 1, or 5 to 1, or even, 10 to 1 in some cases???

Let me know what you think. It would be a very worthwhile project. The big question is, "Can this fall within the parameters of an Eagle Project?" Would the boys need to go pitch companies to enlist their support? How cool would that be?

Maybe Chad could just come over and be the general contractor on the building!

Love,



# Apr\_16\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Instead of washing the car myself today, I went to a car wash nearby and had it cleaned inside and out. We get one car wash a month that the mission will pay for. I made a deal with the ladies that were detailing the inside. If they did a super job on the car I would bring them sweets. When I asked them what kind of candy, they sang in unison, "chocolate."

When I came back from the store (where I bought Mom some butter-nut squash) the car was ready and looked like a million bucks! I gave them a bag of mini Kit Kats. We are now very close friends.

This morning we went to a junior high school in Mdantsane to see the principal with one of our less active member's son. We had arranged to meet him there. He was going to

have to explain why he missed school all last week. When we arrived at the school, we met the principal but we were having a difficult time finding the young man. Well, that's because he was not there! We had no idea where he was, so we went looking for him.

He was not at his father's home. He was not at his neighbor's home like he said he would be. The fact is, he never came back to Mdantsane from "Buffalo Flats" like he was suppose to. Not knowing this, we drove down to East London and tried to remember where (the house) where he was living with his mother. We found it and discovered that everything was now okay between him and his mother and he would be living nearby with his grandfather and going to school there. So it is in Africa at times!

\*Photos:\*

- Serious accidents can happen on the highways. We always pray for protection and that we will be alert and attentive to our surroundings.  
- This is a sticker bush. You do not want to be around this bush if you ever need to use the outdoor restroom! - On our Saturday road trip to Mthatha, we saw a couple of thick stands of pine trees. - Our car wash friends - chocolate addicts!

We love you all. \*Stay on the covenant path\*!

Dad and Mom

## MISSION

All,

Here is an email from one of the missionaries you guys helped get out the door. He is doing fine. Mom and I will be visiting his non-member family while he is away. Thank you for all your support.

Love,

Dad and Mom



This is a sticker bush. You do not want to be around this bush if you ever need to use the outdoor restroom!



Serious accidents can happen on the highways. We always pray for protection and that we will be alert and attentive to our surroundings.

GOOD DAY SISTER AND ELDER STEVESON.

I HAD TOOK A WRONG PAPER OF THE EMAIL NOW I GOT IT.

I AM OUT OF THE MTC, AND CURRENTLY IN SWAZILAND. MY FIRST AREA A SMALL BRANCH CALLED NHLANGANO. MISSION IS GOOD, I AM STILL DIZZY AND ADJUSTING, THE LORD IS ON MY SIDE I CAN TESTIFY OF THAT.. I MISS AND LOVE YOU GUYS AND I HOPE YOL ARE DOING FINE TOO. ONCE AGAIN EACH DAY I APPRICIATE

YOUR EFFORTS ON MY MISSION. PLEASE SEND MY GREETINGS TO THE WARD AND EVERYONE SEND MY LOVE. INDEED CHRIST LIVES.

REGARDS:

ELDER MOLTEÑO

## April thoughts

Good morning children. Dad does a great job of reporting the daily events so I will just add a couple of observations from my side.

This past Sunday we were sitting in Sacramento meeting in the First Ward. Just as the meeting began 4 children came in and sat in the row just in front of us. They were probably between 9 and 11 yrs of age. I know two of the children are members and I think the other two were friends of theirs. One of the boys put a lollipop in his mouth and sucked on it for a few minutes then he passed it to the child next to him to enjoy the lollipop for a few minutes. All four children enjoyed the lollipop until it was just the bubblegum part then they split that part as well. A few minutes after the four children sat down in front of us another boy sat down by us. His mother is a member and he gets to church about 15 to 20 minutes before his mother as they walk to church and I am guessing he runs ahead. He usually sits by us and I let him draw in my notebook to keep him occupied

so he does not wander around. One of the girls with gum took out a small piece of the gum she was chewing and shared it with the boy sitting by us. She was very thoughtful to share and they do not seem to worry about sharing germs here. We also have a gospel art picture book that I started to bring to church for him to look at the photos. I am not sure of his age but he has not been baptized so I am thinking maybe he is 7. It takes some teenage girls about 40 minutes to walk to church from the same neighborhood where he stays. They have to cross the main street of traffic in Mdantsane to get to the church. I am always surprised that mothers do not seem to be worried about their children going long distances, walking on their own. There is another small boy about 5 who walks to church by himself when his mother does not feel like coming to church. They walk at least 30 minutes by themselves.

Dad mentioned that we walked a mother to the Spaza shop in her neighborhood to get a few groceries. She has two young boys about 2 yrs old and 5 or 6 yrs old. It was getting

dark when we were leaving to walk to the shop and these children and other children were out in the streets without parents. They just run from yard to yard or play in the middle of the street and no one seems to pay them any attention. We have visited another less active family in the neighborhood and these little children are always in the streets and the mothers do not seem to worry about the whereabouts of the children. It always amazes me and makes me anxious for the safety of these children. There seem to be more men and groups of men on the streets at night.

When we arrived at the Phakamile school for our first reading session one of the administrators asked another teacher if she would accommodate 50 more students in her class so I could use the classroom to read with the small groups of students I was going to read with. That would be about 100 plus students in one small classroom. I told her we could just meet outside as the weather was nice so they brought out some chairs and we sat in the shade. It was nice and the students stayed pretty attentive to what we

were doing. The wind picked up the second hour and when the other children had their break it was a little noisy but they mostly still focused on what we were trying to do. Students are called learners here.

The teacher had given me a workbook to use and the subject I thought I was to prepare the children had already completed so we moved on to the next chapter which was about weather. These children are in grade 4. Just as in any classroom there were a variety of skill levels. It was great to have Dad there to help the children navigate in their books. They begin to learn English in the schools in the third grade so they are learning new words. There were a few learners that did not seem to understand much of what I said and others that could answer all of the questions very quickly. Jackson Jenkins had a post on Instagram of him snow skiing a little then skiing across a patch of water then doing a flip. We started our session by showing that clip and explaining what snow is and some nodded their heads that they knew what snow was but most held a blank expression. They enjoyed the clip. We then

looked at a photo of weather in their workbook that showed lightening. When we asked if they ever heard a noise after the lightening there was no response. Very few associated thunder with lightening. The new words were sunny, cloudy, rain, thunderstorm, minimum and maximum, liquid, thermometer and Celsius. There was not a picture of a thermometer and the school does not have a thermometer so it was hard to explain. We will see if we can purchase a thermometer and take to the school next week. There was a map with names of some cities

in South Africa and in the back of the book a teacher section where the teacher was to read some information to the students. I had the children read the sentences with me then turn back to the map to find the cities then I asked a question about what we read. An example of the Weather report which we read together was "Johannesburg, cloudy with a minimum temperature of 14 degrees and a maximum of 28 degrees." I then asked the learners what the weather was like in Johannesburg? Blank stares. Then I asked is the weather sunny, cloudy,



On our Saturday road trip to Mthatha, we saw a couple of thick stands of pine trees.



Our car wash friends - chocolate addicts!

rainy? Then they looked back at the sentence that we read and after more prompting they were able to get the answer. I then asked what the minimum temperature was for Johannesburg again we had to point out in the sentence what the answer would be. I then asked what the maximum temperature was and they started to pick up more what I was asking. We did the same exercise for about 5 other cities. Some figured out the pattern pretty quickly and others still struggled. In the end I asked which city had the lowest/coldest temperature and after

they answered that I asked which city had the highest/ warmest temperature? We tried to have each of the students respond even those that were slower learners and they all seemed to enjoy being part of the group. I was so glad to have Dad helping me because we had to point out in their books the information and even though the group was small most needed help. I also wondered if my English instructions/words were unfamiliar to them. I am looking forward to our next visit to the school. The assistant principle took the workbooks

from me and said she does not want we to use that book in the future as the children are on different levels of learning. So when we got home I started to look online to see if any reading books were available to print. I have been looking for reading books at stores that we visit to see if I can get some for this activity. Have not been successful yet so I am probably not looking in the right stores yet. Our idea is to get some story books that we can read together to practice their reading skills, build their vocabulary and see if we can encourage comprehension skills.

I think the teachers do the best that they can under very difficult circumstances. There really is no time for individual interaction. They do not have parent volunteers and if they did there is no place to take learners for small group interaction. As the weather gets colder( we are coming into winter here) or if it is rainy I am not sure where our groups will meet. We will have to see if we can think of a solution before the problem arises.

One of the photos that Dad posted was of children at lunch time. The

school converted one of their classrooms into a kitchen but they do not have tables for the children to eat at. They pick up their bowl of mealie meal and I think sour milk and go outside and find a place to sit and eat then they return the used bowl and spoon to the kitchen. Some of the children bring a lunch from home. Nothing near a balance diet but it fills their tummies.

The school administration is very thankful and want to offer us every courtesy. We do not want to put them out or have them worry about providing anything for us and add to their already stressful lives and we do not want to give offense to them by denying their thoughtful consideration. I am looking forward to next week and I am trying to find some reading books that we can either print or purchase that will be appropriate and when we are finished we can donate them to the school. They do not have a library for the children and the classroom has very few books for pleasure reading. Few meaning 3 or 4.

I mentioned mealie meal and sour milk. That is a very common dish. The mealie meal is cooked cornmeal.

Some times they will put in bits of chopped spinach or onion. I asked a women if they purchase the milk as fresh and then continue to use it as it sours. She said they they purchase it already sour. When we buy milk here it goes bad in just a few days. Even when I make up powdered milk it only stays usable for about 3 days.

This is probably too long and I hope not too boring.  
Love you all and miss you tons,  
Hugs and Kisses,  
Sister Stevenson

## Elder Gcwabe

FYI, a short note from one of the missionaries you all helped get out the door on his mission. Thank you for all your support. He is doing great.

Love,

Dad and Mom  
Dear Elder Stevenson and Sister Stevenson

I hope and pray that you doing all well

I wanted to thank you first for everything that you have done for me , I am truly grateful.

I have been here on mission for long but I am learning a lot and its fun. I just had my first two baptisms last Sunday and I have been working very hard these last weeks because of the area am being sent to , it was a dead area so I had to work heard and have baptisms.

I will attach pictures .

I am grateful for everything , thank you .

I hope your mission is going well too and I ask of you to thank you children too for their effort in helping you to help me . I am truly grateful.

Regards  
Elder Gcwabe



2018 APRIL 17 }

# Apr\_17\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We did quite a bit of driving today. We traveled down to pick up Rollo Steenbeek which about 1 hour from us. Then, we took him to the Phakamile School in Mdantsane so he could survey the foundations and take some measurements. He will be drawing up the plans for the classrooms.

The good news is that he feels the foundations can stay and we simply overlay what is there with about 3-4 inches of concrete with wire mesh and some rebar. Should have initial sketch plans on Sunday!

We were swarmed by children. I thought it was cool, he was getting very upset about it. If we go a next time, we need to do it some time other than their lunch break. The kids were all smiles and having a great time.

We then went downtown to the city planning department and printed up an aerial map of the school. Rollo needs to show the new classrooms in relation to the rest of the school. Then, we went to Guido's, on the beach front, for lunch. We had ribs and Mom had a salad. Pretty good ribs.

Then, took Rollo back to his place with a pizza for his wife who has the flu. All in all, about 4+ hours of driving. I don't mind the driving, but I don't like a dress tie choking off my oxygen?

While we were at the Engineering Department to get an aerial map of the school, we struck up a conversation with the receptionist. She is studying religion. She was very glad to see that we were missionaries and trying to help people in the community. She wants to be a missionary and eventually a pastor. Well, we got

her name and contact information and she will be waiting for the missionaries to come visit.

\*Photos:\*

- If you like curry, this is the place to come. Personally, I do not like it, but went into this store to check out their metal pots. The owner of the shop explained you "can cook anything in these pots." Technically, they are called "fish pots." With a \$500 (USD) deposit from any one I can secure a set for you. I can guarantee the balance, shipping and handling will be slightly less than

another \$1,700 (USD).

Love,

Dad and Mom





If you like curry, this is the place to come. Personally, I do not like it, but went into this store to check out their metal pots. The owner of the shop explained you "can cook anything in these pots." Technically, they are called "fish pots."

2018 APRIL 18 }

# Apr\_18\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Mom has been making some treats for the boarding inspections tomorrow morning, and, banana oatmeal cookies for district meeting on Friday! I was busy scanning in documents that need to go to the mission office - baptismal records, money transfer slips from the bank, receipts, etc. I also spent a fair amount of time looking into some details for fund-raising for the Phakamile School.

Of course, we had car problems to manage also. We had a missionary car that needed a new starter. We got that in the shop and then, we loaned our car to the Elders. Fortunately, we were able to use the Davies' car for this afternoon's appointments.

We had a very good meeting with Brother Bulelo. He was baptized

about 6-8 months ago. After his baptism he was in an automobile accident. Since that time, he and his wife, Pila, have become less active. Basically, this good brother and his wife were baptized before they were completely ready. So, we have arranged for the young missionaries to come back and start all over with him and his wife. The objective is to rebuild his knowledge of the Restoration and help rebuild his testimony.

We met with Sister Mbovane and her niece. Not a good situation. Alcohol and drugs are taking a serious toll. They seem so lost. Mom talked and talked about having faith and hope, but unfortunately, they did not seem to demonstrate too much interest. We did get them to agree to let us return so we can simply pray and read the Book of Mormon together. I promised them that they would feel better when we do this.

This is especially painful for us as we had seen such great response to our message months ago and a much happier family when they came to church. They are strong evidence that when we make poor decisions we allow the adversary to start us down the wrong path with a flaxen cord until he can eventually bind us down with the chains of hell.

\*Photos:\*

- Mom being swallowed by a giant whale - the same one that swallowed Jonah!
- This is one of the better-kept cemeteries.
- Lunch time at

the Phakamile School - the inmates are in control!

We love you all very much. Keep at least 110% of the commandments today!

Dad and Mom



This is one of the better-kept cemeteries



Mom being swallowed by a giant whale - the same one that swallowed Jonah!



Lunch time at the Phakamile School - the inmates are in control!

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



- Mom's carbuncle omelette  
- Interesting painting on someone's outside wall of their house

## Apr19\_2018\_Update

Dear Family,

We picked up a car this morning that we thought was going to need a new starter. Fortunately, it was simply a bad connection to the starter and not the starter itself. So, about \$48 and our missionaries are back on the road.

We returned to our less active family where the Mother and a niece have alcohol and drug issues. We read the Book of Mormon together. It was interesting to see the mother come alive as she recalled the story of

Nephi and his brothers obtaining the plates from Laban. The message we were trying to communicate was that we all have challenges, but when we put the Lord first and strive to obey His commandments, he will bless us. And, just like Nephi, if we do not succeed at first, we keep trying.

Our 15 year old young man, Luthando, has really made a 180 degree turn. He comes to church regularly and helps in passing the sacrament. He is reading the Bible and his Book of Mormon. We had an appointment today with him and his active, fellowshipper cousin. Luthando wasn't there but we still had a very good meeting with Hlumelo. We asked about his 10 year plan. "Stay strong in the Aaronic Priesthood, serve a mission, come home and receive a calling, find an active, strong LDS girl to marry in

the temple and pursue his education!!!" We need a whole army of young men like this.

\*Photos:\*

- This is Mom's "Carbuncle Omelette." (No thank you!) - This is an interesting painting that someone had done on their outside wall of their home.

We love you. Stay on the Covenant Path!!!

Dad and Mom



Mom's carbuncle omelette.

Interesting painting on someone's outside wall of their house.



2018 APRIL 20 }

# Apr\_20\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Another good district meeting this morning. Our topic was the value of the Book of Mormon is finding investigators.

The good news is, we found a dry cleaners to take a suit to. The bad news is that the cleaning cost is \$16.

On our way to our work area, we were stopped at a Traffic Services road inspection. I think they have a van with a camera that captures license plate numbers as they go by. If their computer indicates there is an outstanding fine, they notify one of the officers at the road block to have us pull over.

We were driving another missionary car because we had to get some work done on it. As it turns out, there was a R 100 (\$8.00 USD) outstanding fine from \*September

5th, 2016\*! Anyway, we got it paid at the court house in downtown East London.

Mom had baked a birthday cake for a lady that lives in the less active member home with all the Word of Wisdom problems. Unfortunately, she was not there when we came. She was at the dentist office with some horrific tooth pain. We did take time to read from the Book of Mormon again, Alma, chapter 36. It is amazing at how receptive this good sister is when we study and read from the Book of Mormon.

We believe this exercise is helping her feel the Spirit and we see her attitude changing. We return tomorrow to read some more.

We had a very pleasant visit with another less active member. She had a neighbor friend there that was visiting. She listened in to the lesson

Mom was presenting. To make a long story short, she was interested in our message and we obtained her permission to have the young missionaries stop by to teach her.

We love you,  
Dad and Mom

TEACH WHEN YOU FIND. FIND WHEN YOU TEACH (PMG)

\*Photos:\*

- Check out this four slabs of meat promotion at McDonald's - Clock tower at the harbor - Mercedes Benz cars waiting to be picked up for shipping all around the world. "C" class models.



Check out this four slabs of meat promotion at McDonald's.



Mercedes Benz cars waiting to be picked up for shipping all around the world. "C" class models.



Clock tower at the harbor.

# OOPS!

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

I accidentally hit the send button for Tid Bits before I finished writing it. So, enjoy an early, yet incomplete, version of Tid Bits.

Have fun living the gospel this week!

Love,

Dad

## Apr21\_2018\_Update

Dear Family,

The airlines are now requiring that passengers show their original passport to travel within the country. We use to get by with just a certified copy. This morning, I went to the airport to meet one of the Assistants to the President to pick up original passports for those elders going out

on transfers next week. Losing passports can make for a huge mess, so the president wanted them hand delivered.

The president also instructed us to get a safe that we can keep the passports in. Fortunately, we have a small safe in one of our closets that works perfectly for the passports. The assistant, Elder Sibiya, arrived at 8 AM and then, took off back to Cape Town at 1:30 PM.

We went to a baptism this afternoon where Mom was asked to speak. When I received the text message asking that she speak, I misread it and told Mom her talk needed to be on baptism. Actually, it was suppose to be about the Holy Ghost. When Mom saw the program, she became a little alarmed since she prepared to speak on baptism. Fortunately, she had in her purse a talk from a previous baptism where she spoke about

the Holy Ghost.

The good news is that she now has two baptismal service talks all prepared and ready to go! We had a couple of appointments this afternoon but they both fell through. That happens. However, we usually are pretty lucky about finding people home.

*\*Photos:\** - This man and his wife had quite a reception at the airport. About 30 people gathered to welcome them. We were told that he is a prophet with the Assemblies of

God Church. - Mama Nothemba's baptism. She became interested in the church in part by the example of the LDS young men that live across the street from her. Zizi and Khanisile are the boys and are also the ones in the photo who helped with the baptism. She is a large woman and the two boys she so admires, helped get her under the water and then, back up. Only took two attempts.

Love,  
Dad and Mom



This man and his wife had quite a reception at the airport. About 30 people gathered to welcome them. We were told that he is a prophet with the Assemblies of God Church.

Mama Nothemba's baptism. She became interested in the church in part by the example of the LDS young men that live across the street from her. Zizi and Khansile are the boys and are also the ones in the photo who helped with the baptism.



2018 APRIL 22 }

# Phakamile Sketches

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



All,

Attached are the preliminary drawings for the classrooms at the Phakamile School. These will be sufficient to generate a quote from whatever contractor will do the project. We meet with our stake president this week, who is a contractor. We'll see if he has any interest in taking on this project. At least get his valuable input.

Love,

Dad and Mom

# Apr\_23\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We did a lot of running around today. We had a missionary, Elder Reedy, coming in from about 4 hours north of us on the bus. The president wanted us to meet him at the depot here in East London and then eventually get him to the airport. He is going into Cape Town to be an Assistant to the President.

We picked him up. Took him to get a hair cut. Brought him home where Mom gave him a delicious roast beef dinner with potatoes and carrots. He also ate a large roll from the grocery store, a banana and two chocolate chip oatmeal muffins. Then, we put him on our computer so he could email his family (since today is preparation day).

After that, we got him off to the airport in plenty of time to catch his

flight to CT. He is a good, humble Elder and will be a great Assistant to the President. He seems like a hard worker and is focused on his mission.

It is interesting to see the difference in missionaries. Some can be timid, others very loud and boisterous. Others are very disciplined while some are all about having fun. Some have a higher degree of spirituality than others. I can only imagine what the mission president hears and deals with week to week in addition to everything else he needs to manage. I am sure there are those days when he is thoroughly physically and mentally exhausted.

And...we did a bunch of other things today.

We did visit a family this evening. It's toward the end of the month. No money and no food. The mother

asked us if we could help her by buying some sour milk. We walked up to the little container store and got the milk, a bag of rice, some meat, some canned fish and a loaf of bread. So hard to say "no" when you see this mother and two hungry boys. As we were leaving she said, thank you" and hugged and kissed each of us.

\*Photos:\*

- These are pictures of store fronts where we do some of our shopping. Clicks is like a Walgreens. Hair by Hannah is a hair cut

shop (The owner always gives Brother Davies a free hair cut because he represents Jesus and blesses her shop.)The Crazy Store is like the variety you see in a "dollar store" but things cost more than a dollar. Pick 'n Pay is the grocery store we use the most.

We love you very, very much. Knock it out of the park today!

Dad and Mom

Clicks is like a Walgreens.





Hair by Hannah is a hair cut shop (The owner always gives Brother Davies a free hair cut because he represents Jesus and blesses her shop.)



The Crazy Store is like the variety you see in a "dollar store" but things cost more than a dollar.



Pick 'n Pay is the grocery store we use the most.

# Apr 24 2018 Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Tragedy has struck. The LIZARD is not dead. He lives!

As Mom was coming in the door this evening, the lizard made a beeline for his home behind the AC unit. Just when I was starting to get a good night's rest. Just when I was convinced of his demise! Just when I wanted to shout hallelujah from the house tops as with seven thunders! The bug-eating Beelzebub returns! I will immediately begin plans for his capture and extinction.

We have a wonderful Elder in our zone that is a magnificent piano player. I really believe Elder Kaden Smith can sit down at a piano or an organ and play any church hymn without music. I was tossing classics at him the other day, i.e., Phantom of the Opera, and he was cranking it out without any struggle.

Our friends, the Steenbeeks, had a neighbor dog that got a little too close to two Puff Adder snakes that were in the middle of copulation. They did not appreciate the invasion of privacy. One bit him on the side of his mouth and the other underneath his neck. The dog was in serious trouble. The only vet they could find on the Sunday happened to be one hour away. Four days in the dog hospital and then, he was home with his bark somewhat affected.

We spent the morning with our zone leaders working out details for tomorrow's missionary transfers. There is a lot going on and it requires a lot of coordination. We think we have it all put together, except that there is a nationwide strike tomorrow by workers who have a problem with the new minimum wage law going into effect. This means tire burnings and rocks on the road to bring things to a halt

around the country.

We had an excellent visit with our stake president this afternoon. He is a contractor and would be interested in taking on the school classroom project. He has the right connections with local government and the Department of Education. First stop is to meet with the Department of Education and basically tell them, let's do this project together. You get the credit and we pay the money and do all the work. He said they will love that idea.

We love you! Do Good!!!

Dad and Mom

## School Project

Dear Chad. Liz, Dan and Grace,

Thanks for our telephone conversations regarding additional classrooms at the Phakamile Elementary School. We think, bottom line, building five classrooms is a tall order to fill and that the best way forward is to concentrate on *\*one\** classroom



This is a custom shirt one Elder Zander designed and Mom sewed together (meaning, she did the trim work)

These are all the pizza boxes they threw out of their boarding



with a slight possibility of being able to do more.

That is the way we will bill it to the contractor and the school.

As we discussed, please sit down with your families and try to come up with a dollar figure you feel comfortable your family could contribute. This would include anything from fund-raising, personal contributions, drugs, gambling or sale of personal belongings.

We would like to get a realistic view

of what we think we can commit to.

\*Please email us by Sunday with the amount you feel you can generate over the next month or two\*.

Thank you for your support and interest in this project. It is so needed and soworthwhile. Also, we need a pitch person for the Ogden area. Someone that can go do a presentation to people like President Wadman, President Rigby, John Bowen, etc. Any volunteers? (For example, Brayden, Sidney, Barrett, or, Carter.)

Love,

Dad and Mom

## Phakamile School Project

Dear Family,

As you already know, Mom and I are scheduling our time to work with an elementary school each week, helping children with reading and even math.

This same school, Phakamile Junior Primary School, is also in need of additional classrooms. Presently, they have over 750 students and only 10 classrooms. We have seen the classes in session and it can be very chaotic.

Attached is some information we have pulled together as a way to help explain our goal of raising funds to build additional classrooms. The five classrooms you seen in the attachment would amount to approximately \$96,000. That is a lot of money.

\*Our approach with the school and

the contractor is to commit to one classroom and if fund-raising goes well, maybe more\*. We do not want to over-promise and under-deliver.

Would you please sit down with your families and discuss what you might be able to do to help financially. Then, \*email us by this Sunday what your figure is so we can get a realistic view of what money we have to work with\* .

We appreciate your help and support on this project. It is something that will make a significant difference in this part of the world. At the same time, we realize that you have your own budget and expenses to manage. Please do not feel any obligation to contribute. Some may not be in a position to do so.

Love,

Dad and Mom,  
Uncle Chris and Aunt Mavis  
Chris and Mavis

Elders Zander and  
Armstrong. Zander (the  
tall one) is being  
transferred tomorrow  
to Port Elizabeth



2018

APRIL 25 }

# Apr\_25\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Busy day! We met our missionaries at the Amalinda church building where some of them would be traveling to Grahamstown by car to transfer from there to Port Elizabeth. We launched them off (two cars) and then, Mom and I went to the Phakamile School to help children with reading.

(FYI, Grahamstown is WHW territory. About two hours from where we live.)

Mom was in her zone and did an absolutely great job working with groups of 6 children at a time in 15 minute sessions from 9 AM to 11 AM. I tried one 15 minute session and maybe scored a grade of C+. The children were eating it up. They love to learn and they were super fascinated with Mom the "Super Teacher."

After our teaching at the school, we were raced to the airport to send off more missionaries and to receive 6 new ones to our area. My specific job now is to issue passports to those leaving and to collect passports of those arriving to our area.

It appears all has gone well with this transfer. We always pray for the safe travel and arrival of each missionary. \*I think we all need to remember to pray each time we take to the road for an extended trip. Mom and I believe we have greatly blessed over the years when we have remembered to pray and do our part to be safe\*.

\*Photos:\*

- Mom doing her teaching

Love,

Dad and Mom



Mom doing her teaching.



2018 APRIL 26 }

# Apr\_26\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

\*Please teach your children the importance of being on time\*. This morning I was suppose to meet a missionary companionship at 8 AM to get their AC fixed. They showed up at 8:35. Teach them that you infringe on other people's time when you run late. Bare minimum, missionaries need to make a simple phone call to explain they are going to be late.

We had a couple good visits today. One brother is an older gentleman and very faithful and active in the Church. He is rather slow due to an automobile accident he had several years ago. Since he schedules us to come each week, we decided we will teach about one of the 13 Article of Faith each time. Today, mom started off with the 1st Article of Faith and I shared some scriptures to support it.

We visited Phumlani, the return missionary that has had more downs than ups since he returned home 15 years ago. He has been to Church each week for the last month. We are hoping, praying and keeping our fingers crossed that his efforts are sincere and will be enduring.

\*The beauty of the gospel is the continual opportunity to repent and reconcile our lives with the Lord. We all should be doing that every day\*.

We spent the evening looking for reader books for our kids at the Phakamile School. Mom selected a handful that she feels will be just right for the kids. We are trying to have at least 7 of each book so each child in the reading group has one. Some books we have to go to other stores to pick up and others have to be ordered in from a warehouse. Anyway, the children will really like them. Of course, we leave these

books with the school when we return to the States.

\*Photos:\*

- Photo of Nahoon Dam where Mdansane and East London get a majority of their water - This is a very loud train that runs right behind the homes in one of our areas.

- I spent a couple hours looking at salvage yards for this type of a wheel for one of our missionary cars. No luck. So, I went to the dealership to see what a new one would cost. Over \$500.00 (USD)!!!! That is borderline communistic!

Anyway, we will run the car with hub caps on the front wheels and mag wheels on the back.

We love you and think about you daily! Make good choices!

Dad and Mom



I spent a couple hours looking at salvage yards for this type of a wheel for one of our missionary cars. No luck. So, I went to the dealership to see what a new one would cost. Over \$500.00 (USD)!!!! That is borderline communistic! Anyway, we will run the car with hub caps on the front wheels and mag wheels on the back.



Photo of Nahoon Dam where Mdansane and East London get a majority of their water

2018 APRIL 27 }

# Apr\_27\_28\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Very few of you may be wondering why there was not an update for yesterday. Mom and I and the Davies left shortly after our district meetings and went to Queenstown, about a 2 hour drive from here. Our objectives were, 1) visit with the senior couple, Elder and Sister Bell, 2) see rhinos at the reserve just one block away from them, and 3) have lunch topped off with peach cobbler. We were successful on two of the three objectives!

Unfortunately, we missed the rhinos by about one hour. There use to be 6 rhinos, but the had one killed last week by poachers and they gave away three others in a trade for other animals. We looked like crazy all over the park for the rhinos, but they were very elusive. Many times they are just on the other side of the

fence, one block from where the Bells stay. They were there this morning, but we didn't get over to their house until about 8:30, an hour too late.

We had a pleasant visit and did see quite a bit of wildlife - giraffes, herds of wildebeests running through the park, zebras, springboks, etc. We played games and had some good conversation.

It has been interesting to visit with some of our senior couples and hear their concerns about going home and encountering problem after problem with their children and grandchildren. For some, it is a very real concern and they are stressed. We do not feel that way in the smallest degree. We are so grateful for your good lives and examples. We are blessed. Please keep it that way.

Really, our only concerns are for

about 5 of our 8 children. Other than that, we're cool.

\*Photos:\*

- The room at the Bed and Breakfast where we stayed. It was quaint and comfortable except for the couple mosquitoes I spent half the night chasing and sending off to the Spirit World. - Some animal life in the park

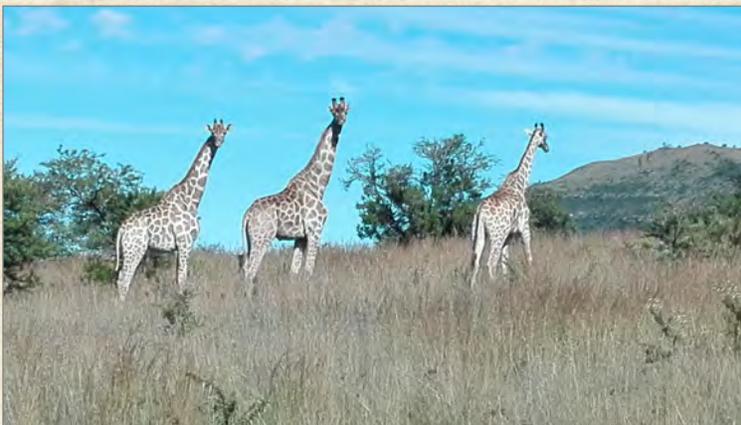
We love you all very much. Remember who you are and act accordingly.

Dad and Mom



The room at the Bed and Breakfast where we stayed. It was quaint and comfortable except for the couple mosquitoes I spent half the night chasing and sending off to the Spirit World.

Some animal  
life in the park.



2018

APRIL 29 }

# Apr\_29\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We enjoyed our meetings this morning. We are so grateful to come to Sacrament Meeting and partake of the bread and water. It is a time of sincere reflection and renewal.

I am afraid that too many of us look at this sacred time as an evaluation of all the things we do badly and how we have fallen short during the week. We need to see it as a time of rejoicing. What a blessing to recognize we have made some mistakes, genuinely repent, receive loving forgiveness and look to another week of growing and learning. Folks, it doesn't get too much better than that!

When we drive down the highway, we spend a minor amount of time looking in our rear view mirror and a whole lot of time looking down the

road toward our destination. When we partake of the sacrament, we need to be so thankful and excited for what is ahead of us, the great blessings of drawing closer to the Lord, of becoming more like Him.

We had a 3 hour ward council meeting today in the 1st ward. No mutiny, every one patiently sat in their chairs. One of the bishop's counselors is a very thin man and always on the move, always running around. I thought the poor guy was going to jump out of his skin because the meeting kept going on and on. He was about as restless and nervous as a cat on the showroom floor of a rocking chair store.

The Lord knows your personally and loves you. We love you. CTR all day, baby!

Dad and Mom

## Tid Bits

Dear Family,

\*1. Word of the week:\* "captious," tending to find fault or raise petty objections. \*Example:\* Most people have captious attitudes and commentary toward Porsche V8 conversions.

\*2. Quote of the week:\*"To the world, you may be just one person. But, to one person, you may be the world!"

\*3. Scripture of the week:\* Suffer not yourself to be led away by any vain or foolish thing; suffer not the devil to lead away your heart again after those wicked harlots. Behold, O my son, how great iniquity ye brought upon the Zoramites; \*for when they saw your \*\*conduct\*\* they would not believe in my words\*. -Alma 39:11

\*4. Joke of the week: \* Q: Why is a giraffe's neck so long? A: Because his head is so far away from his body

\*5. Bee's Knees Award:\* Wow, this



Great T-shirt for someone that works at a burger shop



How good is your balance? This is a very common sight in South Africa.

girl is the real deal. She works hard at staying fit and eats healthy. She can run like the wind. She is creative and knows how to make a house a home. She loves the gospel and loves the Lord. She loves her children and goes out of her way to bless their lives. She is a great wife and mother and neighbor. She has the heart of a missionary. She remembers and honors her covenants. She is more beautiful than 10 beauty queens all smushed together. Annie, you are the Bee's Knees, sistah!!!

\*6. Gospel Question of the week:\*

How many baskets of food were left after Jesus fed the 5,000?

\*7. If I were you (Advice to grand kids):\* If I were you, I would write a note to your Sunday School teacher or Primary teacher or YM/YW leaders, telling them how much you appreciate all that they do. Try it. I think you will like it.

\*8. What I learned this week: \*The people here in South Africa that we work with every day are very much similar to the people we associate with in the United States. We see the

same attitudes, the same personalities, degrees of spirituality, degrees of initiative, etc.

\*9. What I am grateful for:\* I am grateful for a beautiful earth. I recently read somewhere that when we show respect and reverence for creation, we show respect and reverence for the Creator.

\*10. My goal for the week:\* I will keep my same goal of memorizing the 13 Article of Faith.



Brother Shakes and Phumlani (green shirt) after having planted gardens when we bought them some seed.



La Mama  
taking a rare  
moment to  
relax while  
eating some  
very delicious  
red grapes

# Apr\_30\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

I would like to start this email by giving a big shout out to Adam Stevenson. This guy has made some real progress in the last 35 days. Adam, we love you. Keep up the good work! You are in our prayers and thoughts. And, any time you need reliable information or advice on cars, you know you can always call me!

Today was our Mission Leadership Council. We had Elder Palmer of the Seventy on the line with us listening in and participating. He will be doing the mission tour starting tomorrow in Queenstown. Wednesday evening he and his wife will be having dinner with the senior couples here in East London and President and Sister Lebethoa. It happens to be at the restaurant at the Hemingways Casino, Key Largo. Fortunately, it is far enough removed from the casino to

avoid the appearance of evil.

We learned a lot in our council meeting. I think the main thought was the importance of love in all that we do. Elder Palmer gave a talk in conference about this:  
<https://www.lds.org/media-library/video/2017-04-5030-s-mark-palmer?lang=eng>

We need to love like the Savior to make real progress in our lives.

We got cars fixed today and Mom made cookies for a FHE at the church. She also had made the lasagna for our lunch at MLC. Excellent!!! We actually found some Parmesan Cheese to use on our french bread.

\*Photos:\* - Speaking of love, we love this young lady, Nompolelo. As you can see, she is on crutches because her legs do not work. She is a

faithful attender to church. She walks on those crutches with no real use of her legs, about one kilometer to the church building. She is always cheerful and constantly has a beautiful smile. She recently obtained a job and even though it is a struggle for her to get to work (leaving at 6 AM), she is a happy person! So, no more whining, crying, complaining, fussing, etc. - We love this sign - great message! - This was an outdoor shower just out our back door at the Bed and Breakfast where we stayed in Queenstown. We were tempted to use it, but felt it

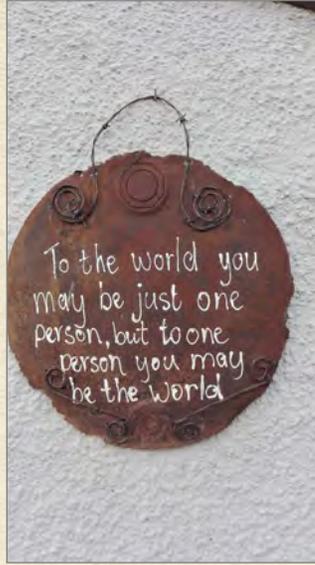
was just a little too open air for our comfort level.

We love you very much. You bring us great joy and happiness!

Dad and Mom



Speaking of love, we love this young lady, Nompolelo. As you can see, she is on crutches because her legs do not work. She is a faithful attender to church. She walks on those crutches with no real use of her legs, about one kilometer to the church building. She is always cheerful and constantly has a beautiful smile. She recently obtained a job and even though it is a struggle for her to get to



We love this sign - great message!



This was an outdoor shower just out our back door at the Bed and Breakfast where we stayed in Queenstown. We were tempted to use it, but felt it was just a little too open air for our comfort level.

# May\_01\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had our preparation day today because we had our Mission Leadership Council yesterday with Elder Palmer. So, Mom did some mending and alterations for me. I washed the car and ran a bunch of errands. I also wrote up the minutes from the MLC and sent them to the mission president.

I meant to include this quote with my comments the other day about the sacrament.

\*Photos:\* - Mom and I went for our ride this morning. On the first leg of her trip, she came up over a little mound of dirt toward the off ramp of the freeway, only to find a pick up truck there. In order to avoid serious injury or death to the pick up driver, or damage to the pick up truck, Mom laid the bike down and did quite the number on her

knees, hand and arm. It hurts worse than it looks. - We have asked our mission president to get us one of these for our mission car. Senior couples are special, they need something a little nicer than a tiny Toyota or simple Chevy.

We love you and pray for you daily,

Dad and Mom

## RSVP

Dear Family,

We have heard back from one family regarding the Phakamilee School Project (PSP). We are guessing that you are still waiting to have a family council where you can discuss how much you feel comfortable pledging to the project. (FYI, we accept no donations over \$70,000 USD.)

Also, I need people who would be willing to go make a presentation to key individuals and solicit charitable funds. Maybe one of our children can come up with a Power Point presentation that several families can use. Who wants to step up and take on that task? I will come up with some people you can go to and share the invitation.

Also, we have a senior couple, Clarke and Luci Fowers, that use to serve in our area and are friends of the school. They would like to get involved. They live just over the hill

from Huntsville in Mountain Green. They are a good source for some robust support.

We apologize if we seem to be harassing you about this project. It is so badly needed and anyone contributing to the cause can feel very satisfied they are doing good. Please let us know what you can do at your earliest convenience.

We love you all very much!

Dad and Mom



We have asked our mission president to get us one of these for our mission car. Senior couples are special, they need something a little nicer than a tiny Toyota or simple Chevy.



Mom and I went for our ride this morning. On the first leg of her trip, she came up over a little mound of dirt toward the off ramp of the freeway, only to find a pick up truck there. In order to avoid serious injury or death to the pick up driver, or damage to the pick up truck, Mom laid the bike down and did quite the number on her knees, hand and arm. It hurts worse than it looks.



# May\_02\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a delightful morning reading with the 4th graders from the Phakamile Elementary School. We read a book Mom picked out, Hattie Peck. It's about a hen that didn't have any eggs to hatch. She searches all over the world for abandoned eggs. She brings home a "colossal clutch to her coo.P There she sits on them until they hatch. In the end, she has baby crocodiles, parrots, snakes, turtles, etc. The children seemed to enjoy reading it together with us.

We have purchased a bout 6 different book titles (7 actual books of each title of each) for our reading groups. We did about 6 groups this morning with 8 "learners" in each group. As you can imagine, some are brighter than the others. We tried to visit several others today, but found most people gone for the day. This is

the first of the month and government checks get cashed and spent. The malls (two of them in Mdantsane) were packed with people.

Mom is still feeling the effects of her bike accident. We took some time off this afternoon for rest and recuperation prior to going to dinner. Sister Davies, the mission nurse, fixed Mom up with all kinds of gause, antibiotic ointment and tape. Her left hand looks like she has been taped just prior to putting on some boxing gloves!

We had a very enjoyable time this evening with Elder and Sister Palmer, and, President and Sister Lebethoa. President Van Herdon and his wife from the East London Stake also joined us.

Elder Palmer said the Twelve can only be in 12 different locations at

once. The Seventy is ordained to go out under their direction and minister to the members and areas away from church headquarters. They go in advance of the Quorum of the Twelve.

This evening was a little bit of a "Love Feast" - the meal was a buffet and the dinner discussion was all about how wonderful the senior couples are. I suggested we do this every week!

\*Photos:\*

- The African National Congress

has supported legislation to establish a national minimum wage of 20 Rand an hour (\$1.60 USD). This poster was by one of the unions that said 20 R was not enough and not to support the new legislation.

- Dinner at the Key Largo Restaurant at the Hemingways mall and casino. Food was very good, but not as good as the company which we thoroughly enjoyed.

We love you very, very much. Make good choices today. It will make you feel good!

Dad and Mom



The African National Congress has supported legislation to establish a national minimum wage of 20 Rand an hour (\$1.60 USD). This poster was by one of the unions that said 20 R was not enough and not to support the new legislation.

Dinner at the Key Largo  
Restaurant at the  
Hemingways mall and  
casino.



2018 MAY 3 }

# May\_03\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a very good training today with our mission president, his wife, Elder Palmer and his wife. We think all the missionaries thoroughly enjoyed the day and left having had a spiritual feast. We know we want to be better missionaries by incorporating what we we have learned today.

One of the themes of our training was the absolute importance of the Book of Mormon in our missionary work. For example, have people read the first paragraph of the Introduction to the Book of Mormon. Then, have them read the last two paragraphs. Then, commit them to read the Book of Mormon. We believe our missionaries will start using the Book of Mormon more in their proselyting activities.

We were feeling a little bit for Sister

Lebethoa. She obviously didn't feel well. Yet, she was a trooper. She gave her part of the training, bore her testimony and was so charming at lunch with everyone. These are leaders who sometimes are more concerned about the work than their own well-being. We hope and pray for her speedy recovery.

You have likely heard of the "24 hour" flu. Well I think I had the "24 minute" flu. When we returned home, I was not feeling 100%. I went to lay down and slept for about 3 hours. After waking up, I felt fine and ready to take on the world.

Mom's bicycle wounds are on the mend. The pain has subsided, but, she is still a little stiff. Bending her knee to get in and out of the car is challenging. Today we purchased a bunch more of sterile dressing material and large "square footage" bandages. She does not enjoy the at-

tention all the bandages attract. (Me, on the other hand, loves the sympathy attention. Some times I just put on bandages so people will feel sorry for me.)

Photos:

All,

Sorry, I clicked on the send button before we signed off or attached any photos. I know some of our kids don't read the emails and only look at pictures!

\*Photos:\*

- We have requested this car as our next missionary vehicle. We think it will get turned down because it is a twin turbo verses just a





Mission  
tour/zone  
conference  
photo with the  
Palmers and  
the  
missionaries  
from the East  
London and  
Mdansane  
zones.

single turbo. - Mission tour/zone  
conference photo with the Palmers  
and the missionaries from the East  
London and Mdansane zones.

We love you. You make us happy!

Dad and Mom

# May\_04\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Mom was feeling a little under the weather this morning. She stayed home to get some needed R&R and I called one of our fellow-shippers, Thandikhaya Christian Goje, to be my companion today.

We had a full day. One of our first visits was to Brother Gadlela's home. Wow, we walked into some serious fireworks there. His sister was steaming mad, emotional and very vocal about what a pill her brother, our member friend we came to see, has been. It ranged from his lack of appreciation to his condemning her because she wasn't a member of our church to she was a daughter of the devil!

These are older people - he is 59 and she is a little younger. It was pretty intense and I am sure the whole neighborhood was listening in on

our visit. I first wanted to get them settled down. There came a point when it seemed good to suggest we pray for the Spirit of the Lord to be with us. Brother Gadlela prayed. It was more of a preaching to his sister than a prayer. Into the prayer, she throws herself to the side of the sofa and is crying in loud, uncontrollable sobs. I stopped Brother Gadlela and tried to get her to calm down. I explained to our good brother that when we pray, we don't lecture another person.

Our discussion went on for at least an hour. I explained the importance of listening, of showing respect, of using a soft voice, of expressing gratitude, etc. I tried to share some other things:

- We taught our children that you need to be the type of person you want to marry. Same thing in our family relationships. Treat the other

person the way you want to be treated. Be the same type of person you want them to be. - "When you speak, ask, is it kind, is it true, is it necessary..." - I had Brother Gadlela tell us three things he admired about his sister. He did so. Then, I asked her to mention three things she admired and respected about her brother (At first she said, there was nothing she could say.) - We encouraged Brother Gadlela to talk to his bishop and get counsel from him - We explained, "We don't bring peace to the home. They have to do their part to invite that

peace and the Spirit of the Lord there."

- Be kind, be respectful, don't shout, look for the good, do your part...

- Don't preach and condemn, show kindness and love

- We are all imperfect and we need to look for the good in others

Anyway, it was quite the experience. I am happy to say she seemed much relieved when we were ready to go.



This is a giant radar tower near the airport. Looks like a giant golf tee with a golf ball on top.



This is a lovely sister with her little boy and her mother. She is the Primary President in the MD 4th Ward. The grandmother is not a member, but what a beautiful lady!

We hope and pray that things will work out there. We took prayer rocks to our "missionary boys." They loved the idea and they each got to pick a rock for their own beds.

We love you very much! Make good choices! The devil is a dope!

Dad and Mom

2018 MAY 5 }

# May\_05\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Pretty much a "work day" today. We did cleaning at the church and we were pleased that we had others come to help. One of our goals is to help members in general understand how important it is to keep the Lord's buildings clean.

I did some weeding outside around the house. It looks a lot better, but there is a lot more to do. There is a lot of stress on me because for a few days I have had to do the dishes with Mom's hand being in a bandage. Please, please, don't worry about me. I will be okay. I'll just do my best and try to manage through the pressure!

We might have a movie night with some popcorn a little later.

\*Photos:\*

- This is a fly paper strip that was hanging in the Steenbeek's kitchen.

They can be pretty ugly, but they are very efficient. - Sample of one of the prayer rocks we made.

We love you. Have a great day doing what is right. Say your prayers and read your scriptures!

Dad and Mom



This is a fly paper strip that was hanging in the Steenbeek's kitchen. They can be pretty ugly, but they are very efficient.

Sample of one of the  
prayer rocks we made.



# May\_06\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Today we had testimony meeting. I was touched as one of our fellowshippers, Thandikhaya, bore his testimony. He was emotional, which we have never seen from him ins the past. He has a tender heart and a strong testimony born of the Spirit. We are assuming he will be speaking in church next Sunday, and then, off to the MTC on May 17th. We haven't shared this with him, but after the MTC, he will temporarily be assigned to our mission. We think there may be a visa problem or some other red tape preventing him from going straight to Zimbabwe.

Mom and I took part in a fireside after church. We each spoke about 5 minutes to discuss "Finding the Lost Sheep." I think the theme for the meeting was that we need to seek out the less active, but do so with a

pure love for them. Things start to change when people know how much we love and care for them.

Mom said in her remarks, "People don't care how much you know, until they know how much you are."

\*Photos:\*

- This is the yard next to the Steenbeek's. This is the same guy that made a brick-making machine. He sold that and is now welding up trailers for sale. No grass growing under his feet!

Have a great Sabbath. We love you,

Dad and Mom

## Tid Bits

Dear Family,

\*1. Word of the week:\* "umbrage," offence or annoyance. \*Example: \*It can be easy for the proud to take umbrage when church leaders counsel us and we are guilty of unrighteous living.

\*2. Quote of the week:\*

\*3. Scripture of the week:\*

Nevertheless they did fast and pray oft, and did wax stronger and stronger in their humility, and firmer and firmer in the faith of Christ, unto the filling their souls with joy and consolation, yea, even to the purifying and the sanctification of their hearts, which sanctification cometh because of their yielding their hearts unto God. -Helaman 3:35

\*4. Joke of the week:\*

Q: How much did the pirate pay for corn?



This is the yard next to the Steenbeek's. This is the same guy that made a brick-making machine. He sold that and is now welding up trailers for sale. No grass growing under his feet!



During a visit to Michael and Megan's home in Scottsdale, Arizona, we climbed the treacherous "Tom's Thumb" trail and lived to talk about it.

A: A buck an ear!

\*5. Bee's Knees Award:\* Can you run a marathon? Can you ride your bicycle 102 miles? Can you be the world's greatest soccer coach? Probably not. This girl has a strong testimony and is so thankful for the gospel in her life. She is a tender, caring, loving, nurturing mother. She practices what she teaches her children. She is more beautiful than a combination of 10 beauty queens and princesses all smushed together. She is tender-hearted and very generous. She is a good, supportive partner in mar-

riage. She has been fellowshipping her husband in the church for years.

Grace, you are the Bee's Knees, sistah!!!

\*6. Gospel question of the week:\* Where was Joseph Smith married? (City and State, please)

\*7. If I were you (Advice to grand kids): \* If I were you, I would get in the habit of praying during the day at other times than when you normally pray. For example, if you always pray in the morning and at night, what about praying when you

come home from school? How about praying just before you read the scriptures? Try it. I think you will like it.

\*8. What I learned this week:\* I had reaffirmed in my mind that the Book of Mormon is a powerful missionary tool. Truth-seekers and believers in Christ will recognize the profound witness it is of the Savior.

\*9. What I am grateful for:\* Our sisters in the gospel. They bring a very important perspective to the work of salvation that men do not always see. They are spiritually-minded and have a great sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others.

\*10. My goal for the week:\* I am embarrassed to say I need to keep my goal from the last two weeks to memorize the 13 Article of Faith.

\*11. Photo of the week: \* During a visit to Michael and Megan's home in Scottsdale, Arizona, we climbed the treacherous "Tom's Thumb" trail and lived to talk about it.

We pray that you will make good choices and enjoy the blessings that

come from righteous living. Have fun living the gospel this week!

Love,

Dad and Mom



"The path that we have chosen to walk is narrow. Along the way are challenges that will require our faith in Jesus Christ."

Jorge F. Zaballos

2018 MAY 7 }

# May\_07\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

It has been a tragic, sad day and it has been a joyful day.

This morning I had a phone call from one of our 1st ward families. Brother Mkwando had just learned that his son, living in Cape Town, had been stabbed to the heart and died while in route to the hospital. We do not know the details. He was very sad. It was such horrible news for him. We will be visiting him and his family tomorrow.

Mom and I are reading about the Gadianton robbers right now in the Book of Mormon. We live in a day and age where gangs, organized crime (secret combinations) and evil are rampant. These are the last days. How important to listen ever so carefully to our living prophets and apostles. We will not go astray if we listen to them and employ their

teachings into our lives. They Know the way!

One of our African missionaries was over to our house today and told us of his grandfather who was stabbed to death. So, in this country, when some one pulls a knife, it is serious business. Even though I could easily overtake a knife-wielding criminal with my expertise in Kung Fu, I will not be attempting any of that while on our mission!

It has also been a very joyful day. We took dinner over to our 4th ward bishop's house where the whole bishopric and their wives had congregated. We had a delicious meal that Mom prepared - roast with potatoes and carrots, grapes, upside down apple cake with whipped cream! We had a FHE lesson from the bishop and then, played some games afterward.

This is a new bishopric and a new ward within a new stake. There are a lot of challenges, but the bishop is humble and teachable. We feel like we have a good, trusting relationship with him and his counselors. It was a fun evening and Mom did a fantastic job on the meal.

\*Photos:\*

- It was very foggy when I went for a ride this morning. Unusual conditions for Gonubie. - I had a serious bike accident today. To make a long story short, I fell and receive a massive, life-threatening abrasion to

my right hand. I later administered first aid to myself and medical experts are now saying I am lucky to be alive. Of course, the bandage is generating a lot of attention for me. Even though I try to shy away from the spotlight, I thrive on flocks of people gathering around me and trying to comfort me! Please, please, don't worry, I'll be okay.

Love,

Dad and Mom



It was very foggy when I went for a ride this morning. Unusual conditions for Gonubie.



I had a serious bike accident today. To make a long story short, I fell and receive a massive, life-threatening abrasion to my right hand. I later administered first aid to myself and medical experts are now saying I am lucky to be alive.



Of course, the bandage is generating a lot of attention for me. Even though I try to shy away from the spotlight, I thrive on flocks of people gathering around me and trying to comfort me! Please, please, don't worry, I'll be okay.

2018 MAY 8 }

# Gospel Question

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Annie responded to the Gospel Question of the week, but the answer (guess) was incorrect. Someone can still grab the honors on this one.

Question: Where were Joseph and Emma married? (City and State)

Love,

Dad and Mom

# May\_09\_and\_10\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We apologize for not having an update for yesterday. In this country you have pre-paid Internet time. Our "data" ran out last night before we could start an update.

First of all, congratulations to Josh and Michelle on the delivery of a beautiful, bouncing baby girl, Molly Michelle! We just saw pictures of her. I think she looks like a sun burned Chinese baby. Truthfully, Mom and I think she is beautiful and we are so glad she and mommy are doing well. What a great addition to the family!

We spent some time with Thandikhaya today at his favorite place to eat, KFC. For a skinny guy, he can chow down the food. We relaxed a little and talked about his mission. (He leaves for the MTC in

Johannesburg in one week.) He is a very good kid. We will miss him. We hope and pray he will be a stellar missionary and return to contribute mightily to the Church here in Mdantsane.

Tonight we had a FHE with the Fikiso family. This is a fairly less active mom with two teenage children, Salizwa and Imkhita. The father is not a member of the Church. Our approach this evening was to talk about what happens when we taste of the love of the Savior. Just like Lehi, Enos and Alma, we have an almost immediate interest and concern for the welfare of those around us - our family members, friends, etc.

We wanted the father to know that if his children are precious to him, the best thing he can do is become converted and help insure that his family is the same. We think and hope he

got the message. We will continue to pray for this good family. The father is the key to making things happen.

We took our family picture book to show the Fikiso family. As I was explaining the different people in the picture, I said, "and this is our son-in-law, he is a sheep..." Before I could

finish with the word, "rancher," they started laughing hilariously. They thought I was saying Klave was a sheep. Then, Mom explained that they had a new little baby by the name of, "Rhett." Again, they laughed uncontrollably thinking that Mom said we had a grandson by the name of "Rat."



I took a picture of the scene of my bike accident. This pile has been cleaned up since my fall. Now there is a good foot of pathway to pass on. The other day, it was 6 inches or less when my bike went off the path and I was thrown violently into the highway. When cars ran over my legs, I flexed my muscles so as not to have any broken bones.



This was a stacking game where you see who can stack all the bowls and cups in a certain way the fastest. Imkhita won with the fastest time on his third try, 11.99 seconds. These are some of the Fikiso family: Imkhita Fikiso (mama)



Salizwa Fikiso

**\*Photos:\***

- I took a picture of the scene of my bike accident. This pile has been cleaned up since my fall. Now there is a good foot of pathway to pass on. The other day, it was 6 inches or less when my bike went off the path and I was thrown violently into the highway. When cars ran over my legs, I flexed my muscles so as not to have any broken bones. - These are some of the Fikiso family - Salizwa in the pink, Zameka in the gray (mama) and Imkhita. This was a stacking game where you see who can stack all the bowls and cups in

a certain way the fastest. Imkhita won with the fastest time on his third try, 11.99 seconds.

We love you very much - more than steamed egg plant! Do good today,

Dad and Mom



Zameka Fikiso

2018 MAY 10 }

# Gospel Question

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

I am pleased to announce that Michael Beckstead has been the first person to correctly answer the gospel question of the week. He has now racked up 53 chocolate milkshakes!

Love,  
Dad

# May\_11\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had our district meeting this morning. One of our missionaries, our district leader, Elder Armstrong, provided today's training. This is very good experience for missionaries. One could tell this Elder was not comfortable in front of our group. He seemed a little flustered and disjointed. But, he did a good job and each time he does this, he will get better and better. Missions are good for young men - good training ground!

We were going to meet with our stake president regarding the Phakamile School Project, but he had to reschedule until tomorrow. So, we came home and did some needed grocery shopping. Mom is going to make a great dinner combo for about 6 missionaries that will be coming over on Sunday to call home on Mother's Day. Beef stew, corn-

bread, juice and cheesecake!!!

I took off and went to a commercial section of Gonubie to talk about construction costs for PSP with builders. We have a truss company that is developing a quote for us on everything to do with the roof for the classrooms. I think the quote might come in pretty good because Mom sent along a bag of homemade chocolate chip cookies for him. I also made some contacts for concrete slab work. Anyway, you know the old saying, "You make your money when you buy." Or, in our case, "You build more classrooms when you buy."

I heard an interesting and scary news report today on the radio. Crooks operating in Johannesburg, have "spotters" at malls to follow people and see what they are buying. Then, the spotters notify their colleagues on the outside who will follow the unsuspecting shoppers in a

car, pull into their residence right behind them and rob them. There is nothing quite like the safety of Huntsville!

\*Photos:\*

- Sister Lucy Mcata holding a certificate showing she was sealed to her husband who was shot and killed in 1985. She was completely overwhelmed with the temple. Now, we just need Uncle Thom to find this guy and present the gospel to him! - Yes, missionaries do actually wash their cars! Our zone leaders, Elders Smith and Momoal-

ibe.

Be strong, stay strong in the gospel. Satan takes great pleasure in destroying lives. Today, you can poke him in the eye and say, "Not me!"

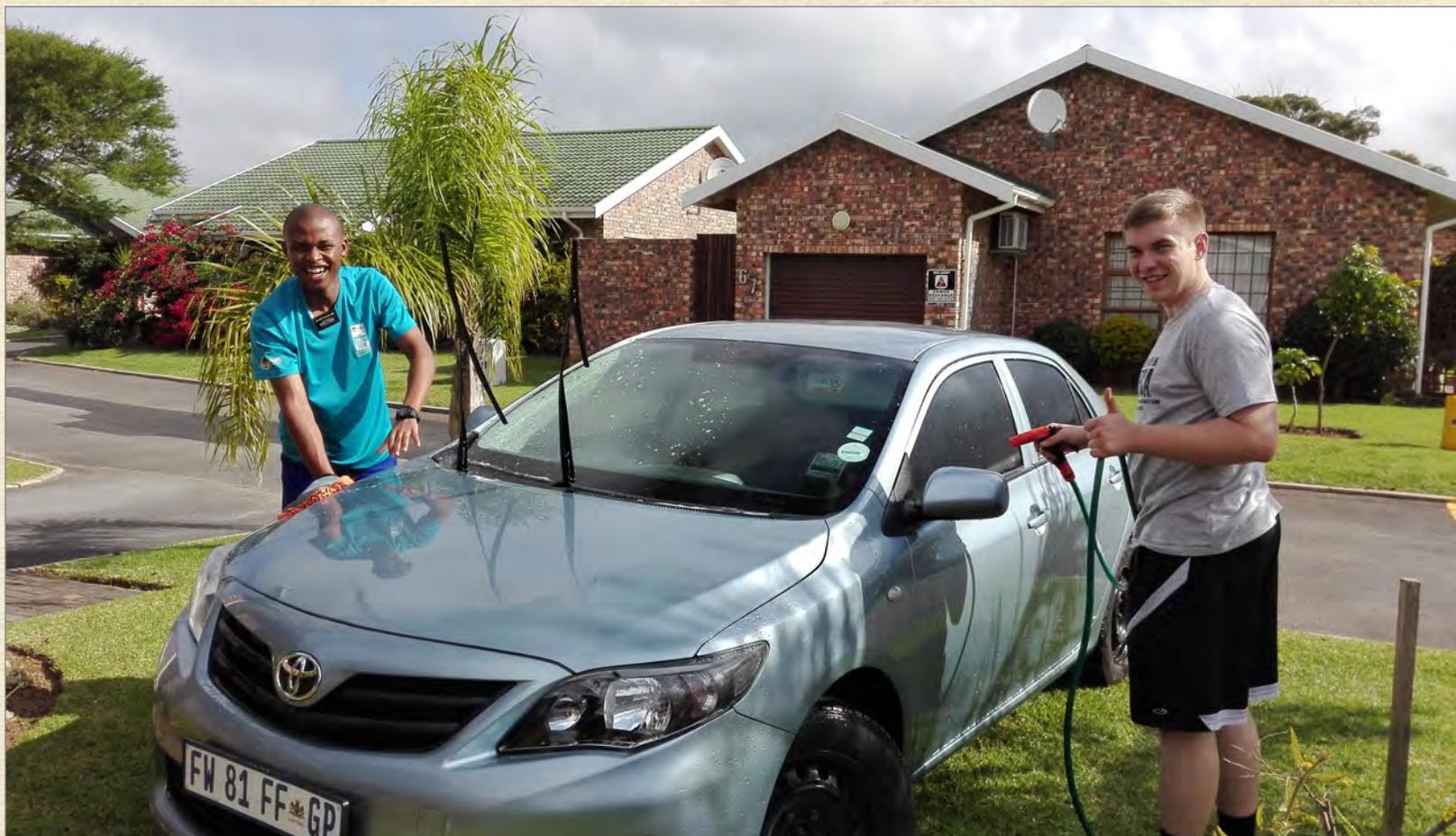
We love you,

Dad and Mom



Sister Lucy Mcata holding a certificate showing she was sealed to her husband who was shot and killed in 1985. She was completely overwhelmed with the temple. Now, we just need Uncle Thom to find this guy and present the gospel to him!

Yes, missionaries do actually wash their cars! Our zone leaders, Elders Smith and Momoalibe.



# May\_12\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We have had a busy Saturday. First thing this morning, we got a lot of cleaning and cooking done. Mom cut up something that looks like round steak and put it in the crock pot to simmer.

We then went to a meeting with the stake president about the estimate he and his company put together for building new classrooms at the Phakamile school. To say the least, it was a very detailed and professional proposal. Everything you can imagine was covered in the estimate, including classroom furniture, cabinets, flooring, etc. These would be first class, beautiful buildings.

He had been to both the municipality and the Department of Education regarding the plans and received the green light from both of them. According to him, the Department of

Education has developed building standards for school classrooms that go way beyond block buildings covered with plaster. The quotation was centered on brick/masonry classrooms.

So, the good news is that the plans to go ahead are basically approved, but the bad news is the cost. The bottom line price tag was staggering - about \$80,000 per classroom! That is a "no deal."

We were warned by another gentleman about using contractors. His name is Rommel Roberts. He said to make sure you are seated when they unveil the total cost of construction. To make a long story short, Rommel has been involved involved in humanitarian work in South Africa for 20 years. He has accomplished an awful lot during that time - everything from developing computer labs in high schools to constructing

buildings. The last building he did had a contractor bid for 3.5 million Rand. He built it for 750 K Rand.

He seems to think that he and the right people can get our original block-type building approved and off the ground for competitively a lot less money than maybe our original thinking (\$96,000 USD). More details to come as we will be meeting with him this coming week.

We had two young ladies baptized today. Both have been coming to Young Women's for some time. Now

we need to make sure that the ward really envelopes them and makes them feel completely comfortable at church.

I did two baptismal interviews this evening for President Lebethoa. These are baptismal candidates that have had some serious problems and needed to have a more in depth interview. I feel one is okay to go. The other one will need some careful consideration by the mission president. Both are young men and would be good missionaries some day.



Zizi Lubelwana. He will be going on a mission next month. Great young man and a great future leader for the Church in South Africa.

\*Photos:\*

- This is Zizi Lubelwana. He will be going on a mission next month. Great young man and a great future leader for the Church in South Africa. - Here is a recording of our mission song. There are only about 5.5 missionaries singing it. It really sounds awesome when you have two zones really getting into it!

We love you!

Dad and Mom

2018 MAY 14 }

# May\_14\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We miss you!

Of course, it rained today because I had the car washed.

We took a drive out to an area called Hanover to meet with Rommel and Robin Roberts. These two are heavily involved in humanitarian work and have done an awful lot in the last couple decades. Robin is from San Francisco area and we think Rommel is what they call a "colored" (mixed race) from South Africa.

We brought a discussion sheet with several key points to discuss the project of adding classrooms to the Phakamile Elementary School. To make a long story short, the proposal from our stake president contractor is completely out of reach. Rommel has visited with a builder and they have come up with some very

good numbers.

The key to making this happen is to have the school administration, the SGB (School Governing Board) and the town council person (elected position) present to the Department of Education their request to move forward with this plan to construct block buildings. Rommel and our celebrity contractor (the one that built the area's hospital) would also be at this meeting.

This may generate an approval to move forward. From that point it becomes a matter of how much money can be raised to determine how many classes can be built.

Tomorrow we meet with the family that had their 35 year old son stabbed and killed. The funeral is on Friday. We are going to help with providing bread so the family can make sandwiches. They are thinking

50 loaves.

\*Photos:\*

- Rommel and Robin operate the Hilltop Empowerment Centre. It is a farm land out in the middle of the country. They have a bicycle repair operation. A computer lab classroom. A carpentry shop - all in an effort to help the locals. - They are presently running a miniature school class to test out a new teaching method for English - Robin is a very good artist and is the one sitting at the table with the African children.

We love you. Be physically safe. Be spiritually safe.

Dad and Mom



Rommel and Robin operate the Hilltop Empowerment Centre. It is a farm land out in the middle of the country. They have a bicycle repair operation. A computer lab classroom. A carpentry shop - all in an effort to help the locals.



Robin is a very good artist and is the one sitting at the table with the African children.



They are presently running a miniature school class to test out a new teaching method for English.

2018

MAY 15 }

# May\_15\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family

When I sent out the update for yesterday (May 14th) I received back a message from every one's email saying "Blocked Message." So, I couldn't send it out. I just did a test email without getting that message. Hopefully you received the May 14th update without any issues.

We went to our area today to do a lot of visiting, but ended up running all over the place trying to find a suit for Thandikhaya. He could not find one in Mdantsane, so we took him to a few places in East London. We found a good suit for him. It was R 850. We paid R 700 and he paid R 150.

This evening was a "send off" for him. It was well-attended and a time for people to say good bye and wish him good luck. Mom had prepared a lot of food to help out. That, coupled

with what the Relief Society provided, was enough to feed the masses.

Thandikhaya will be a good missionary. He will learn a lot on his mission that will serve him well the rest of his life. We plan to stay in touch with him. Thanks to all who helped get him outfitted for his mission. He has expressed his thanks for you several times.

We love you. Be safe by making good choices!

Dad and Mom



Elder Thandikhaya Goje and his mother with us.



- Sister Stempa (gray dress) and Mom. She is a convert of a year and a half and really likes Mom.



Sister Velapi, Mom and I.  
She is a convert of less  
than a year. She was  
called to be the Gospel  
Doctrine teacher! She  
does her best.  
Fortunately, there are a  
lot of people who pitch  
in and make comments.

2018

MAY 16 }

# May\_16\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a very enjoyable time reading with the children at the Phakamile School this morning. We are finding that most of them are able to read well and sound out words. However, when you ask them about what they have read, they seem confused and at a loss of words to explain. So, we are going to be working more on understanding in the future.

We met with the school administration about the "next steps" in trying to add classrooms. Their job is to 1) find the original set of plans that were approved, and 2) meet with the town councilperson to gain his/her endorsement of the plan, and 3) schedule a meeting with the Department of Education to tell them what they are going to do. They need to get the department's approval to proceed with a block-type classroom

construction. Once we have the green light from the Department of Education, we will meet with the potential builder that has been recommended to us and see if we can sing out of the same hymn book.

We met with the Mkwando family today and finalized things on what Mom and I can do to help at the funeral. We have ordered 50 loaves of bread for sandwiches they plan to feed their family and friends after the funeral and burial. FYI, because this was a killing/"accident" only the men go to the cemetery for the burial. (Don't know the reasoning behind it all?)

We stopped by the house of a less active that has done a good job of turning us away time and time again. We found one of the daughters (age 50+) just outside their home in the front yard. The conversation went pretty good. We have a teaching ap-

pointment scheduled for Sunday night at 7 PM.

This particular person was baptized in 1993, a long time ago. When her father died, very few to none of the members of the ward came to visit. This offended the family and they have been absent for over 20 years! We hope and pray we might be able to rectify that truancy starting with our first meeting.

Maybe the important lesson here is that we attend our church meetings and do our part in the Church because of our testimonies and witness by the Spirit. The Church is full of imperfect people. We cannot afford to always be looking for ways to be offended because those ways will always surface from time to time. Why live below our privileges because of the words or actions of others? There is a veritable spiritual feast every Sunday for us to enjoy. We need to keep our eyes focused on that and take seriously the covenants we have made with the Lord..

\*Photos:\*

- These were some of the

Phakamile kids getting ready to participate in "Sports Day"

Love,

Dad and Mom

2018 MAY 17 }

# May\_17\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

This morning we met with a company that specializes in Alternative Building Technologies (ABT). We discussed cement fiberboard panels as an inexpensive way to build classrooms. Then, we went out to a school where they had actually built some classrooms for us to see. Long story made short - less expensive, but maybe twice as much as the block way we are thinking of going. Plus, I didn't like the looks of them. They look cheap.

Mom and I are helping with some things for a funeral tomorrow. We ordered 50 loaves of bread. I went to pick them up this afternoon and the good news was that they were baked and bagged, ready for pick-up. The bad news, none of the loaves were sliced! So, we had to cancel 2 appointments we had for this afternoon while a bakery worker and I

ran each loaf of bread through the slicing machine. (FYI, we unbagged them first.)

*\*Lesson learned\**: I need to make sure I give better instructions when I order things. Even though I said the loaves were for sandwiches, I did not instruct them to slice them.

I absolutely loved re-reading the conference talk by President Oaks (October 2017) about the "Family, a Proclamation to the World." I think he lays out the case that the Proclamation is as close as we are going to see in this day and age as "the revealed word of the Lord through His chosen servants." It's not policy, it's revelation. Those that follow and adhere to the doctrines and teachings in that document are doing so much to insure their progression on the covenant path toward eternal life.

*\*Photos:\**

- Bread, bread, bread! - The Golden Arches on this side of the world - People waiting to get the nod for work at an employment service - Pre-fab, cement fiberboard panel classrooms

Keep ALL of the commandments!  
We love you,

Dad and Mom



People waiting to get the nod for work at an employment service.



The Golden Arches on this side of the world.



Pre-fab, cement fiberboard panel classrooms.



Bread, bread, bread!

2018 MAY 19 }

# May\_19\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Clean the church day. We arrived a little late, but what a pleasant experience to see some many others (6-8 people) already working and cleaning. Mom and I put in about an hour of work and things were pretty much taken care of.

We had made the decision earlier that we would go out to visit the Steenbeek's. It's a bit of a drive, but we want them to know we love them and are thinking of them. Mom whipped together some hamburger rolls and her favorite Napa cabbage salad and a container of cookies. We had a good visit and I think we can say, "mission accomplished." Additionally, I slipped him R 500 (\$40 USD) for the working sketches he did for the additional classrooms at the Phakamile School.

Mom is busy making some word strips for teaching music tomorrow in one of our ward's Primary. She will be teaching, "We Thank The O God for a Prophet." She will do an absolutely smashing good job!

I think one lesson we have had reinforced since we have been here in South Africa is the value of letting people know you love them and care for them. That genuine, sincere love can have a tremendous influence on people. When we do this, we are acknowledging the inestimable worth of them as sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father.

\*Photos:\*

- The bread-slicing machine and the nice lady that helped me slice 50 loaves! - This is Matthew. As we were approaching the Steenbeek's home on a very narrow asphalt road, Matthew was coming in the opposite direction. We move to our

side of the road to give him plenty of room to pass. He was on a dirt bike and he moved to the shoulder of the road, hitting the bumps and divits along the way. He was doing fine until we waved to him. He raise one hand to wave back, hit a hole or bump and started to wildly go out of control. We could see in our mirrors him losing it and taking what appeared to be a pretty serious fall. I thought for sure there would be some broken bones. Fortunately, he survived with some bumps, bruises and a badly-wounded ego.  
- These are the type of road signs

announcing a bridge and what river flows under it. "Gulu" is one of the easy names we see for rivers.

We love you guys a lot. We miss you. We pray for your welfare daily.

Dad and Mom



The bread-slicing machine and the nice lady that helped me slice 50 loaves!



This is Matthew. As we were approaching the Steenbeek's home on a very narrow asphalt road, Matthew was coming in the opposite direction. We move to our side of the road to give him plenty of room to pass. He was on a dirt bike and he moved to the shoulder of the road, hitting the bumps and divits along the way. He was doing fine until we waved to him. He raise one hand to wave back, hit a hole or bump and started to wildly go out of control. We could see in our mirrors him losing it and taking what appeared to be a pretty serious fall. I thought for sure there would be some broken bones. Fortunately, he survived with some bumps, bruises and a badly-wounded ego.



These are the type of road signs announcing a bridge and what river flows under it. "Gulu" is one of the easy names we see for rivers.

# May\_20\_2018\_Update

FROM: [stevenson.danny@gmail.com](mailto:stevenson.danny@gmail.com)



Dear Family,

We have had a busy Sabbath!  
Our meetings went well. Mom

taught music in both Primaries today. I think she really enjoyed it even though it is frustrating to see the lack of staffing in the Primary. It is pretty bad and makes it difficult for the Primary president. We plan to bring this up in our meeting with the bishopric on Saturday.

Mom practiced with the 4th ward choir today. The choir is getting ready for ward conference in July. One of the songs will be "Press Forward Saints."

We tried in vain to find a young mother that we know from the Sweet Shop here in Gonubie. She lives in an area called, "Egoli." I should have done a better job of getting instructions and her phone number. We are looking forward to

meeting with her and her children and see if we can get the missionaries to teach her.

We visited Brother Dale Lusipho this afternoon. He was so grateful for the priesthood blessing I gave him a few months ago. He said, "It worked!" He also shared with us that after he did the baptism in the Johannesburg Temple for his father, his father came to him in a dream and said, "Thank you, son." Wow, what great spiritual experiences for this good brother. However, he said he is going to go back to his old church where his father was a pastor. Does that make any sense at all?

As we explained to him, it is going to be a little embarrassing when he gets to the other side and his father tells him that he has accepted the gospel and the old church where he was a pastor is not the true church of Jesus Christ. "Son, what have you

done?"

Some times it is easy to watch the clock in church. We are calculating how much time is left before we go home. Today I made a concerted effort to enjoy every minute of my time in church. Returning home comes quick enough. It is so much more important to be involved in the moment during church. I think I will learn a lot more and feel a lot more by doing this.

\*Photos:\*

- These are the word strips Mom

used to teach the Primary children today, "We Thank The O God for a Prophet." - These girls did a great job singing the "Lord's Prayer" Here is a link so you can hear the whole rendition - [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1El6jdRuL2tm3HBqwr-IV\\_ty8XIgAY7pbk/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1El6jdRuL2tm3HBqwr-IV_ty8XIgAY7pbk/view?usp=sharing)

We love you all very, very much.  
Make very, very good choices today!

Dad and Mom



These are the word strips Mom used to teach the Primary children today, "We Thank The O God for a Prophet."

These girls did a great job singing the "Lord's Prayer".



# May\_21\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Preparation Day. Unfortunately, I pulled weeds a good chunk of the day. Even though I have been in farming in Huntsville for almost two decades, I dislike pulling weeds. You see, my father was a farmer and he felt that imposing his opinions regarding weed-pulling upon his children was an appropriate act of parenthood. In reality, it was cruel and unusual punishment!

I love my father, but his overbearing, disciplinary approach to yard work was borderline unrighteous domination. May I describe some of his inhumane practices? First, the audacity to literally divide up the front yard with string to designate work areas for each of his boys. (All this did was create an atmosphere of dishonesty as Thom and I would move the boundaries to enlarge Uncle Greg's territory.) And, how mean is it to de-

prive your sons from going to a friend's house because their work was not done? Oh yeah, then, there were the times you felt depressed and singled-out because you didn't finish the job. You were a quitter. No wonder everyone hated me. No wonder I had no friends.

In those days there was no social services to prevent "work abuse." Dad expected the work to be done and no excuses. There was no use in complaining to other adults because they would always side with the parent. Life was tough, very tough!

Great success today in visiting the Department of Public Works. The architect I met with looked at me like I was crazy. The reception started out a little cold. He said building plans would be at least one month off. He went on to ask how building classrooms could happen if there are no public funding? When I explained

that money was being raised privately, the whole temperature of the conversation changed.

Before I left, he had working plans for both a three room set of classrooms and plans for a two room set of classrooms. He said he would get the okay from his supervisor and have the plans for me tomorrow! Bishop Beech (hospital contractor) will take them to the municipality for approval this week. Then, the big meeting with the Department of Education for their "agreement to complete the construction of the class-

rooms that never got started years ago." (This approach assumes no new approval, just the okay to resume construction.)

We want the meeting with the Department of Education to have in attendance, the school administration, the school governing board, the contractor from the local hospital, the town councilman, and Rommel Roberts (veteran humanitarian guy). We hope that will be enough fire power to get the green light.

\*Photos:\*



The before shot with stubborn weeds.



The after shot showing the "Temple Soil" kind of look we now have in our front yard.

- The before shot with stubborn weeds. - The after shot showing the "Temple Soil" kind of look we now have in our front yard. - This is the type of sunsets we have to deal with from day to day.

We love you. Be good!

Dad and Mom

## School Project Update

\*Project Status (as of 21 May 2018):\*

We frequently are asked how the classroom project is going for the Phakamile (pah-kah-me-lay) Elementary School. Here is a quick update:

- We have identified a builder that can construct the classrooms for a very good price. We haven't completed any final pricing with him, but we think we can build each

classroom for approximately \$15,000 (USD). - We have met with the architect from the Department of Public Works and have secured working drawings for classrooms. These are standard classrooms and will fit on the existing foundations at the school. Bishop Beech, who has been the lead contractor on the main hospital here in Mdantsane, will take the plans to the municipality for approval this week. - Once the plans are approved by the city, the school administration, along with other community leaders, will meet with the Department of Education to get their agreement to proceed with construction. - With a green light from the DOE, we will meet with the builder to develop a detailed schedule and timetable for materials and work to be completed. - We want a ground-breaking ceremony no later than June 18th and start of construction by June 22nd.

\*Local participation:\*

The families of the Phakamile School students are involved in raising funds on their own. Each family is responsible for contributing 40

Rand per student in their home. This is about \$3.20 (USD). That may not sound like a lot of money, but to them it is. It will take them about 2 - 3 months to set aside that amount of money.

\*Fund-raising:\*

We have told the school we can commit to at least one classroom at this point. Any additional classrooms depend on how well fund-raising will go. We would love to do five classrooms, but \*we need your support\*. Please consider your budgets and see if you can squeeze some discretionary cash for a very worthwhile, humanitarian project.

\*How to contribute:\*

Please send any donations to our daughter, Elizabeth Roberts at P.O. Box 46, Huntsville, Utah 84317.

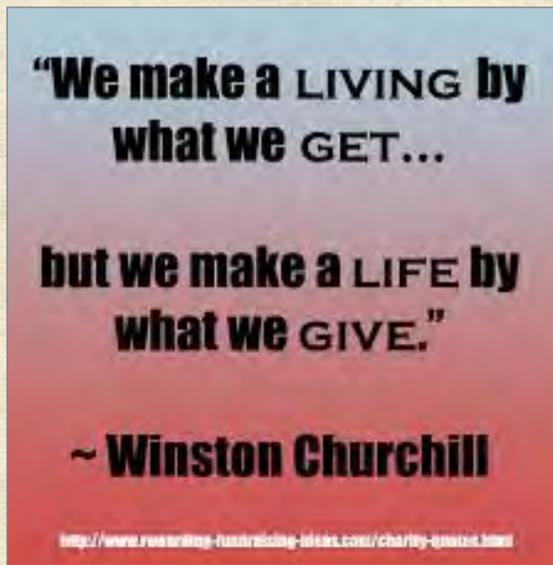
Make checks out to Phakamile School Project, Inc. This is a Utah Non-profit corporation. Funds will be held in Utah and only transferred to our South African checking account on an as-needed basis.

Thank you for anything you can do to help this important cause. Your donation becomes a future dividend to the community in the way of better-educated children.

Sincerely,

Chris and Mavis Stevenson

This is the type of sunsets we have to deal with from day to day.



2018 MAY 22 }

# May\_22\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

When we have little accidents in life, it is human nature to try and blame other people. Well, I am human, and, I naturally blame Mom for not seeing the huge piece of concrete I drove over, popped the front left tire and left us high centered, unable to move. It was a very bad, embarrassing moment. The whole left side of the car was in the air.

We were in a new construction area and there were road hazards all over the place. When I went up and over this piece of concrete there were about a half dozen woad workers in the area. I can't imagine what they thought when they saw us stuck on top of the cement. We all surveyed the situation. Then, six of us lifted up the back of the car and moved it off the cement block. I then changed the tire and we were back in busi-

ness.

Since I constantly advise the missionaries to be careful in their driving, we plan to get this car into our "panel beaters" ASAP and get any damage repaired before fingers of scorn and ridicule are pointed our way.

We met with the Fikiso family this morning. We went over the story of Nephi and his brethren returning to Jerusalem to retrieve the Brass Plates. The message we tried to deliver is that when the Lord gives us a commandment, we can accomplish it even if it takes us several times to get it done. For example, leaving the world and any habits you might have behind and following the Savior. We were trying to be bold and suggesting that they need to step up. We'll see what happens.

We hope to hear from the Depart-

ment of Public Works tomorrow. We stopped by today and the head honcho was not there. He is the person that needs to give permission to release working plans for the classrooms. The architect, who has the plans, is 100% on our side now that we gave him a bag of chocolate chip cookies. He will talk to the head man tomorrow and call us.

I heard a radio program yesterday about the dilemma of men in South Africa. To make a long story short, the real cure for problems both men and women have is the gospel of Je-

sus Christ. That trumps any psychology, any self-help books, any golden tongued, motivational speaker. "Wherefore, how great the importance to make these things known unto the inhabitants of the earth..." (2 Nephi 2:8)

\*Photos:\*

- My fish and chips (french fries)  
- Mom enjoying some delicious baked salmon - The chuck of concrete that severely damaged my ego and spotless driving record. - Damage to the car. I think our friends at Gonubie Body Worx can



My fish and chips (french fries)



Mom enjoying some delicious baked salmon.



The chunk of concrete that severely damaged my ego and spotless driving record.

repair this fairly inexpensively. -  
- - Keep all of the command-  
ments! We love you, - Dad and  
Mom



Damage to the car. I think our friends at Gonubie Body Worx can repair this fairly inexpensively.

# May\_23\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had an interesting visit today with a sister who joined the church in 2000. A fair amount of gossiping and finger-pointing led to her leaving the church. Fortunately, somewhere along the way, she came back into activity and has gone to the temple to be endowed. She was just released as our Primary President and is now the employment specialist in the ward.

We were able to have a good conversation about "spiritual eclipses" when the words and/or actions of others become so big in our lives that it blocks out the warmth and light of the gospel. Of course, that is the topic of the talk Cousin Gary gave in October Conference, 2017. Unfortunately, we see so much of the small things becoming the big things and thus, blocking the really important things.

I hope all of us build our testimonies on the "rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God." We cannot afford to let any gossip, any frailty of others, any misdeeds, any offenses derail us from the "Covenant Path." It is so critical that we stay true and clasp the iron rod firmly, moving forward...that is the only way!

We printed up a letter for the Phakamile School to sign, saying that they are working with us on this classroom project. I had the principal sign and stamp it today. Tomorrow we give it to the Department of Public Works and we walk away with the building plans we need. Then, municipality approval. Then, get the Department of Education to jump on board. Then, go to work!

\*Photos:\*

- If you recall, one of our families had a death of their son who was stabbed. Part of the tradition and

culture is to clean all of the son's clothing, his bedding, the house, paint the inside of the house...everything. This is a girl cleaning the son's blankets and pillow. - This is a play land at one of the local malls. Not as good as McDonald's, but still, a really fun place for kids to climb around.

Be good, be very good! Love,

Dad and Mom



If you recall, one of our families had a death of their son who was stabbed. Part of the tradition and culture is to clean all of the son's clothing, his bedding, the house, paint the inside of the house...everything. This is a girl cleaning the son's blankets and pillow.



This is a play land at one of the local malls. Not as good as McDonald's, but still, a really fun place for kids to climb around.

2018

MAY 24 }

# May\_24\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Missionary cars cost money and time! The bad news: we had a companionship that called this morning to advise me that their car would not start. The worse news: I took the afternoon to drive to their area (King William's Town) which added up to about 4 hours of time. KWT is about an hour and 15 minutes from our house.

Fortunately, it was only a bad battery. We jumped started their car and drove to the "Battery Centre" to have the battery tested. It was going dead, so we bought and installed a new one. Cost: \$72.00 (USD) and a bunch of down time for the missionaries and Mom and I.

Today we received a text message about a family in California that might want to help with the school classrooms. Our humanitarian

friend, Rommel Roberts, sent me the name of the family, "Gubler." I sent a text back to him, telling him I went to school in California with some Gubler's. The problem was that Spell Check rewrote Gubler in my text to "Giblets." So, he read that I went to school with some "Giblets."

\*Photos:\*

- Cost of used cars. To figure the cost of each car, multiply by .08 - The last few bags of flour that we have purchased have had weevil in them. I love Mom's baking, but now I have to stop and think that I may be getting a little extra protein. Well, what does not kill you, makes you stronger. We have taken back the flour and simply got a refund of our money. We are trying a different store and brand for flour now.

Love,

Dad and Mom



The last few bags of flour that we have purchased have had weevil in them. I love Mom's baking, but now I have to stop and think that I may be getting a little extra protein. Well, what does not kill you, makes you stronger. We have taken back the flour and simply got a refund of our money. We are trying a different store and brand for flour now.



Cost of used cars. To figure the cost of each car, multiply by .08.

2018 MAY 25 }

# May\_25\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

District meeting today. Our nervous district leader did a good job. Everyone does good to listen and participate. Mom had delicious pumpkin spice muffins and fruit for the missionaries after the meeting.

Mom needed to get some things done here at the house. I dropped her off and then, made plans to go our with Shakes to do some visiting. We had some very good visits. Hopefully we see some more people to church this coming Sunday. Too many get caught in a "spiritual eclipse" and it keeps them from enjoying the great blessings of the gospel.

Two of the sisters we visited have drinking problems. It seems in both cases, their selection of "friends" are adding to the problem. One freely

admits she likes to drink on the weekends. Her friends will call up and she gives in. I mentioned that some times when we want to change our lives we also need to change our friends. The people we surround ourselves with can be a great deterrent to us or a great blessing.

We love you very much. Have a great day!

Dad and Mom



The meat cases always have prepared meats covered in secret sauce(?)



Chicken feet are very popular here in the townships



Most street corners have people trying to sell things like produce, USB cords, dust pans, umbrellas, etc.

# May\_26\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We ran a lot of errands and various tasks today - Missionaries out to and from the airport, grocery shopping, email writing, receipts accounting for the financial secretary, cooking, taking missionaries to lunch, etc.

After going on some appointments with the young missionaries, I am very impressed at the Spirit they can bring into a home and the impact their message can have on an individual or family. It is a truly wonderful experience for them to feel the joy and satisfaction of teaching the truths of the gospel and to see the difference it can make in a person's life. It is an experience that cannot be replicated anywhere else in the world.

\*Photos:\*

- Here are a couple used cars from

a nearby car lot. Multiply the amount on the window by .08 to see how much it costs in U.S. currency. - I thought this was an interesting sign I saw in the Department of Public Works.

Have a great day making good choices! We love you,

Dad and Mom

## Tid Bits

Dear Family,

\*1. Word of the week: "absolution," formal release from guilt, obligation, or punishment. \*Example: \*The Church has officially declared absolution for any of its members who have ever cheered for or attended the University of Utah.

\*2. Quote of the week: "You are a

child of God. He is the father of your spirit. Spiritually you are of noble birth, the offspring of the King of Heaven. Fix that truth in your minds and hold to it. However many generations in your mortal ancestry, no matter what race or people you represent, the pedigree of your spirit can be written on a single line. You are a child of God." -Elder Boyd K. Packer

\*3. Scripture of the week:\*

Now the cause of this iniquity of the people was this—Satan had great

power, unto the stirring up of the people to do all manner of iniquity, and to the puffing them up with pride, tempting them to seek for power, and authority, and riches, and the vain things of the world. -3 Nephi 6:15

\*4. Joke of the week:\*

\*Q:\* Why was Goliath astonished when David hit him with a stone?

\*A:\* Because such a thing had never entered his head before.

\*Q:\* When Goliath is resurrected,



I thought this was an interesting sign I saw in the Department of Public Works.



Family reunion  
bear

should you tell him this joke?

\*A:\* No - he already fell for it once.

\*5. Bee's Knees Award:\* Here is a guy that happily, joyfully takes life seriously. The gospel keeps him grounded as he goes about his various responsibilities. He is generous, thoughtful and loving. He is a great father and a great husband. His children love him. His favorite time is playing with his kids. Next favorite thing is watching his children play and achieve. He is a hard-worker. He is somewhat competitive. He tailgates on the freeway. He is a true-

blue-BYU fan in both good and bad seasons. He walks the talk, Daniel, you are the Bee's Knees, brotha!!!

\*6. Gospel question of the week:  
\*When was the Kirtland Temple dedicated?

\*7. If I were you (advice to grand kids): \* If I were you, I would sit reverently during sacrament meeting and really concentrate on the Savior as the sacrament is being passed. Try it. I think you will like it.

\*8. What I learned this week:\* There

is "Divine Design" to our lives. (Elder Rasband, April General Conference 2018)

\*9. What I am grateful for:\* A righteous posterity!

\*10. My goal for the week:\* I almost had the working plans for the school project. We received the okay to have them released, but no one seemed to be working on Friday when we went to pick them up (no surprise). I will get them on Monday. My goal this week is to get the plans approved by the municipality.

\*11. Photo of the week: \* Can you believe this little guy is going on a mission?

We love you all very much. Have fun living the gospel this week! SCP (Stay on the Covenant Path)

Dad and Mom



2018 MAY 27 }

# May\_27\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Church was great today. Fairly good attendance and Mom and I did not have to do anything except enjoy sacrament meeting and our classes!

We had a baptismal interview after church. We picked up the missionaries from a ward at the other end of Mdantsane and drove to the young man's home who needed the interview. He was out front as we were approaching the house. When we went through the gate and to the back of the house, he was gone. According to the father, he was not inside the house. We went outside and the missionaries were looking for him with no success.

The missionaries are thinking that he may have gotten cold feet and did not want to go through an interview with his father present? The reason I

am doing the interview for President Lebethoa is because the young man had a problem with "Question #4" in the baptismal interview by the district leader. This is the question where something serious has happened in the person's life that needs closer examination.

Tonight we are going to Skype with a couple who are serving a mission in the Congo. They were instrumental in helping to build some school classrooms in their work area. They will have some good tips on getting Church Welfare Services involved with our school project. With the okay this week from the Department of Education to proceed, we think it would be a good time to ask our mission president to contact the area office in Johannesburg on getting the Church involved.

\*Photos:\*

- Sister Velapi - new member of

the Church, maybe 6 months. She was called to be the Gospel Doctrine teacher in Sunday School. - This is another fairly new member. She has a little, crossed-eyed boy (maybe 7 years old) that comes to sit by us all the time during Sacrament Meetings.. When we attend the other ward Sacrament Meeting, he will leave Primary and come sit by us during that meeting too.

Love,

Dad and Mom



Sister Velapi - new member of the Church, maybe 6 months. She was called to be the Gospel Doctrine teacher in Sunday School.



This is another fairly new member. She has a little, crossed-eyed boy (maybe 7 years old) that comes to sit by us all the time during Sacrament Meetings. When we attend the other ward Sacrament Meeting, he will leave Primary and come sit by us during that meeting too.

2018

MAY 29 }

# May\_29\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

You may not believe this, but a good portion of the morning (from 6:30 AM to 10:30 AM) was taken up with car repairs and maintenance. The oil change on our car was only \$145.00 USD! The cars are going one of these days and good old walking will be enthroned as the primary weapon of choice for meeting and teaching people.

I dropped by the school yesterday and they were very excited about our progress on the classrooms. They are trying to schedule the meeting with the Department of Education this week. Keep your fingers crossed and say your prayers!

We had some good visits today. We think our first three visits today will result in people coming back to church. One of our visits was to a lady who is pregnant and expecting in

July. She was told by some church members that she shouldn't come to church when she is pregnant and not married, that it was some kind of desecration. Mom explained that information is completely wrong and as far from the truth as it could be. We told her church is where the medicine is and we ALL need spiritual healing.

One of our missionaries was notified this morning by President Lebethoa that his father had passed away yesterday. The president asked me to let him call home and talk to his mother and for me to visit with him if needed. He was teary-eyed and saddened, but overall, we think he will be okay. The sad thing is that he goes home in 6 weeks. He is the only member of the church in his family. He is from Tonga. The best advice is to remember all the good times, pray for comfort and be thankful for the great Plan of Salvation.

\*Photos:\*

- Here is a better photo of the train that runs from East London up to Mdantsane. Sometimes this train can get absolutely jammed packed, hot and stuffy. - We visited Brother Sibuyi this afternoon. He has been less active, but now brings his son to church each Sunday. His little boy observes the Aaronic Priesthood passing the Sacrament. So, at home, he broke up some bread and pretended to be passing it to those in the house. Tell all our grandchildren that they are being watched and need to be the best ex-

amples they can be.

Pay someone a compliment today!

Love,

Dad and Mom



Here is a better photo of the train that runs from East London up to Mdantsane. Sometimes this train can get absolutely jammed packed, hot and stuffy.



We visited Brother Sibul this afternoon. He has been less active, but now brings his son to church each Sunday. His little boy observes the Aaronic Priesthood passing the Sacrament. So, at home, he broke up some bread and pretended to be passing it to those in the house. Tell all our grandchildren that they are being watched and need to be the best examples they can be.

2018

MAY 31 }

# May\_31\_2018\_Updates

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

I think we did some good today! Mom knocked herself out preparing a taco lunch for a less active couple we have been visiting and a return missionary type that was recently released as our Elders Quorum President and is also staying with this couple. The lunch was a success.

This couple got the phone number from us of our ex branch president who can still perform marriages here in South Africa. They are going to call him and schedule a time. They are shooting for next week. This is huge because we don't think the Labola (Money paid to the bride's family) has been arranged. We think they are saying, along with President Nelson, that Labola is not consistent with the Church's position on marriage.

Here is a good link to the Labola practice in this part of the world:  
<http://www.destinyman.com/2012/02/28/negotiating-lobola-2012-02-27/>

Zine (bride) said, I don't care what my family says, I'm getting married no matter what. Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead!

Thanks to all who participated and helped with the funeral activities for Keith Jackson. Let's remember the Jackson Family in our prayers.

\*Photos:\*

- Sinethemba Toli and Zine, soon to be newly weds! - Melikhaya - return missionary from Mozambique. Was a Cricket player prior to joining the Church.

Who can you help today? Who can you lift and bless their life? Love,

Dad and Mom



Melikhaya - return missionary from Mozambique. Was a Cricket player prior to joining the Church.



Sinethemba Toli and Zine, soon to be newly weds!

2018 JUNE 1 }

# Jun\_01\_2018\_Update

FROM: Elder and Sister Stevenson



Dear Family,

I went to bed last night and forgot to complete and email the update for June 1st. Please forgive me!

We had our district meeting this morning. We are grateful the district leader is trying hard, but it is obvious he is a little intimidated each time he does a training. No big deal, for the most part, we get out of the trainings what we put into them ourselves. This is good experience for him.

Mom went home after the meeting and I was suppose to meet the Young Men's President from the 4th Ward so we could go visit all his young men. I waited and waited - no show! Second week in a row. So, I went up to the Phakamile School to see where the school administration stood on setting a meeting with the

Department of Education. Nothing firm yet, but they did say they need to get a letter from us and their own letter to present to the DOE.

\*Photos:\*

- Would you put this on your food for a million dollars? Monkey Gland Sauce, uuuuum, yummie! - Mom and I bought 30 plates for the wards to use for various events. Normally they are R 15, but we were able to get them down to R 10 by purchasing 30 plates.

We love you very much! Do good!

Dad and Mom



Mom and I bought 30 plates for the wards to use for various events. Normally they are R 15, but we were able to get them down to R 10 by purchasing 30 plates.



Would you put this on your food for a million dollars? Monkey Gland Sauce, uuuuum, yummie!

2018 JUNE 2 }

# Jun\_02\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

My bike ride this morning was a little chilly, but tolerable with the right gear - long sweat pants, windbreaker and gloves. June, July and August are suppose to be the cold months. If I remember correctly, last year it was cool, but nothing like Utah winters. I put on a light jacket a handful of times. Mostly sweater weather.

We have a missionary send off tomorrow. Mom bought large flour tortillas and all the trimmings to make some kind of a roll up with cream cheese and veggies. Once they are rolled up, she will slice them and make a beautiful tray of bite size horse doers. (hors d' oeuvres)

I went to the church today to drop off plates we purchased for the ward, drop off some refreshments for a YSA activity and to work with

our Elders Quorum President to go visit some of the members of his quorum. Well, I got one of the three things accomplished. I dropped off the plates. The EQ President had something else come up and there was no YSA activity at our chapel or the one at the other end of town.

I stopped off at the home of Brother Gadlela who passed away last week. There was a lot of neighbors, friends and relatives there. The sister of the brother who died (not a member) was very kind to invite me in and introduce me to all the people in the house. Then, she ask me to pray. It was a good opportunity to express appreciation for the good people who came to visit and comfort her and for the great blessing of the resurrection.

\*Photos:\*

- This is Brother "Shakes." He is as faithful as they come! Here he is

working at the church, helping with the Saturday cleaning for the Mdantrsane 1st Ward. - I keep spare keys for all the mission cars in our two zones.

We love you and pray for your physical and spiritual welfare daily.

Dad and Mom



This is Brother "Shakes." He is as faithful as they come! Here he is working at the church, helping with the Saturday cleaning for the Mdantrsane 1st Ward.

I keep spare keys for all the mission cars in our two zones.



2018 JUNE 3 }

# Jun\_03\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Busy day. We saw a number of our less actives at church today for which we are very grateful. However, we are re-thinking our strategy with less actives. Our new thinking is to visit the active members and challenge them to befriend less actives that live near them. We want them to make these less active members their best friends. Church will follow as they feel the genuine love they receive.

We have an elderly lady (Mama Mcata) that is always a funny girl in Sunday School. We can't understand her Xosa, but when she says something, everyone gets a chuckle. She is a faithful member that has been to the temple and is one of the anchors in the ward. She is full of wisdom.

The 4th ward Sacrament Meeting attendance was 82 today. The high has

been 105. This is a new ward, so it might take a little longer to get our attendance up to where it should be.

We had a missionary send off today for Zizibele Lubelwana. He will be a great missionary. He has been out with our Mdantsane missionaries many, many times. He has come with us a couple of times. He knows what the mission is all about. His older brother left on his mission a month or two ago.

This morning I had the privilege to give a name and a blessing to Liqhawe Joy Elijah Xamane. I butchered his first name in the blessing. We call him Joy for short. The kid is a chunk and a half! His dad is a very big man. Unfortunately, the dad has gone less active and left his family. It would have been so much nicer to have him perform the ordinance.

We were going to have a baptismal interview today at 4 PM, but the missionaries called me and said their investigator still needed more time. My guess is that he is still having some issues trying to repent of some major sin in his life. Good for him to wait. I hope all of our missionary grandchildren will make sure their investigators are ready to be baptized. Too many join the church without proper repentance and weak testimonies. We need saints with "enduring conversion."

\*Photos:\*



Joy, Sister Xamane and Elder Stevenson. Joy sat still on his mother's lap through the whole blessing.

- Zizibele Lubelwana, to serve a mission in Durban, South Africa. - Joy, Sister Xamane and Elder Stevenson. Joy sat still on his mother's lap through the whole blessing. - Me and some of my homies.

We love you. Be smart. Make smart choices.

Dad and Mom



Zizibele Lubelwana, to serve a mission in Durban, South Africa.

## Tid Bits

Dear Family,

\*1. Word of the week:\* "penchant," a strong or habitual liking for something or tendency to do something.

\*Example:\* Calvin has a strong penchant for being outside.

\*2. Quote of the week:\*

\*3. Scripture of the week: \* (3 Nephi 13:22-23)

The light of the body is the eye; if, therefore, thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If, therefore, the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

\*4. Joke of the week:\*

In Salt Lake City, many people spend time researching their family tree. Even the big department stores sell genealogy supplies. A newcomer to Salt Lake City got a job as a clerk at one of the big department stores.

She received her introduction to genealogy one day when a customer came into the store and asked "Where do I find the Family Group Sheets?" The new clerk, with a shocked look on her face, answered, "Family Group Sheets? All we carry are the King, Queen, double and twin size sheets."

\*5. Bee's Knees Award: \*Can you drive grandpa's Porsche without jerking the car to pieces when you let out the clutch? Probably not. This kid is smart. He is an excellent student. He goes on dates and girls hope and pray he takes them out. He is a very good example of the gospel. He loves his family and reveres his parents. He is an outstanding basketball player and is athletic in any sport he pursues. He is determined to fill an honorable mission for the Lord. He scored in the 90's on grandpa's instructional driving course. David Walker, you are the Bee's Knees, brotha!!!

\*6. Gospel question of the week:\*  
What was a token of the Everlasting Covenant between God and Israel:  
1. Circumcision 2. The Sacrament 3. Rainbow 4. Manna

\*7. If I were you (advice to grand kids):\* If I were you, I would do things around your house to make it look beautiful. For example, pull weeds, pick up trash, straighten the garage, sweep the patio, etc. Try it. I think you will like it.

\*8. What I learned this week:\* One should always have a back-up plan if your original plans fail to materialize.

\*9. What I am grateful for:\* A good night of sleep.

\*10.. My goal for the week:\* Call President Lebethoa regarding our Phakamile efforts and get his advice on how to proceed from where we are.

\*11. Photo of week:\* Two of these three people are true masterpiece, works of art. Can you pick them out?

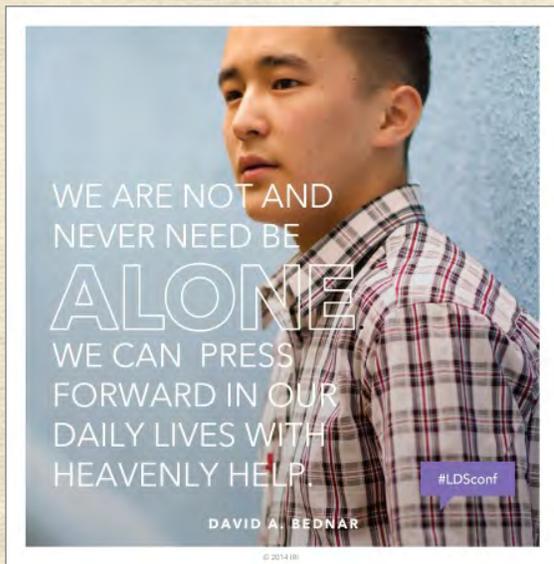
We love you. Have fun living the gospel this week. Living righteously is cool!

Dad and Mom

Me and some of my homies.



Italy 2002



2018 JUNE 4 }

# Jun\_04\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

First of all, I sent a photo a day or to ago to the family showing a picture of a bottle of "Monkey Gland Sauce." I found out today what that is all about. "Monkey Gland" is another way to say something has a little extra kick to it. For example, you good ask for a steak that has a little monkey gland to it. Or, make my hamburger monkey gland. It would be like a Bar-b-que sauce with a little extra kick to it.

Our car has been in the shop all day. We get it back tomorrow morning. I have personally committed that I will be a lot more careful as I drive. No more cement blocks! Fortunately, Mom is always good to be on the alert and has prevented us from a few accidents with her cautionary screams of terror. We had our zone leaders over today so we could discuss the logistics of moving mission-

aries around on Wednesday, transfer day. We fed them pizza and cookies.

I took some cookies over to the girls that work in the pizza shop. This is the second time now and they love Mom's baking. This is excellent public relations for the church and when you want a little extra cheese on the pizza without paying for it! Please do not be jealous or angry with me because I had fried mac 'n cheese for dinner.

\*Photos:\* - Many of the homes in the nicer areas of town have solar heating systems. One person in our complex says he has paid for his unit in savings and does not have a heating bill each month. I like the idea of no heating bill, but they need to do something about the looks of the unit.

Love,  
Dad and Mom



This is the view of the dirt road I take when I am finishing my bike ride. At the end of the road is a private home that is very secluded and heavily gated.



Many of the homes in the nicer areas of town have solar heating systems. One person in our complex says he has paid for his unit in savings and does not have a heating bill each month. I like the idea of no heating bill, but they need to do something about the looks of the unit.

2018 JUNE 5 }

# Jun\_05\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

There have been two very remarkable church events in the last week. One is the fireside for youth with President and Sister Nelson, and, the second one is, the "Be One" celebration at the Conference Center. Both have been simply outstanding. If you have not watched them, we highly recommend you go to LDS.org and take the time to view them.

We hope each one of our grandchildren see the youth fireside. It does such a great job of helping the youth get some perspective on what is "the most important" work they can be involved with.

We had a special treat this afternoon. We had made arrangements with a couple of young men (who happen to be converts in the last year or so) to teach us like the mis-

sionaries would, the Restoration lesson. We showed up and pretended to be investigators. Their job was to teach us. They were not very well prepared, but all things considered, they did a good job. Consequently, they each were rewarded with a baggie of cookies. Good pay for 30 minutes of work!

I had a very good conversation with Brother Phillip Montlhodi who is the Director for Welfare Services in Johannesburg. He said they would be interested in helping out with the Phakamile School Project. More details to come. It is premature to say what they can or cannot do at this point. And, we need to make sure our mission president is cool with them possibly jumping in. More details to come.

\*Photos:\*

- This is Joy, my good buddy. -  
Attached are the working plans for

the additional classrooms. Study them and make any recommendations you might have. We will run them by the committee and get right back to you!

Love,

Dad and Mom

2018 JUNE 6 }

# Jun\_06\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a busy day carting missionaries around due to transfers. Bus station, airport, buying lunch, waiting, visiting, etc.

We have been here long enough that we recognize some of the missionaries coming back to serve on the Eastern Cape. It is good to see them and discover they are doing well and are happy. We love missionaries.

We had a telephone call from President Lebethoa. He will call us tomorrow at 2 PM to discuss the Phakamile School Project and a few other things that are on his mind. We think it might have something to do with our boarding situation or even a small reassignment of sorts. We will let you know.

\*Photos:\* - It is amazing down at the ocean to see birds virtually hold

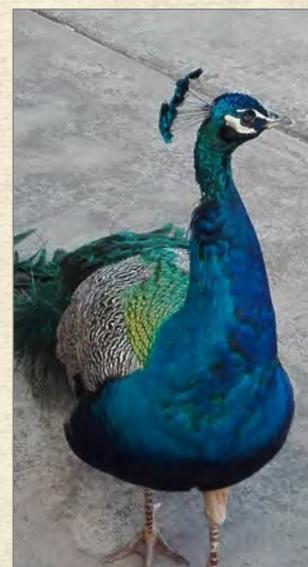
still in the air as the off-shore winds suspend them as long as they want. They just hang out looking for sea food that washes up on the shore. - A double-decker Greyhound. Out missionary rode from Port Elizabeth to East London in the front row on the second level. He said it was awesome! - This guy is a regular at the BUCO Hardware Store.

We love you,

Dad and Mom



It is amazing down at the ocean to see birds virtually hold still in the air as the off-shore winds suspend them as long as they want. They just hang out looking for sea food that washes up on the shore.



This guy is a regular at the BUCO Hardware Store.



A double-decker Greyhound. Our missionary rode from Port Elizabeth to East London in the front row on the second level. He said it was awesome!

2018 JUNE 7 }

# Jun\_07\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a very good chat with our mission president today.

We spoke for about a half hour on three topics:

1. Phakamile School Project - Full steam ahead on the project. He had some general guidelines for us to follow, but we are going to see things happen. FYI, we have three quotations coming in from builders. We'll see who takes home the trophy.

2. Missionaries living in the township - We are moving quickly to get rid of the cars and have the missionaries living in the "nicer areas" of Mdantsane. We are going to look at one tomorrow that sounds pretty good. There is another one at the other end of the township that might have potential. 3. Mom and I serving the missionaries that are in Mthatha (225 Km's away) - This will mean periodic trips to that location to check on missionaries, solve

boarding issues, provide supplies, check on medical problems, etc. It is a 3.5 hour trip by car. We'll probably spend the night there and come home the next day.

We are still what will happen in August when the Davies go home? I think worse case scenario is we manage the two zones because they will not put another senior couple here. I think any new senior couples will be going to Port Elizabeth.

\*Photos:\*

- Elder Gillis (Mesa, Arizona), Mom and I. - Elder Smith (with the Zulu head band) - Elders Lupeni (Tonga), Monoalibe (Johannesburg), Smith (St. George, Utah) and Armstrong (Johannesburg)

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

Dad and Mom



Elder Smith (with the Zulu head band)



Elder Gillis (Mesa, Arizona), Mom and I.

Elders Lupeni (Tonga),  
Monoalibe  
(Johannesburg), Smith  
(St. George, Utah) and  
Armstrong  
(Johannesburg)



# Jun\_08\_2018

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had some missionaries that had their car go on the blink last night. They are about one hour away from us, so I couldn't get out and see them too easy. We had the car towed to a holding yard in their area. Mom and I drove out there this morning and checked out the car. Since it was an electrical problem, we had it hauled to a trusted electrical shop here in Gonubie. They should have it fixed by tomorrow afternoon if we are lucky. That is much, much better than the dealer who would probably have it for a month and then, charged 3 times as much money or more.

We picked up the missionaries while we were in King Williams Town and took them to our district meeting. Fortunately, the Davies were heading out their way this afternoon and gave them a ride back. Mom and I

had to leave the meeting early so we could attend a wedding at the church.

Today, Sinethemba Toli and his fiancée were married at the church by Brother Magwaca, who has a license to perform marriages in South Africa. This is a good couple. He is an individual that went on a mission and returned home a week later due to some repentance issues. He went less active for years. He ended up meeting a Mormon girl from Queenstown. They started a relationship and even started to live together.

About three months ago, a senior couple that use to be missionaries here came back to visit the area. They found Sinethemba who they had known when they served here. Sinethemba was considering some changes in his life. The Fowers' visit confirmed that he was thinking correctly. He and his girlfriend (a less

active member) started to come to church off and on. They knew things had to change and decided getting married was the right way to go about it.

This marriage was very nontraditional. No family was there except for a sister. No big elaborate wedding party. No band. Just a few close members of the church who were friends of the groom and bride. Mom and I were invited because we have been visiting them for about three months now. We were teaching them the "Marriage and Family Relations"

course. They are planning on going to the temple a year from now.

I was called on to speak and so was Mom. They are making good choices and will be valuable members in our ward for a long time.

\*Photos:\*

- Sinethemba and Zine. Brother Magwaca was the person who performed the marriage. He use to be the branch president years ago. Don't know who the white people are???



Brother Magwaca was the person who performed the marriage. He use to be the branch president years ago.



Sinethemba and Zine.



Make wise choices. The decisions you make today may have eternal consequences!

Love,

Dad and Mom

Don't know who the white people are???



2018 JUNE 9 }

# Jun\_09\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We attended a funeral this morning. Our dear friend, old Brother Gadlela had passed away. Funerals are very important events with the Xhosa people. We have one family that has been less active for fifteen years because they said, "No one from the church came to her father's funeral."

This funeral was held in the our LDS chapel. The good news is that many non-members heard some good gospel preaching today. The bad news, the funeral went 2 hours and 35 minutes! The whole service was in Xosa, so it was a little difficult to stay tuned. And, about the two hour mark, I needed to make the bladder gladder.

We visited Sister Grace this afternoon. She is 93 years old and the sweetest old lady you could ever

imagine. We took her three oat-meal/chocolate chip/banana muffins. We shared a scripture message with her and her daughter that is often taking care of her. We had prayer and were leaving when she said, "I love that song you sing in our church." She wanted to sing for us. We heard the most beautiful rendition of "God Be with You Until We Meet Again." She apologized about her voice, but we felt we were in the presence of a heavenly angel.

We went to a nice restaurant for dinner this evening. Our guests were Rommel and Robin Roberts. Rommel has been involved in humanitarian programs for thirty plus years. He has a builder that will be submitting a quote for us to send to the area office in Jo-burg. Robin is a very pleasant woman from the San Francisco area. The two of them have adopted two beautiful black girls - Oweto (8) and Nora (15). They came along too.

We thought we were going to see a proposal this evening, but no such luck. However, it was good to get to know them better. Rommel and I each had Ostrich medallions. They were delicious. The meat was very tender and flavorful. Just about zero fat.

FYI, another lizard has taken residency behind our AC unit. He is now entombed with masking tape.

\*Photos:\*

- The "Who's Your Daddy" contest is a tragically popular question in the

township. - In our upscale strip mall near our home, you can purchase several different drinking games. Alcohol is a real problem for many in this country - township or among the whites in the city.

We love you all very, very much!

Dad and Mom



In our upscale strip mall near our home, you can purchase several different drinking games. Alcohol is a real problem for many in this country - township or among the whites in the city.

**WHO'S YOUR DADDY?**



**WIN A WEBER & ACCESSORIES**

**WIN A FATHER'S DAY WEBER BRAAI AND ACCESSORIES WORTH R2500 AND R1000 BALFOUR PARK SHOPPING CENTRE VOUCHERS.**

**TO ENTER:** Like our Facebook page, share this competition post, find the Weber braai on display in the Centre and inbox us the secret message displayed inside the braai.

The "Who's Your Daddy" contest is a tragically popular question in the township.

# Tid Bits

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

\*1. Word of the week: \* "convivial," friendly, lively, and enjoyable. \*Example: \*We had a very convivial evening as we dined with Rommel and Robin Roberts.

\*2. Quote of the week:\*

\*3. Scripture of the week: \*

The ablinde <<https://www.lds.org/languages/eng/content/scriptures/nt/matt/11#note5a>> receive their bsight <<https://www.lds.org/languages/eng/content/scriptures/nt/matt/11#note5b>>, and the lame walk, the clepers <<https://www.lds.org/languages/eng/content/scriptures/nt/matt/11#note5c>> are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the dpoor <<https://www.lds.org/languages/eng/content/scriptures/nt/matt/11#note5d>> have the gospel

preached to them. -Matthew 11:5

\*4. Joke of the week:\*

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 girl is uber fantastic. She is more beautiful than 10 of your most beautiful beauty queens all smushed together. She is smarter than 20 rocket scientists all smushed together. She plays the piano like Mozart and Beethoven. Your heart melts as she plays the violin so fluidly, so gracefully. She loves to read. She is a tremendous example of living the gospel to her family and her friends. She loves her brothers and little sister. She is a happy, really cool, awesome kid. Ella, you are the Bee's Knees, sistah!!!

\*6. Gospel question of the week: \* Who beheaded John the Baptist?

\*7. If I were you (Advice to grand kids): \* If I were you, I would learn how to cook really good. Try it. I think you will like it.

\*8. What I learned this week: \* The Church really knows what they are doing in teaching self-reliance. It's the Lord's way and it is different than man's way.

\*9. What I am grateful for: \* Electronic Fuel Injection

\*10. My goal for the week: \*Get at least two building proposals off to Jo-burg for the additional classrooms.

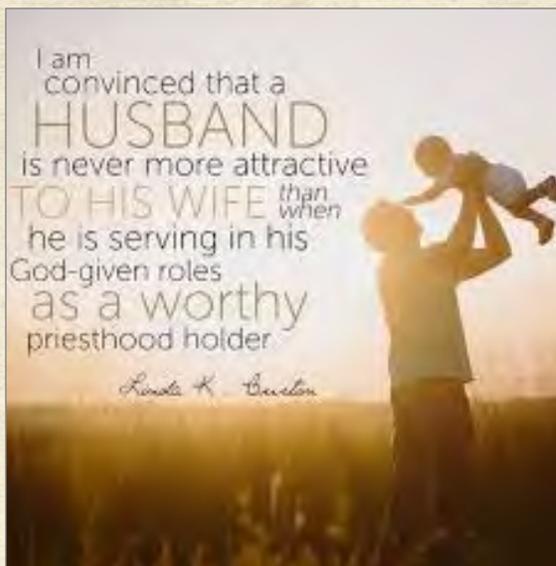
\*11. Photo of the week: \* Who are these strange-looking people???

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

Dad and Mom



Who are these strange-looking people???



day.

Dad and Mom

## Jun10\_2018\_Update

Dear Family,

Attendance at church today was rather light. I counted no more than 60 people in the 1st ward sacrament meeting. In the 4th ward priesthood meeting we had 6 Melchizdek Priesthood holders and maybe 6 to 10 Aaronic Priesthood boys.

I attended both Primaries today so I could take photos of each of the children. Mom wants to make a Primary

board with photos of all the children under a banner that says, "I am a Child of God." This coming Saturday the 4th ward is having a reactivation activity where we send out as many of the active, faithful members as possible to visit the less active. My job is to develop routes for the members to go visit. We hope we get a lot of people to show up because there is a lot more less actives than active members. The idea is very good, but there is a real lack of communication and organization.

We love you more and more each



Here are two of the Primary children we took pictures of.



Just want you to see how really beautiful and sweet they are.



Mom leading the children in a "get-out-the-jiggles" exercise prior to teaching them a Primary song. She has a keyboard up front that she uses.

2018 JUNE 11 }

# Jun\_11\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We have had a busy preparation day. I had the car washed and so far, no rain! I bought data for our Internet. I put together a photo album for our recently married friends. I dropped off a missionary car for some new wheel bearings and got the car back by 3:30 PM. I did some banking. I bought two apple pies at McDonald's. I took care of some church expenditure book work. Mom and I drove the missionary car and our own car out to King William's Town (one hour away from us). And...a lot more.

Mom has been busy knocking out a bunch of wash, house-cleaning and exercising. She did super driving on the main highway to King William's Town. I could see her in my rear view mirror. However, she appeared to be drowsy or drunk. She assured me she was not drowsy.

One of the lessons we learned today is that we can spend a whole lot less money (The Lord's money) by using capable auto repair people instead of the dealership. We are approaching 3 months now where one of our missionary cars has been at the dealership waiting to be repaired. The car needs a head job. We are leaving it there because they said it will be covered by the warranty. I am not sure it is worth it???

Anyway, we do not like to spend the Lord's money if we don't have to. We know of one senior couple that runs up a pretty hefty bill each month buying lumber, weed-eater, power tools, appliances when maybe a repair job would work best, etc., etc. We are not trying to be too critical, but we think we could get along for a lot fewer purchases. Anyway, that's why we have a mission office. Hopefully they have things under control.

It is amazing how many people go bare-footed in this country. It is not unusual to see adults and children in bare feet at the grocery store, restaurants or just walking around the mall. Mom will only go bare foot in the house. As she happily skips around the house, I call her my "Bare Foot Contessa."

Please do not hate me because I had fried mac 'n cheese this evening for dinner and you did not.

\*Photos:\* - I saw a gentleman from Zimbabwe selling "Ironwood" carvings out of the back of his truck. Ironwood is very, very heavy, dense wood. A chunk of it could be passed off as a rock. The lion you see in the photo took one year to carve. And, the lion is yours for only \$2,000 USD. - The Missionaries in King William's Town, Elder Sinkurciri (Fiji) and Elder Rebelo (Jo-burg, South Africa) live next to a housing unit that caught fire not too long ago. Good missionaries!

Love,





I saw a gentleman from Zimbabwe selling "Ironwood" carvings out of the back of his truck. Ironwood is very, very heavy, dense wood. A chunk of it could be passed off as a rock. The lion you see in the photo took one year to carve. And, the lion is yours for only \$2,000 USD.



Dad and Mom





The Missionaries in King William's Town, Elder Sinkurciri (Fiji) and Elder Rebelo (Joburg, South Africa) live next to a housing unit that caught fire not too long ago. Good missionaries!



# Jun\_12\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had our Senior Missionary Council this morning from 10 AM to Noon. We discussed some very important items such as decreasing the number of cars in the mission, housing in the townships, using Mormon.org as a missionary tool, shared spiritual experiences, etc.

We also found out that we will not be a part of the Mission Leadership Council - the 5 hour long mega meeting that I would take minutes of. Wow, what a relief. From now on, instead of telephone meetings, zone leaders will be going to Cape Town from their various areas to meet and counsel together re: missionary training, policies, mission rules, procedures, exchanges.... I think that is expensive, but definitely the way to go. The telephone does not translate well into productive meet-

ings.

Since Mom and I control the passports for this area, we had to take some missionaries to the airport and also made sure everyone (6 missionaries) had their passports in order to check-in. Then, on Thursday, we need to be there to collect their passports upon arrival. We have a small safe in our bedroom closet where we keep them.

We are impressed with our mission president's focus on what the main objectives are within the mission. Once he has that identified, he then looks at what options there are to accomplish those objectives. Then, which option best satisfies getting the job done. After that, he does a good job of implementation. All of us can do better at solving our own problems and challenges the same way.

\*Photos:\*

- Our 6 zone leaders (left to right) Elder Mushuipi (Zambia), Elder Stevens (Carlsbad, Calif.), Elder Lilback (Germany), Elder Heald (Utah?) Elder Dos Santos (Brazil), Elder Monoalibe (Johannesburg, SA) - An appropriate street name for some parts of our work area (the townships do not have street names. Just house numbers within a certain geographic area called a zone, i.e., NU 3, or, NU 17, etc.)

We love you very much. Do all those little things in your families that will

increase spirituality - family prayer, FHE, scripture study, service, kindness, love

Dad and Mom



An appropriate street name for some parts of our work area (the townships do not have street names. Just house numbers within a certain geographic area called a zone, i.e., NU 3, or, NU 17, etc.)



Our 6 zone leaders (left to right) Elder Mushuipi (Zambia), Elder Stevens (Carlsbad, Calif.), Elder Lilback (Germany), Elder Heald (Utah?) Elder Dos Santos (Brazil), Elder Monoalibe (Johannesburg, SA)

# Jun\_13\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We shot off to the Phakamile School for a 9 AM for a meeting with the school administration and some of the School Governing Board (SGB). Basically, we decided we need to set up a meeting as soon as we can with the Department of Education to make sure they know we want them to bring something to the party. We will try to see them tomorrow.

We visited a couple of sisters today. One is a non-member mother of a missionary our ward sent out, Thandikhaya Goje. We plan to visit her periodically. She is a very pleasant woman and a dedicated Anglican. We were surprised when she told us that the song, "Come, Come Ye Saints" is a hymn the church choir sings. She is a member of the choir and has a very nice voice. After having a prayer and before we left,

she sang us one verse of "Nearer My God to Thee" in Xhosa.

We also saw a non-member sister of the church member who just passed away, Brother Gadlela. It was a good visit. She loves us to come see her. After a scriptural message and a prayer, she walked us out to the car. She told us that one of the songs we sang at her brother's funeral, "Come, Come Ye Saints," is also a song they sing at her mother's Seventh Day Adventist church. She and Mom sang the first verse there by the car.

We also made about 20 stops today at various active members homes. We are passing out a flyer telling them of a reactivation activity we are having this Saturday.

Mom has a super duper plan to decorate the Primary room at church with "I Am a Child of God" banner and photos of all the little children.

She is also going to create a board that will show all the monthly Primary themes (each month they have a new theme). We spent some time and a small fortune at the stationary store getting everything she needs. It will look great and the children will love it!

\*Photos:\*

- You cannot see the whole thing, but this lady is carry the large bag on her head, and carrying two other bags, one in each hand. Recycling can be hard work. - This beer billboard is at a very high traffic in-

tersection. Wouldn't it be great to have a mormon.org sign there? - As you can see, someone who may have received a speeding ticket took their revenge out on the traffic cam. Hard to capture speeding license plates with red paint all over the lens.

We love you. Reflect on the great blessings of the gospel in your lives! Be grateful.

Dad and Mom



You cannot see the whole thing, but this lady is carrying the large bag on her head, and carrying two other bags, one in each hand. Recycling can be hard work.



This beer billboard is at a very high traffic intersection. Wouldn't it be great to have a mormon.org sign there?



As you can see, someone who may have received a speeding ticket took their revenge out on the traffic cam. Hard to capture speeding license plates with red paint all over the lens.

2018 JUNE 14 }

# Jun\_14\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Mom and I had the joyful experience of going to the dentist this morning to get a check-up and cleaning. We walked out in pretty good shape. I have an area around a tooth that looks suspicious, maybe an infection. So, she prescribed an antibiotic and mouthwash for me just to be safe. The bad news, we do not have dental insurance here. The good news, the dentist gave us a very good deal.

We picked up our zone leaders at the airport. They are pretty pumped up after their meeting in Cape Town. We hope to see that energy passed along to the other missionaries. The meeting seemed productive and they will continue to have ZL's travel for a monthly meeting.

We received good news from the Department of Education. They are re-

ferring us to the next level up and we think something good will come of it all. We have a meeting with the DOE and the Church's Director of Welfare Services scheduled for the first week of July. Pivotal meeting to get things off dead center.

We had another car jacking the other day in the Port Elizabeth area. One more reason to get out of our cars and do more walking. Fortunately, no one was hurt.

We have named our new lizard, "Houdini." He seems to have escaped the mask taping I did to the AC unit. I am seriously thinking a BB gun and some safety glasses are in order. He knows when we leave and when we come home. Many times we will walk in the door and see him running up the wall to the AC unit. Coward!

\*Photos:\*

- Mom and I in the dental chair -  
Street signals/lights at intersections are called "robots" in South Africa. So, when they package three different colors of peppers - red, yellow and green, they call them robot peppers.

Be clean in body and mind. Let's be worthy to have the Holy Ghost as our constant companion.

We love you,

Dad and Mom



Mom and I in the dental chair.



Street signals/lights at intersections are called "robots" in South Africa. So, when they package three different colors of peppers - red, yellow and green, they call them robot peppers.

2018 JUNE 15 }

# Jun 15 2018

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

It was interesting this morning in our district meeting as we listed all the revelation, doctrine, information, scripture, etc. that has come to light from the Restoration of the Gospel. It is a very lengthy list. It demonstrates the tremendous richness of scripture and doctrine we have in the Church. There is such an abundance of revealed light and knowledge. It is amazing what we learn in the Restored Church compared to what other religions teach.

I had a baptismal interview this afternoon. It was with a young lady that has had some problems in the past and needed that next level of interviewing. I will report my findings to the mission president and he will make the decision on whether she can be baptized or not at this point. We have handed out some "routes" for some of our members to

follow in finding some of our lost sheep for an activity tomorrow. These members live quite a ways from the church. They can just start their finding activity right from their homes and not have to come to the church until they have finished. Other members that live closer to the church will meet us at the chapel at 10 AM tomorrow and we will give them their routes. All meet back at the church at 1 PM where Mom will have lunch ready for them - Sloppy Joes.

Love,

Dad and Mom



These are a couple of parrots at one of our favorite restaurants (they are for decoration, we don't eat them)



Old farm tractor - just like Huntsville



This is an African Potato Tree



# Jun\_16\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Busy, busy day. Mom was up getting food ready to take to our reactivation activity today. We arrived at the church by 10 AM, the prescribed start time for the activity. No one was there except one of our "missionary boys," Ephriam. To make a long story short, more eventually came and we sent out 6 teams to go find some of our lost sheep by 11:15 AM.

They did a good job. We gleaned a lot of information from those they were able to visit. We will do this again next month and keep doing so until we know about everyone on our ward directory.

The objective is not to get names off our ward rooster so our percentages look better. The heart of this activity is to find people that need the Church in their lives. If they have

moved to Cape Town, then, we need to know where so we can notify the correct ward in that area and then, the saints in Cape Town can minister to them.

Mom prepared a killer lunch. We brought plenty for those in our "search and find" group, but by the time you added in a bunch of others that happened to be there, it was barely enough. We had about ten young women show up for an activity where Mom taught them how to make chocolate chip cookies. They snarfed down the food real quick!

While Mom was teaching the art of baking cookies, I went to the other ward house at the other end of Mdantsane (the NU13 Building) and met one of the builders that is submitting a proposal for the building of the Phakamile classrooms. His bid is \$62,800 for five classrooms. Heck of a deal.

We have a set of missionaries coming to the house this evening. President Lebethoa has asked us to facilitate Elder Monoalibe in using our phone to call home for a few minutes. Someone in his family has passed away. We spoke with the missionary earlier today and he seemed in good spirits. He is a good, strong Elder and this experience will probably make him even better for the rest of his mission.

\*Photos:\*

- The "rescue party" eating sloppy joes
- The young women (hoard of

locust) that cashed in on lunch. One girl snatched up 4 servings of oatmeal squares and a Rice Krispie treat. - Mom in the kitchen teaching. This was just some of the girls that were there.

Keep doing the right things. It will make you happy. We love you,

Dad and Mom



The young women (hoard of locust) that cashed in on lunch. One girl snatched up 4 servings of oatmeal squares and a Rice Krispie treat.



The "rescue party" eating sloppy joes.



This was just some of the girls that were there.



Mom in the kitchen teaching.

# Tid Bits

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

\*1. Word of the week:\* "replete," filled or well-supplied with something. \*Example: \*Early church history is replete with faith-promoting stories.

\*2. Quote of the week: \*

\*3. Scripture of the week:\*

And there were great and marvelous works wrought by the disciples of Jesus, insomuch that they did heal the sick, and raise the dead, and cause the lame to walk, and the blind to receive their sight, and the deaf to hear; and all manner of miracles did they work among the children of men; and in nothing did they work miracles save it were in the name of Jesus. -4th Nephi, vs. 5

\*4. Joke of the week:\*

\*Q:\* Why do they bury lawyers under 20 feet of dirt?

\*A:\* Because deep down, they're really good people.

(or)

\*Q:\* What is the difference between a herd of buffalo and a lawyer? \*A:\* The lawyer charges more.

\*5. Bee's Knees Award:\* Have you ever shot off a side view mirror with a rifle? Probably not. This guy is an expert shot with a rifle. He is a serious dad. He loves his children and loves to be with them. He is a good, loving husband. He is a good provider for his family. He will help anyone in need. He would give you the shirt off his back. He cooks a mean fried mac 'n cheese and flats. He is a hard worker. He loves the gospel. Some day he may have a "Rat Rod." Andrew, you are the Bee's Knees, brotha!!!

\*6. Gospel question of the week:\* In what city did Jesus turn water to wine?

\*7. If I were you (Advice to grand kids): \* If I were you, I would learn to look people in the eyes when you talk to them. Try it. I think you will like it.

\*8. What I learned this week: \* If you read, then, re-read a couple more times, the conference talks, you get so much more out of them.

\*9. What I am grateful for:\* What a

blessing to have temples dotting the world so members almost everywhere can enjoy those great, supernatural blessings.

\*10. My goal for the week:\* I was going to have at least two bids for the Phakamile classrooms delivered to me. Mission accomplished. This week, I plan to put together a comprehensive summary of all our mission cars in East London, and Mdantsane.

\*11. Photo of the week: \* One of the coolest guys on the face of the planet!



One of the coolest guys on the face of the planet!



et!

## Jun\_17\_2018\_Update

Dear Family,

Great to attend church today. Our Sabbath has been a delight.

Here is a quote that Elder Oaks used in our last General Conference from Senator Dan Coats of Indiana,

"The only preparation for that one profound decision which can change

a life, or even a nation, is the hundreds and thousands of half-conscious, self-defining, seemingly insignificant decisions made in private."

I am reminded of the saying, "You make the habits and the habits make you."

"And thus we see that by small means the Lord can bring about great things."  
-1 Nephi 16:29

"It was not the lightening or the for-

rest fires that tumbled the mighty redwood tree. It was the little bugs that ate at the heart of the giant."  
-someone

\*Photos:\*

- Another gorgeous sunset at Hazy Ridge! - I was so intrigued by this homemade crepe roller-upper that I bought 3 cinnamon/sugar crepes to eat the other day when I ran to the store to get something for Mom.

We love you all. Happy Father's Day to the truly fantastic fathers in this family. Mom and I feel so wonderfully blessed when we stop and consider our beautiful daughters-in-law and our handsome sons-in-law!

Dad and Mom

## Father's Day

Dear Children,

It is Father's Day, so here is my wish for today. If you decide to call me, I would like to hear about the following:

1. Something funny you remember

or a fun experience we have had

2. Something valuable you have learned

3. Something spiritual or a spiritual experience we have had together.

Thanks,

Dad



Another gorgeous sunset at Hazy Ridge!



I was so intrigued by this homemade crepe roller-upper that I bought 3 cinnamon/sugar crepes to eat the other day when I ran to the store to get something for Mom.

2018 JUNE 18 }

# Jun\_18\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We have had a very nice, relaxing preparation day. The bike ride was a little cool, but once I was on my way back with a tail wind, it was very pleasant. This is Winter and to Mom and I it feels like very nice weather.

I picked up a roofing proposal for the Phakamile School today. I also took a close look at one of the proposals from a prospective builder. It is pretty inexpensive. The total bid is for \$63,000 USD. However, the bid wasn't itemized. So, does it include electrical? Does it include paint? I am sure the Church will want a more detailed bid.

I said, "Church," because there is an outside chance the Church will get involved with this project through the Humanitarian Services Department. The director will fly in from

Johannesburg the first week of July to talk business. The Church likes to partner with organizations (i.e., the Stevenson Family) and the families of the school students in projects for the community. More details to follow.

Here is a quote I put into an email the other day:

"You can say and do things as a father or a mother and not think much about the impression it has made on one of your children and then, come to learn many years later that you did something that has had a significant influence in their life. As a matter of fact, you probably will have entirely forgotten about it, but they remember it vividly and reflect on it often. It had an impact on their life."

Parents, love your children and make sure you are teaching all the time by word and deed. Savor every

minute with them. You will be surprised someday at what they have learned from you.

Have a wonderful day. You are the best. We love you very much,

Dad and Mom

\*Photos:\*

- You don't have to be afraid of too many dogs around here. They are so weak and hungry, they do not have the strength to attack you. On the other hand, there are some dogs where you know they are very bad news! - I tried some of this hot sauce the other day, which is really out of character for me. It was hot, but I survived. Mom kind of liked it.



I tried some of this hot sauce the other day, which is really out of character for me. It was hot, but I survived. Mom kind of liked it.



You don't have to be afraid of too many dogs around here. They are so weak and hungry, they do not have the strength to attack you. On the other hand, there are some dogs where you know they are very bad news!

2018 JUNE 19 }

# Jun\_19\_2018\_Update

FROM: Elder and Sister Stevenson



Dear Family,

I took care of my exercising this morning and then took off for a little village area called Wesley about an hour and a half from our home. Mom stayed behind with some things she wanted to do. I picked up Brother Steenbeek and we then met Rommel Roberts and his builder friend at a restaurant in Wesley for lunch.

We had lunch and then talked about the classroom project. The builder looks legit and I think will have some very good numbers in his proposal. He has done his material costs but didn't have a total quote yet. He will email it to me tomorrow or Thursday at the latest. That will make two proposals in the bag and a third one by Sunday (I hope).

It was a long day of driving around, but productive. I think we kept the

ball rolling today. One thing you have to develop in Africa is patience. It is a difficult thing to learn, but I am improving.

\*Photos:\*

- The little cafe we met at in Wesley was quite unique. The proprietors were German. Their place was like a Cracker Barrel type cafe. All the walls had writing from different customers they have had over the years. - A sign in the bathroom at M&J Restaurant. - Christmas Rock - found by Vasco de Gamma on Christmas Day many years ago. Very pretty beach - completely void of humans.

Love,

Dad and Mom



A sign in the bathroom at M&J Restaurant.



The little cafe we met at in Wesley was quite unique. The proprietors were German. Their place was like a Cracker Barrel type cafe. All the walls had writing from different customers they have had over the years.

Christmas Rock - found by Vasco de Gamma on Christmas Day many years ago. Very pretty beach - completely void of humans.



2018 JUNE 20 }

# Jun\_20\_2018\_Update

FROM: Elder and Sister Stevenson



Dear Family,

We picked up a letter from the Department of Education this morning that basically said, go ahead and build the classrooms. Additionally, the municipality should have the working plans approved this Friday. Basically, green lights at this point. Next week we have Brother Phillip Moatlhodi from the Church Humanitarian Services in Johannesburg flying in to look things over. More details to come later.

Normally, we have lunch for our zone conferences catered. However, the caterer we typically use will be out of town this zone conference we are having on Friday. So, Mom and Sister Davies are making two large crock pots of sloppy joe sauce. And, a whole lot of other stuff to go with it. Consequently, today has been mostly shopping for all sorts of ingredients for the lunch. The only

thing we did not find was celery seed that Mom would like to use in the Cole Slaw.

This evening, President Lebethoa joined us for dinner at 6:30. He has missionary interviews tomorrow morning. Then, from noon to 2 PM, Mom and I are going to show him some areas around the township where missionaries might be able to rent and live. We have one home in particular, with boarding rooms in the back of the house, that we will be showing him.

Mom prepared a delicious dinner and we visited until 9:30 PM. President Lebethoa is an exceptionally good man. He is all in! He has a lot of energy and is very focused on his calling.

\*Photos:\*

- This is a sample of the poster stuff wants to do in the Primary

room, but, much, much, much more better.

We love you. Have a fantastic day!

Dad and Mom



This is a sample of the poster stuff wants to do in the Primary room, but, much, much, much more better.

# Jun\_21\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

The Church is not timid about spending a lot of money to accomplish their divinely-mandated charge to take the gospel to the entire world. And, the Church does a masterful job of accounting for any expenses made by anyone all they way down to the smallest branch in the nether most part of the kingdom. So, I spent a couple hours this morning doing financial accounting for expenses we have made for and in behalf of the Church.

It is comforting to know that our tithes and offerings are spent wisely and responsibly. The widow's mite is going toward the most important work on the face of the earth, not into the personal bank account of some charismatic, golden-tongue preacher. The gathering of Israel takes money and in the Lord's way of doing things, the work is moving

forward.

Mom has been in the kitchen all day getting ready for the two-zone conference tomorrow - sloppy joe mix, cole slaw, baked beans, chocolate cake, fruit bowl, etc. I hope our missionaries appreciate all the work that is going into feeding them a nutritious and delicious meal.

I met President Lebethoa at noon in Mdantsane. From there, we took our car and went to look at various neighborhoods with the idea that our missionaries could actually live in the township. We even stopped at one home that Mom and I had already previewed. The president was impressed and felt reassured that living in NU 17 (an obviously nicer neighborhood than others we visited) could work.

Safety is the number one factor in looking at potential boardings. The

move to the township is part of the strategy of getting rid of the cars and giving the missionaries more exposure as they walk within their respective work areas.

\*Photos:\*

- Sloppy Joe's, fruit, cake.... -  
Cole Slaw in the making (eventually poisoned with lots of Mayonnaise)

We love you all very much. Stay on the covenant path!

Dad and Mom

Sloppy Joe's, fruit, cake....





Cole Slaw in the making  
(eventually poisoned  
with lots of  
Mayonnaise)

# Jun\_22\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We loaded up the car with all the food for zone conference early this morning, got ready to go and then made it to the church to unload everything and still be on time for our meeting.

The structure of our meeting was first, training by the zone leaders for an hour. Then, President Lebethoa broke his part of the training into three parts: 1) what did we learn in our last zone conference and what have we applied it? 2) Doctrinal discussion on 2 Nephi 19-20, and lastly, 3) Doing more walking and finding.

One interesting point of review from our last conference was having a vision on which we make goals on which we make plans.

Also, do we tolerate our companion or do we embrace our companion.

Tolerating, of course, is simply putting up with someone until there is a change. Embracing is when we take Christlike attributes and put them in action.

We had a very delicious lunch that Mom and Sister Davies made for us. It was a lot of work and plenty of food for all. No one went hungry. Some of the missionaries can really wolf down the food. We have a missionary from Fiji that puts away a boatload of food. I told Mom to see what he loads on his plate. Sure enough, three sloppy joes, tons of salad, fruit in his pockets and then, came back for seconds. Desert was cake and ice cream.

We heard some nice testimonies from four missionaries that will be going home soon. Then, the zone leaders and district leaders had a training session with President Lebethoa. The rest of us cleaned up

and got everything packed into the cars.

At home, Mom washed dishes and bowls and crock pots. I washed the car and got it filled up with petrol and did some grocery shopping. No rain in the forecast, but we will see. A washed car has magical powers over the weather.

\*Photos:\*

- Fresh and delicious meal with chocolate cake to boot - East London and Mdantsane missionaries enjoying a great meal

We love you. Have a great day making good choices.

Dad and Mom





Fresh and delicious meal with chocolate cake to boot.



East London and Mdantsane missionaries enjoying a great meal.

2018 JUNE 23 }

# Jun\_23\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We have spent most of the day working on all the pieces Mom needs the Primary bulletin board. We figured out how to do the banner, "I am a Child of God" and a way to depict all the monthly themes for the year. Long story made short, next Sunday the Primary presidency and children will see a nicely decorated room. And, the presidency will have a good idea of how to do it for 2019.

We took some time to go to the birthday celebration down at the Davies. Elder Davies turned 80 years old. It was a lot of food which means there will also be a lot of missionaries. Even though, our mission president has asked us not to "gather," they will continue to gather if they are invited and fed by the senior couples. Senior couples can become "enablers."

FYI, Mom and I obey the mission rules. One good thing about doing away with the cars is that missionaries will not find excuses to travel 30 minutes (one way) the other direction from their work area. The mission president wants missionaries in their respective areas and not at the senior couples homes eating like horses. (For you people that live in the city, horses do not have stomachs. They just eat and eat and eat.)

We love the missionaries and we love being around them. But, happy missionaries are the ones that live the mission rules with exactness.

\*Photos:\*

- Mom and I at a birthday celebration for Elder Davies who just turned 80 years old today - Elder Taylor Smith from Bountiful who says he knows David Walker. David, do you recognize this guy?

We hope and pray you have a wonderful day. As you make good choices, you will sleep well at night.

Love,

Dad and Mom



Elder Taylor Smith from Bountiful who says he knows David Walker. David, do you recognize this guy?

Mom and I at a birthday celebration for Elder Davies who just turned 80 years old today.



# Tid Bits

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

\*1. Word of the week:\* "assiduously," with great care and perseverance. \*Example:\* Mom and I love how assiduously you look after your children with such loving care.

\*2. Quote of the week: \*

\*3. Scripture of the week:\* \*And I am the same who hideth up this record unto the Lord; the plates thereof are of no worth, because of the commandment of the Lord. For he truly saith that no one shall have them to get gain; but the record thereof is of great worth; and whoso shall bring it to light, him will the Lord bless. \*

\*4. Joke of the week:\*

\*Q:\* How can you tell they played football in the Book of Mormon?

\*A:\* "And it came to pass..."

\*5. Bee's Knees Award: \*This girl miraculously survived her childhood even though she managed all kinds of accidents. She has an Oscar-winning smile, is very kind and generous and is the ultimate mother. She loves her children and does so much for them - especially teaching them the truth of the gospel. She is all-in when it comes to living the commandments. She is a patient, long-suffering, understanding wife. She has the beauty all the beauty queens aspire to. She is a camper and hiker extraordinaire. She is a worker. Everybody loves this girl. Melissa, you are the Bee's Knees, sistah!!!

\*6. Gospel question of the week:\* What type of man was Boaz before he married?

\*7 If I were you (Advice to grand kids):\* If I were you, I would take care of my toenails so you don't get toe fungus like Uncle David. Try it. I

think you will like it.

\*8. What I learned this week:\* By reading and re-reading the General Conference talks, we pick up more and more of the truths and teachings of the Lord's appointed servants.

\*9. What I am grateful for: \*My missionary companion. She is the best missionary companion I have ever had!

\*10: My goal for the week:\* Convince Brother Phillip from Church Humanitarian Services that the con-

struction of additional classrooms at the Phakamile School is really a great and worthwhile project to partner with. (He will be here on Friday to talk and visit the school.)

We continue to love you guys more and more each day. Have fun living the gospel this week!

Dad and Mom



Mom and I admiring the one and only, beautiful Olivia May!

2018 JUNE 25 }

# IMPORTANT

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



\*Dear Family,\*

\*We are pleased to inform you that the Phakamile School Project is moving forward. However, we still need more donations.\*

\*Mom and I would really love it if we could tell the school administration that every single member of our family and our siblings donated to the construction of the classrooms. We know that for some, this type of an expense is not in their budget. So, here is a suggestion:\*

\*Every family donate at least \$10 to the fund. For those of you that would like to contribute more to the cause, please do so, we need the money. Can you please have this to Elizabeth within a week of getting this email?\*

\*We know that if you donate, William Holmes Walker (served in 1853) and James Gunn McKay (served

in 1906) from the other side of the veil will be doing cartwheels!\*

\*Make checks payable to: Phakamile School Project, Inc. \*

\*Send funds to:\*

\*Elizabeth Roberts\*

\*P.O. Box 46\*

\*Huntsville, Utah 84317\*

\*The works is progressing and Mom and I are learning a lot about being good missionaries. We both are hoping and praying we don't get transferred apart before it is time to go home. \*

\*Thank you for all your love and support. We feel your prayers and thoughts every day.\*

\*Love,\*

\*Elder and Sister Stevenson,\*

\*Dad and Mom,\*  
\*Uncle Chris and Aunt Mavis,\*  
\*Chris and Mavis\*

## Jun25\_2018\_Update

Dear Family,

\*LIZARD REPORT:\*

Allow me to start with this report and get this out of the way. I am reluctant to share this with some of you because I know you are lizard lovers. What you fail to realize is that lizards are dangerous animals. Cohabitation with a

lizard can mean kidney failure at some point, TB, rheumatic fever, toe fungus, and yes, even dry, itchy, scaly skin.

We moved the sofas out from the walls to vacuum behind them and clean up the droppings of our unwelcome guest. When Mavis moved the curtain, the wretched creature came running along the wall directly towards me. I took this as a serious threat and felt to use lethal force to protect myself. Needless to say, the little guy met with a magnanimous death. Now, after months of restless



How can a little runt of a lizard leave such a mess behind the sofas? If you study the Old Testament, lizards were regularly administered capital punishment for crimes against humanity.



This little girl is a sweetheart. She will run to me and throw her arms around me like I was her favorite uncle. We always have a good laugh together!

sleep, a peaceful night's rest!

Today was preparation day. We had a set of missionaries come over to pick up an SD card with some mission photos on it. I used it last night to upload some photos to his Google Drive (480 photos). While they were here, they read and wrote emails. Then, Mom made sure they had plenty of lunch before they walked out the door.

\*Here is an important lesson\*: Yesterday when one of our sacrament meetings started, no one was there

to conduct the music. About half way through the song, an old mama, who has been endowed and is simply wonderful, came to the stand and started to direct the music. She did not know what she was doing, but there she was trying her best to help out. She is a good example of pitching in where we can and give it our best. Isn't that what we have covenanted to do?

One of our Bishop's name is, Mnyameli \*Wiseman\* Jada.

Mom is still working on the Primary

banner and bulletin board. I was able to go through a bunch of information sheets that came from various members during our reactivation activity and have some good stuff for our ward clerk to work on.

\*Photos:\* - How can a little runt of a lizard leave such a mess behind the sofas? If you study the Old Testament, lizards were regularly administered capital punishment for crimes against humanity. - This little girl is a sweetheart. She will run to me and throw her arms around me like I was her favorite uncle. We always have a good laugh together!

Have a fantastic day. Make a difference!

Love,

Dad and Mom

2018 JUNE 26 }

# Jun\_26\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Dad and Mom

This morning I tried to set up a tour of the harbor for Elder Davies and I. He is a sailor from way back and pretty much traveled all over the place on a U.S. Navy ship. He would love to get up close to some ships again. The harbor people are not being very cooperative. We keep getting "pushed off" (pun intended). I am trying one last time tomorrow morning.

We took the afternoon to put up the "I Am a Child of God" banner and the monthly themes for this year. The banner had to be 15 separate pieces of card stock glued and taped together. Mom got a headache trying to get all the monthly themes to fit in the designated area and still look nice.

we love you all very much. Have a good day.



Behold, the Primary banner and monthly theme bulletin board.

2018 JUNE 27 }

# Jun\_27\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Today is a very special day for me. 67 years ago Uncle Thom and I can into this world. And, on top of that, Uncle Kent was born on our birthday. Both have been very good examples to me. They, along with Warren and Greg, are great brothers. And, on top of that, I have had Aunt Diane and Aunt Kathy in my life. I love my brothers, but I really love my sisters. They are as good as they get!

I have been thinking about Thom today quite a bit. I would like to share a fun experience I remember from our childhood days. We had just arrived at the bike rack area at school. We were in 7th grade. While parking our bikes, an 8th grader pulled Thom's spelling book out from among his other books on the back of his bicycle. He thumbed through the book and started broadcasting to

everyone some of Thom's spelling grades from previous quizzes. This really got under Thom's skin! The next thing I knew, Thom had this 8th grader pinned up against the chain link fence and slapped him across the face a couple of times. I could hardly believe my eyes! I thought for sure Thom was about to die a brutal death. After all, this was an 8th grader he was dealing with. To the contrary, the bully 8th grader coward away while at the same time apologizing to Thom for his misbehavior. It was cool to tell all of our friends what Thom had done. They would listen in total amazement. Thom's reputation as a type of super hero spread throughout the school. It was a great day to remember!

Believe it or not, we actually got to do the tour at the harbor this morning. Elder Davies, who turned 80 last week, loved every minute of it. He was elated to share with us all the

information about the one tanker ship that was docked right there before us. He was enjoying every minute as we asked him questions. We really did get a VIP tour. After the harbor "walk about," we went to Guidos Restaurant where Elder Davies and I had 800 grams of ribs each. Mom and Sister Davies had chicken avocado salads.

Tonight, homemade oatmeal cake! My favorite!

I spent this afternoon setting up appointments and making a schedule

of sorts for the Church Humanitarian brother that will be here on Friday. No guarantees, but the Church may want to partner with our family if we can come up with enough money.

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

Dad and Mom



At one of the local grocery stores they have an "American Doughnut" making machine. As you can see, it produces very small doughnuts that get rolled in cinnamon and sugar. They are not exactly like American Doughnuts, but I buy a half dozen any time I go there (48 cents USD).

2018 JUNE 28 }

# Jun\_28\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

I will be 500 pounds by the time we get home if I keep eating like I have today. I finished off the ribs from yesterday (delicious), had three pieces of oatmeal cake and a bowl of tapioca pudding. And, I had an orange.

This morning, Mom and I tried a different bike route. It is only a ten kilometer trip, but 60% of it very easy. We biked along the ocean front for about 4 kilometers. The last part was an uphill stretch. Mom was awesome. She stayed with me the whole way until the hill. I am embarrassed to say I had to get off my bike and walk for about 100 yards. Mom kept on cranking away like a maniac. (FYI, the uphill part was 2 to 3 times steeper than King's Ridge of the Levi Gran Fondo.)

We had some nice visits today. It is

refreshing to see what the gospel can do to change a person's life. As they live the gospel, their problems do not necessarily go away, but they learn to deal and manage them better. They have hope. They have faith the Lord will bless them as they obey the commandments. And, they are a lot happier! You know that scripture, "Righteousness never was sadness."

\*Photos:\*

- Me and my girlfriend cruising the beachfront. - The bed and breakfast where some will stay if they come to visit. - "No Hawkers" means no one allowed to sell their wares at that intersection.

We hope all is going well. We love you. Dig deep for the Phakamile School!

Love,

Dad and Mom

Me and my girlfriend cruising the beachfront.



"No Hawkers" means no one allowed to sell their wares at that intersection.

The bed and breakfast  
where some will stay if  
they come to visit.



# End of June comments

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Hello all,  
When Dad left today to meet Phillip and the contractors who have submitted bids for building additional classrooms at the Phakameli school he told me my job today was to write a long letter to our children. I really do not need to be instructed to do this as it is always on my mind. Just about anything that Dad writes I could add at least a paragraph of detail. I love the details but I recognize that might be boring to others and I cannot always think of something that might be interesting to you that I have not already shared.

Anyway I just want each of you to know that I miss you very much and look forward to sharing time with you when we return in a year. In saying that I also want to say that our time here has been incredible. As a couple we are enjoying our time together. I have the most wonderful companion who is kind and sup-

portive and fun. We do have a great time laughing together. reading scriptures together and praying together. I am so thankful that we have this time to serve together.

We missed our district meeting today as Dad is out with Phillip and I did not have a ride home after the meeting so I just stayed home. Dad took some muffins that I baked yesterday and some fruit to the Zone leaders to take to the meeting for the Elders. I was thinking about Elder Armstrong who is the District Leader who has been teaching the lessons at our district meeting this transfer. He is a nice looking white Elder from South Africa. He is pretty short and he stumbles in his speech in finding the words to express his thoughts and he does not seem to have a great deal of confidence but... each week he stands up and gives a wonderful well prepared lesson. There is a great spirit in the

meeting. He always begins by asking what we talked about the week before and makes notes on the whiteboard of what the Elders remember from the training. Then he asks, "have we applied what we have been taught". The Elders then share experiences from the week if they did apply what was taught and what the results were. I am always reminded that the teaching is of little effect if we do not apply what we are taught. As we read the conference talks we can ask ourselves what did we learn and what do I need to be doing that I am not now doing.

Last week Elder Armstrong had us read D & C 5:34 "Yea, for this cause I have said: Stop, and stand still until I command thee, and I will provide means whereby thou mayest accomplish the things which I have commanded thee." Then he asked why should we stand still? Some of the responses were: To know what the Lord has done for us, To feel the Spirit, to "be still and know that I am Christ", to learn what we need to learn, to exercise patience, to trust in the promises of God. Then he asked how do we know when to stop and stand still? A couple of the re-

Akhona with his braille Book of Mormon.





Elders Paskett, Dennis and Akhona's mother.

sponses were, when we are confused and when we feel like we cannot go forward. We then reviewed PMG (preach my gospel) pg. 198. What is a testimony? Then the questions again, why do we bear testimony. Some responses were; to seal the truths that were taught, it allows other to witness, if they felt the spirit they will be held accountable and to confound the wise. How? frequently bear testimony to strengthen our own testimonies. Be humble and sincere, to confirm what your companion has said is true. then he ended with D & C 62:3 "Nev-

ertheless, ye are blessed for the testimony which ye have borne is recorded in heaven for the angels to look upon; and they rejoice over you and your sins are forgiven you."

It is a great privilege for us to associate with these young men. I am always impressed with their knowledge and understanding of the scriptures and their willingness to study and prepare.

We have recently had more opportunity to visit with Elder Paskett and I am impressed that he jumped into

his mission experience with both feet and not holding back or wishing his time away or longing for home. He said he has always wanted to come to Africa as a missionary. He is always cheerful and smiling and every experience has a silver lining. He was one of the missionaries that was held up before we came here and their car was hijacked. He eats the food that the natives feed him. He was saying that tripe is better if it is grilled rather than boiled, he has eaten the chicken heads and chicken feet and he said he liked them. He knows Josh James' family. He was the captain of the football team at his high school. Anyway we associate with Elders who are putting in their time here and counting the days for their release and others who do not think about home very much but are totally focused on the work and sharing the gospel. Elder Paskett and his companion Elder Dennis are teaching a blind man who is preparing for a 90 k run. He runs with someone, and they tether their wrists together and the sighted runner has to stay behind the non sighted runner. What a challenge in more ways than one. Elder Paskett shared his testimony at the last zone

conference as he goes home at the next transfer and it was wonderful. He bore testimony of the work and how he loves the people. He was emotional about leaving and that is the first time I have seen an Elder bear testimony and be emotional about leaving since I have been here. I guess I should add, that I remember.

At the last fast and testimony meeting the first week of June a young man who is a convert of about a year and is 14 yrs old (I think), bore his testimony and one of the things he said was "I thank you that you have welcomed me into the church with warm hands." I love the way the people speak, it is so descriptive.

I don't remember if I shared this before so I hope it is not a repeat. We visited a non member mother whose son is serving a mission (Tandikiya Goje). I had noticed that she knew the words to the song "Come, come ye Saints" and asked her where she had learned that song. She said she sings it with her choir at her church.

The Anglican church I believe. Brother Godlela's sister who is also not a member of the church also

shared with us that Come, come ye saints is one of her favorite hymns. I was pleasantly surprised to learn that this "Mormon" hymn is sung throughout the world and they most likely do not know its origins.

Yesterday we had a great visit with Nandiphi Xamane. She had some wonderful things to say and shared some scriptures and how they are affecting her life. She is wonderful and has a great vision of where she wants to be. She is preparing to go to the temple and is trying to divorce her abusive husband. He has left her and is "hiding" which means he is avoiding the divorce. She is forgiving of the abuses and has forgiven the neighbor who was helping her husband beat her and is actually helping the neighbor do some things as the neighbor's mother just passed away. She said she has to forgive or she cannot move forward. I wish more people had her attitude and there would be less less active members here.

This is a very long letter. I will try to make notes of some things I can share at a later date. Have a wonderful summer celebrating our na-

tions birth and the pioneers entry into valley in the mountains. I love you all. Hugs and Kisses,  
Mom

## Jun29\_2018\_Update

Dear Family,

I had a very interesting and spiritually uplifting day! I was out in the field with Phillip Moatlhodi who is with the Church's Welfare Services. He was in town to look over the Phakamile School Project and to meet with some builders. It is just one small step toward a decision of whether or not the Church wants to get involved.

The one thing that we have going for us is the generosity of our family in putting together funds for the additional classrooms. We think if we can mount enough money, the Church will see us as the type of partner it like in these types of projects. So, our heart-felt thanks to all of you for your commitment to seeing this project come to life.

I joined two of our missionaries this

afternoon to deliver a Braille Book of Mormon to a gentleman who has been blind since he was 8 years old. The Book of Mormon (with footnotes) in braille is 8 large three ring binders. I was moved to tears as he read from 1 Nephi 1:1, "And, I Nephi, having been born of goodly parents..."

It was a marvelous sight to behold and then, to think of this scripture:

For it shall come to pass in that day, that every man shall ahear <<https://www.lds.org/scriptures/search?lang=eng&query=own+tongue&testament=dc-testament#note11a>> thefulness of the gospel in his \*own \*\*tongue\*, and in his own blanguage <<https://www.lds.org/scriptures/search?lang=eng&query=own+tongue&testament=dc-testament#note11b>>, through those who are cordained <<https://www.lds.org/scriptures/search?lang=eng&query=own+tongue&testament=dc-testament#note11c>> unto this dpower <<https://www.lds.org/scriptures/search?lang=eng&query=own+tongue&testament=dc-testament#note11d>>, by the administration of the eComforter <<https://www.lds.org/scriptures/search?lang=eng&query=own+tongue&testament=dc-testament#note11e>>, shed forth upon them for the frevelation <<https://www.lds.org/scriptures/search?lang=eng&query=own+tongue&testament=dc-testament#note11f>> of Jesus Christ.

I knelt down next to this man, took his hand and bore him my testimony that as he reads this book he will know what a powerful witness it is of Jesus Christ and that by the power of the Holy Ghost he will know it is true.

It warms my heart as I think of the good the Church does throughout the world. It is not interested in a plaque on a school wall saying it was the principal donor. It is only interested in doing good, just as the Savior did. Jesus went about doing good...quietly.

\*Photos:\*

- Akhona with his braille Book of Mormon - Elders Paskett, Dennis and Akhona's mother - Here's a link to Akhona reading the Book of Mormon in Braille - This is a must to hear!

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Z4ozHuqU2zCHluK7ux-5US-bTPPnz8Dl\\_/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Z4ozHuqU2zCHluK7ux-5US-bTPPnz8Dl_/view?usp=sharing)

We love you. We want nothing but the greatest happiness for you.

Dad and Mom

# Jun\_30\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a long day in cars!

This morning we took off for Queenstown with the objective of driving around that town with the senior couple (the Bells) who will be leaving for home in two weeks. We need to get familiar with everything so we can take a couple days mid-July to acquaint the new senior couple (the Blazers) that will be taking their place.

We have been there twice before, but we felt we needed to know where a lot of the key places were in town - post office, tyre repair, office supplies, doctor office, clinic, hospital, church house, missionary boardings, grocery stores, pharmacy, car dealership, malls, fabric store, etc.

The Bells are great missionaries. They have been a tremendous blessing to the saints in the area where

they were assigned. They will be dearly missed. We had lunch with them and then headed back to our place in Gonubie about 4:15. From our house, the trip is about 2 hours fifteen minutes.

\*Photos:\*

- Phillip Moatlhodi, director of Welfare Services at the area office in Johannesburg and one of the builders (Creeston) who is bidding on the job. - A temporary building that we are thinking of moving to a different location so we can use the foundation under it for new classrooms. - Phillip with two other builders (Brothers Twani and Mdalana). We need to have three bids all together for Phillip to take to his committee.

FYI, Phillip is a very nice man. He is 48 years old, married with two teenage children, an 18 year old son getting ready for a mission and a 14

year old daughter who insists that she have her own bathroom. The conversion story of his family is faith-promoting. Basically, his parents were told that they needed to baptize their 6 month old baby who had died or it would go to hell. His father argued that what they were saying was preposterous. Because the family objected, they were all excommunicated. The father decided never to go to church again. However, as a family they prayed and studied the Bible.

One day the saw missionaries in

their township. The father stopped them to ask what they were doing. He invited them to come to his home to teach. The missionaries invited them to church. They came that very Sunday. Of course, the father asked about child baptism. The missionaries went to the Book of Mormon, Mormon chapter 8 (I think) and read to him about the abomination of child baptism.

For the next three months, the family read everything - the Book of Mormon, the D&C, the Pearl of Great Price, pamphlets, course man-



Phillip Moatlhodi, director of Welfare Services at the area office in Johannesburg and one of the builders (Creeston) who is bidding on the job.



A temporary building that we are thinking of moving to a different location so we can use the foundation under it for new classrooms.

Love,  
Dad

uals - everything they could get their hands on. The doctrine of baptism for the dead, the Plan of Salvation and families being together forever was music to their ears! Then, they were baptized and generations have been blessed ever since!

We love you from the center of our hearts!

Dad and Mom

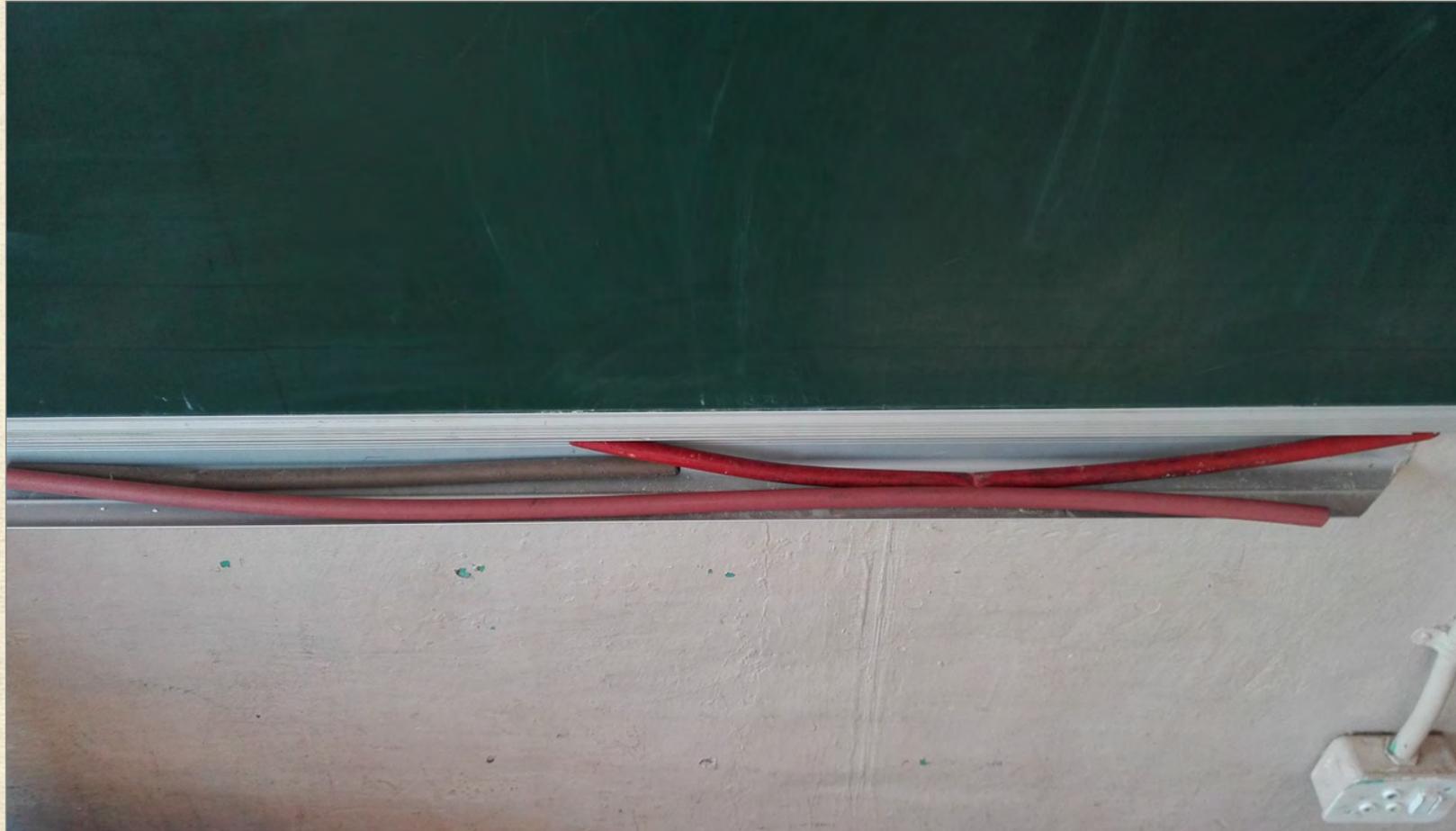
## Whacking Sticks

Dear family,

FYI, the sticks and rubber hose on the chalk board tray in the attached photo are used to whack the kids if they misbehave. We have heard some pretty crazy stories this last year about corporeal punishment. Our children should be ever grateful that Mom prevented me from RHBM (Rubber Hose Behavior Modification) as a form of discipline in our family.



Phillip with two other builders (Brothers Twani and Mdalana). We need to have three bids all together for Phillip to take to his committee.



The sticks and rubber hose on the chalk board tray in the attached photo are used to whack the kids if they misbehave. We have heard some pretty crazy stories this last year about corporeal punishment. Our children should be ever grateful that Mom prevented me from RHBM (Rubber Hose Behavior Modification) as a form of discipline in our family.

2018 JULY 1 }

# Jul\_01\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

As always, a great blessing to attend church today and to share and hear testimonies, and, to partake of the sacrament. When you consider the world's population, there are precious few that have that opportunity each week. I hope we all appreciate the privilege and remember what it represents.

Be looking for a D.O.P.E. Manual submission entitled, "Sanctifying Struggles."

We love you tremendously!

Dad and Mom



Mom and Sister Booi who is a counselor in the Young Women's program



The Booi family. Great people! She is a return missionary from England. He is the second counselor in the bishopric. We need about 500 more families like this in our stake.



These two are the children of President and Sister Dinana. Their names: Singa (boy) and Sibiu (girl). Fun and intelligent children. President Dianana is in the stake presidency



# Tid Bits

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

\*1. Word of the week:\* "umbrageous," angered at something unjust or wrong. \*Example:\* The thirteen colonies were umbrageous about the taxation without representation in their new found land.

\*2. Quote of the week:\*

\*3. Scripture of the week:\*  
And we know that all men must repent and believe on the name of Jesus Christ, and worship the Father in his name, and endure in faith on his name to the end, or they cannot be saved in the kingdom of God.  
-D&C 20:29

\*4. Joke of the week:\*

As a bagpiper, I play many gigs. Recently I was asked by a funeral director to play at a graveside service

for a homeless man. He had no family or friends, so the service was to be at a pauper's cemetery in the Kentucky back country. As I was not familiar with the backwoods, I got lost and, being a typical man, I didn't stop for directions. I finally arrived an hour late and saw the funeral guy had evidently gone and the hearse was nowhere in sight. There were only the diggers and crew left and they were eating lunch. I felt badly and apologized to the men for being late. I went to the side of the grave and looked down and the vault lid was already in place. I didn't know what else to do, so I started to play.

The workers put down their lunches and began to gather around. I played out my heart and soul for this man with no family and friends. I played like I've never played before for this homeless man. And as I played 'Amazing Grace,' the workers began to weep. They wept, I wept, we all

wept together. When I finished I packed up my bagpipes and started for my car. Though my head hung low, my heart was full. As I opened the door to my car, I heard one of the workers say, "I never seen nothin' like that before and I've been putting in septic tanks for twenty years."

\*5. Bee's Knees Award:\* This guy is Mr. Positive. He is always happy. He will always see the good side of things. He is a hard worker and provider for his family. He loves his children and they think he is "Super Dad." He has a gift for training Bor-

der Collies. He loves and admires his wife. They are temple attenders. He knows everything about sheep ranching. He has a deep testimony of the gospel and is a great example of service to others. He is honest as the day is long. He can turn a front-end loader on a dime. He's great. He's awesome. Klave, you are the Bee's Knees, brotha!!!

\*6. Gospel question of the week:\*  
How old was Abraham when he begat Issac?

\*7. If I were you (Advice to grand



The SEMA  
Brothers!



kids):\* If I were you, I would 1) think of good goals, 2) write those goals down, 3) write down how you will accomplish those goals (your plan, your steps to get it done), and 4) post those goals where you can see them everyday.

\*8. What I learned this week:\* Our struggles will someday be look at in hindsight as sacred experiences.

\*9. What I am grateful for:\* President Nelson! He is such a good example of Christ-like qualities.

\*10. My goal for the week:\* Get three revised quotes put together from builders.

\*11. Photo of the week:\* The SEMA Brothers!

Have fun living the gospel this week!  
We love you! We think about you all the time!

Dad and Mom

## Gospel Question

Folks,

\*Here are the winners\*:

\*Last Week Question:\* What type of man was Boaz before he was married?

The correct answer was by Michael Beckstead, "Ruth-less"

The winner of this week's gospel question is Klave:

\*This Week Question: \*How old was Abraham when he begat Issac?

Answer: 100 years old.

Love,

Dad and MOom

## Jul\_02\_2018\_Update

Dear Family,

We used our preparation day very well today! We left early this morning and went to Grahamstown for the National Arts Festival 2018. This is an 11 day event that promotes anything and all things artistic. It is probably similar to the Shakespearean Festival in Cedar City. It is a 2 hour and 15 minute drive from our house. Fortunately it is all national highway. Unfortunately, there was the usual road construction.

During the trip, Mom is reading aloud "The Covenant" by James Mitchner. It is a historical fiction novel and provides a good understanding of the history behind South Africa. (Mom's second time reading it.)

It was windy this morning when we left. By the time we arrived in Grahamstown, it was raining, windy and big time cold. Fortunately, we brought our jackets. We first saw some very nice art in one building. Then, off to the fair booths. Probably

300 booths where you could see just about any handicraft or trinket you can imagine.

Then, we went to a one man play, "Alfonse." The good news, it was amazing to see this man do his monologue for one hour+ and use the voices for 27 different characters in his story. The bad news, it was okay, not stellar.

So, we thought we would try something that had dance in it. We settled on seeing "The Rhythm of Makhana." The good news, it was about 20% traditional dress and history. The bad news, it was 80% loud, modern, screeching music with robotic, brake-dancing. Mom had her ears covered a good portion of the time.

It was fun, entertaining and a good get-away for Mom and I. On the way home, we played a game of "head-to-head." The topic was blessings we have received. It went on for an hour before we called it quits. We were home by 7 PM. The bottom line: we had a good dose of African art and talent!

\*Photos:\*

- Here is a link to some photos we took today at the Grahamstown Art Festival: - <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1Py8KZMHTsjjeTjE-tUYeLDwLUJIBLb1Kb> - One of the photos is of a very old wall inside at restaurant. Look at it closely and see if you can find the writing etched into the stone "WHW was Here" - The photo of the lady with her bright blanket wrapped around her is, Eve. She was very nice and fun to dicker with. I employed some negotiating techniques I have learned over the years in Tijuana to get everything we purchased a lot cheaper. Mom felt badly that we were taking advantage of her. I felt like Uncle Greg would be so proud of me!

Yes, we still love you guys. You are wonderful. Keep up the good work of being good.

Dad and Mom

2018

JULY 3 }

# Jul\_03\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Ada,

It is about 6:30 in the morning and I just read your email. You have made my day! An email from Adelaide is like finding a pot of gold at the end of a rainbow.

We are so happy you were able to go to New York. That is such a big city. I think the nickname is, "the city that never sleeps." Grandma and I went there once and had a neat time watching plays on Broadway. We are glad you had such a good time. I hope your brothers treated you like a queen and made you feel special, beautiful, like royalty, with reverence, always bowing in your presence!

I love my missionary companion. She is the best companion I have ever had! Grandma has a great love for the people we visit. All the sisters in our wards think she is awesome.

She is a good listener and can empathize with them. (Look that word up if you do not know what it means. But, you probably know because you are the smartest girl on the face of the planet.)

Grandma and I read a chapter from the Book of Mormon every day. It has helped us learn a lot more and it has strengthened our testimonies. We challenge you, the great, fantastic, marvelous and awesome Adelaide, to read a chapter each day. You may not understand everything, but we promise you that as you prayerfully study that great book, your testimony will grow and you will be building your house on the "Rock", the Savior. Can you do it, or are you a yellow belly chicken?

Continue having a fantastic summer. It is so nice to have a pool you can fall into when it gets too hot. Thank you for being such a good example of

the gospel. We love you. We admire you. We want to be like you when we grow up someday!

Love,

Grandpa and Grandma Stevenson

## Jul\_03\_2018\_Update

Dear Family,

We took zone leaders to the airport today so they can attend their Mission Leadership Council in Cape Town. One set of missionaries from Queenstown went to the Davies home for lunch prior to leaving. When it was time to go, they could not locate their car keys. We got them to the airport okay, but now, we have until Thursday noon to 1) find the keys, 2) have a new key





We were so surprised to see William Holmes Walker's initials carved into the stone of this old wall. He spent some time in Grahamstown.

- This is Lee Lalendle. His first name is a difficult (for us) Xosa name, so we just call him Lee. - We were so surprised to see William Holmes Walker's initials carved into the stone of this old wall. He spent some time in Grahamstown. - The Xosa bead work is famous. They can make the coolest things decorated with small beads that are placed one at a time into their handicraft. - Eve sells a lot of stuff. She comes from Cape Town but gets a lot of her trinkets from Zimbabwe. Some items she buys "raw" and then, she decorates/finishes them. She does the bead work herself.

made by a locksmith, or 3) travel to Queenstown to pick up a spare key from the senior missionaries.

We had what we call Senior Council this morning. It is a Skype conference call where we discuss various mission topics, needs, policy, etc. As MLS missionaries, we received some good training from President Lebethoa about self-reliance. Our takeaway is that we need to be available to assist in the form of demonstrating, advising, pointing and supporting. We do not want to be doing things for them because when we

leave, they haven't really learned anything. We don't want to prop them up. If we take the right approach, over time they will get it.

I tried to stay warm all morning because I have a bit of a cold and cough going on. After the airport, I was into my Winter pajamas and took a nap under a nice warm blanket. Fortunately, our bedroom gets partial sunlight for a good part of the day and it is the warmest part of the house.

\*Photos:\*

Love,

Dad and Mom



Eve sells a lot of stuff. She comes from Cape Town but gets a lot of her trinkets from Zimbabwe. Some items she buys "raw" and then, she decorates/finishes them. She does the bead work herself.

2018 JULY 4 }

# Jul\_04\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

I have lost a few days around here. I have been a little under the weather with a cold, chills and a cough. I can't even remember if I sent out an update yesterday or not. I thought I did but just checked my "sent mail" and nothing is there from yesterday. I know my memory is going south because I woke up this morning with a stranger in my bed and she will not go away. She says she loves me.

Today was spent staying warm and trying to raise my body temperature. However, we did go out at 2 PM to meet with some missionaries. The office has asked that we provide an account of the missionaries finding and teaching Akhona, the blind gentleman. I wrote down some of the details and made a rough draft. We still have some details to add before the office puts it in the monthly mis-

sion newsletter.

I am attaching it to this email so that \*Brayden and others contemplating a mission \*can read it. I think it summarizes what can happen when missionaries are doing their best to find and bless the lives of our Heavenly Father's children.

\*Photos:\*

- Akhona - "Finding and Blessing the Elect"

Have a great day. Do what is right.  
We love you!

Dad and Mom



Akhona -  
"Finding and  
Blessing the  
Elect"

2018 JULY 5 }

# Jul\_05\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We spent a good part of the day carting missionaries around. Our zone leaders were coming in from Cape Town and we had to help provide some transportation.

Mom is baking some delicious cinnamon rolls for our district meeting tomorrow. We also have a big bowl of fruit where the missionaries can take two pieces along with one cinnamon roll. We have to limit things a bit because some missionaries are capable of eating the entire container of cinnamon rolls!

I did some shopping for groceries and tried to stay warm most of the day. I think by tomorrow I should be 110%.

I also spent some time on Facebook trying to find some lost sheep in our Mdantsane 4th Ward. I think I have

identified at least three of our members who have moved away. I did a friend request for each one and hope to find out where they now live so we can move their records.

\*Photos:\*

- At the Hazy Ridge Club House, we have a wide selection of books, movies and music we can check out.

- The pool is always clean, but I have never seen anyone use it yet.

- For anyone coming to visit us, we can have a brai (bar-b-que)

Love,

Dad and Mom



The pool is always clean, but I have never seen anyone use it yet.



At the Hazy Ridge Club House, we have a wide selection of books, movies and music we can check out.

For anyone coming to visit us, we can have a brai (bar-b-que)



2018 JULY 6 }

# Jul\_06\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a good district meeting this morning. One portion was on forgiving, using Elder Echo Hawk's talk in general conference as a guide. The other portion was about discerning the Spirit, Page 96-98 of PMG.

I truly believe that we have the presence of the Holy Ghost continually when we are striving to do what is right. The problem might be that we do not realize it as we get promptings and feelings because they are constantly coming at us. We need to pay attention and listen. It stands to reason that if Satan can continually bombard us with evil, temptations, suggests, etc., then, we can equally reason that the Holy Ghost, which has been sent to us by the Father, will also be sending messages that teach us, enlighten us, guide us, warn us....

Today, Mom had an appointment with Brother Shakes to help him learn how to cook pasta. It was a simple lesson on how to make mac and cheese. We made some more when we got home so that I have a three - four day supply.

We are dealing with a lot of bureaucratic horse pucky in trying to get the Department of Public Works on board with our Phakamile classroom project. The good news is that we made significant headway today. I have a letter from the regional director of the Department of Education telling the Department of Public Works that they approve of the project. With that, the DPW can write us a letter saying they approve and the Church will seriously consider partnering with our family on this deal.

We had a good visit with the mother of Elder Goje, the young man that recently went on a mission from one

of our wards to Zimbabwe. She is not a member. We took time to explain to her what the sacrament was in our meetings since she has come a few times. She had a friend that was there with us. I read from the Book of Mormon the sacrament prayer as part of our explanation.

After having a parting prayer, the friend asked the reference for the the scripture we shared, thinking it was in the Bible. I mentioned I was reading from the Book of Mormon and that I would be happy to give him a copy. I walked him through

the book and pointed out the passage of scripture I had read. The book is also marked with about 35 scriptures that testify of Christ. We will see what happens as we try to follow up.

\*Photos:\*

- Mom giving cooking lessons to Shakes. He is always smiling. - Elder Davies has converted their garage into a warehouse of cleaning goods, church literature, power tools, shelves of hardware, etc. We might inherit this when they go home next month!



Mom giving cooking lessons to Shakes. He is always smiling.



Elder Davies has converted their garage into a warehouse of cleaning goods, church literature, power tools, shelves of hardware, etc. We might inherit this when they go home next month!

Have a great day. We love you,

Dad and Mom



2018 JULY 7 }

# Jul\_07\_2018\_Update

FROM: Elder and Sister Stevenson



Dear Family,

Mom and I had a productive day. We took a couple of "Lost Sheep" routes that we have created for members to go visit and chased down about 15+ less active members. We also were able to get good information of members who have moved or even died. We will make our notes and then, turn the lists over to the ward clerk. He is good at moving people out of our ward if we have a new address for them.

The objective is to locate as many members as we can so the Church can effectively minister to them. If they are on our ward records but they have moved to Durban, that member is not getting the attention and care they should.

Please do not hate me because I had fried mac 'n cheese for dinner and you did not.

I meant to mention yesterday that Mom and I also drove down to the ocean front to look for whales. We believe we kind of saw three. They are far out and what we see is them blowing out water and then diving back down into the ocean. We do not have photos, so you will just have to believe us.

Please, do not ever say that Mom's cookies never get us anywhere. Not true! Yesterday, my friends at the local pizza shop handed over to me a small pizza and some supreme garlic bread for free. I have treated them 2 or 3 times in the past with some of Mom's baking. Monday I will be taking them banana bread.

\*Photos:\*

- Boys have fun spinning their tops. They show their expertise by being able to pick it up and have it spin in the palm of their hand. -  
We are seeing a lot of grass fires all

over. We think It is just that time of the year when things get very dry and brown. No one seems to get worried. They simply let it burn out on its own.

Do some good today! We love you,

Dad and Mom



Boys have fun spinning their tops. They show their expertise by being able to pick it up and have it spin in the palm of their hand.



We are seeing a lot of grass fires all over. We think it is just that time of the year when things get very dry and brown. No one seems to get worried. They simply let it burn out on its own.

# Tid Bits

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

\*1. Word of the week:\* "implacable," unable to be appeased or placated. \*Example:\* Michael Beckstead has an implacable appetite for pizza.

\*2. Quote of the week:\*

\*3. Scripture of the week:\*

O the wisdom of God, his mercy and grace! For behold, if the flesh should rise no more our spirits must become subject to that angel who fell from before the presence of the Eternal God, and became the devil, to rise no more.

(2 Nephi 9:8)

\*4. Joke of the week:\*

The definition of a good high counselor talk: It should have a good be-

ginning. It should have a good ending. And they should be as close together as possible.

\*5. Bee's Knees Award: \*Are you a great hunter? Can you track a bear blindfolded and by smell only? Probably not. This kid is Mr. Awesome. He is a hunter extraordinaire, a wrestler and all star football player and an expert water skier. Best of all, he loves the Lord and wants to do what is right. He knows the importance of being a priesthood holder. He will be an excellent missionary. He is committed to doing what is right. He loves his family very, very much. Carter, you are the Bee's Knees, brotha!!!

\*6. Gospel question of the week:\* What is the scriptural reference where Jesus gives to Peter the "keys of the kingdom?"

\*7. If I were you (advice to grand

kids): \* If I were you, I would get into the habit of reading the Book of Mormon everyday. Read at least one chapter a day for the rest of your life. Try it. I think you will like it.

\*8. What I learned this week:\* Struggles and challenges are good for us and it is important for us to deal with them as learning experiences, even when they might seem insurmountable.

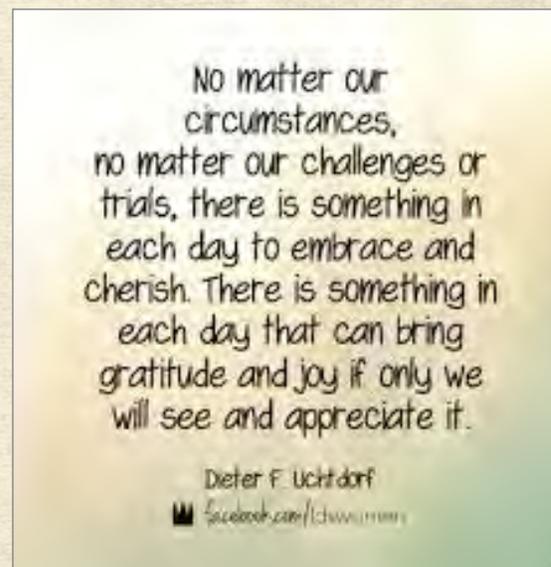
\*9. What I am grateful for:\* People who keep plugging away at their jobs in the church despite the challenges

and obstacles along the way.

\*10. My goal for the week:\* I need to keep the goal of getting revised bids in from builders for the Phakamile classrooms. I have one and need two more.

\*11. Photo of the week: \* Eating dinner at a very swank Salt Lake City restaurant!

We love you more today than yesterday. Have fun living the gospel this week!





Dad and Mom

## Julo8\_2018\_Update

Dear Family,

We had are usual sabbath day meetings today. However, we went to the ward council for the 4th Ward. We enjoyed it because the bishop had an agenda and there was a lot of discussion about people. The bishop did not dominate the time. And, it did not go for 3 hours! We sent him a text message telling him what a good

job he did.

After church, we drove to a certain location to meet the Elders from the East London 2nd Ward. We discussed our friend, Mavoreen and her family. Mavorren works at the Sweet Shop near our house and we have become friends over this last year. We had prayer that the Lord would be with us as we went to her house to introduce them.

Her husband was sleeping, but we still opened with a prayer and then visited. Her two young sons were

there also. The missionaries discussed the Restoration pamphlet and asked her to commit to reading it. She said yes. She was asked to offer a closing prayer and she did. She was so very receptive to everything the missionaries told her. She seems genuinely interested in what the missionaries will share with her and her family. They have an appointment to return Thursday evening.

We see her as one of the elect (D&C 29:7). Her life will change dramatically as she embraces the gospel and she will be better able to manage the challenges in her life.

Yes, I'm eating fried mac 'n cheese.

\*Photos:\*

- Can you imagine 75 children in this size of a classroom? Help is on its way. - Mom and Sister Booi. All the women love Mom's hair. - Sister Bukani, the Primary President in the 4th Ward.

We love you. Have a great Sabbath Day.

Dad and Mom



Mom and Sister Booi. All the women love Mom's hair.



Can you imagine 75 children in this size of a classroom? Help is on its way.



Sister Bukani, the Primary President in the 4th Ward.

2018 JULY 9 }

# Jul\_09\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a nice walk around noon today - 6.5 miles. Keep in mind this is Winter, but we had on light exercise clothes and worked up a sweat. I'm guessing it was around 70 degrees. My kind of Winter!!!

We spoke with a senior couple recently and they were appalled that some of the missionaries feel right at home in their house. One in particular would go right into their kitchen and open their cupboards and refrigerator. Elder Bell (roughly my age) had to sit those missionaries down and tell them their behavior was entirely unacceptable.

I reflected on this as I would make it a practice when I have visited our children's homes to go right to the cupboards and refrigerators and take food left and right! Now I am wondering just how inconsiderate

and rude I was??? No one ever said anything to me, but I feel like I probably overstepped my bounds.

Because all of you have read D&C 64:9-10, I think you might give me a chance to correct my inappropriate comportment in the future.

\*Photos:\*

- In South Africa, they use the word "queue" instead of "line." For example, "The queue begins here."

We love you. Have a wonderful day doing good.

Dad and Mom



In South Africa, they use the word "queue" instead of "line." For example, "The queue begins here."

2018 JULY 10 }

# Jul\_10\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had missionaries with car problems this morning. This required picking them up from the repair shop (feeding them pizza) and then, taking them out to their work area. As we cut our mission vehicle fleet down about 50%, we expect a lot of these problems to go away. This will give missionaries more time wearing down their shoe leather. Plus, we will be keeping the best cars and dumping the dogs. We had some good visits today. However, we missed a good brother who has been having some health issues. We are not exactly sure what happened to him, but he said to others he was losing his mind. His neighbors picked up on the fact that he was not 100% and helped themselves to taking a whole lot of his belongings from his home. He said he just sat there and watched and felt helpless because he couldn't get his body

to move. I peeked into his back door and saw it completely empty. One of the items they took was his laptop.

We visited Brother Yolisa Jack. He was baptized in October and we have not seen him during the last month or more at church. He was caught a little off guard when he answered the door and found us on his doorstep. When we stepped into his one room apartment, it reeked of tobacco smoke. We told him he needs to come back to church and that the church needs him. We told him we loved him. We told him that he was a son of a Heavenly Father and he loves him. Then, we showed him the video, "Spiritual Crocodiles," by Elder Boyd K. Packer. That seemed to really get his attention. We hope to see him on Sunday.

We love you!  
Dad and Mom

In U.S. prices, this is about \$4.93 a gallon!!!



Our local "petrol" station. Always good service here



2018 JULY 11 }

# Jul\_11\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Two major events this day:

1. The Bells (senior couple) arrived at the Pinecreek Restaurant at 11:45 for lunch with the Davies, Mom and I. They came in from Queenstown where they have spent the last 18 months. Our job was to escort them to the airport so they can start their journey home. After dropping them off we brought their car back to our house. Mom drove like she was born here. We will take it to the airport again on Friday to pick up the new senior couple (the Blasers) and escort them to Queenstown, about 2.5 hours from here. The Bells have been a great blessing to the little branch they have been serving. Saturday, the branch threw a 6 hour going away party for them. They were moved to tears as the members gifted them dresses, shirts, ties, souvenirs, etc. The members dipped in-

to their day-to-day living money to do this.

2. Mom and I purchased new walking/running shoes. Mom's for running and mine for walking. Mom's old shoes have lost all their cushioning and she has worn holes through the top part. I have a pair of clunkers that must weigh about ten pounds. I will continue to use those for bike-riding and use my new Reeboks for walking in style.

We love you all very much. Do good!

Dad and Mom



- These donkeys are on the main road to Gonubie. Every once in a while we see people stopped there to feed them



Names: Jack, Elizabeth and Charlotte. I call them the three democrats of South Africa.



With these new shoes, the pounds will be falling off left and right

2018 JULY 12 }

# Jul\_12\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We left early this morning to go do a surprise boarding inspection in King Williams Town. We called the missionaries when we were about 30 minutes away from their place. We are sure panic set in and there was a mad scramble to try and clean things until we got there. That boarding needed a little help. Additionally, Mom laid down the law for one of the Elders who had some pretty grimy white shirts hanging in his closet.

We then inspected three other flats. We were surprised at how neat they were for a sneak attack. The only major problem were the cars. These missionaries do not realize how important it is to make sure they have a good spare tire (not flat) and a jack. Some night it will be 9 PM and pitch black and they will have a flat and no spare to put on. That is not a good

situation. All of them were told to get things fixed today.

We made contact with a real estate company in Mdantsane. It was a huge surprise that there was even such a business in the township. We think there will be a nice home in a safe, secure area up for rent around mid-august. We are hoping it will be a nice enough place for one or two sets of missionaries. This will make the mission president very happy.

We also went to look at a home that was recommended. We never found the house number, but we could tell from the neighborhood that it was not a good area for missionaries to reside.

\*Photos:\*

-We found a pretty good restaurant. My steak was very good. Mom had a nice salad. A little pricey.

- I am ask so frequently about how

to make fried mac 'n cheese. I don't like to share my special recipes with anyone, but here goes: Take left over mac 'n cheese and put it in a non-stick frying pan. Cook it until it is crunchy. Please, keep this secret and do not share this recipe with others.

We love you all very much. Make good choices!

Dad and Mom



I am ask so frequently about how to make fried mac 'n cheese. I don't like to share my special recipes with anyone, but here goes: Take left over mac 'n cheese and put it in a non-stick frying pan. Cook it until it is crunchy. Please, keep this secret and do not share this recipe with others.

We found a pretty good restaurant. My steak was very good. Mom had a nice salad. A little pricey.



2018 JULY 13 }

# Jul\_13\_14\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Sorry about no update yesterday. We had our district meeting and then, went to the airport to pick up the new senior couple, the Blasers. They are from the Rexburg, Idaho area. He taught at BYU-I for 28 years in agronomy. They will be here for one year. Very nice couple and they will do a great job.

Our job was to take them to Queenstown and get them settled into their new flat and show them around town. The 2 1/2 hour drive from East London to Queenstown was a little hectic for a couple reasons. 1) It was very foggy and misty. visibility was poor, and 2) I let Elder Blaser drive for about 2 of the hours. He was more than just a little nervous. However, he did well. We had a chance to discuss a lot about the job they will be doing in their assigned area.

We dropped them off and Mom and I checked into a bed and breakfast. Next we picked up the Blasers and took them to dinner. The bed and breakfast we stayed at had wi-fi, but we did not bring our laptop, hence, no update.

Today we took time for them to meet the missionaries in their Queenstown Zone at the church building. It was a cordial visit for about 20 minutes, then got the missionaries off to work. After that we did a whole bunch of things to help them know where things are, how to purchase electricity, where to fix flat tyres (South Africa spelling), good places to eat, located the local hospital, retail stores, Internet service provider....they felt like they had taken a drink of water from a fire hose by the time we were finished! I think they were on information overload by the time we left to return to Gonubie. However, they will

catch on quickly and Mom and I are only a phone call away.

Love,

Dad and Mom

\*Photos:\*

- Cars all lined up for take off after district meeting. - This is Elder Lupeni from Tonga. Not appropriate dress for a missionary in South Africa. He goes home on Wednesday so I think he was taking some liberties. - This is "Ollie" the semi-tame Ostrich at a game reserve in Queenstown. I fed her some delicious popcorn. Pecks it right out of your hand.

Cars all lined up for take off after district meeting.





This is Elder Lupeni from Tonga. Not appropriate dress for a missionary in South Africa. He goes home on Wednesday so I think he was taking some liberties.



This is "Ollie" the semi-tame Ostrich at a game reserve in Queenstown. I fed her some delicious popcorn. Pecks it right out of your hand.

2018 JULY 15 }

# Jul\_15\_2018\_Update

FROM: Elder and Sister Stevenson



Dear Family,

It has been a little bit cool the last couple days. Back on Monday, it actually snowed in Queenstown. And, remember, no one has central heating!

We had some very good talks today in Sacrament Meeting. One young lady is from an less active family we have been teaching off and on for the last year. Another was by Phumlani Ngqase. He is a return missionary, having served in Salt Lake City from 2002 to 2004. After returning, he went into inactivity and led a life of the prodigal son (except without any money). We have been visiting him for the last year. It has been a bit of a miracle to see him make changes and start to come back. He knows what is right and is starting to make good choices.

Before our 2nd Sacrament Meeting,

Mom started to have symptoms of a migraine headache. We decided to come home and let her get some rest.

It is a blessing and a privilege to be serving as missionaries. I told Elder Blaser, it is being involved in the most important work on the face of the earth during the day and like being on vacation with your wife during the evenings. Mom and I have been so blessed throughout our lives. We have much for which to be grateful and want to demonstrate our gratitude through service the rest of our lives.

\*Photos:\*

- These are fiberglass kayaks that people take out into the ocean. Imagine sitting in one of those and having a huge Great White Shark come up from beneath and bite right where you are sitting, thinking you are a delicious seal or sea lion.

- While in Queenstown, Mom and I went for a walk (3 miles) through a nice neighborhood where the Blasers live. They had dogs everywhere. The previous senior missionary (Elder Bell) has been bitten three separate times and once knocked to the ground by a big dog.

We love you more today than yesterday. You are great. Keep doing good things.

Dad and Mom

## Molo

Dear family,

This is an email that came from one of the missionaries you helped send off to the mission field with his necessary/required clothing. He is doing well and will be a great asset to the church when he returns to Mdantsane.

Thanks you for your generosity!

Love,



These are fiberglass kayaks that people take out into the ocean. Imagine sitting in one of those and having a huge Great White Shark come up from beneath and bite right where you are sitting, thinking you are a delicious seal or sea lion.



While in Queenstown, Mom and I went for a walk (3 miles) through a nice neighborhood where the Blasens live. They had dogs everywhere. The previous senior missionary (Elder Bell) has been bitten three separate times and once knocked to the ground by a big dog.

Dad and Mom  
Good day

I am well Honored to hear such great news. When I was there brother phumlani was L.A I think, that is so powerful that he is back into Activity! I am doing wonderful on my side. Mission is treating me good. I am trying daily to be an Example to my Trainee, so that he may be able to be a better missionary and have first wonderful first companion insights!. Mission Time indeed flies, it is still far from me but I see daily how time and days go by quick. in the field. I

have missionaries whom I was with in the MTC that are in that side, ELDER LARE. hopefully you guys will meet him soon if not on your Transfers.

This week has been a down one. I always like seeing my investigators at church, but this week only 3 of them were present. It doesn't happen usually. There was also one investigator who was supposed to be interviewed this past Sunday, she was not there, therefore she won't be baptised this coming Sunday, which adds to my mission stresses for this week. I had however a wonderful opportunity to

go interview candidates who were gonna be baptised next week, in the Zone leader's Area. I felt the spirit as I was conducting those interviews. At the end of one of them which was of a 12-year old girl, whom I had asked all the questions I was required, I felt inspired to ask her "Is there any question you have for me before we conclude" ..she said in a slow and calm voice with eyes looking on the Ground "YES" ..She asked me "should I forgive my Mom" ..I was thrilled by this question. I didn't expect it from such a young girl. and I was trying to explain and give the answer in the ability that she would understand....the spirit uttered words in my mouth as I unfolded this question to this young lady. She explained that her mom had Abandoned her when she was 6 years and that her Dad passed away when she was 5. I was thrilled with how we looked the scriptures and ended up giving her hope and warmth in the Convents she is about to make and honor!. My week was good. it could have been better but all works in Good for the benefit of those who love the Lord. May you have a great week full of Love and Prayer, with the Book of Mormon being the Centre of your

Life.

Love  
ELDER Molteno

## Jul\_16\_2018\_Update

Dear Family,

Preparation day! We got up early and went to the doctor's office. Mom needed to have a rash checked out on her ankle. I wanted to get 1) something for my toe fungus, 2) a PSA test, 3) an A1c blood sugar test, and 4) a renal test. We were the first ones there and out within an hour.

We spent some time trying to figure out transfers for tomorrow and Wednesday. There is a lot going on between buses, cars and airplanes, but I think we have it figured out.

Mom and I took a drive up to a game reserve park called, "Inkwenkwezi." We went there about 6 months ago and had a very enjoyable time. I was able to track down the owner and told him we would be having family here around January. Long story made short, we have a deal. I think

things can even get better over the next few months with regular deliveries of some of Mom's delicious baking.

**\*Photos:\***

- Spelling in South Africa is a little different than the USA - Elder Lillback needed a suit since he had worn out the pants on his suit. So, I gave him one and surprise, surprise, it fit! - Mom and I went to see the ocean not far from Inkwenkwezi Game Reserve

We love you. Have a wonderful day making good decisions!

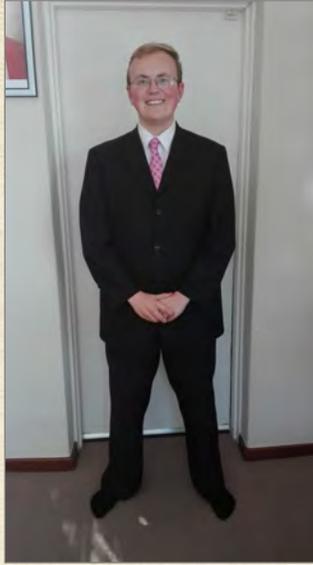
Dad and Mom



This is an email that came from one of the missionaries you helped send off to the mission field with his necessary/required clothing. He is doing well and will be a great asset to the church when he returns to Mdantsane.



Spelling in South Africa is a little different than the USA.



Elder Lillback needed a suit since he had worn out the pants on his suit. So, I gave him one and surprise, surprise, it fit!



Mom and I went to see the ocean not far from Inkwenkwezi Game Reserve.

2018 JULY 17 }

# Jul\_17\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We spent most of the day reading and writing and getting missionaries off at the airport. We had three that were returning to Cape Town for their exit interviews with the mission president. It is amazing to see how much more mature they seem than the 18 year olds that are coming into the mission now.

We were touched as we met a Sister Vena who came all the way up from Port Elizabeth (3 1/2 hours away) to see Elder Paskett off to home. Two years ago, Elder Paskett was only on his mission one month and met this sister and her family. They became investigators, and then strong members of the church. He baptised her. She arrived on Sunday and went to the church house to surprise Elder Paskett. We saw the video of her walking into a class where he was

sitting. He was so surprised. He came right over to her and gave her a big hug.

Then, today, at the airport, they said their good byes. Elder Paskett gave her his suit badge, hugged her and said, "I love you, mama." How sweet is that!

We visited with her a little and heard about her conversion. Her daughter is now on a mission in Sierra Leone. She has a son or nephew that is also getting ready to go on a mission. She lights up like a Christmas tree when she talks about how happy she is now compared to prior to receiving the gospel. They have been to the temple as a family and it seems life continues to get better and better for them.

We thought it was interesting that she still has many of the same challenges she had before but she and

her family can manage them so much better. They have faith. They have hope. The Lord is blessing them.

Just think what great things have happened because this young man went on a mission to South Africa! His life is blessed. Families and future generations are being blessed. The church is stronger. Eternity will be so sweet as they renew their friendships in the next life. How cool is that!

\*Photos:\*

- Elder Paskett (Bountiful, Utah) and Sister Vena - Elders Grover (Mississippi) and Burns (Roy, Utah)

Do good today. We love you,

Dad and Mom



Elder Paskett (Bountiful, Utah) and Sister Vena.



Elders Grover  
(Mississippi) and Burns  
(Roy, Utah)

2018 JULY 18 }

# Jul\_18\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

I am struggling right now and I hope I can get over my depression and discouragement as soon as possible. Yesterday, Mom was reading. I approached with what I considered a serious and semi-romantic face. I moved to kiss her. To my surprise, she laughed at me. I tried again, this time, a little more assertive. She continued to laugh and laugh loudly. I asked, "What's so funny?" She just laughed louder and longer. I am at a loss as what to do.

It has been quite the day with transfers. We had missionaries coming on buses, leaving on buses, waiting for airplanes. debarking airplanes all day long. Literally, we were pretty busy from 9 AM to about 4 PM just trying to make sure everybody departed or arrived where they needed to go. We are proud of the ZL's who did 99% of the work. Mom and I were

official greeters, well-wishers and passport coordinators.

While we waited, we had time to ask returning missionaries to share memorable moments from their mission. We heard some great experiences - everything from being robbed to the wonderful transformations seen in people accepting the gospel. Good stuff!

\*Photos: \*

- This is what they call a "Dassie." It looks like an overgrown groundhog. Sometimes they call them a rock rabbit. They are very plentiful along the coast and find shelter in the thick brush - The South African-Joburg bunch. These five missionaries come from Jo-burg and surrounding areas. - This is a safe at the back of one of our closets where we keep the missionary passports.

We think of you often. We love you,

Dad and Mom



This is what they call a "Dassie." It looks like an overgrown groundhog. Sometimes they call them a rock rabbit. They are very plentiful along the coast and find shelter in the thick brush.



The South African-Joburg bunch. These five missionaries come from Joburg and surrounding areas.



This is a safe at the back of one of our closets where we keep the missionary passports.

# Jul\_19\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Our goal today was to move the Phakamile School Project forward. It just seemed that we were all entangled in bureaucracy at every department of the government. So, we went to the Provincial (State) level of the Department of Education, about an hour from our house.

Not knowing exactly where to go, we simply found the right government offices, parked our car and then, started asking questions. The first office we went to, we were surprised to meet a white woman who had a job helping with libraries throughout the province. We explained our situation. She did not know exactly where to go, but took us to an area on the other side of these sprawling government offices that dealt with infrastructure.

No surprise to us, all the key people

were not in the office. The clerical people thought we were there to collect money due to us from work we have provided. However, upon finding that we were interested in donating classrooms, she stopped what she was doing and said she would take us to the director of the department.

We met with the director and had his complete attention. Bottom line, we will write a short two paragraph letter and he will set the ball in motion. He wields enough power to override certain issues like classroom size and having to use face brick instead of cement block. It seems the Lord blessed us all the way through to get to the right people and get this project off of high center.

Now, we need to get one or two more bids in the door and we will be ready for the church humanitarian

department to take this project to their committee and get it approved.

\*Photos:\*

- Another selfie of Mom and I with the Indian Ocean in the background.

- These stairs went up to a landing where you could overlook the ocean.

Each stair seemed to be a different height and it felt weird walking up them - The coastline where the Nahoon River flows into the Indian Ocean - Grave markers of those who have died at sea. Some are surfers who were attacked by sharks. From May - July there are

massive schools of sardines/pilchard that run between Cape Town and Durban. Whales and sharks show up in droves to feast on the little fish and surfers if they get in the way. - This tree was massive with all its millions of branches

Do what is right! We love you,

Dad and Mom



Another selfie of Mom and I with the Indian Ocean in the background.



These stairs went up to a landing where you could overlook the ocean. Each stair seemed to be a different height and it felt weird walking up them.



Grave markers of those who have died at sea. Some are surfers who were attacked by sharks. From May - July there are massive schools of sardines/pilchard that run between Cape Town and Durban. Whales and sharks show up in droves to feast on the little fish and surfers if they get in the way.



The coastline where the Nahoon River flows into the Indian Ocean



This tree was massive with all its millions of branches

2018 JULY 20 }

# Jul\_20\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had our district meeting this morning. Elder Mabanga gave our training. He is a young black missionary from the Jo-burg area. As he instructed us, I thought what a great asset he will be to the Church when he returns to his home ward. One of the goals in the mission is to have all our missionaries go home as powerful priesthood holders, ready to make a significant contribution to the Church.

We visited a real estate company in Mdantsane (the only one that might exist in the township) and found a property that might be available for rent in mid-August for some of our missionaries. We took pictures from the outside and sent them to the mission president. We also made arrangements for him to tour the property next week when he is here for zone conference.

Today we are trying to put together a lesson we can take into the homes of our active members with the objective to motivate \*them\* to go out and find the "lost sheep." Ideally, we want \*them\* to locate and nurture a friendship with these less active members. We are plotting the location of our active families on a map and then, plotting where the less actives are in relation to them. Our challenge is for \*them\* to select one or two households and go minister.

Mom and I will be gone one of these days. We want that strong bond to be among the members who will be here for a long time.

\*Photos:\*

- This is the house we want to show President Lebethoa when he comes next week. Pretty safe neighborhood and much nicer homes than the rest of Mdantsane.
- "Eastern Beach" as you look to-

ward the ocean from Buccaneers Restaurant.

Think, say and do the right thing today! We love you,

Dad and Mom



"Eastern Beach" as you look toward the ocean from Buccaneers Restaurant.



This is the house we want to show President Lebethoa when he comes next week. Pretty safe neighborhood and much nicer homes than the rest of Mdantsane.



2018 JULY 21 }

# Jul\_21\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

This morning was a Mdantsane 1st Ward activity. It was suppose to start at 10 AM. We arrived at 10:15 and two people were there trying to get some things set up. Finally, the bishop showed up around 11:30 with his two boys to start the barbecue.

We left to run an errand and came back about an hour later. When we arrived, about 30 to 40 people were in the Relief Society room. One of the counselors in the bishopric was talking about "Ministering." The message was very good, but several speakers and the meeting dragged on and on.

The next phase of the activity was some games in the cultural hall. We had a three-legged race, gunny sack race and some other relay type games. All had a good time. Then

came the food. We left before it was served. We were a little concerned about the pork, the sausage and tons of bread.

We visited some less actives. One was a woman, 32 years of age, and just had her third child. She will leave the baby and her other two children here while she returns to Cape Town to live and work. Grand-ma will be raising the children here. This is more the rule than the exception. And who is the father???. Where is the father???. Unfortunately, this is an all too common scenario in South Africa.

It seems like this is such a generational problem and we hope and pray that the gospel and righteous teaching in the home will break the cycle.

\*Photos:\*

- On our way back to the church

for the 1st ward activity, we came upon this scene. Traffic had to be diverted down a rocky dirt road. I think it was a BMW SUV that was burning. - Fun and games at the church. - This is a three month old baby. They get strapped to the back with their legs spread wide apart, It looks highly uncomfortable, but the kids do not seem to mind it.

We love you very much,

Dad and Mom



On our way back to the church for the 1st ward activity, we came upon this scene. Traffic had to be diverted down a rocky dirt road. I think it was a BMW SUV that was burning.

Fun and games  
at the church



This is a three  
month old  
baby. They get  
strapped to the  
back with their  
legs spread  
wide apart. It  
looks highly  
uncomfortable,  
but the kids  
do not seem to  
mind it.

# Jul\_22\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

It is a great day to be alive. We had our church meetings today and come away refreshed, edified and ready for the upcoming week.

We said hello to Mama Maluke as we took our seats in the chapel. She was sitting right in front of us. Before the meeting started, the Stake Relief Society President made her way over to see her. Mama Maluke saw her and almost immediately bowed her head in her hands and became teary eyed. The Relief Society President shook her hand and then leaned over and gave a big hug. I do not know the relationship between them, however, I was touched that there was this obvious bond of love between the two of them.

One of our speakers today was Sister Nompomlelo. She is the young lady

with the crutches and struggles to get to church each Sunday. She gave a beautiful talk, standing there, clutching the podium so she did not fall over. At the end of her talk, she bore her sweet testimony of the gospel and broke into tears of gratitude before she sat down. How do you not love a person like that!

After the meeting, I made my way to the stand and gave her a big hug. I told her what a wonderful job she did.

We spoke with two different people that had been to the temple in the last couple days. They were fired up and glowing. How do you not give thanks to our Father in Heaven for temples close by to bless the lives of so many members!

Mom and I were asked to speak in Primary about the importance of Temple Marriage. We hope we were

able to communicate the great blessings that come to us from being married the Lord's way. Mom spoke of our wonderful family and became a little emotional as she thought and spoke of our children. How do you not love a girl like that!

Mavreen, from the local Sweet Treats, and her family had another missionary lesson on Thursday. The Elders said how "powerful" it was to be there. She, her husband, her children and her neighbors were packed into their little government home. One missionary said the father has

been able to make some friends at church last week. We are hoping and praying! I think we will take her some Lihonas to read this week. In the back of the magazine they always have fun things for the children. How do you not love the "elect" who have not hardened their hearts and recognize the message of the Savior.

\*Photos:\*

- One of our Primary kids that comes and sits by us during Sacrament Meeting. He was proud of his new hair cut. We owe him a print of the photo. - This is a recording af-



One of our Primary kids that comes and sits by us during Sacrament Meeting. He was proud of his new hair cut. We owe him a print of the photo.



Mavreen and her co-worker, Kathryn, at Sweet Treats.

ter Mom taught the Primary children, "We Thank Thee O God for a Prophet." - Mavreen and her co-worker, Kathryn, at Sweet Treats. (Previous photo)

Follow the Prophets, they know the way! We love you,

Dad and Mom

## Tid Bits

Dear Family,

\*1. Word of the week:\* "proscription," the action of forbidding something; banning. \*Example:\* \*The Catholic Church eventually imposed a proscription of the selling of indulgences.

\*2. Quote of the week:\*

\*3. Scripture of the week:\*

O Lord, wilt thou grant unto us that we may have success in bringing them again unto thee in Christ.

Behold, O Lord, their souls are precious, and many of them are our brethren; therefore, give unto us, O Lord, power and wisdom that we may bring these, our brethren, again unto thee. (Alma 31:34-35)

\* 4. Joke of the week:\*

What do you call a scout that is...

Being towed behind a boat: Skip

Hiding in a hole: Phil

Sleeping on your porch: Matt

Hanging on your living room wall:

Art

Sleeping in your mail box each month: Bill

Camping on the beach: Sandy

Flying over the fence: Homer

Hiding in a pile of leafs: Russell

Floating in the lake: Bob

Sitting with a car on his head: Jack

Sitting in the sun too long: Wilt

Falling in the campfire: Frank

Stuck in the latrine: John

Throwing up: Ralph

Rock climbing: Cliff

Struck by lightning: Rod

Shaving for the first time: Nick

Getting pushed underwater by an-

other scout: Duncan

Coming home from camp: Dusty

Locked in a bank vault: Rich

\*5. Bee's Knees Award:\* This kid is good at so many things. He is an artist. He is an all star basketball player. He is way smarter than ten rocket scientists all smushed together. He is every one's friends. The girls love him. He lives the gospel 24/7. He obeys his parents and loves his family very, very much. He is a good example to those around him. He is polite, respectful and honest. Barrett, you are the Bee's knees, brotha!!!

\*6. Gospel question of the week:

\*How many chapters are there in the Book of Mosiah?

\*7. If I were you (Advice to grand kids):\* If I were you, I would always try to be on time to everything. When it comes to church, we like to say, "If you are not there 10 minutes early, you are late!" Try it. I think you will like it.

\*8. What I learned this week: \*The closer we come to our Heavenly Father, the more worldly music and

movies seem uncomfortable. It is a good feeling to not enjoy movies depicting killings, people getting hurt and using foul language.

\*9. What I am grateful for:\* I love the Book of Mormon. It is powerful and stands as such a mighty witness for the Savior.

\*10. My goal for the week:\* Last week I needed to get more classrooms proposals done. We made a little progress, but not all the way. This week we want to get the Church fully up to speed where the project is so they can take it to their committee meeting for review.

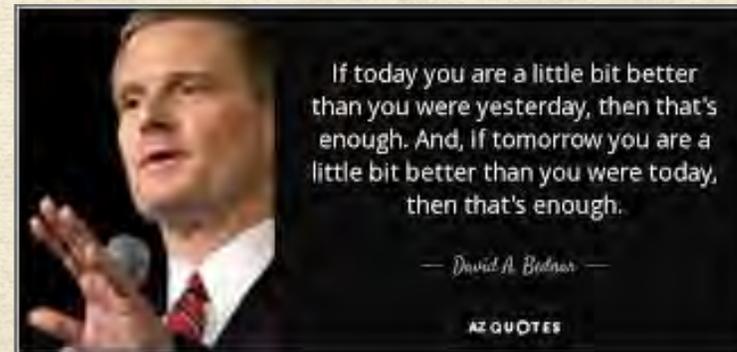
\*11. Photo of the week: \* Which one is Midnight?

We love you very much and pray for you every day. Have fun living the gospel this week!

Dad and Mom



Which one is Midnight?



2018

JULY 23 }

# Jul\_23\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Since it was preparation day, we decided to do our 6.5 mile walk again. We both have new shoes and the walk seemed a little easier.

We did a little banking and stocked our car up with supplies that we will be taking to the Mthatha Elders. There are 4 of them that live in the same boarding. The drive is a good 3 1/2 hours north of us. On our way we will be stopping at the Nelson Mandela Museum. Should be educational and interesting.

Because we will be spending the night there, probably no update until Wednesday night. We will be trying a bed and breakfast that is suppose to be very nice.

I trimmed some hedges today and Mom did some cross-stitch. The cross stitch is a piece she brought

from home and wants to complete before we leave here.

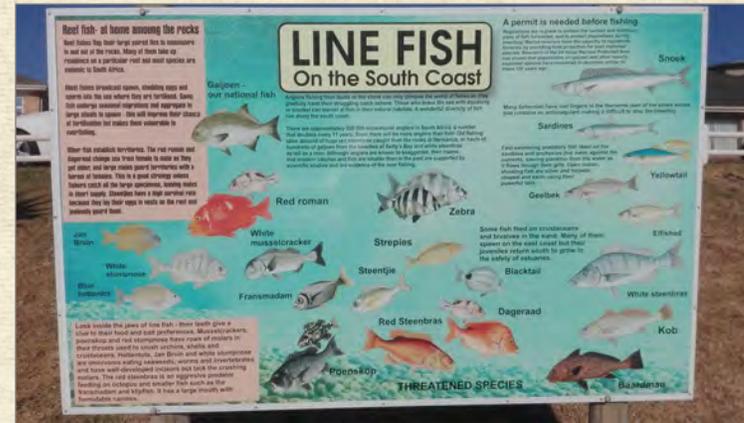
\*Photos:\*

- This is a support pole that holds up a power pole. Obviously, they do not want anyone climbing it without long-lasting physical impairments and repercussions - Lot of fish around this part of Africa. - This is the Gonubie River that runs behind our complex. - Pretty tree that Mom pointed out on our walk this morning.

Be true! We love you,

Dad and Mom

Lot of fish around this part of Africa.



This is a support pole that holds up a power pole. Obviously, they do not want anyone climbing it without long-lasting physical impairments and repercussions



This is the Gonubie River that runs behind our complex.



Pretty tree that Mom pointed out on our walk this morning.

2018

JULY 24 }

# Jul\_24-25\_2018\_Update

FROM: Elder and Sister Stevenson



Dear Family,

We have been to Mthatha and back. Interesting trip, but glad

we only do it about once every 6-7 weeks. There is a lot of road construction between here and there and the traffic is two way (no divider)

We heard on the news that a Johannesburg taxi loaded with fifteen people, returning from a funeral of a fellow taxi driver, was ambushed and shot up with over 250 bullets. 12 people died. Pretty sad situation. We need to make sure the taxis our missionaries are riding in are not part of taxi cab association wars.

Yesterday (Tues.) we arrived in Mthatha early. We decided to go to the Nelson Mandela Museum near his home town, Qunu. It was about 20 Km south of us. We found it easy enough, but it was closed until April

of next year. However, there is a larger, maybe better, museum in downtown Mthatha.

The museum was free and very interesting and educational. It is hard to believe that the Apartheid Government was so cruel, arrogant and iron-fisted. It is amazing to us that Mandela, from a village in the middle of no where in South Africa, could rise up and one day be the George Washington of the country. Throughout the museum you could read quotes from him and they were inspiring. Of course, when you are imprisoned for 27 years, you have a lot of time to think.

Here is a link to see a few pictures from our trip:

[https://drive.google.com/open?id=106fgbe\\_kJ95bLlk9ga7Fe8ouwGhoT6de](https://drive.google.com/open?id=106fgbe_kJ95bLlk9ga7Fe8ouwGhoT6de)

If you get a chance, you may want to

watch, "The Long Walk to Freedom," a movie depicting the struggle Mandela and others fought for. Mom and I watched it prior to coming here. We plan to watch it again. Or, read the book.

\*Photos:\*

- This is the most sheep we have seen in one place at one time. If things don't work out for Klave and Amanda in Oregon, they can always raise sheep and their kids here. - With all the road construction, you have vendors going up and down among the waiting cars. Where there

is construction, many times they will halt one lane of traffic to let on-coming traffic through, and, viz versa.

Keep all the commandments and then some! Love,

Dad and Mom



This is the most sheep we have seen in one place at one time. If things don't work out for Klave and Amanda in Oregon, they can always raise sheep and their kids here.

With all the road construction, you have vendors going up and down among the waiting cars. Where there is construction, many times they will halt one lane of traffic to let oncoming traffic through, and, viz versa.



2018

JULY 26 }

# Jul\_26\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We spent early afternoon looking at a home with President Lebethoa in NU17 in Mdantsane. Unfortunately, the owner was not home and we pretty much were only able to look at the outside. Mom and I will try to look inside on another day and take some pictures.

We went to visit Brother Qalase today. When we first arrived, he was a less active member of the Mdantsane 1st Ward. After several visits, he started coming back to church. Mom had been encouraging him from the first visits with him to get busy on his genealogy. Today, we discovered that he has filled in a lot of blanks on his pedigree chart. Tomorrow, he will meet us at the church house and we will go about entering his information into Family Search. He will be seeing the bishop and working on getting a temple recommend. He is

excited.

We visited with Nandie Xamane this afternoon. It was quite the visit. She shared with us, through tears and quivering voice, the good and the bad. The bad, a horrible marriage to a man that was totally unfaithful (impregnating at least three other women while she was pregnant herself), physically abusive, a drunkard and drug user. All this and a lot more. Her marriage was a living hell.

She and her husband have separated and heading for a divorce. Now the good news. She has been such a stalwart in the Church. From the very first time we met her, Mom and Nandie hit it off wonderfully. Even though her husband has turned away from the truth and buried his baptismal and temple covenants in the filth of the world, she has remained strong. Unbelievably, she has been forgiving of him and faithful to

what she knows is the truth.

She shared with us a dream she said she had a while back. She said a man dressed in white came to her and said, "The Stevenson's have been sent to you." Forget anything about building classrooms, reading with school children, seeing wild animals, eating Ostrich steak, handling python snakes, spiritual zone conferences....this one experience is all we need to help us understand how joyful it is to be in the service of the Lord.

\*Photos:\* - Our zone leaders were rear-ended yesterday. Guess what? The other driver had no ID, no driver's license and the car did not belong to him. The police took everyone down to the station and the appropriate reports were completed. If I had to bet, the Church and AIG insurance will be paying for all of this.

Love,  
Dad and Mom



This is Brother Qalase and his mother. He was so happy we visited him today and set a time to input some of his genealogy research tomorrow



Our zone leaders were rear-ended yesterday. Guess what? The other driver had no ID, no driver's license and the car did not belong to him. The police took everyone down to the station and the appropriate reports were completed. If I had to bet, the Church and AIG insurance will be paying for all of this.



2018

JULY 27 }

# Jul\_27\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We enjoyed a very good zone conference today. President Lebethoa did a wonderful job with his doctrinal discussion of 3 Nephi 11: 30-41 and some good old basic principles of goal-setting. This man is certainly one of the "Elect" and is making an important contribution to the work - in his own country. We met with Brother Qalase to set up an LDS Account for him, a Gmail Account, and, a FamilySearch Account. We took his hand written pedigree chart information and we entered the information under his FamilySearch account. He was all smiles. Sunday he will see the bishop about a temple recommend. We visited our sweet old Mama Maluke. We showed her and the family a video about the book of Mormon. She was touched as she was recently assigned to give a spiritual thought in Relief Society last Sunday. She spoke

about the Book of Mormon. This seemed like a small confirmation for her that her comments were meant to be. She insisted we sing a hymn before we prayed and left.

We visited Brother Aluta Fubesi. He is a relatively new convert that went astray and started drinking again. We missed him a few days ago and got lucky today. His grandmother passed away and it gave us a good opportunity to visit with him and his other family members about the Plan of Salvation. We challenged him to come to church this Sunday. Lastly we saw a young lady who joined the church years ago, but has become less active. The day the missionaries knocked on her door (FYI, one was Elder Pack from Huntsville Stake) she was in her bedroom about to commit suicide. When the knock came, she answered the door out of curiosity. She came to an activity and then church, and it was a slam

dunk for her from that point on. She is so happy we came by to locate her house and we will be meeting with her tomorrow afternoon.

Dad and Mom

\*Photos:\* - Mom and I are concerned about the general cleanliness of the church building and some things that need maintenance. The photos are self-explanatory. There just needs to be a big adjustment to attitudes on the importance of keeping the church clean and maintained.

We love you,



Mom and I are concerned about the general cleanliness of the church building and some things that need maintenance. The photos are self-explanatory. There just needs to be a big adjustment to attitudes on the importance of keeping the church clean and maintained.



2018 JULY 28 }

# Jul\_28\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We have had a delightful day attending a baptism in the Mdantsane 1st Ward and visiting various members of the wards we tend. A 17 year old girl was baptized by the name of Bongeka. I felt so sorry for the young lady who, first, was afraid of going under the water, and second, was shivering like crazy as she stood in the baptismal water. Our missionary did well and got her under.

Now, the doctrinal question: During the baptism, it appeared she was totally immersed at one point just before she raised one of her feet that broke out of the water. Do you call it good, or, do you do it again?

We visited Brother "T" at his home. It was recently the scene of an attempted murder on his brother. Long story short, two guys were

beating him in one room as Brother "T" was sleeping in another. One was choking the man (to keep him from yelling) while the other beat him. He passed out and they left him for dead. Fortunately he lived, but not without continuing problems from the assault.

This poor brother does not live in a good neighborhood. He would like to move out but does not have any funds to do that. The tavern next door to him is the suspected source of the trouble and terrorizing thugs.

We visited Sister Chuma today. We mentioned yesterday she was the lady who was about to commit suicide when the missionaries came knocking at her door back in 2011. She is a young mother with a lot of problems. It was good to sit there for the most part and let Mom visit with her. She and Mom seemed to connect pretty good. They talked about

drug addiction, marriage to a man that will be faithful (not like the father of her latest child), drug addiction, raising children, Sister Chuma giving birth and having the doctors push back in the uterus that had partially come out, the love of our Heavenly Father for all his children, repentance, etc. I was content to do very little of the talking. She will be at church tomorrow!

\*Photos:\*

- Mom does not beat our clothes on a rock in a crocodile-invested mud hole. We do have a washer

and dryer. Mom never uses the dryer. - Our good bicycles are going to Mthatha for a set of missionaries to use. These are two mono-speed bikes that Mom and I will be using for our ride about Gonubie. Bummer! - Here is a registration (license) plate that we had made as a souvenir to take home with us.

Remember that we love you and that the devil is a dope! (Plus, he heads up the losing team.)

Dad and Mom



Mom does not beat our clothes on a rock in a crocodile-invested mud hole. We do have a washer and dryer. Mom never uses the dryer.



Our good bicycles are going to Mthatha for a set of missionaries to use. These are two mono-speed bikes that Mom and I will be using for our ride about Gonubie. Bummer!



Here is a registration (license) plate that we had made as a souvenir to take home with us.

2018 JULY 29 }

# Jul\_29\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Sister Velapi spoke in church today. She is a convert of less than one year. A little scared, she did a very good job for her first time speaking. Brother Ovayo, counselor in the bishopric, was our concluding speaker. It was powerful. I could sense the depth of his testimony as he bore witness of the restoration of the gospel. He spoke of the heavens being opened again with the appearance of the Father and the Son to the Prophet Joseph Smith. It was faith-promoting.

The Mdantsane 2nd ward was a little less prepared. I saw the bishop in the hallway with his hand to his forehead. I asked him if he was okay. "No," he confessed, "I don't have any speakers for Sacrament Meeting." My sense of compassion overtook my sense of "let the consequences follow." I volunteered Mom and I to

speak.

Even though Mom was horror-stricken when I gave her the news, she did a great job talking about everyone pitching in and doing their part. I spoke on Prayer. The bishop finished up with words on the Plan of Salvation.

Mom is tempting our sense of constraint with a diabolical desert she made that is simply to die for. It is a hellish concoction of a cookie type crust with walnuts, a layer of whipped cream and cream cheese blended together, topped with a layer of chocolate pudding. This is commonly used by the adversary to lure people to outer darkness and bind them with the everlasting chains of self-indulgence.

Then, some good old beef stew for dinner! (People should know that I scrubbed the potatoes.)

\*Photos:\*

- This is a short video from our ward activity a week ago. Everyone had a good time.

We love you. Remember who you are!

Dad and Mom

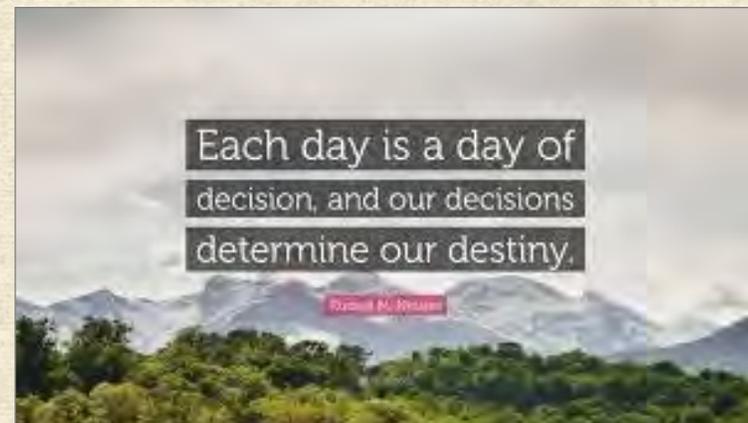
## Tid Bits

Dear Family,

\*1. Word of the week:\* "nonplussed," so surprised and confused that one is unsure how to react. \*Example: \*Elizabeth was nonplussed when she watched the video of her hypnosis!

\*2. Quote of the week:\*

\*3. Scripture of the week:\* Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized





Early Years

before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones; And God saw these souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them, and he said: These I will make my rulers; for he stood among those that were spirits, and he saw that they were good; and he said unto me: Abraham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born. (Abraham 3:22-23)

\*4. Joke of the week:\* (Sorry, if I have used this one before. I like it.)

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. "No!," the voice replied, "it is the manager of the ice skating rink."

\*5. Bee's Knees Award: \*This girl's middle name is imagination. She is always so happy. She is more beautiful than all the queens and princesses in the world smushed together. She loves Star Wars. She is a good swimmer. She loves her family very, very much. She is obedient. She is a wonderful example of living the commandments and doing what the Savior would want her to do. She rides bikes, does girl scout type stuff, tea parties like a professional. Audrey, you are the Bee's Knees, sistah!!!

\*6. Gospel Question of the week:\* I am pleased to announce that David Walker was the first to correctly answer the question last week. This week's question: Whose daughter did Jesus heal?

\*7. If I were you (Advice to grand-

children):\* If I were you, I would show good manners and respect by always saying, "Thank you," "Please," "Your welcome," "Yes, sir," "Yes, mam." Try it, I think you will like it.

\*8. What I am grateful for:\* People who show their faith in the face of challenges and adversity.

\*9. What I learned this week:\* We have it so very easy.

\*10. My goal for the week: \*Still try to get the Church to tell us next steps in moving forward on classrooms. Mavis is suggesting I exercise patience. How silly is that?

\*11. Photo of the week:\* The wash at the end of our street in South San Gabriel where Uncle Thom and I use to play.

We love you. Have fun living the gospel this week! Don't listen to the devil. He is a loser!!!

Dad and Mom

2018 JULY 30 }

# Jul\_30\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a busy day. We did our long bike ride down by the ocean front. As we rode, Mom was ahead of me and never uses the gears. It's like having a one-speed bike. Yet, she seems to stay ahead of me. I kept yelling to her, "Yor a spinnar, yor a spinnar!" This comes from her days attending a "spinner" stationary bicycle class at Gold's Gym.

I visited with the auto body shop on a missionary car that was rear-ended. Unfortunately, the cost will be about \$1,600 from them. When the cost is over \$500 USD, we have to send it to the church's insurance company to fix it. I am trying to get AIG to consider using this panel-beater as a regular provider. They would save a lot of money. I will bet other bids will come in around \$3,000.

I had the car washed by my girlfriends at a strip mall nearby. They love me because I always go to the grocery store and buy them candy bars when I return for our car. And...they do a great job for us!

We did all of our house cleaning - bathrooms, kitchen, vacuuming, dusting, etc.

Mom was ironing a missionary's white baptismal tie and accidentally melted a part of it. She was feeling pretty bad about it. She spent a chunk of time trying to fix it with a custom white stripe to cover up the burnt part. It actually looks okay. However, we will be giving him my white tie I brought from home to make things good.

Quick update on the school classrooms. We got the go ahead to have working plans drawn where the drawings actually will fit the present foundations. This will cost a whop-

ping \$80 USD and take about one week after final measurements. With the plans, we go to the DOE at the province level and get their final approval. Then, Municipality Department of Public Works approvals.

With all of that, we just need the final blessing of the Welfare Committee (on vacation for July) in Johannesburg. We feel certain they will give final approval. Last year they rejected 5 projects and approved 89. Phillip from Johannesburg and Director of Welfare Services is recommending we give this project a green

light.

Photos:

- Our last East London and Mdantsane zone conference photo (Friday) - The tie!!!

Ride tall in the saddle! We love you,

Dad and Mom



Our last East London and Mdantsane zone conference photo (Friday)



The tie!!!

## Jul\_30\_2018\_Update

Dear Family,

Our well-planned day turned out a little different. We did a long walk this morning and then, tuned into Skype of our Senior Council meeting. Half way through the meeting I had a call from a set of missionaries - Flat tire and their spare was also flat! I could hardly believe my ears as we have been harping on this topic for the last three weeks. The mission president even jumped on this prob-

lem on Friday.

I told them they just had to wait until after our meeting and after I took our ZL's down to the airport, so about 2 PM. This is the same time I was suppose to meet our bishop to do some visiting. Fortunately, I was able to speak with him on the phone to let him know I was going to be late.

Mom stayed home and I took the ZL's to the airport. Ten minutes away from the airport we realize I did not bring their passports so they

could check in. Panic! We had to turn around and head back to our house. I called Mavis and she retrieved the passports from our safe. She jumped on a bike and rode down to the freeway to meet us with the 6 passports. This saved us about 15 minutes of driving time.

We raced back to the airport. Thankfully, everyone was able to get on the flight with 15 minutes to spare. Thank goodness for Mavis and a good tail wind as she peddled down the main road in Gonubie to meet us.

After the airport I was off to a missionary boarding to help them out with a flat tire and a bad spare. When I arrived, it is discovered that their key is not working to open the car or trunk. We finally got the key to open one of the doors and set off the alarm. We got that to stop and then, we were able to get into the trunk. We pulled the spare out and took it to the tire shop. We needed to get a new tire because of a puncture in the sidewall.

We had to go to three different locksmiths before we found the right

battery for the automated key to the car. Arriving at the missionaries' flat, we took off the flat tire and went to put on the new tire. Guess what? They had the spare tire from a different missionary car and it would not fit properly. So, we took the flat to the tire shop and had that one fixed. Returned, put it on the car, and I left to go meet the bishop 3 hours late!

The bishop was very understanding and I had about 20 minutes of windshield time to calm down after helping our irresponsible missionaries. The bishop and I were able to squeeze 4 very good visits before we called it quits.

One was to a sister that has been delving into divination and seeing a "faith healer." Basically, this is the traditional witch doctor in the area and promises all kinds of things as long as he/she gets enough money. In other words, Satan-inspired revelation.

I thought our Bishop did a good job in addressing the matter very frankly and committing her to some good scripture reading (Duet.

18:9-14, Sherem in Jacob 7, Korihor in Alma 30). I spoke to her on the power of prayer to receive personal revelation. We will see what happens.

**\*Photos:\***

- A beautiful flower that Mom pointed out to me on our walks this morning. - This is what we could use for the trusses on the school classrooms. However, those will all be put up by hand/manual labor.

We love you,

Dad and Mom



A beautiful flower that Mom pointed out to me on our walks this morning



This is what we could use for the trusses on the school classrooms. However, those will all be put up by hand/manual labor.

2018 AUGUST 1 }

# Aug\_01\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Today started out rather boring. We went to Lion Park and I spent some time with Khara the Cheetah. I am providing a link to photos of our visit there so you can see for yourself this extreme act of bravery.

[https://drive.google.com/open?id=1GUBzWEN5CqtLR-PX7xaJ5\\_eop3Zewn3R](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1GUBzWEN5CqtLR-PX7xaJ5_eop3Zewn3R)

Today we had Brother Mgwaca riding along with us to do our visiting. He was the first branch president in our area of (NU1 - NU9) and is a favorite with so many of the members. He is a very compassionate and generous person. His wife died about 3 - 4 years ago. She was the first in the family to listen to the missionaries and was instrumental in translating the Book of Mormon into Xhosa.

We visited a number of people and it

was grand to see him connect with everyone we visited. Of course, Mom and I understood very little because they spoke in Xhosa the whole time. He would give us a debriefing in the car between visits.

Two Sundays ago, he let off some steam in Sunday School about the church not helping young ladies who need sanitary supplies each month. In his mind the church should be helping these families because it keeps them away from church. When he was the branch president, they used to keep such supplies tucked away for needy cases.

We shared with him our point of view that maybe these same people need to prioritize a little. They can purchase cell phones, buy air time and monthly TV packages. The church should be there as a last resort. They need to plan and budget. They should not consider the church

as a dispensary of goods any time they need something. He agreed, but that we need to teach those principles better in our auxiliaries and quorums.

He is a good man. He will continue to give generously on his own. We love him and are so grateful for his contributions the the church in Mdantsane.

\*Photos:\*

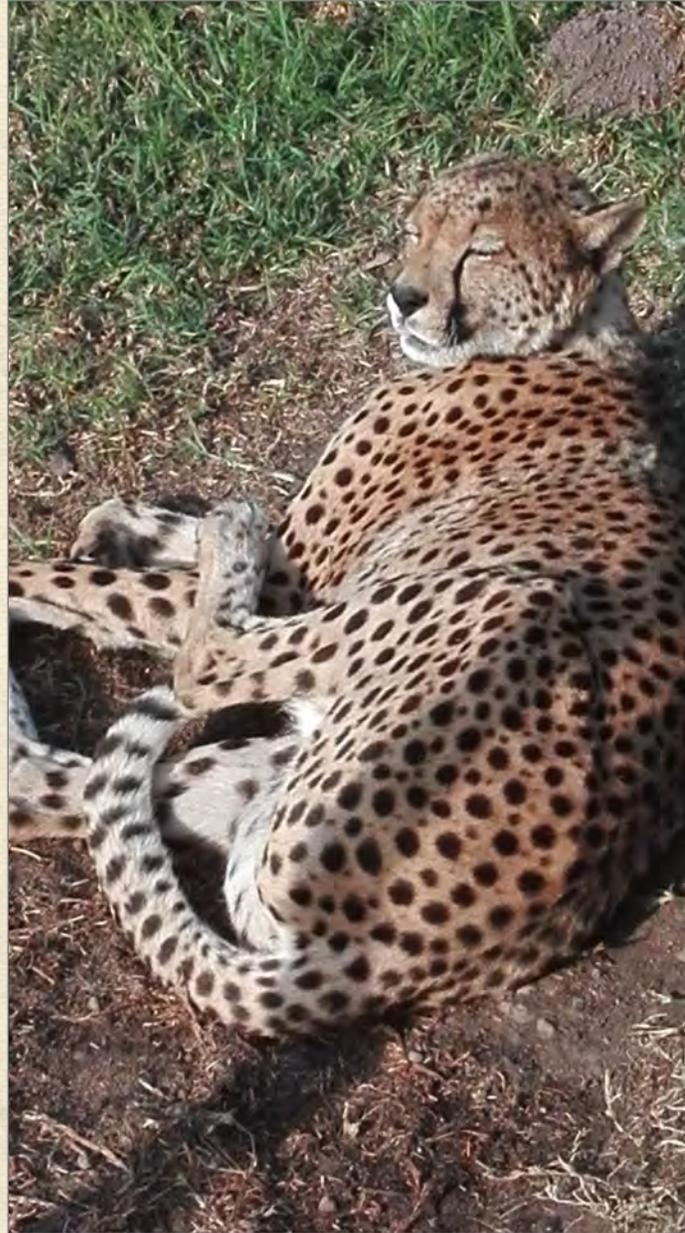
- A few photos from Lion Park. Go to the Google Drive link above to see everything.

We love you very much. Enjoy each minute of today.

Dad and Mom



A few photos from Lion Park.



2018 AUGUST 2 }

# Aug\_02\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Missionary car problems take time. I ran over to a missionary boarding this morning and checked out a "bad oil leak" as reported by one of the missionaries. My immediate thought was of them going to fast, hitting a rock and puncturing the oil pan. I jacked up the car and looked things over. Then, we started the car and I was able to identify the issue. Fortunately, it was only the oil-sending unit that was leaking pretty bad.

We topped off the oil and I followed them to our old mechanic friend here in Gonubie. When we got off the freeway, having only traveled about five miles, we stopped to check the oil again. It was down over one liter. We topped it off again and made it safely to the repair shop. Car will be ready for pick up tomorrow morning and at about a third the

cost of the dealership.

Mom stayed home and did a bunch of things to get ready for district meeting tomorrow morning. For example, a couple million pumpkin cookies!

After, getting the missionary car to the shop, I headed to the airport to meet Rollo Steenbeek. He and his wife arrived and they jumped into our car. I drove them to the Phakamile School. There we were able to do some accurate measuring for him to draw some complete and comprehensive working plans that fit the actual size of the foundations. He will have plans ready for us in about one week.

At 2 PM, I picked up missionaries at the airport and hauled them back to Gonubie where their car was parked while they attended a zone leaders meeting in Cape Town.

Then, off to the bank to deposit some money in our account. Once that was done, I could purchase some electrical power for our missionaries in Mthatha. Once I do that, I then send them a text message with the numerical code they need to put into their meter.

Then, I went to Romans Pizza. I had with me 6 bags (each with 3 cookies in them) for the workers there. It was almost a riot! There were probably about 8 or nine workers there, so I hope they all shared. They love Mom's cookies and breads and I love

the free extra cheese on our pizza!!!

*\*Lesson for today\**: When you are running here and there and life seems a little hectic, do not forget to thank people for their work, their friendship, their giving of time, their opinions, etc. We can run ourselves ragged, but at the end of the day, it is people we work with. How will they remember you? Will your personal reputation, your family reputation, your church reputation be elevated or tarnished in their eyes?

*\*Photos:\**



A multi-car accident at the "robot" (stoplight) just outside our compound.



This little monkey is a bit of a rascal. It runs all over the Lion Park office making a mess. As soon as a stranger shows up, it runs to this girl and holds on for dear life. It wears a diaper.

- A multi-car accident at the "robot" (stoplight) just outside our compound. - This little monkey is a bit of a rascal. It runs all over the Lion Park office making a mess. As soon as a stranger shows up, it runs to this girl and holds on for dear life. It wears a diaper. It can't stay with the monkeys it came from because it gets picked on. It is a male baby and the other males do not appreciate it intruding on their territory. So, they are trying to introduce it gradually to a different group of monkeys.

We love you all! Have fun today.  
Count your blessings!

Dad and Mom

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

# Aug\_03\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

I am a little upset with Annie. She wrote and wanted to know, "What's up with the cheetah photo? Is the cheetah paralyzed? Doesn't it have any teeth? Is it so old it won't attack you?" She is belittling me. Truth be known, I wore adult diapers when I entered that cage! The cat has 17 kills so far this year. 6 of them have been human beings. Please, please do not question my courage.

We had a good district meeting today. The missionaries gobbled up Mom's pumpkin chocolate chip cookies and our bowl of fruit we brought. A lot of our meeting was on how to find people to teach. In our opinion, it is a topic that needs a lot of attention. We have a lot of young missionaries and it is going to be important for them to learn quickly and step up.

We had a good visit with the Mloka family. The young man that lives in this shack, Aphiwe, was not there. Fortunately, he now has a job! So, we visited with the sisters and the Mother. Mom is going to teach one of the girls that is a Primary teacher some basic piano and some of the Primary songs. Big day tomorrow as they move from the shack to a relative's home. They mentioned it will be a challenge as the other family drinks and yells a lot. It will be a very crowded place.

We saw our missionary boys today. We decided to give them a quiz on gospel topics. I would give them a c+ for a grade. Their neighbor, about 4 houses away from them, did much better. Altogether, we have about 6 boys we like to call our "Missionary Boys." We started them saving money and it is amazing how well they are doing.

Today we stopped for a quick lunch at a little cafe where the owner caters for our zone conferences. I feel like a pig! That's because I had the "Three Little Pigs" burger. It is a combination of pulled pork, bacon and pork belly all layered on a hamburger bun with homemade barbecue sauce. It was good, but we don't think we want to eat there every week.

\*Photos:\*

- Sister Mloka (not a member) and her three daughters. The second from the left, Asisipho, is a mem-

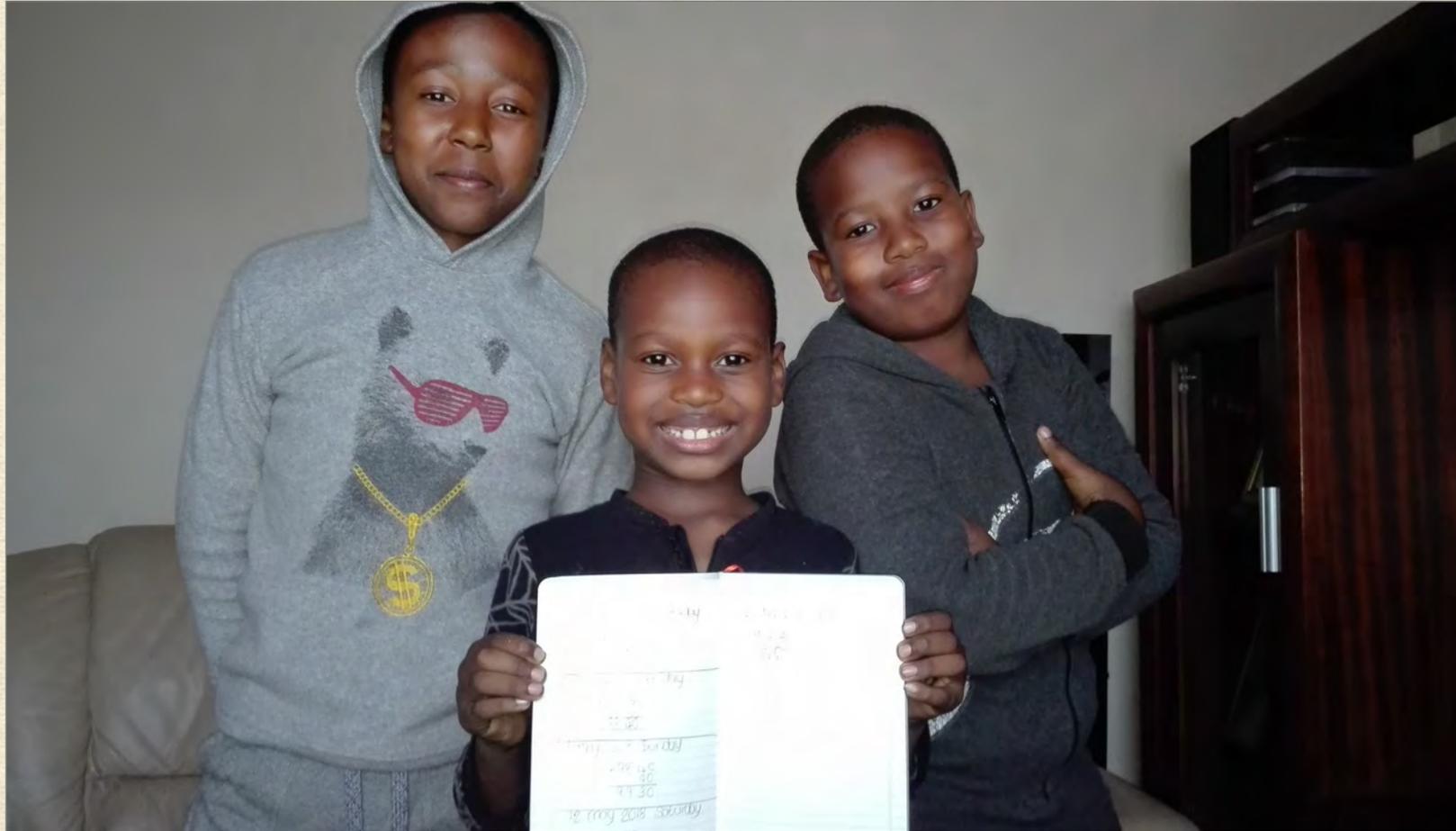
ber and a recently-called Primary teacher. - Three of our missionary boys. We started them out with about 27 Rand in cheap coins we found laying around on the ground. Today, they have grown their fund to over 125 Rand. We gave them a journal to keep track of their money. Check out the excellent penmanship and accounting these guys do.

We love you all very much. Have a super day making good choices!

Dad and Mom



Sister Mloka (not a member) and her three daughters. The second from the left, Asisipho, is a member and a recently-called Primary teacher.



Three of our missionary boys. We started them out with about 27 Rand in cheap coins we found laying around on the ground. Today, they have grown their fund to over 125 Rand. We gave them a journal to keep track of their money. Check out the excellent penmanship and accounting these guys do.

2018 AUGUST 4 }

# Aug\_04\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

The Book of Mormon is such a jewel. Mom and I enjoy reading it every day. And, today, Mom was getting a bunch of things ready from baking muffins to deliver to some of our less active members to thinking of ways to teach new songs to Primary children.

I took time to prepare Books of Mormon to hand out to various people of other faiths we feel inspired to talk to. As I was highlighting different passages of scripture, I was impressed by the Spirit of what a powerful book of scripture it is. Our strategy is to highlight scriptures that speak of Christ and His atonement. Those that are believers in the Savior to begin with will be deeply touched by the multitude of verses testifying of Him in the Book of Mormon.

Each book takes us about 25 minutes to prepare. We insert a "Dear Friend" page up front, a list of key scriptures in the back, and of course, highlight special verses that witness of Him. Because they take time to prepare, we want to prayerfully seek guidance on who we can present them to. I know for sure, we want to stop and talk to any father-led families.

Phillip with the church's Welfare Services has been training a new senior couple the last two weeks. We had a call from them and they will be coming to East London to look over the classroom project on Monday. It appears that Phillip is maybe handing over this project to them. We hope they will see the need and give us their full support. Then, get this 8 classroom project approved in their welfare committee.

\*Attachments:\*

- This is our opening page - This

is our last page that we show the reader and direct him/her to start at the beginning to read

We love you. We pray for you. We think of you often. We know you are mostly doing good things.

Dad and Mom

# Aug\_05\_2018\_Update

FROM: Elder and Sister Stevenson



Dear Family,

A member who bore his testimony this morning said something very important. He was speaking about the importance of sustaining our church leaders, all the way from the prophet and apostles to our bishop. They are the ones that have the keys to direct and administer the gospel in their respective jurisdictions. Then, he said, "We should not complain, we should comply." Good advice!

We drove out to the Steenbeck's this afternoon with the Davies. The Davies are going home a week from tomorrow and this was a way for the Steenbecks to bid them farewell. The meal was okay, we pretty much ate everything they fixed. Roast pork, green beans, sweet potato bake, butternut squash, Mom's rolls, Mom's 5 cup salad and Sister Davies' apple pie.

The Davies are ready to go home! Poor Elder Davies misses his truck and his man cave where he has five of every tool ever made by man. They have served faithfully and we hope that when we are 80 years old we will have the same desire and willingness to serve.

\*Photos:\*

- Dinner at the Steenbeck's

We love you. Do good! Be good!

Dad and Mom

## Tid Bits

Dear Family,

\*1. Word of the week:\* "dalliance," a casual romantic or sexual relationship. \*Example:\* The dalliance between Coriantan and Isabel created credibility issues for teaching the people the gospel.

\*2. Quote of the week: \*

\*3. 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. (1 Nephi 17:3)

\*4. Joke of the week:\* (Dumb dad joke!)



Dinner at the Steenbeck's



International Spies found snooping around in Italy.

\*5. Bee's Knees Award:\* This girl is all about family. She loves her children like crazy. She loves her siblings and loves to hang out with them and go camping with them. She has a strong testimony of the gospel and teaches her children at her knee. She dances like a maniac. She exercises like a maniac. She is madly in love with her husband. She is the ultimate beauty queen. She loves people and has an infectious, positive attitude. Stacy, you are the Bee's Knees, sistah!!!

\*6. Gospel Question of the week:\*

Who issued the manifesto on plural marriage?

\*7. If I were you (advice to grand kids):\* If I were you, I would Keep my fingernails trimmed and my hands soft. No one likes dirty fingernails and lizard-skin hands. Try it. I think you will like it.

\*8. What I learned this week:\* Sincere compliments are powerful.

\*9. What I am grateful for:\* I am so thankful for the Book of Mormon. I probably have said that before and I

will probably say that again. That book will help us become more like the Savior than any other book on earth. When we study, ponder and apply the teachings of the Book of Mormon, we become more like Him.

\*10. My goal for the week:\* Get final plans for the classrooms to the Department of Education in Bhischo.

\*11. Photo of the week:\* International Spies found snooping around in Italy.

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

Dad and Mom

# Aug\_07\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Progress! I love to see things move forward. Yesterday I sent a lengthy email to the area humanitarian people about the justification for them joining forces with us in building classrooms at the Phakamile School. I heard back this morning that they are leaning favorably toward the project and will probably put it forward for approval by the area presidency. If they recommend it, there's a pretty high probability they will sign off.

The working plans will be ready in two days. That will spur two more steps forward. First, an approval letter from the Department of Education at the province (state) level. Second, quotations from more builders/contractors we have contacted about the project. Obviously, they need to see the plans before they can quote.

We went to the school today and did some more photographing for the area office. If we are lucky, there will be some additional improvements to the school like repairing broken desks, adding ceiling and insulation to one of the existing classrooms, redoing crumbling concrete stairs leading into the classrooms, etc.

One other good thing happened today. I will save it for later since right now it is far from reality. We will just keep our fingers crossed and say our prayers! You will be the first to know.

\*Photos:\*

- This is a manhole cover made from some kind of cement and fiberglass. They are very cheap. This thing has had a hole in it for months. Some night (if it hasn't happened already) someone will step right through that and break their legs. I took the remaining portion of the

cover and went to the local hardware store. Talked to the manager, Mark, and he is going to put together a new one for me. No charge. I like the guy very much! He will probably get a bag of cookies. - This is an ad for a political rally they had a week or two ago. The leader of this political group is pretty radical. You know, things like, "Kill the white man," or "Take back our land without compensation."

Have a good day doing good. We love you,

Dad and Mom



This is a manhole cover made from some kind of cement and fiberglass. They are very cheap. This thing has had a hole in it for months. Some night (if it hasn't happened already) someone will step right through that and break their legs. I took the remaining portion of the cover and went to the local hardware store. Talked to the manager, Mark, and he is going to put together a new one for me. No charge. I like



This is an ad for a political rally they had a week or two ago. The leader of this political group is pretty radical. You know, things like, "Kill the white man," or "Take back our land without compensation."

2018 AUGUST 8 }

# Aug\_08\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

7 1/2 hours in the saddle! Mom and I left early this morning to take bicycles to Mthatha. We carried them on a bike rack just off the trunk of the car. By the time we reached our destination, our trunk lid was dented in and the back bumper pushed out of shape. We will see how the missionaries in Mthatha do with the bikes. They take time if they are not maintained properly. Some missionaries get bikes and the novelty of it all is good for two or three weeks, and then, "We don't think we need bikes any more."

We plan to get the tail end of the car fixed and then have a tow hitched put on the car. Taking it to the body shop every time we haul bikes for three hours is not a good idea. The hitch will save us money.

Two good things about our trip:

First, Mom read from her Kindle, "The Covenant," a great fictional novel depicting the long history of South Africa. Second, I knew when I got home I could fry up some delicious mac 'n cheese!

While we were there, we also looked at another boarding for the missionaries. It was very nice, but we would be concerned that it is too far away from their work areas and the church house. Where they are now is working well, but the cost of electricity each month is expensive.

We decided to go to Mthatha and return the same day. This saves the church money and we would rather sleep in our own bed at night. \*We all need to be good stewards of the Lord's money\*.

\*Photos:\*

- This is one way you dispose of your cigarette butts. Up until now we

have been just throwing them on the ground. - This gentleman has collected more jewelry and money with his metal detector than you see in most jewelry stores. He travels the East coast of South Africa from Durban to Cape Town scanning the sand. He has about a \$1,200 metal detector. In the course of two years, he purchase a new truck from his discoveries! - One of the toddlers at the Phakamile School. They had some sort of treat with frosting and the teachers would paint their faces with little stripes here and there. They keep 105 toddlers from

1-4 years old in the blue temporary building during school hours. - We hit this type of traffic we when passed through some of the towns or got stopped for road construction work.

Have a good day being good examples. Don't make us fly over there and blister your bottoms! We love you,

Dad and Mom



This gentleman has collected more jewelry and money with his metal detector than you see in most jewelry stores. He travels the East coast of South Africa from Durban to Cape Town scanning the sand. He has about a \$1,200 metal detector. In the course of two years, he purchase a new truck from his discoveries!



This is one way you dispose of your cigarette butts. Up until now we have been just throwing them on the ground.



One of the toddlers at the Phakamile School. They had some sort of treat with frosting and the teachers would paint their faces with little stripes here and there. They keep 105 toddlers from 1-4 years old in the blue temporary building during school hours.



We hit this type of traffic we when passed through some of the towns or got stopped for road construction work.

2018 AUGUST 9 }

# Aug\_09\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Mom has been down with a cold today. Her mission was to stay warm and stay inside. My mission was to run a bunch of errands:

- Change out water filters in 4 missionary boardings
- Deliver mended pants to missionaries
- Buy a plastic container to make a first aid kit
- Buy fruit for district meeting tomorrow
- Buy little kids jewelry so we can use the decoration part to glue on magnets we use at Primary
- Buy groceries for Sunday dinner that we will have with the new senior couple - the Hodges
- Buy electricity for the Mdantsane 2nd Ward Elders
- Buy chocolate chips at the Sweet Treats shop
- Buy L-Lysiene at the pharmacy for Mom (prevents cold sores)
- Check the hardware store to see if the man hole cover was ready
- Check with the Gonubie municipality about a man hole cover
- Buy Mozzarella

cheese at a different grocery store

- Check the local video shop to see if they have any good DVD's. (They do not)
- Go to Post Net to print photos (they were closed since today is "Women's Day, a national holiday)
- Take our car to the panel beaters to get an estimate on fixing the damage from the bike rack.

They will also quote at towing hitch.

- Walk for an hour
- Buy two large pizzas for \$8.00 USD (one pepperoni and the other barbecue chicken)
- Follow up on classroom plans - they will be ready to pick up at 1`PM tomorrow
- Take an extra car to the Davies as their car will be going to the new couple tomorrow, and, get parts to fix one of the water filter systems at a missionary flat

We will see how Mom feels tomorrow. She is tempted to get up and go places, but staying inside and warm is the best choice at this point.

I love this quote from Joseph Smith, Jr.:

"The Standard of Truth has been erected; no unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the

work is done."

It is happening in South Africa. It is happening all over the world!

I also like this quote quite a bit: In the battle between water and rock, water always wins. Not because of strength, but because of persistency.

We love you all very much!

Dad and Mom



This is the blue temporary building where they care for and "teach" 105 children from 1 to 4 years old



A few of the kids that attend the blue building pre-school at Phakamile

2018 AUGUST 10 }

# Aug\_10\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Wow, we had a lot of rain today. It has been cold, windy and wet. This is exactly the type of day where Mom needed to stay inside, stay warm and get batter. So, I went to district meeting by myself. Our training today was on retaining people to teach after the first visit/lesson. We had some good instruction from Elder Mabanga - an entertaining, energetic, likable missionary from Johannesburg.

After the meeting, the missionaries wolfed down Mom's peanut butter oatmeal squares with chocolate drizzle. They also grabbed two pieces of fruit. I jumped in the car and headed to The Steenbeek's home to grab the classroom plans. It was pouring rain and standing water every where.

When I arrived at the Steenbeek's,

they had lunch ready for me. It was a fish, hard boiled egg and rice dish accented with a heavy dose of curry. It was actually okay. The curry had a bit of a bite to eat. However, it was the "spinach quiche" that got to me. When I served myself, it was runny and not too appetizing-looking. I am hoping and praying I do not come down with a case of salmonella.

After "fetching" the plans, I raced to the airport where I needed to help with transporting luggage for the new senior couple, the Hodges. They deboarded the plane in a horrible downpour. By the time they retrieved their bags and met us, they were drenched. I think Sister Hodges was a little embarrassed about her first impressions. They looked great and we are so happy to have them here!

Once we had them dropped off at their new home, I shot over to the

print shop to get 15 copies of the classroom plans made. It is now time to get some signatures (approvals) and builder quotations completed.

There will be a more formal communication of our gratitude for all your support on this school project. Suffice it for now, please know of how much we appreciate you all going to work to make this project happen. The family has really pulled together and done a marvelous thing. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

\*Photos:\*



This is a house we were considering for some of our missionaries in Mthatha. It was very nice, but too far away from their work area and the church.

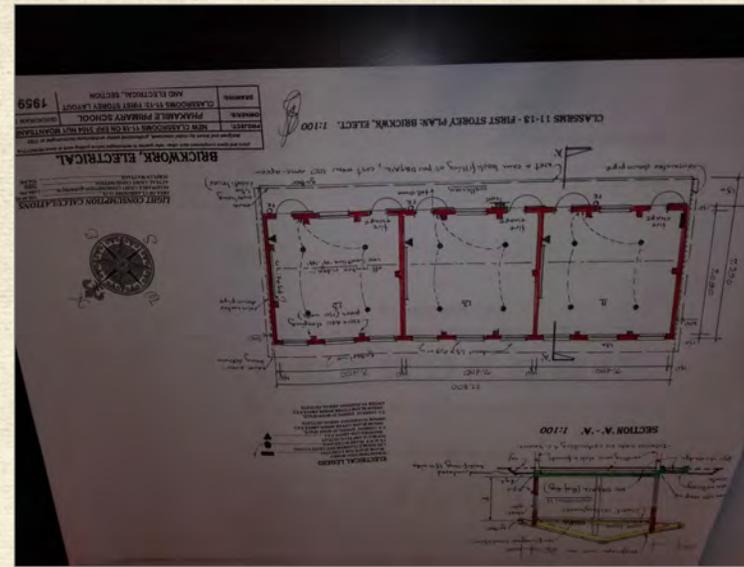
- Ze plans! Ze plans! Ze plans! -  
This is a house we were considering for some of our missionaries in Mthatha. It was very nice, but too far away from their work area and the church.

Have a wonderful day making good decisions. We love you,

Dad and Mom



Ze plans! Ze plans! Ze plans!



2018 AUGUST 11 }

# Aug\_11\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Mom is still under the weather, but the good news, she is getting better. Today she baked french bread, made a pumpkin tort, ironed shirts, made lasagna, folded laundry, etc. Pretty good for a sick person!

I was able to shoot out to our work area to deliver a pair of my shoes to one of our Young Men leaders that doesn't have any for Sunday. I also delivered some photographs to a friend that one of our missionaries, Thandikhaya Goje, sent to us.

But here is the real news. I took classroom plans to a new building supply store in Mdantsane. He will price out the materials for us. This will give us a gauge to know if we are getting gouged by builders who will also submit material costs.

Then, I delivered copies of the plans to four different builders. Two we have been working with already and then, two new ones. We hope to have these quotes in by the end of next week.

Monday, we go to the Department of Education at the province level to get their stamp on the plans. The Area Welfare Services Committee has pretty much approved the project. They will now take it to the area president for his sign off.

\*Photos:\*

- I do not like to share my recipes, but I am so happy with this one that I want you all to know about it. Cook oatmeal with cinnamon. Add sliced bananas. Add roasted chopped almonds. Sprinkle on sugar to your liking. (Please do not share this with anyone else.) - Relief Society sisters all dressed up in their traditional clothing for an RS activity by the

stake. Mom would have gone and enjoyed, but is a sicky!

Keep up the good work. Remember who you are and act accordingly. We love you,

Dad and Mom



I do not like to share my recipes, but I am so happy with this one that I want you all to know about it. Cook oatmeal with cinnamon. Add sliced bananas. Add roasted chopped almonds. Sprinkle on sugar to your liking. (Please do not share this with anyone else.)



Relief Society sisters all dressed up in their traditional clothing for an RS activity by the stake. Mom would have gone and enjoyed, but is a sicky!



# Tid Bits

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

\*1. Word of the week:\* "extirpate," eradicate or destroy completely. \*Example:  
\*Please join me in my global initiative to extirpate all lizards from the face of the earth.

\*2. Quote of the week:\*

\*3. Scripture of the week: \*

Wherefore, the fruit of thy loins shall write; and the fruit of the loins of Judah shall write; and that which shall be written by the fruit of thy loins, and also that which shall be written by the fruit of the loins of Judah, shall grow together, unto the confounding of false doctrines and laying down of contentions, and establishing peace among the fruit of thy loins, and bringing them to the knowledge of their fathers in the latter days, and also to the knowledge

of my covenants, saith the Lord. \*(2 Nephi 3:12)\*

\*4. Joke of the week:\*

A Mormon mother was preparing pancakes for her sons, Owen, 5, and Bill, 3. The boys began to argue over who would get the first pancake. Their mother saw the opportunity for a moral lesson. If Jesus were sitting here, He would say, "Let my brother have the first pancake. I can wait." Owen turned to his younger brother and said, "Bill, you be Jesus.

\*5. Bee's Knees Award:\* This dude is all cowboy. He is handsome. He has an award-winning celebrity-like smile. He loves his family and all of the dogs. He is reverent in church and loves Primary. He is a big helper around the house. He is obedient to his parents. He is always trying to be like Jesus and is a good example of the gospel. He is just plain cool.

Tyke, you are the Bee's Knees, brotha!!!

\*6. Gospel question of the week:\*  
Who is this a photograph of?

\*7. If I were you (advice to grand kids):\* If I were you, I would memorize the 13 Articles of Faith. Try it. I think you will like it.

\*8. What I learned this week:\* Don't stack a lot of commitments on less actives and investigators. Give them

one or two commitments to work on. This way they are not overwhelmed.

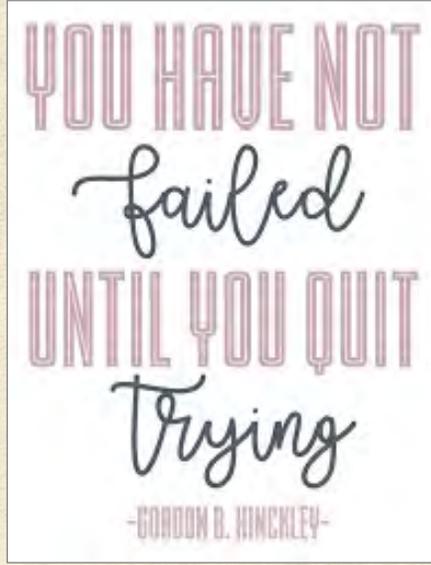
\*9. What I am grateful for:\* Mom's cooking! I have had a little bit of other's cooking here in South Africa. No one is as cook as Mom's cooking!

\*10. My goal for the week:\* Learn the new credit card reporting system the area has gravitated to.

\*11. Photo of the week:\* Would you get on a motorcycle with this guy?



Would you get on a motorcycle with this guy?



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

Dad and Mom

2018 AUGUST 13 }

# Aug\_13\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Busy day! It started out getting two new tires on a missionary car that hit a pot hole which was more like a bomb crater.

This morning I went to the Phakamile School and had the principal sign each page of 4 sets of working plans for the classrooms. Then, picked up Brother Shakes as a companion and flew out to the Department of Education to get their signatures. Long story made short, we won't get that until Wednesday if we are lucky.

Just a quick comment on my visit to the school. After the principal signed the plans, I asked her, one of the other administrators and two men that were in the office if we could have a prayer before going to the DOE. I offered the prayer. We asked that we would be able to get the nec-

essary approvals and letters so we could move forward. It was a very sweet moment and I could feel the faith of those in the room.

I was able to get back fast enough to help the Davies get to the airport with all their luggage to head home to St. George, Utah. I had the new senior couple with me, the Hodges. We spent the rest of the day getting them set up on the Internet. We purchased a router, a sim card for "data" and I connected their laptops when we got to their place.

\*Photos:\*

- Remember the man hole lid that was missing. I was going to make a covering out of thick lumber. I asked my neighbor if he could help me make it. Lo and behold, sitting just off of his front flower bed, was a cement man hole cover - exactly the size we needed. It was just there, nothing but dirt underneath it. I

took it over to the man hole and set it in place. The foot you see of the picture is of a drunk who was walking by and was amazed at the new lid. Since he was a model for the photo shoot, I gave him 5 rand (\$0.40) when he asked for "Food Money." (Liquid food, that is)

Be good, very good. We love you,

Dad and Mom



Remember the man hole lid that was missing. I was going to make a covering out of thick lumber. I asked my neighbor if he could help me make it. Lo and behold, sitting just off of his front flower bed, was a cement man hole cover - exactly the size we needed. It was just there, nothing but dirt underneath it.



I took it over to the man hole and set it in place. The foot you see of the picture is of a drunk who was walking by and was amazed at the new lid. Since he was a model for the photo shoot, I gave him 5 rand (\$0.40) when he asked for "Food Money." (Liquid food, that is)

2018 AUGUST 14 }

# Aug\_14\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

I picked up the Hodges this morning and started on a long list of places to go, people to see and things to do. We finished about 3:30 PM. Like most of us that show up in South Africa for the first time, they are overwhelmed with everything. Our goal is to help the Hodges get situated and comfortable as soon as possible. When they feel comfortable, they can then more easily concentrate on the work at hand.

They are a very nice couple, a little older than Mom and I. They are the parents of 6 boys. They have 24 grandchildren. They are from Highland, Utah. It appears he worked for O. C. Tanner for many years. But perhaps, the greatest single piece of good news is, Elder Hodges is a dyed-in-the-wool BYU Cougar fan. You can rest assured we will be watching the games (live if possible) together

and cheering for the boys in blue.

Mom is feeling much better and we hope she will venture out of the house tomorrow to resume our normal activity.

\*Photos:\*

- \$14,800 USD for this Audi. It would be a nicer, more comfortable senior missionary car. - This is a sign to rent a building. They use the express, "To Let." I have been tempted to paint a yellow "I" right after the "O" to get some giggles from passer-bys. - South Africa has the own "energy drink." It is cheap and popular. I have never partaken of it.

Do good today. We love you very much,

Dad and Mom



This is a sign to rent a building. They use the express, "To Let." I have been tempted to paint a yellow "I" right after the "O" to get some giggles from passer-bys.



\$14,800 USD for this Audi. It would be a nicer, more comfortable senior missionary car.



South Africa has the own "energy drink." It is cheap and popular. I have never partaken of it.

2018 AUGUST 15 }

# Aug\_15\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We like to ask ourselves at the end of the day, "Have we done any good today?" Well, we think we did today. We spent some time with the Hodges and answered a lot of their questions. We did this over lunch at the Pinecreek Restaurant. Fortunately, Mom was feeling well enough to come along and was able to provide a lot of useful information.

I ran out to the school and met a builder and his partner. Their concern was that the foundations of the school needed to be redone. That is, tear out the old cement and put down new stuff after leveling off the settle dirt of the foundation. I tend to agree with them. I told them to quote the job both ways and to let the church know what their concerns are with laying a slab over the old concrete.

When the Church gets involved, they will want to make sure it is done right, even if it will add more money to the project.

Mom was good enough to make about 3 - 4 dozen cookies today. We put them in small baggies and I delivered them to the workers at the local gas station where we usually fill up. A total of about 16 guys that run the pumps between all their shifts. They were very happy to receive the goodies.

\*Photos:\*

- The Hodges from Highland, Utah
- Some metal work for sale at the Pinecreek Restaurant (kind of a South African Cracker Barrel)

Smile today. Can you make another person happy. Who can you compliment and lift? We love you!

Dad and Mom



Some metal work for sale at the Pinecreek Restaurant (kind of a South African Cracker Barrel)



The Hodges from Highland, Utah



2018 AUGUST 16 }

# Aug\_16\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had an interesting visit to the school today with an engineer. We will have his report in about 7 to 10 days on what he thinks is required in terms of any foundation work. My guess is that he will say part of the foundations are okay to build on, but about half of what is there needs to be torn out and re-done. We'll see.

\*Here is a question for you\*. If we discuss, study, ponder, read, and learn about Jesus Christ, why do we not hear more about people dreaming about him? I am not talking about visions and personal visitations. I'm just saying "dreams?"

No luck at the Department of Education today - no one was at the office I needed to see. I am sorry to say, it seems that there are a lot of people drawing a paycheck and do very lit-

tle to earn it. Frustrating, but that does not stop us from trying to move the ball forward.

\*Photos:\*

- It will be a wonderful 44 years tomorrow!!! - Delicious apple muffins that Mom made for district meeting - Wasabi coated peanuts for Mom! (No thank you!)

We love you. Be valiant!

Dad and Mom



Delicious apple muffins that Mom made for district meeting



It will be a wonderful 44 years tomorrow!!!



Wasabi coated peanuts for Mom! (No thank you!)

2018 AUGUST 17 }

# Aug\_17\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Cars are of the devil. We started out with intentions of finding some of our lost sheep today after district meeting. However, it seems we were chasing down car problem after car problem this afternoon. Two spare tire problems, headlight issues, brake jobs, not enough blinker fluid in the turning signal reservoir, etc.

We had a good training this morning regarding the Holy Ghost. Once again, one of our fine African missionaries did the instruction. Once again, We can see how important their mission is and how they are learning and will become powerful priesthood holders making great contributions to the church the rest of their lives.

I think one point we fail to remember some times is that the Holy Ghost is a companion to help us

eventually become perfect in Christ, to become sanctified. Only then, being holy without spot, can we be in a state to live with God. (Moroni 10:32-33)

\*Photos:\*

- Elder Shelembe did a good job with our district meeting this morning.

Have a great day living the gospel and doing good.

Love,

Dad and Mom



Elder Shelembe did a good job with our district meeting this morning.

2018 AUGUST 18 }

## Aug\_18\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Today was a helping hands project in each ward. Mom is still feeling the effects of her cold and we thought one more day inside and keeping warm was good idea. So, I was hopping from project to project today.

The Mdantsane 1st Ward had a project of preparing about five small gardens at a school and then planting them with veggies. The school will harvest the veggies and use them to feed the children at the school. It was a neat project, but I wish the bishop would have made sure others (not members) from the school were there to help with the project. Good project!

The Mdantsane 4th Ward went to a home where there is only a mama, a teenage daughter and another daughter that is handicapped and

confined to a wheelchair. We cleaned up the yard and painted the inside of the home. We also purchased and laid down some vinyl covering on the living room floor. Good project!

Through the course of the day, the car got pretty dirty. I took some time this afternoon to clean it up. When we go to church, I want to the young missionaries to see our car clean. I want them to know we appreciate the privilege to have a car and the importance to take care of it.

Yesterday, we had car car that went to the dealership for a noise in the back wheel. They recommended new brake pads and new rotors. The cost was about \$400 USD. I told the missionaries, "Absolutely not!" I gave them a spare car we had in the garage and took their car to a local shop for brakes. The total cost will be about \$160 USD. Dealerships are

Satan-inspired serpents.

\*Photos:\* Here are two links to all the photos I have from our Mormon Helping Hands projects today. (Forgive the photography.)

- <https://drive.google.com/open?id=13oFT47EiH9T4hreg4dJXWn93xV3dPMRW> - <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1Cty6lh-pRN3EHtC3HyfL5hurbw3BX4oTd>

We love you muchisimo!

Dad and Mom

# Aug\_19\_2018\_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

It was a pleasant surprise to walk into church today and see the girl in the wheelchair and her sister that we helped yesterday during our Mormon Helping Hands project. They are not members of the church, but they looked great with huge smiles on their face. I think our members feel genuinely good about the service they performed yesterday.

I have been thinking for weeks about crucifixion as a form of death. It is hard for me to contemplate a way of dying more painful than being crucified. Descriptions I have read leave me feeling sick. It is hard to believe that people would find some sadistic pleasure in seeing a person crucified.

I can't begin to imagine how the Savior was able to withstand such a cru-

el act, especially after the emotional and spiritual exhaustion He experienced in the Garden of Gethsemane. "I tremble to think of his hands pierced and bleeding to pay the debt! Such mercy, such love and devotion can I forget?" I hope to be able to better understand it all. For the present, I will put my faith and love in the Savior. The day will come "when I will kneel at his feet" and then, maybe realize and appreciate in greater measure, His love for me.

The sisters of the Mdantsane 4th Ward love Sister Stevenson. Today, they presented her with an apron in bright African colors. On it is bead work that says, "Mama Stevenson." Next week she will receive a Duc (sp.), or, head scarf.

Our bishop was working with another (less active) member of the church to purchase some cow bones. The idea was to make some soup and sell

it for extra money. The bishop put up the money and the other member provided some transportation. Unfortunately, the one brother took off with the bones and has not been seen since. Sad story because any loss of money or goods like that really hurts. The stake president has been advised of the situation and hopefully there will be a good resolution to the problem.

\*Photos:\*

- Mom and her "apron of many colors" - Brother Qalase - hopefully heading for the temple soon to do

work for his ancestors!

Do good! Be good! We love you,

Dad and Mom



Mom and her "apron of many colors"



Brother Qalase  
- hopefully  
heading for the  
temple soon to  
do work for his  
ancestors!