



Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life.

2 NEPHI 31:20



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SACTM: SOUTH AFRICA CAPE TOWN MISSION



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SACTM: South Africa Cape Town Mission

August 20, 2018 - March 29, 2019 - Book 3 of 4

CHRIS AND MAVIS STEVENSON | 3

SCATM: South Africa Cape Town Mission

August 20, 2018 - March 29, 2019 - Book 3 of 4



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CHRIS AND MAVIS STEVENSON | 3

SCATM: South Africa Cape Town Mission

2018 AUGUST 20 }

Aug_20_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

What a busy preparation day. First thing this morning I took a missionary car in to have the rotors turned. They call it, "Skimming the discs." here in South Africa. Bottom line, the cost for the brakes and the skimming was 31% of what the Toyota dealership wanted to charge!

I am sorry to say that when Mom and I opened the door this evening to come in the house, a stupid lizard came running in like he owned the place. After weeks of living lizard-free, we now were faced with an alien visitor from the lizard nation. I was feeling sick. How can one sleep knowing there is a repulsive reptile wandering around your house?

I decided to be proactive. I grabbed a broom and a flashlight and went searching. Nothing under the couch. Nothing on the window sills. But,

when I pulled back one of the curtains, I saw him. He raise one of his legs and extended his middle finger at me. I was livid. Bad enough a stranger comes into your home uninvited, but then to blatantly offend you? I thrust the broom down on the scaly, semi-serpent *Sphaerodactylus ariasae <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jaragua_Sphaero>. *Rest assured, he was not laughing at me now.

When I removed the broom, he shot out from behind the curtain and over near the garage door. Big mistake. I swatted and landed a blow squarely to the back. He was stunned but not done. He continue to move at a slow pace to another part of the room. My forceful jab with the broom was the same as 100 knives piercing his puny little frame. His broken body lay in a crumpled heap. Sleep will come much easier tonight.

On a more serious note. Mom and I had a wonderful evening with the Gogwana family. They are active members of the Mdantsane 1st Ward. Our goal was to discuss President Nelson's comments months ago about staying on the covenant path. We congratulated them on being such converted and faithful members. Then, we said that the Lord expects something more from us.

We read from the New testament where the Savior, speaking to Peter, said, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Then, we

also read the passage in Luke where the Savior said, "Feed my sheep." We challenged this good family to reach out to others and to feed His sheep. There was a wonderful Spirit there.

We played a game (seeing who could stack plastic bowls and cups the fastest). Their son who is a little slow mentally, won with an 11.28 second time. When we had some of Mom's baked apples, the son said after trying a bite or two, "I don't like this." It may have felt uncomfortable for the parents, but we understood what the situation was. A good, strong family.



I buy Diet Coke now that it is sold on the BYU campus. This is 2.25 liters for about \$1.05. Pretty good deal for the "Black Death."



As I was writing this email, I was eating what they call a "Russian Pizza" and washing it down with a little Coca Cola. The Russian pizza is a sliced sausage-like meat on a layer of cheese over a sweet/fruity sauce on a thin base pizza dough. Actually pretty good stuff.

Photos:

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some one's life. Love,

Dad and Mom

Hope you have a great day. Reach out to others and be a blessing in

2018 AUGUST 21 }

Aug_21_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

I picked up Brother Shakes this morning at 8:15 in Mdantsane. Then, took him to the chiropractor in our area for a consultation. He has been having nagging sciatica pain for a few months. And, it has been getting worse. The pain will shoot down the leg and even attack the bottom of his feet. It has effected his walking and he is having a difficult time sleeping at night.

The doc seems to think a bulging disc and a lot of tightening muscles. He worked on him, applying a lot of pressure to the affected muscles to help loosen them up. Then, he poked his back with about 6 very thin needles. After that, he showed him a few stretching exercises he needs to do every day. We go back on Friday for a second round.

As we were leaving, he mentioned to me he felt like crying. I asked him if it was really that bad. He said, "No, I feel like crying because of what you and Sister Stevenson are doing for me." He is about 30 years old. He wanted to know what he could do for us?

Then, we headed out to Bhisho (45 minutes) to see our MIA (missing in action) friends at the Department of Education. Guess what? They were not in the office. Now, we know why things do not get done around here.

Then, we went into King Williams Town where I needed to do a baptismal interview for President Lebethoa. This was a truly neat experience. This lady of about 40 years old is on fire. We could have talked all day. She is the daughter of a pastor who was very popular in the Assemblies of God Church. Long story short, she never felt much of any-

thing at that church and was disgusted with all the hypocrisy of the members.

She learned a lot about our church from an extensive conversation with a relative that was a member. After hearing so much about the church, she contacted the missionaries. She and her two children will be baptized on Sunday. Her husband isn't quite ready yet, but I think his time is coming. Especially after he will see the change in his family. There was such a strong spirit during that interview.

Mom needed one more day of recovery, but still got quite a bit done here at the house. We got our oven fixed (bad heating element) and Mom cranked out several dozen chocolate chip cookies. She is also looking at the best way to teach a new song to the Primary.

Photos:

- Shakes, the "Human Pin Cushion" - This country eats a lot of cabbage! - This is Shakes garden. Mom and I had bought him a bunch of seed and he is now seeing the results of his sweat and toil.



This is Shake's garden. Mom and I had bought him a bunch of seed and he is now seeing the results of his sweat and toil.



This country eats a lot of cabbage!



Shakes, the "Human Pin Cushion"

We love you all very much!

Dad and Mom

Tid Bits

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

1. Word of the week: "perspicacity," the quality of having a ready insight into things; shrewdness. * Example:* One must have perfect perspicacity in today's investment world if they want to increase their net worth.

2. Quote of the week:

*3. Scripture of the week: *

Wherefore, how great the importance to make these things known unto the inhabitants of the earth, that they may know that there is no flesh that can dwell in the presence of God, save it be through the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah, who layeth down his life according to the flesh, and taketh it again by the power of the Spirit, that he may bring to pass the resurrec-

tion of the dead, being the first that should rise. (2 Nephi 2:8)

4. Joke of the week:

The bishop told an eighty-year-old widow in the ward that, at her age, she should be giving some thought to "the hereafter." She said to him, "I think about it many times a day."

"Oh, really?" said the bishop. "That is very wise."

"It's not a matter of wisdom," she replied. "It's when I open a drawer or a closet, I ask myself, 'What am I here after?'"

5. Bee's Knees Award: This girl lives in a very happy world. Wow, she can smile big. She has an incredible imagination. She loves to play with her sisters. She really loves her whole family, even the boys. She is obedient. She loves to read, swim,

dance and sing. She is absolutely gorgeous. She is smart as 10 rocket scientists all smushed together. She is just plain super. Katie bug, you are the Bee's Knees, sistah!!!

6. Gospel question of the week: Hats off to Michael Beckstead for being the first to answer correctly the question from last week. The photograph was a picture of Elder Marvin J. Ashton. This week's question: Who is the son of Enos?

*7. If I were you (advice to grand kids): * If I were you, I would learn to

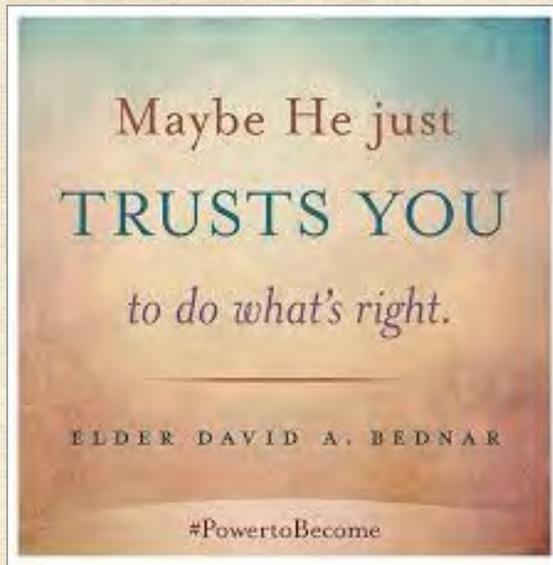
eat and enjoy as many vegetables as possible. They are so good for you. Try it. I think you will like it.

8. What I learned this week: People respond better to you when you can "build relationships of trust." I texted a recommendation for ward council to each of our bishops this last week. Both responded with thank you's and said they would implement the recommendation.

*9. What I am grateful for: *I am so thankful for a temple marriage. When I stop and consider what great



This is the Alhambra Ward in which Uncle Thom and I were baptized a few years back.



blessings come from a sealing in the temple compared to other worldly approaches to marriage, *there is not comparison* !

10. My goal for the week: I want to get our plans approved by the Department of Education! That is my goal this week.

*11. Photo of the week: *This is the Alhambra Ward in which Uncle Thom and I were baptized a few years back.

We love you. We pray for you. We

want nothing but the very best for you. Have fun living the gospel this week!

Dad and Mom

Aug_22_2018

Dear Family,

Let's get this over right now. We had a car accident this morning. No one was injured, but my pride is suffering from deep depression. We were in the outside lane and another car in the inside lane as we were approaching a traffic circle. Without checking my blind spot, I put on my blinker and started to move over to the inside lane while in the circle. I should have been going straight instead of trying to go around the circle and back the other direction.

The car with the inside track was going straight and ran into my driver side door as I was changing lanes. It caved in the driver side door and his front end bumper was torn almost off. His front left fender was pushed in to the front tire. I am pretty sure it was entirely my fault.

The bad news is that the other car is a BMW. The good news is that it is an old BMW.

The driver of the other vehicle was

very nice and friendly. An older man. We exchanged contact information and took a myriad of photos of each other's car and the traffic circle. We are both glad it was not any more serious than it was.

So, today was a lot of paperwork with the police department, filing an accident report with the mission office and getting the car to the panel beater for an estimate. We are hoping the mission president does not send us home. Or, maybe he sends me home and they keep Mom here?

It is indeed humbling to have this happen as I am always counselling the missionaries to "Slow down," "Watch where you are going," "Be a defensive driver."

Photos:

- Our pretty little baby got a boo boo!
- Older model BMW. Whew!!!
- You can see the arrows designating what you can do at the circle. We were coming from the right. In our lane we could only go straight or turn to the left. The other lane can also go straight or continue around the circle and turn to the right. When I tried to change lanes to the

inside, I did not see him and I cut right in front of him.

We are alive and in good spirits.
Have a great day obeying all the traffic laws in your country!

Dad and Mom



Our pretty little baby got a boo boo!



Older model BMW. Whew!!!



You can see the arrows designating what you can do at the circle. We were coming from the right. In our lane we could only go straight or turn to the left. The other lane can also go straight or continue around the circle and turn to the right. When I tried to change lanes to the inside, I did not see him and I cut right in front of him.

2018 AUGUST 23 }

Aug_23_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Boarding inspections this morning. We did the sneak attack approach and we were pleasantly surprised. Two of the flats were very good and the residents received a bag of homemade chocolate chip cookies. The other two were in less than favorable condition. We go back to visit them on Saturday.

We are driving a different car until ours is repaired. This one drove a little funny. When I looked at the wheels, they were all 15 inch except for one which was a 14 inch wheel. I checked to see what the spare looked like. A dented mag wheel and a sidewall puncture the size of a half dollar! So, new tires ordered this afternoon and we will put them on tomorrow.

Mom has been busy doing some Primary preparation and making some

rolls for tomorrow's district meeting. I have been busy compiling accident reports with accompanying photos!

Photos:

- We are guessing "RUCC" stands for Reformed Universal Christian and Catholic Church - A little storage room at the Phakamile School where they have accumulated old workbooks, notebooks and other junk

We love you all very much,

Dad and Mom



A little storage room at the Phakamile School where they have accumulated old workbooks, notebooks and other junk



We are guessing "RUCC" stands for Reformed Universal Christian and Catholic Church

2018 AUGUST 24 }

Aug_24_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Our district meeting this morning was about teaching. We discussed the importance of asking good questions and of listening. It was a lesson built for me. I need a lot of work with listening.

I took Shakes to the bone cracker again today. More of the same – massage, stretching and the needles! He has Shakes doing some stretching exercises every day. We hope this will work. We plan to make him a cheap chin-up bar for his bedroom doorway. Hanging from the bar will help stretch the spine some and alleviate pressure on something like a bulging disc. He is going to go get some x-rays done before his next and last visit to the Chiro.

We received a phone call the other day from Joburg. They basically said, "All we can commit to at the

Phakamile School is relocating the temporary Blue Building and helping to construct three new classrooms. This was a little disappointing. We countered with a tactfully written letter to have them reconsider and get funding from Salt Lake for 8 classrooms. (Anything over \$25,000 needs to be approved by Salt Lake.)

We received an email back today with a long list of other projects they need to fund that truthfully are a lot more serious and in desperate need than our project. We are blessed and fortunate to have the Church step in and help. So, the project will be three very nice classrooms. More details to come.

Photos:

– We found this hat in a bag full of deserted missionary clothes. I want to burn it. I can't imagine some one wanting to wear this in public. Kind of a sick (in a bad way) hat to say the

least. – The other guy's car.

Love,

Dad and Mom



We found this hat in a bag full of deserted missionary clothes. I want to burn it. I can't imagine some one wanting to wear this in public.



The other guy's car.



2018 AUGUST 25 }

Aug_25_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We have been going since first thing this morning. Two things that take up a lot of time: Medical/dental needs and cars! Mom checked into the doctor this morning for some follow-up questions and advice following her visit a few weeks ago. She has a sinus infection that does not seem to want to go away. She ignores my home remedy of milk chocolate.

Then, Elder Monoalibe has wisdom teeth problems. He will probably have to have them extracted soon. They are causing him a good deal of pain. Then, later today we had an Elder come in from King Williams Town (1 hour outside of town) with a bad cold, fever and respiratory problems. All of these visits need Mom's attention so she can report them to the mission office, i.e., symptoms, doctor's name, diagnosis,

medications, etc.

Mom is kind of the Eastern Cape medical liaison. I have heard her tell a least two missionaries to drink more water. I recommend spraying Windex on the problem, but no one listens to me. Any way, things like this take time.

On our way to the Steenbeek's to have ox tail stew, our rear left shock absorber came loose. No only did it rattle like crazy, but it actually poked a hole through the side of the trunk. On smooth, open highway it sounds okay. But on pothole roads like the ones going to Cozy Corner where the Steenbeek's live, it was annoyingly loud. That gets fixed on Monday.

We see our mission changing a little. We are going to need to dedicate more time to medical and dental issues, boarding maintenance and of

course, car repairs. This takes us away from where we want to be, with the members. But, you have to do what the mission needs you to do and make the best of it.

We look forward to Sunday with the saints! We relish the opportunity and privilege we have to partake of the sacrament. We know God lives. We know His son, Jesus Christ, is the Redeemer of the world. We rejoice we can be in His service helping our brothers and sisters in this part of the world. It is the very least we can do to try to repay the debt.

Photos:

- If you look carefully in this photo, you can see two little baby chicks. Char Steenbeek put two chicken eggs in there and the Cacatiel will sit on them and keep them warm until they hatch. Then, she cares for them as if they were her own. She has done this many, many times. - This bird took a huge bite out of the previous owner's hand about 20 years ago. Since coming to the Steenbeek's it has not bitten anyone. - Bruce (the black retriever) loves to fetch. He will carry a tennis ball around in his



Bruce (the black retriever) loves to fetch. He will carry a tennis ball around in his mouth all day if he thinks there is someone that will play with him. The dog is about 400 years old!



This bird took a huge bite out of the previous owner's hand about 20 years ago. Since coming to the Steenbeek's it has not bitten anyone.

mouth all day if he thinks there is someone that will play with him. The dog is about 400 years old!

We love you. Stay strong. Keep your guard up. It is dangerous out there.

Dad and Mom

Aug_26_2018

Dear Family,

I thought today as we were partaking of the sacrament that in addition to a review of our lives and how we can improve in the upcoming week, that we need to seek the Lord's help, the enabling power of His Atonement, to have the strength to become more like Him. Isn't that such a neat thing about the sacrament - we repent (hopefully before we get to sacrament meeting), we contemplate how

we can do better, we plead for His help and then, we start the week so happy that we get to work on being more like the Savior.

I hope we enjoy doing that. We should take great joy in the privilege to step by step, become more like Him. How wonderful is that!

Our dear old Sister Maluke spoke today about Joseph Smith. She did fantastic. We love her faith and testimony. This is the elderly lady that likes us to sing with her before we leave a visit to her home.

Another sister spoke for the first time in sacrament meeting. You could tell she was a little uncomfortable. She was having a difficult time finding scriptures she referenced from her notes. Other members would walk up to the podium and had her their scriptures, already opened to the verse she was looking for. Good for the members and good for this faithful sister to give an important talk on keeping the Sabbath Day holy.

I have tried something a little different the last month or so. I use to find

myself looking at the clock frequently in church. I would think about what was for dinner or, what is in the news, or, what to say in emails, etc. But, I have found it so much more rewarding to be in the moment. It is a waste of time to dwell on the future when there is so much to learn in the present. As we focus on what is being said and being involved by participating, we can learn a lot. The time goes by fast enough. We need to learn to savor the moment.

Photos:

- Check out this newspaper article about a guy who feel through a broken manhole. This is a different one than the one we fixed, but what a nightmare!

We love you very much. Follow the Savior!

Dad and Mom



If you look carefully in this photo, you can see two little baby chicks. Char Steenbeek put two chicken eggs in there and the Cacatiel will sit on them and keep them warm until they hatch. Then, she cares for them as if they were her own. She has done this many, many times.

LIVE IN SUCH A WAY THAT THOSE WHO KNOW YOU BUT DON'T KNOW GOD WILL COME TO KNOW GOD BECAUSE THEY KNOW YOU.



Check out this newspaper article about a guy who fell through a broken manhole. This is a different one than the one we fixed, but what a nightmare!

Tid Bits

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



*1. Word of the week: * "im-
pute," to lay the responsibility
or blame for (something) often
falsely or unjustly. *Exam-
ple*: Various people impute me as a
dangerous and reckless driver.

2. Quote of the week:

3. Scripture of the week:

For my thoughts are not your
thoughts, neither are your ways my
ways, saith the Lord.

For as the heavens are higher than
the earth, so are my ways higher
than your ways, and my thoughts
than your thoughts. (Isiah 55:8-9)

*4. Joke of the week: *

A Mormon guy in line to get lunch
leans over to the guy next to him and
says, "Wanna hear a Mormon joke?"

The guy next to him replies, "Well
before you tell that joke, you should

know something. I'm 6' tall, 200 lbs.,
and I am an anti-Mormon. The guy
sitting next to me is 6'2 tall, weighs
225, and he's an anti-Mormon. The
fella next to him is 6'5 tall, weighs
250, and he's an anti-Mormon. Now,
you still wanna tell that joke?"

The first guy says, "Nah, not if I'm
gonna have to explain it 3 times." *5.
Bee's Knees Award: * Can you play
Mozart with your eyes closed? Prob-
ably not. This girl is simply amazing
on the piano. Better than that, she is
the best mother around- just ask her
children. She loves them and nur-
tures them. She loves the Lord and is
Christ-like in all she does. As a
nurse, she knows more than most
doctors. She is a super wife, devoted
companion. She cheerfully serves in
her church callings. She hates scor-
pions. Megan, you are the Bee's
Knees, sistah!!!

*6. Gospel question of the week: * I

am pleased to announce that *Juliet*
was thirteenth person to answer the
gospel question of the week correct-
ly : Jarom is the son of Enos. *This
week's question*: Two men in the
New Testament were being consid-
ered to fill the position of Judas Is-
cariot. Mathias was chosen. Who was
the other candidate?

*7. If I were you (Advice to grand
kids): * If I were you, I would learn
how to get along with people. You
will be around them the rest of your
life. (One secret, talk about them, not
you all the time). Try it. I think you

will like it.

*8. What I learned this week: * Don't
talk about things as if they are done
until you know for a fact they are
going to happen. You avoid creating
false hope. It is better to under-
promise and over-deliver.

*9. What I am grateful for: * Modern
medicine.

*10. My goal for the week: * Get DOE
approval on the classrooms. (I hate
to sound like a broken record play-
er.)





11. Photo of the week: Pumpkin People!

Aug_27_2018

Dear Family,

Someone once said that when a door is closed on you, the Lord opens another. Such is the case on our school project. Sunday after sacrament meeting, a man was at the back of the chapel looking for Mom and I. His name is Patrick Pumlomo. He is a local political personality in one

of the zones where students come from to attend the Phakamile School

He has been asked by the school to jump in and help. We would normally not be too impressed by the offer to get something done because we have heard it from so many others and seen no results. But, this guy, was driving down the main road and passed the church and had the idea to stop in and find us. Which he did.

He heard our story and the next morning (today) he was at the #1 man's office for the Department of

Education - his good friend. He waited until the top dawg was out of a meeting and got right to work. He gave me a list of things we needed to produce (most of which we already had and submitted). After that meeting, he left King Williams Town and drove an hour to the Buffalo City Metro Municipality (BCMM) to meet with another person he knows who heads that department. He will be back tomorrow morning for an 8 AM meeting.

We had two cars in the shop today and we spent time at home cleaning, ironing, making telephone calls, getting quotations from builders, getting cars repaired and eating pizza (well, I was eating the pizza).

This evening we had to run some medication out to King Williams Town to an Elder that is down with a bad cold. Plus, Mom got him some yogurt, electrolyte drinks and Jello.

We then went to the boarding of our zone leaders. We were going to meet them at 8:30. Guess what? They didn't show up. Not even a phone call from them! So, we waited until 9 PM, left a note and went home.

When I arrived home, I telephone them to let them know our displeasure about them not being on time. I used words like "inconsiderate" and the need to be more "respectful" of others. We hope they got the message.

Photos:

- I think we may have sent this photo in a previous email. This is not photo-shopped. This is Arnold and Wendy Cortez with our mission Assistants to the President, Elders Sibiya and Reedy. Elder Sibiya, on the left, will be coming to our zone on Wednesday to train a new missionary.. - The car looks so much better!!! (Sorry, this is the good side. Car is in the shop now to get the other side fixed.) I miss my cruise control.

Be extra good today. We love you,

Dad and Mom



I think we may have sent this photo in a previous email. This is not photo-shopped. This is Arnold and Wendy Cortez with our mission Assistants to the President, Elders Sibiya and Reedy. Elder Sibiya, on the left, will be coming to our zone on Wednesday to train a new missionary..



The car looks so much better!!! (Sorry, this is the good side. Car is in the shop now to get the other side fixed.) I miss my cruise control.

2018 AUGUST 29 }

Aug_29_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Busy 12 hour day! We started early with Mom washing some bedding for our two new missionaries coming to the Mdantsane 4th ward. Then, off to the boarding to help clean. We ran out of time as today was transfers and we had to coordinate passing out and collecting passports for about 20 - 25 Elders. And, helping with getting missionaries to the airport, their boarding the bus depot, etc.

Finally, we had a car that broke down and Mom and I had to make sure it was cleaned out and called a towing company to come get it. This was taking precious time and we had to get out to our work area to give a FHE with a member family.

After all the running around, what a refreshing 1-2 hours with a great family. Bother and Sister Lubelwana

have been members since 2007. It was a delightful way to end a busy, hectic day. We had prepared a lesson, but we were treated to a great lesson from them! They told us of their introduction and conversion to the church. One cannot hear their experience and not say they are the elect of God. This family was ready and recognized the voice of the Savior through his servants, the missionaries.

They had marvelous answers to prayer and feelings from the Holy Ghost they never knew could exist. They found great peace and joy from the message of the restored gospel. They have two of their boys on missions right now. They have been to the temple. They have been blessed with employment. Their whole lives have changed for the better.

We had a prayer together, played a fun game, had Mom's delicious up-

side down apple cake and went home. We not only did some good today, but we have reason to rejoice because of this good family in our lives!

Dad and Mom

Photos:

- New restaurant in town. You cut off a slab of meat and cook it on a barbecue. Just joking, of course. However, this is how rare Andrew enjoys a good steak. - Some of our missionaries in our zone.

We love you. Do what is right.



New restaurant in town. You cut off a slab of meat and cook it on a barbecue. Just joking, of course. However, this is how rare Andrew enjoys a good steak.



Some of our missionaries in our zone.

2018 AUGUST 30 }

Aug_30_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

At our last Mission Tour (which happens annually), a general authority and his wife travel with the mission president and his wife throughout the whole mission. Last year it was Elder Koch. He mentioned something that was important for the missionaries to hear.

Sometimes you have people you are teaching and for one reason or another, they are not responding like they should. Perhaps they are not reading, attending church or praying. Consequently the decision is made to drop them from the teaching pool. He said, do not worry about doing this.

When we teach people, you need to think of yourself driving the gospel bus and passengers get on at a certain point. Some will last to the end of the ride. Some will leave the bus

early for some reason (because they are not following through on their commitments). When they get off, another bus will more than likely come by again. We hope they board the bus and stay on the second time around.

We had a referral from the other senior missionaries (the Hodges) about a young lady who was a waitress they met at a restaurant in East London. She saw their missionary tags and recognized who they were immediately. She was from Mdantsane and our specific work area. We visited her and her mother today and had a very promising visit. They were both genuinely happy we came to visit.

As it turns out, this is their third time on the bus. They have met and known missionaries in 2002 and 2012. They seemed very intent on our questions and the message we

shared with them (Hel. 5:12). They accepted our invitation to return on Sunday afternoon and to bring our young counterparts with us. This will be Elders Sibiya and Rasband. We are hoping and praying that they buy a ticket for the whole bus trip and stay on until the end.

Photos:

- In South Africa, the cars are small and the grocery baskets are small. They make me feel right a home with my small man syndrome.

Love,

Dad and Mom



In South Africa, the cars are small and the grocery baskets are small. They make me feel right a home with my small man syndrome.

Aug_31_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

A couple of things I forgot to share over the last few days:

- When we had our little car accident (you know, the one where Mom violently jerked the steering wheel and forcing us into the next lane) it was simply amazing to see how fast an emergency EMS ambulance showed up. It seemed like it was instantaneously there before we got out of our cars. Then, two tow trucks were there licking their chops within a split second of the collision. I view them like vultures waiting in a tree or circling in the air, waiting for an animal to collapse so they can descend and pick at its dead carcass. - The other night I felt like I was burning in HELL. I felt for sure this was punishment for listening to the Rolling Stones a week ago on one of our walks. However, it turns out that shortly before dozing off to sleep, I acci-

dentally turned my full length heating pad to the highest level instead of the off position.

We had some very good discussion this morning in our district meeting. Our topic was "Adjusting our teaching to the needs of those we are teaching." A big part of this instruction is asking good questions to make sure we know what the person is thinking or feeling. Then, listen.

Mom was able to spend about an hour on the chapel piano this afternoon and I did a bunch of telephoning and texting.

We then took Brother Shakes to the chiropractor. This was his third and last treatment. According to the doctor, his muscles were much less tight. At this point the doc was able to do a little more stretching and bone-cracking. I think he is feeling better. Mom and I have bought him

some heavy duty U-shaped hooks that we are going to attach to the top portion of his bedroom door frame. Then, he is suppose to hag from them and relax his back. This will help take some pressure off any disc problems.

Did some other meetings with a few members. One needs employment, was just laid off from his teaching job. Another is going for his driver's license and needs money. We have the money - it came from a previous senior couple that have reached out to help him. We are safe-guarding

the funds to make sure they are spent on getting a driver's license as opposed to something else.

We retire to bed tonight feeling that we have done some good. That makes for a good night's rest!

Photos:

- These are my girls at the local pizza shop. I bring them cookies and they add extra cheese to my pizza. The guy in the gray shirt is the owner/boss. If he is working, I do not usually get the extra bump in the cheese. - We usually see semi



These are my girls at the local pizza shop. I bring them cookies and they add extra cheese to my pizza. The guy in the gray shirt is the owner/boss. If he is working, I do not usually get the extra bump in the cheese.



We usually see semi trucks with 24 wheels. In the USA, they are usually 22 wheels. I took this one thinking it was 24 wheels, but then, realized it was a "cab over" and did not have four wheels supporting the cock pit. I will get a photo of the 24 wheel rig soon.

trucks with 24 wheels. In the USA, they are usually 22 wheels. I took this one thinking it was 24 wheels, but then, realized it was a "cab over" and did not have four wheels supporting the cock pit. I will get a photo of the 24 wheel rig soon.

Stay loyal to the Royal! We love you,

Dad and Mom

Sept_01_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We cannot believe how fast August has blown by. Today is the first official day (according to the locals) of Spring. It was warm today and from here on out, we think it is going to be beautiful weather.

This morning we did a lot of little, but important things. Mom mended missionary clothing, bake some cookies, did a bunch of wash. I went and had some lamination done on some song-teaching sheets of "A Child's Prayer" that Mom wants to teach the Primary children. I also made several copies of the engineer's diagram of what needs to be done with the classroom foundations.

Unbelievable, we receive a letter from the head architect for the DOE. He had a few suggestions and it is obvious that people are busily dis-

cussing the project and nearing some approval action.

At noon we had two missionaries come over to look at our fabulous one-speed bikes. They like them! They will get permission from the mission president to use them and then, we will gladly turn them over to them to scurry about town.

I watched a documentary last night about World War 2. When you stop and think about the massive numbers of soldiers involved in that war, it puts into perspective what Mormon and Moroni were witnessing in the last days of their people. Remember Mormon talking about the tens of thousands of his people that had fallen.

On the Eastern Front, during the war between Germany and Russia, Russia had over a million troops just in and around Moscow. In other

parts of the land, 500,000 would be taken prisoners by the Germans. At one point, 250,000 Nazis were taken prisoners by the Red Army. Very few of these soldiers ever returned. The death and carnage described by Mormon is so plausible when you stop and think of modern-day conflicts when one nation has battled against another nation.

Photo:

- Elder Day (Kaysville) and Elder Felisberto (San Paulo, Brazil) trying out bikes they might be using in the near future.

We love you!

Dad and Mom



Elder Day (Kaysville) and Elder Felisberto (San Paulo, Brazil) trying out bikes they might be using in the near future.

Sept_02_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Of course, it was good to be at our church meetings today. It was a blessing to partake of the sacrament and be prepared spiritually for this upcoming week.

At dinner this evening, we decided to talk about the good things we saw at church today:

- During ward council, the Relief Society president was there and ready for the meeting on time. (No one else came except the bishop and the missionaries) - A young lady that was called to conduct music was present and doing her calling. She had the chance to do some work for an aunt today and get paid, but she chose to come to church instead. (Mom is meeting with her this coming Saturday to help her learn how to conduct music.) - The little boy that runs wild all over the church during sacrament meeting

only turned off the podium lights. (He usually turns them all off.)

I think our bishop was feeling a little disappointed today with the low attendance at church. However, he keeps going with a positive attitude and a smile on his face. We think he knows he has a tough row to hoe, yet he does not look back. His hands are on the plow and he is always looking forward.

(Interruption in writing)

Sorry, I had to break a few minutes from writing to eat some strawberry shortcake! That's right, strawberries, and whipped cream on a delicious pound cake. Oh, how we suffer some times!

Photos:

- It is kind of funny how men will wear their suits with the tag of the designer/manufacturer still on their

sleeve. - We are driving a Chevy Aveo while our silver car is in the shop getting surgery. The Aveo is a dog! But, we cannot complain. We are lucky we have a spare to use and we are not walking.

We love and think about you often,

Dad and Mom

Tid Bits

Dear Family,

1. Word of the week: "bereft," deprived of or lacking (something).
Example: A family should never be bereft of Mom's oatmeal cake with the brown sugar and pecan frosting.

2. Quote of the week:

3. Scripture of the week:

Behold, I will send for many fishers,



It is kind of funny how men will wear their suits with the tag of the designer/manufacturer still on their sleeve.



We are driving a Chevy Aveo while our silver car is in the shop getting surgery. The Aveo is a dog! But, we cannot complain. We are lucky we have a spare to use and we are not walking.

saith the Lord, and they shall fish them; and after will I send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks. (Jeremiah 16:16)

4. Joke of the week:

*Q: *Did you hear about the guy who stopped brushing up on his Book of Mormon?

*A: * He got truth decay!

5. Bee's Knees Award: Are you physically fit? Can you run up and

down a soccer field without fainting or gasping for oxygen? Probably not. This girl is not only the world's greatest soccer player, but she is humble, sweet, friendly, polite, kind...you know all the good stuff you can imagine. She is a "A" student and does things ahead of time. She gives the best sacrament meeting talks in the Church and then, practices what she preaches. She is a natural beauty and intelligent. She loves her family and parents muchisimo! Sidney, you are the Bee's Knees, sistah!!!

6. Gospel Question of the week: Jacod was the first to correctly answer last week's gospel question. Justus was the other person being considered as an Apostle to fill the position of Judas Iscariot. This week's question: Who was Hagar's son?

7. If I were you (Advice to grand kids): If I were you, I would exercise every day. Talk to Aunt Liz and get a personalized training program for yourself and then, do it. Try it. I think you will like it.

8. What I learned this week: When nations go to war, the death count and casualties are staggering. Satan has been raging with blood and horror for 6,000 years. The day is coming when there will be peace over all the land during the millennial reign of the Savior.

9. What I am grateful for: Football helmets!

10: My goal for the week: Strengthen relationship with Bishop Lalendle and see where we might be able to help more.

11. Photo of the week: Can you name all these youngsters in this photo?

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

Dad and Mom

D.O.P.E. Manual Submission

Dear Family,

Attached is a D.O.P.E. Manual submission for your review. Please read it and provide any comments or suggestions. If there is no objection in the next two weeks, I am asking Daniel by way of this email to officially incorporate it into the family D.O.P.E. Manual/Website.

Love,

Dad



2018 SEPTEMBER 3 }

Sep_03_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a little bit of all four seasons today. We woke up to stiff winds and a lot of rain. Then, a little later, a drizzly Spring day. This afternoon nice and warm - somewhere between Fall and Summer. Then, back to some rain.

I had a busy day running errands all over. One was to help a return missionary in Mdantsane with getting a driver's license. I waited and waited. He was 45 minutes late. But that's not all. He forgot to bring his proof of residence. So, off to the bank where I waited some more for him to progress through the long lines.* I hope you are teaching our grandchildren the importance of being punctual. They need to understand and be considerate of other people's time*.

Spoke with a gentleman we met the

first two weeks of our mission about an "Alternative Building Technology" for the classrooms. Interesting, but I wasn't too sold - at least, not yet.

Photos:

- This is a flock of birds I photographed while waiting at the driver's license building. - The view from Brother Mike's hotel apartment. He is the brother from East London 3rd Ward that showed me the new building technology. I do not think it can beat the building block prices. Here is an interesting link if you are interested : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VJekgKmr_Y - A mosaic in the lobby of the hotel Where Brother Mike and his wife live. It was done by Oscar-Claude Monet about 5 years ago (JK)

Be strong like a bear! We love you,

Dad and Mom



The view from Brother Mike's hotel apartment.



This is a flock of birds I photographed while waiting at the driver's license building.



A mosaic in the lobby of the hotel Where Brother Mike and his wife live. It was done by Oscar-Claude Monet about 5 years ago (JK)

Sep_04_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

A day in the life of senior missionaries:

6:30 Out of bed and get showered and dressed for the day
7:30 Companionship prayer. Breakfast - Mom, piece of fruit and yogurt with granola. Dad, pizza
8:15 Leave to drive a spare car to the Amalinda church building
9:00 Meet children at the Phakamile School
10:00 Try out all the keys for the 6 cars we are taking out of service at the Amalinda building. Clean out cars, gather fleet cards.
11:00 Car tracking company meets us to remove tracking devices in cars being decommissioned.
12:00 Meet zone leaders at our boarding to give them ride to the airport. 2:00 Back to the Amalinda building to lock up all the cars and secure keys. 3:00 Went shopping for

household items for new missionary companionship 3:45 Went to Brother Shakes house to drill holes in cement block door frame for hooks he can suspend himself from.

4:45 Met set of missionaries to go on appointments

5:00 Met with Sister Zimbini

6:00 Met with Sipokazi and her neighbors

7:00 Gave missionaries ride home to their boarding

7:30 Arrive home and ate some dinner - Mom, Some kind of Italian chicken dish, Dad, pizza.

8:00 Write update

8:30 Read Book of Mormon with companion

8:45 Companionship prayer

Video:

- These are some of the Phakamile children singing for us. The words, "Yesterday, today, tomorrow, I will follow Jesus Christ." (Or, close to it)

2018 SEPTEMBER 5 }

Sep_05_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Six Chevy Aveos were placed on tow trucks and hauled away this afternoon. What a blessing to see these buckets of bolts go the way of all the world. I had to fight Mom all day long because she wanted to save one, ship it to Utah and put a 6.2 liter Corvette engine in it! Some times she is so ridiculous.

We had a sick Elder this morning and when that happens, you put other plans aside and get him medical attention. Turns out that he has a bad cold and needs to treat the symptoms for the next week or two until it goes away. He will survive.

We went with the new missionary companionship we have in the MD 4th ward to a few appointments this evening. They are working with both active and less active members to find new people to teach. They seem

to be dedicated, hard-working missionaries and will make a difference.

Photos:

- Strange-looking tree. I call it the deer antler tree. - Interesting front patio to some one's home in a white neighborhood, not the township - Blossoms on the trees and bushes because it is Spring in this part of the world. - This is Libhongo and her little sister. I will be baptizing Libhongo the first Saturday in October. She is a shy girl with a lot of energy. Her mother is a Relief Society teacher.

We love you! Hace bien frio en las mananas!

Dad and Mom



This is Libhongo and her little sister. I will be baptizing Libhongo the first Saturday in October. She is a shy girl with a lot of energy. Her mother is a Relief Society teacher.



Strange-looking tree. I call it the deer antler tree.



Interesting front patio to some one's home in a white neighborhood, not the township



Blossoms on the trees and bushes because it is Spring in this part of the world.

Sep_06_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We have a set of missionaries that will be trying out the one-speed bicycles in their area. I think it might work because their area is semi-flat. That is the good news. The bad news is they are not very mechanically-inclined.

Had a good phone call this morning from the secretary of the MEC (Member of the Executive Council) for the province. She wanted all the information on the Phakamile project and their office is going to provide some heat from above on the infra-structure guys. However, this is Africa, so don't get too excited quite yet!

Elder Hodges and I picked up the three sets of zone leaders from the airport. They went to Cape Town for their monthly Mission Leadership Council. It has been very wet and

chilly the last few days and the report is that Cape Town has had similar weather. That is very good news for Cape Town.

We have managed to come up with a way to watch BYU sports. Daniel's IT guy gave us the links to a couple good VPN (Virtual Private Network) websites. Basically, for a small sum of money, we get an IP address for the United States which in turn allows us to access Daniel's Dish Network and watch any recorded games! Elder Hodges and I watched the BYU-Arizona game tonight. Way to go Cougs! It was a closer game than I thought.

As of 3:30 PM today we were without a car. Ours will not be ready from the auto body shop until tomorrow afternoon. Check this out - our "panelbeaters" will have the job done for \$500 USD. The winning bid through the insurance company to

do the repair was \$1,721 USD. Less than 1/3 the cost!

Photos:

- As you can see, this is why the foundations at the Phakamile School need some re-working - The chandelier at the Pinecreek Restaurant - Some cute metal artwork

Have a really good day. We love you,

Dad and Mom



As you can see, this is why the foundations at the Phakamile School need some re-working



The chandelier
at the
Pinecreek
Restaurant



Some cute
metal artwork

2018 SEPTEMBER 8 }

Sep_08_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

No car again today. However, it was so windy and cold, we are glad we could stay inside and just do some things to get ready for Sunday. Mom did a lot of baking, was and mending. I did some email writing and research on SCIPS (Structural Concrete Insulated Panels) as a form of building school classrooms. We also had missionaries over a couple of times today for one reason or another.

I did venture out this afternoon to go to the store for some groceries. It's about 2 - 3 blocks away from our house. The wind was ferocious. It seemed that every step I took, the wind blew me back two. The only way I made it home was to walk backwards!

Mom made a bunch of cookies for a missionary homecoming tomorrow

after church. They were sitting out on the kitchen counter. Well, you know the rest of the story. I was not to be denied! Please do not mention this to Mom.

Photos:

- Mom doing mending for missionaries. She has already mended enough clothes to start her own Mr. Mac store. - Elders Methembu (Johannesburg) and Lilbeek (Germany) having lunch at our house in exchange for them picking us up tomorrow for church. Actually, Elder Methembu is sick and came over to rummage through Mom's huge first aid kit.

Have an enjoyable day making good choices. We love you,

Dad and Mom



Elders Methembu (Johannesburg) and Lilbeek (Germany) having lunch at our house in exchange for them picking us up tomorrow for church. Actually, Elder Methembu is sick and came over to rummage through Mom's huge first aid kit.



Mom doing mending for missionaries. She has already mended enough clothes to start her own Mr. Mac store.

Sep_09_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had the zone leaders come pick us up for church today since we are without a car. We hope to have it back by tomorrow afternoon. They also gave us a ride home. So, Mom offered them some chicken noodle soup and some cornbread. Hard to believe, but they accepted the invitation.

We enjoyed partaking of the sacrament today. I hope I can gain a great appreciation for that wonderful blessing as I get older. I am simply amazed at the fact that this week I can really become more like the Savior. We can be forgiven of our sins and shortcomings, but because of the enabling power of His atonement, we can also draw near to Him and become more like Him. That knowledge makes 3 Nephi 27:27 all the more attainable.

Today is such an important day! 19 years ago Mom had her bone marrow transplant made possible by Aunt Carla. Those couple weeks leading up to the transplant and the exhausting months following it, demonstrate the strength and stamina Mom has. Mom's attitude was, "Okay, what do I need to do?" And then, she just did it. What a good example to follow.

A couple of memories from my part:
- A blessing given by Grandpa McKay at our McKay family reunion where he told her that she would live to raise her children and see her grandchildren. I believe modern medicine held the miracle to cure Mom and that Grandpa McKay had the inspiration to know what the outcome of the 60/40 chance of survival would be. - I remember moving a big trailer full of our household furnishings from Col-

orado to Huntsville. Mom was already there. When I arrived and got out of the car. Mom and I embraced, just holding each other for a long time. It was a moment I will never forget. - Uncle Tom and Aunt Diane Stone were so kind and generous to let us stay in their Gateway condo while Mom was recuperating. Mom would walk to the hospital from there for her check-ups. The nursing staff was astounded that she could walk that far having recently gone through chemotherapy and then, the transplant. - On one occasion, the whole fami-

ly went to see Mom at her special hospital room. It was quite the sight. The room was packed with her children, lying on the bed with her, in chairs, standing up - all of us watching a movie together. It was a vivid image to me of our family's unity, support and love for each other. - The very same values and things of real importance to Mom before her illness and hospitalization were the same after she received news of her potentially life-threatening disease. She had her values, focus and priorities in line with the gospel. (Some times news of



A poster for our youth car wash and bake sale. I have a feeling Mom will be doing a lot of baking and I will be doing a lot of washing and drying.



Elders (from left to right) Armstrong (Johannesburg), Mholoko (South Africa), Gamble (Kanosh, Utah), Wamungwina (Zambia). They stopped by our house on their way to stay the night in East London with some other missionaries before stake conference.

pending death changes the way we think and what is really important in life.)

We love Mom! None of us can imagine what life would have been like without her 19 years ago. Every day my life is better because of her. I thank the Lord every day for such a marvelous companion. And, she makes one heck of an oatmeal cake!

Photos:

- Elders (from left to right) Armstrong (Johannesburg), Mholoko (South Africa), Gamble (Kanosh,

Utah), Wamungwina (Zambia). They stopped by our house on their way to stay the night in East London with some other missionaries before stake conference. - A poster for our youth car wash and bake sale. I have a feeling Mom will be doing a lot of baking and I will be doing a lot of washing and drying.

We love you. We think of you often and remember you in our prayers daily.

Dad and Mom

Tid Bits

Dear Family,

*1. Word of the week: "stultify," cause to lose enthusiasm and initiative, especially as a result of a tedious or restrictive routine. *Example: BYU's offensive line has the ability to stultify good defensive teams.

2. Quote of the week:

*3. Scripture of the week: O be wise; what can I say more? (Jacob 6:12)

4. Joke of the week:

Q: Need an ark?
A: I Noah guy.

*5. Bee's Knees Award: Are you more handsome than ten movie stars all smushed together? Probably not. This kid is not only a chic-magnet, but he is also smart, a great musician, has a cool personality, knows all about exotic race cars and everybody and their dog loves him. He is a strong priesthood holder and per-

forms his priesthood duties with honor. He loves his family like crazy. He is trying to be like Jesus and getting the job done. Parker, you are the Bee's Knees. brotha!!!

*6. Gospel Question of the week: Congratulations to Audrey who answered last week's question correctly. Hagar's son was, Ishmael. This week's question: How many chapters in the book of Mormon?

*7. If I were you (Advice to grand kids): * If I were you, I would read from the Book of Mormon every day of my life. What a great habit to develop! Remember, you make the habits, and the habits make you. Try it. I think you will like it.

*8. What I learned this week: The Lord has His own timetable. We need to learn to be patient and simply do our part. Every thing else will fall into place as it should.

*9. What I am grateful for: Living prophets and apostles to help guide us in these last days. They can show us the way.

*10. My goal for the week: Have a

coordination meeting with our new missionaries and our Ward Mission Leader.

11. Photo of the week: This is my very beautiful Chinese friend, Lexie "Hong Kong" McKay. Notice how her eyes are a little slanted.

Have fun living the gospel this week! Making good choices helps us to be truly happy.

Love,

Dad and Mom



2018 SEPTEMBER 10 }

Sep_10_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had beautiful weather today. I ate pizza. I ate fried mac 'n cheese. We got our car back. We went for a long walk today along the beach. There was so many great things today. Then, we watched the BYU - Cal football game. Now I have a headache and I am so upset I cannot sleep.

That is one of those games where you say, "We would have won had we scored more points than them!" We had our chances, but dropped balls and pass interference calls will lose a game pretty quick. It hurts! Oh, it hurts so bad!

I think we made some headway on the classroom approval. We had the Parliament/legislative committee on education send a letter to our infrastructure guy at the DOE that has been so unresponsive. All the legal

stuff with the Church is almost done. Money from our family will be transferred this week to the Church account in Johannesburg. We are moving the ball ahead yard by yard.

Great news! Russell Stevenson is coming to visit us in a few days. He is going to fly from Cape Town to East London and stay with us for a couple days. It will be fun to have him here and to hear about his research he has been doing this Summer.

Elder Hodges, from the senior couple that lives just a few doors away from us, is a huge BYU fan. Fortunately, we have been able to watch the first two games. It has been great even though it is a delayed, recorded game for us. So far we have known the score ahead of time.

Photos:

- These guys patiently wait for

people to come out from the hardware store and hopefully select them to come work as day laborers. Some times they are there all day waiting and no one picks them up. - On our walk today, we saw these two police officers on horses. I thought Mom was going to jump on one and ride off. - Is this racial profiling? Note the one police officer is searching the man and the other one has his hand on his gun. It has to be a little intimidating.

We love you. Have a great day!

Dad and Mom



On our walk today, we saw these two police officers on horses. I thought Mom was going to jump on one and ride off.



Is this racial profiling? Note the one police officer is searching the man and the other one has his hand on his gun. It has to be a little intimidating.



These guys patiently wait for people to come out from the hardware store and hopefully select them to come work as day laborers. Some times they are there all day waiting and no one picks them up.

2018 SEPTEMBER 11 }

Sep_11_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had such beautiful weather today! We had a good walk this morning and then tried to take care of a bunch of errands before we went to the clinic with one of our missionaries.

This young man is from Johannesburg and has been complaining about some back problems for weeks. He has spoken with the mission president about going home. Mom, others and myself have the feeling that he just wants to go home. His heart and his mind seem to be somewhere else and losing himself in the work does not seem to be a priority right now. He has an interview with President Lebethoa on Thursday. It will be interesting to see what happens. Of course, we want him to stay and have the success of an honorable mission under his belt.

Three things taking a lot of our time right now: Medical issues, automobile repairs and boarding maintenance. I really like Jacob in the Book of Mormon. FYI, the South African Police Service just released today that there have been 20,000 murders in the last year. That equates to 57 people per day. A South African has a higher chance of dying from murder than from a car accident. This is the highest it has been in the last ten years. Sad commentary on South African life.

Do good today. We love you,

Dad and Mom



This is one tree you do not want to encounter if you are out in the wild



In the USA your car can get booted. In South Africa, you get clamped.

2018

SEPTEMBER 12 }

Sep_12_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We have had a busy and glorious day. I had a bunch of errands to run prior to an 11 AM meeting. Mom has been cleaning and preparing for our mission president who will be here for dinner this evening at 6:30. (She did a lot more work than me today!)

We are saddened, however, that one of our missionaries will be going home. We do not know all the reasons, but once that decision is made, the Church seems to move quickly to extricate him from the field and get him on a flight home. We are guessing that the main reason for that might be to avoid any negative influence on the other missionaries. Even though this is for "medical reasons," we are guessing that he probably could have stuck it out for the rest of his mission??? We should not judge.

At 11 AM this morning, Patrick Pumomo (the husband of the Assistant Principal of the Phakamile School) and I met with Mzi, his friend he grew up with in Mdantsane. Mzi is the right hand man to the MEC (Member of the Executive Council) which is about as high up in the provincial government you can get. He was puzzled at the delays we have encountered and the seeming lack of interest by the Department of Education. He knew the Chief of Infrastructure that Mom and I met with 8 weeks ago.

After hearing our case, he got Chief Zama's office on the line. The chief happened to be in East London at the moment, not far from Mzi's office. Mzi had Chief Zama in his office within 10 minutes! The chief walked into the conference room where we were meeting and looked like a whipped puppy. It was obvious he was very uncomfortable.

To make a long story short, everything was resolved in 15 minutes. He promptly apologized and said he was glad we did not give up. Then, Chief Zama picked up his phone and made a call to the Chief Architect and told him to issue a letter of approval by this afternoon. Guess what? I actually received that email this afternoon. Definitely an answer to prayers.

Photos:

- Copy of DOE approval letter -
Can you see the monkey in the tree?
- Beautiful flowers this time of the year!
- Our panel beater has a refrigerator full of the old glass Coke bottles.

We love you more today than yesterday! Be good!

Dad and Mom

Sep_13_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

As many of you may know, Russell Stevenson is in town and we have had such a good time visiting and doing some thing with him. After we took one of our missionaries to the airport this morning, Russell and I went to the Medicross Clinic where he wanted to be seen by a real medical doctor. His experience in Nigeria has been considerably less than professional.

A few weeks ago he had contracted Malaria and was burning with a fever at the doctor's office. They took his blood pressure and he then decided it was a good time to pass out. The next thing he remembers is being hauled out on a stretcher and placed in a white van. The next couple days is was in a horrible excuse for a hospital (no, food, no blankets, poor medical care, etc.). Fortunately, they knew a lot about Malaria and with

the proper medication, was back in the saddle.

The doctor called today with the results from his blood tests and all is fine - no evidence of Malaria. And, in good health otherwise. So, what do you do when you get results like that? You go out to dinner and eat ostrich steak! That is exactly what he did and he likes it.

It has been fun talking and sharing information. I have only had to straiten him put on a few history topics. Most of what he says is pretty accurate. We do have a chocolate milkshake riding on one point of church history. I do not like it when he seems so confident.

We went to the Lion Park for a little while. We could not line up the Cheetah experience for Russell because the Cheetah is a little hungry and gets irritable when she does not

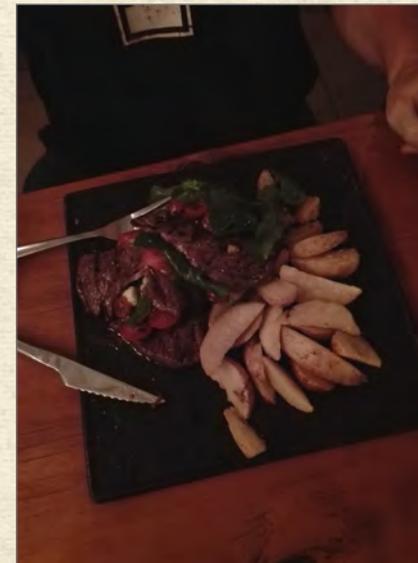
have food. She has to wait until Sunday for her food. The lions were barely visible. However, we did get a Caracal (large African cat) to hiss at us! Saturday morning it is the Python Pit!

Dad and Mom

Photos:

- This is a photo of Russell's Ostrich steak - Mom and I with Nandi (Wow, I look a little too chunky! Time to seriously knock off the pizza.)

Love,



This is a photo of Russell's Ostrich steak



Mom and I with Nandi
(Wow, I look a little too
chunky! Time to
seriously knock off the
pizza.)

2018 SEPTEMBER 14 }

Sep_14_2018

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a very good zone conference today. This is where our mission president comes to town, interviews the missionaries and holds a teaching and training. This was an especially important training due to the fact that we had a lot of new missionaries in our group. We hope they listened carefully and will now go apply what they have learned.

I thought LDS use to stand for "Latter-day Saint," but now look at the acronym a little different. President Lebethoa talks of an important approach to teaching - first we *L*earn, then *D*o, then *S*hare (LDS).

After our meeting, Russell and I went and did some errands he wanted to get done before heading back to Nigeria. Then, a trip to the es-

planade to meet Ivy, the souvenir lady and spare ribs at Guido's.

Photos:

- The Chandlers have opened a new business here in South Africa.
- Russell and Uncle Chris with the beautiful Indian Ocean for a back drop. The ribs were good. Russell said they were good enough to bring our kids here when they come.

We love you! Have an absolutely great day!

Dad and Mom



Russell and Uncle Chris with the beautiful Indian Ocean for a back drop. The ribs were good. Russell said they were good enough to bring our kids here when they come.



The Chandlers have opened a new business here in South Africa.

2018 SEPTEMBER 15 }

Sep_15_2018

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

It has been a busy day, but Mom is a hero of mega proportions today. She has spent a large amount of time yesterday and today baking and getting food prepared for a bake sale this afternoon just prior to our stake conference at the NU13 building. Check out the picture below to see how much food she (and she alone) prepared. The young women were there to help sell everything.

The Young Women made over R 1,000 from the sale. The Young Men made R 250 from doing a car wash. This money is being used to help the youth earn enough money for the South Africa Equivalent of EFL.

Russell and I went to the Python Pit this morning. We saw a lot of creepy snakes and learned a lot. After that, we ran a bunch of errands he needed

to do prior to heading back to Nigeria on Monday morning. We all went to the NU13 building to help set up for the bake sale and the car wash. After that, we had our Adult session of stake conference.

It has been fun to have Russell here and to visit so much. After further research on the Waldensian's of Switzerland fame, I feel exonerated from the guilt he heaped upon me that my account of the church hymn, "For the Strength of the Hills," had reference to the mountains from where the Waldensian's originated. Please do not listen to him if he tries to tell you differently.

Photos:

- The extremely brave Russell Stevenson with wild reptiles, exhibiting zero fear. - The wide selection of delicious baked goods generated by Mom over the last few days. She is being nominated for

sainthood. She originally wanted to go to the church to teach and help the girls bake, but she never got included on any plans to do so. So, she just baked away and delivered the goods today at 1:30 PM, prior to stake meetings.

Love,

Dad and Mom





The extremely brave Russell Stevenson with wild reptiles, exhibiting zero fear.



The wide selection of delicious baked goods generated by Mom over the last few days. She is being nominated for sainthood. She originally wanted to go to the church to teach and help the girls bake, but she never got included on any plans to do so. So, she just baked away and delivered the goods today at 1:30 PM, prior to stake meetings.

Tid Bits

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

1. Word of the week: "expropriation," the action by the state or an authority of taking property from its owner for public use or benefit. *Example:
*The expropriation of land by the South African government without compensation is having a detrimental effect on the economy.

2. Quote of the week:

3. Scripture of the week:

I say unto you, can you imagine to yourselves that ye hear the voice of the Lord, saying unto you, in that day: Come unto me ye blessed, for behold, your works have been the works of righteousness upon the face of the earth? (Alma 5:16)

4. Joke of the week:

Q: Why wouldn't Pharaoh let the

Hebrews leave Egypt? A: He was in De' Nile

5. Bee's Knees Award:

This kid is an athlete with a dash of humility. He is smarter than 10 rocket scientists all smushed together (no joke). He has a great personality (no joke). He strives to do the best he can in everything. He loves everyone in his family and does his part around the house. He and I share a great secret that I will carry to my grave. He honors the priesthood he holds by living the gospel at home and in public. He has a great smile. Everybody loves him. Sam, you are the Bee's Knees, brotha!!!

6. Gospel question of the week:

One has answered the gospel question of the week correctly yet from last week. The question was how many chapters in the "book of Mormon?" Note the small "b" in the ques-

tion. This week's question: What is the difference between "Eternal Life" and "Immortality?"

*7. If I were you (advice for grand kids): * If I were you, I would develop the habit of genuinely and sincerely complimenting people around you each day. Try it. I think you will like it.

8. What I learned this week:

We should not issue commitments to people until they first understand the doctrine behind the request we make to them.

9. What I am grateful for:

"Preach My Gospel" This is an awesome tool for missionary work in today's world.

10. My goal for the week:

Get our classroom plans over to the Buffalo City Municipality for approval.

11. Photo of the week:

The bonding ceremony with Olivia May Stevenson

Yes, we love you very much. Have fun living the gospel this week!





Dad and Mom

Sep16_2018_Update

Dear Family,

We experienced a wonderful stake conference this morning. The choir was beautiful, the speakers inspired and the testimonies faith-promoting. I must say that during this conference my emotions were close to the surface. I wish I had the words to write or the language to speak that would adequately convey the tender

feelings I had. Among other things, it was a confirmation that the Church will continue to grow and expand throughout the land.

I hugged a young boy who sang a solo part with the choir. All I could do was hug him and pat him on the back because I could not speak. I hugged one of the brethren that bore his testimony and told him I loved him. I hugged Brother Magwaca and told him I loved him. I was so edified by the strength and the Spirit I felt in that meeting.

This afternoon Russel and I had a few hours to discuss a number of issues. We have come up with a lot of solutions including how to implement world peace. Now, all we have to do is sell the ideas to the rest of the world!

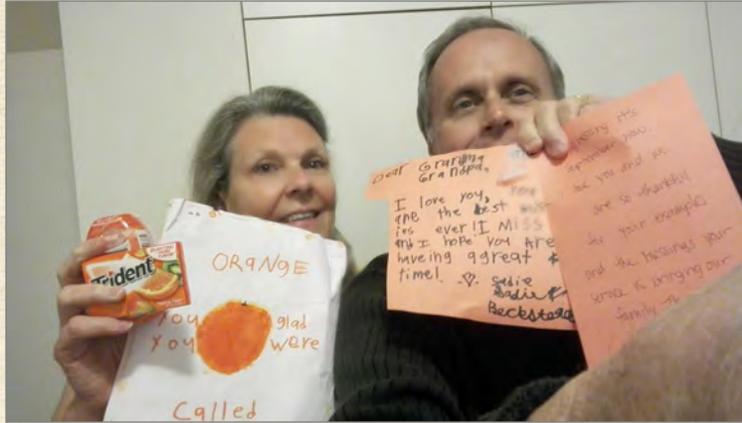
At 4 Pm we all went to a dinner put on by our Ward Mission Leader, Sinethemba Toli and his wife, Zine. It was Mom and I and Russell, our two missionaries for that ward and an Elder's Quorum President and a couple of kids. This was a good meeting as our WML is a newly activated member and this will be such a good way to get him heavily involved in the ward.

Photos:

- We received a package from Tampa, Florida. Beautiful artwork!
- The Young Men washing our car. It was far from a perfect car wash, but we were happy to over-contribute to their fund-raising for youth conference.

We love you all. You are in our prayers daily. Make good choices!

Dad and Mom



We received a package from Tampa, Florida. Beautiful artwork!



The Young Men washing our car. It was far from a perfect car wash, but we were happy to over-contribute to their fund-raising for youth conference.

2018

SEPTEMBER 17 }

Sep_17_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Mavis had chicken soup for breakfast. Russell had a veggie and bacon omelette. I had roast beef, carrots, potatoes and gravy. We are trying to use up all our leftovers. Russell and I ran a bunch of errands - not the way I like to use preparation day. However, we did go by the school so Russell could get a good idea of what we want to do with regard to classrooms.

I also needed to drill some holes to hang some large hooks in a concrete block wall. I went to a rental shop and basically was able to secure the use of a hammer drill for a dozen chocolate chips cookies. It took about 5 minutes to drill the holes. What a difference the right tools can make in getting a job done.

Mom and I had a Family Home Evening at 5:30. It went well. We gave

a lesson about baptism. The 8 year old girl, Libhongo Faku, in the home wants to be baptized. We hope she was able to understand the reason why baptism is so important and why it must be done by one with authority.

When had a closing prayer, played "Don't Eat Pete," and then ate some rice krispie treats that Mom made. Our goal is to help them understand what a FHE is and how fun and valuable it can be for the family. We watched the BYU-Wisconsin game this evening. The Cougs did a formidable job against a very stout Wisconsin offensive line. I hope they celebrated with Kringle in the locker room!

Photos: - Russell and the bake sale girls - Oyama Didiza (going on a mission in December). President Magwaca and myself. Magwaca was one of the first branch presidents in

Mdantsane. Great guy. His wife helped to translate the Book of Mormon into Xhosa years ago. She passed away about 4 years ago.

Love,
Dad and Mom



Russell and the bake sale girls.



Oyama Didiza (going on a mission in December). President Magwaca and myself. Magwaca was one of the first branch presidents in Mdantsane. Great guy. His wife helped to translate the Book of Mormon into Xhosa years ago. She passed away about 4 years ago.

Sep_18_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We heard some interesting news on the street today. Evidently, the taxi drivers are not happy with the negotiations with the ANC (African National Congress) for government subsidies. There will be a general taxi strike tomorrow for the Eastern Cape. I actually received a text message that informed me that several of the main roads in the area will be shut down or blocked. None of the taxis will be running and it is not safe for other vehicles to be traveling.

This evening, we received a text message from our mission president that we are to remain inside our boardings tomorrow because it will not be a safe environment on the streets with the possibility of some violence.

We received an email today from the

church Welfare Services in Johannesburg confirming that the Church will be funding our classroom project up to their maximum level at the area office. That is good news and we expect things to start moving faster from this point on.

On October 2nd and 3rd, we have 6 different builders that our project manager (Elder Russell from Syracuse, Utah) will be interviewing. Should be fun to see some work being done at the school.

We are so grateful to the Church for helping out with this project. They have so many other worthwhile projects, and in many cases, in more desperate need than the Phakamile School. We feel fortunate to have the level of financial support we do from the area office.

Russell Stevenson turned 25 again today, his birthday! We went to a

nice restaurant and had a good steak dinner. When we came home, Mom had some of her famous cheesecake ready for consumption.

We have a couple of funerals coming up and Mom has been baking batches of cookies to take to the families. It is customary to take food to the family as they will have family and friends coming every day until the actual service and it is the tradition to feed these visitors. They always like to see us coming with a huge bag of cookies. She only did three different types today: chocolate chip, oat-

meal and snicker doodles.

Photos:

- Russell and I at Sannok's for steak dinner. - Mom's delicious cookies (kind of washed out with the flash)

We love you all very much!

Dad and Mom



Mom's delicious cookies (kind of washed out with the flash).



Russell and I at Sannok's
for steak dinner.

Sep_19_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

I think I mentioned last night that our mission president instructed us to remain at our boardings instead of traveling to our work areas. We followed his counsel. And, we got a few things accomplished.

Mom has been wanting to spend time on a cross stitch piece she has been working on for 20 years now. I was able to get a bunch of paperwork and emailing done. The project manager for the classrooms at Phakamile will be coming into town on the first week in October. I managed to set up 6 interviews during his time here to meet these potential builders eyeball to eyeball.

I sent him a spreadsheet with company names, contact people, phone numbers and email addresses. It is starting to feel pretty good for "passing the baton" to the Church to

handle this project. They are the experts and will get it done in a professional manner. I just wished people worked faster. I am too impatient.

Mom provided me a dozen cookies to take over to my pizza friends at Romans Pizza. Of course, when I picked up my pizza, it had plenty of extra cheese. I tell people that the Book of Mormon is the most powerful missionary tool we have. But, coming in at a close 2nd place are chocolate chip cookies!

Russell and I took a dozen cookies to our tool rental shop and made good on a promise to get him cookies in exchange for the super deal he gave us for a hammer drill. It cost us roughly \$6.00 USD for the day. He told us to come back any time we need something.

Russell and I went to Roca Mamas

tonight. He had a cheeseburger with way too much mayo. He loves real mayo. I told him of the carcinogenic qualities of mayonnaise, but he ordered it anyway. For him, it is a little bit of hamburger to go with my mayo! He will be sorry he did not listen to me when he gets cancer of the elbow or something like toe fungus.

We were able to get a lot of reconciliation of church expenditures today. Basically, I notate each receipt from the church credit card I have and the, scan it and send it as an email

attachment to the mission office. You can train a monkey to do this procedure, but it just takes time to get it all done.

Photos: - Russell and I at Roca Mama's for hamburgers, ribs and milkshakes. - The trees are in bloom this time of the year



Russell and I at Roca Mama's for hamburgers, ribs and milkshakes.



The trees are in bloom
this time of the year.

Sep_21_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Mom and I raced to get to our district meeting this morning. As we pulled into the church parking lot we discovered there were no other missionary cars. As it turned out, the zone leaders changed the meeting to a different building without letting us know. The good news: we did get there for about one hour of the meeting.

Mom had two pieces of fruit for each missionary and two sweet potato muffins. We brought 27 muffins. We have 12 missionaries and I ate one of the muffins. They were all gone when it was time to leave. Do the math. I was cheated out of at least one muffin. I am both bitter and livid at the same time.

We took Russell to the airport around 2 PM. His flight goes out around 5 PM. It was good to have

him here. We are sorry we could not devote 110% of our time to him, but at least we were able to straighten him out on some church history topics. Seriously, he is a wealth of historical information and interesting to hear his take on things. We discovered he is a peanut butter addict and loves just about any kind of cheese you can think of. Of course, I asked him about his "five year plan." He has it all worked out. We are excited for him as he moves forward in life.

Mavis had appointments to teach music conducting to a few people today at the church. Well, they did not show up. But, there were a couple other people that were there that she was able to teach. Mom really wants to get people learning both the conducting and playing the piano.

While Mom taught, I went and finally

put up the hooks for Brother Shakes to suspend his body from in an effort to elongate his spine. It helps if you go to the house with the right tools to get the job done.

We love you very much and think of you often. We miss you.

Dad and Mom

Photos:

- Mama Maluke and her fantastic garden. She is pretty proud of it. And, she is not a young woman. Good for her to stay so active! - The screeching Ibis on our lawn. We learn in the Doctrine and Covenants that this bird will be silenced in the Millennium.



The screeching Ibis on our lawn. We learn in the Doctrine and Covenants that this bird will be silenced in the Millennium.



Mama Maluke and her fantastic garden. She is pretty proud of it. And, she is not a young woman. Good for her to stay so active!

Sep_22_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Today was a work day! We were "Inspired with the desire," but not "Hired" to help a family getting ready for the funeral of their grandmother. We did our job and were not "Fired." It was nice and warm and you know what that means - "We perspired." I like to say "Expired." Anyway you look at it, we are going to bed "Tired."

After a couple hours at the home where the funeral will be, we went to Sister Nandi's house and panted some squash plants that started to sprout from some of Mom's compost she used in our flower beds.

When we got home, I stripped the bedding from Russell's stay at the guest house and Mom did some general cleaning of the joint. While Mom was cleaning, I went to meet with Rollo Steenbeek about some issues

on the classroom project. It was a good, productive meeting. Our next steps are to see just what the Church is going to do when they get here on October 1st to interview builders. It would be very important to have an architect and an engineer at the work site regularly to insure everything is coming together properly and will pass the municipality inspections.

I am reluctant to mention this, but the yesterday I came from behind to give Mom a warm embrace. I must of frightened her because she turned and landed an elbow squarely on my front teeth. I think I fell to the ground as I started to see total blackness. Laying on the floor, I thought I could hear her taunting me, "The left one of iron, the right one of steel. If the left one don't get you, the right one will." I guess you call that a physical relationship?

I am still deciding if I will share this with the mission president? I don't want them to send Mom home.

Photos:

- Mom and I having fun in the sun!

Have a good day preparing for the Sabbath. We love you!

Dad and Mom



Mom and I having fun in the sun!



Tid Bits

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

1. Word of the week: "ignominious," deserving or causing public disgrace or shame. *Example:* The University of Wisconsin football team suffered an ignominious defeat at the hands of the BYU Cougars.

2. Quote of the week:

3. Scripture of the week:

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;

For the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves. And inasmuch as men do good they shall in nowise lose their reward. (D&C 58:27-28)

4. Joke of the week:

A doctor, an architect, and a lawyer were arguing over who had the oldest profession. The doctor said, "Well the first operation was performed on Adam, so the medical profession is the oldest."

"No," said the architect, "Architectural planning and design was needed to create the earth and the universe out of chaos, so I represent the oldest profession."

"Where do you think the chaos came from?" asked the lawyer.

5. Bee's Knees Award: This kid loves cars. He has toy trucks, cars, buses and motorcycles. He is a happy boy and is a very big help to his mommy and daddy. He loves his little sister. He loves to hear stories. He reads scriptures at night with his family. He loves Primary and to learn about Jesus. He likes riding in Grandpa's fast car and going to Val-

ley Market for an ice cream cone. He is nice to others and likes to share. He is a fast runner and strong like a bear. Christopher, you are the Bee's Knees, brotha!!!

6. Gospel question of the week: Michelle gave the correct answer to the "book of Mormon" question from two weeks ago. Sarah Johnson gave the correct answer first to the "Immortality vs. Eternal Life" question from last week. This week's question: Who was Abimelech? A) king B) baker C) sorcerer D) prophet E) wise man F) Sadducee G) judge

*7. If I were you (advice to grand kids): * If I were you, I would make it a habit to focus your conversation on other people when you speak with them. Talk about them more than you talk about yourself. Try it. I think you will like it.

8. What I learned this week: You have "doers" in the world and you have "talkers" in the world. It is better to be a doer.

9. What I am grateful for: Oh how I love to see children smiling, laughing, playing and having fun in life!





10. My goal for the week: I did go see the Buffalo City Metro Municipality about getting classrooms approved for building. They want R 17,000 for their fees . That is about \$1,250 USD. Not much, but we are trying to get the Department of Education to pay it. FYI, the great news is that starting the first week in October, the Church officially takes over this project and manages it.

We love you very, very much!

Dad and Mom

*11. Photo of the week: * Tin horn sheep rancher, ready to go to work!

Have fun living the gospel this week!

September Spring

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*

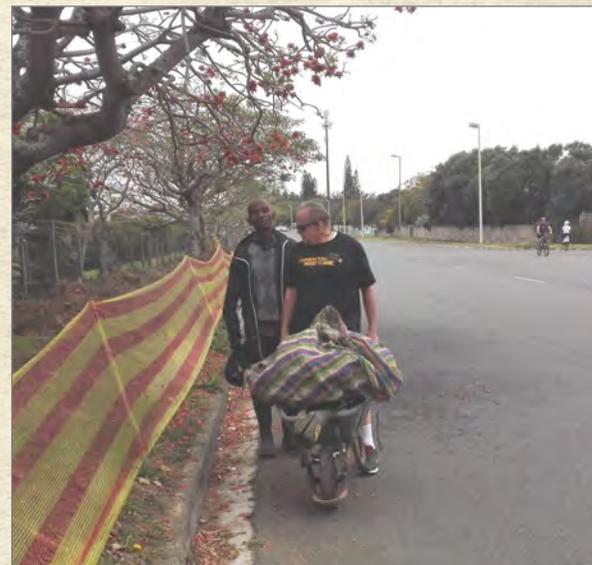


Dear Family,
 I am so turned around in my seasons. We will have had what feels to me like 4 Summers by the time we leave South Africa. We left in the summer and will have been here for 2 years of very mild seasons and will then return in the summer next year. I am not complaining we are loving it. I am just a bit confused about the time of year and what to expect in the weather. It is pretty breezy this time of year. The mornings are less windy. Since today is our preparation day we went for a longer walk that takes us by the ocean. It was a very pleasant walk. Russell Stevenson was here for about a week. He is doing some research in Nigeria for his Doctoral thesis. His visa was not renewed on time so he had to leave the country for a few days. He has now returned to Nigeria. The week before last was our Stake conference and the young

women from our Ward decided to have a bake sale to earn money for FSY, which is like EFY. Russell was with us and talking to people. He asked a women (Pamela Giaca) if there are any problems with drugs in her neighborhood? (I am not sure how old Pam is. She used to do a lot of kick boxing competing and she has had a stroke so she had to give that up as the left side of her does not work properly) She might be in her mid to late thirties, not sure. Anyway she answered Russell's question by stating that "there had been a problem but they took care of it. Next question was , How? She said that everyone in the neighborhood was given a whistle and when trouble comes into the neighborhood they would blow their whistles and everyone would come out of their houses with whatever they had, pans, sticks, what and what. If they had nothing else they would pick up rocks to throw and they drove the

trouble away. The neighborhood united to keep themselves safe." On Friday we went to visit 4 families who had lost loved ones and were preparing for funerals. The people that passed away were not members of the church but a member of their family is. We usually take a big sack of cookies to the family and share a message. The cookies are to help with the burden of feeding the many people that visit the bereaved family. When you visit the house the family gives you some tea or a cool drink and some biscuits or something. Then on the day of the funeral they

feed everyone who went to the funeral or anyone who happens to stop by their house. They set up a huge tent (think circus tent) in the yard and rent a ton of chairs to accommodate everyone. Funerals are very expensive here. The family receives neighbors, friends and family for two weeks before they have the actual funeral usually. Anyway a couple of the scriptures we shared were Alma 11:45 and Alma 40:23. At Sister Booi's house I was thinking about not giving a message because she is a returned missionary and an active member of the church. Her husband



As we were walking this morning, I noticed a guy across the street with his wheel barrel. He was tired, had stopped and was taking a rest.



I crossed the street and told him I would take over. I pushed it about 1/2 mile to where he was stopping. Then, we told him we would bring back some bread for him. He got a bag with oranges, peanut butter, jam, a liter of juice and a half dozen bananas. He was grateful and we enjoyed our Matthew 25 experience.

is in the bishopric. It was her grandmother that passed away. Dad suggested we give the message anyway so we did. After reading the scriptures and visiting with them for a couple of minutes she said, "Thank you for the message, I had forgotten about that." This visit was a testimony to me about the importance of listening to the Spirit and strengthening everyone whether they are active members or not. Another house that we visited were two girls (16 and 18 I think) They have been members for only a year and they are the only members in their fami-

ly. Their father passed away. He was only 52. He was bedridden because his legs had been amputated. They are still learning much about the gospel but they are excited that they can have their father's work done for him at the Temple. They believe he would have become a member of the church if he could have been able to go to church. I think her mother is now taking the missionary lessons or will pick them up again after all of the funeral proceedings. I hope in the next year or so they all will go to the temple to be sealed as a family. This past Sun-

day there were a few less active members at church. It was nice to see them at church. There were also some more active members missing from church. It seems to always be a struggle to be consistent. We have a list of Ward members we feel like we need to visit but I am not sure if we will have time to do it this week. Tomorrow we are taking another Sr. couple, the Hodges to Mthatha. It is about a 3 1/2 hr drive. The missionaries there are in the Hodges zone but we have been doing the boarding inspections etc because it was too far of a drive for the other senior couple that was here before the Hodges. We are hoping the Hodges will be able to take this on. While we are in Mthatha tomorrow or Wednesday morning we will need to locate a Doctor who the missionaries would be able to see if any of them get sick. Currently we do not have a contact there. Last time Chris and I went to Mthatha we drove up in the morning, did what we needed to do and then drove back in the afternoon. It was a long day but I was glad to do it in one day. The mission President asked us not to do that anymore but to make it a two day excursion. The Bishop of the

Fourth ward is Bishop Lalendle. The missionaries found him a few years ago. He had long dreadlocks and was not headed in a good direction. He listened to the missionaries, joined the church and served a mission. He married in the Temple and he and his wife are expecting their second child. He is very faithful and is always trying to improve and learn and do what is right. He has a huge challenge as not everyone is as faithful as he is and he has to make do pretty often. Sunday he shared some short remarks because I think one of the people asked to give a talk did not come to church. Part of what he said was "the spirit of the Lord is whispering in your ear. When we listen to speakers we have many thoughts and we have to decide which one to grab on to. If we listen to the whispering's we will hear the word of the Lord." President Dinana also spoke for a few minutes to fill in. His comment was "Do not leave the Savior". He elaborated on that statement and then said we should not say to someone, I enjoyed your talk". but we should ask ourselves "what will I now do". President Dinana might be in his mid thirties. He is a member of the

Stake Presidency and his family lives in the 4th Ward. It seems like every time he visits the Ward he is asked to speak to fill in for someone who did not show for their assignment or to fill in because a member of the Bishopric forgot to ask someone to speak. He always gives a very meaningful message. I am impressed that even though he and his wife (two small children) have struggled financially, they always show up to clean the building and always fulfill their callings and assignments. They are both converts and first generation members. I have started teaching a conducting music class on Friday afternoons. I have done this for two weeks and neither week have the same people attended. I am curious to see what happens the third week. I am hoping to begin the church piano course with a few students after the conducting course is completed. We will see what happens and if anyone is really interested and dedicated enough to complete the classes. I am sure I have said before that no one plays the piano. It would be so great if one or two learned the basics and then taught others. Thanks for listening. I hope all is well with each of you and your fami-

lies. Keep on keeping on. Hugs and Kisses!!
Love, Elder and Sister Stevenson

Sep_24_2018

Dear Family,

Since today was out preparation day, we took our long walk down by the ocean. For those of you that do not know your geography, it is the "Injun" Ocean. The weather was pretty good, not too hot. I called a hospital where Russell had some lab work done to make sure they were open and could take a payment. "Yes, no problem. Come on down and the receptionist can take your payment." You probably know the rest of the story. The lab area of the hospital was not open because today is a national holiday - National Heritage Day. That's why I called. Not open.

We got a lot of cleaning done this afternoon and Mom cranked out a ton of emails. She also is trying to make contact with a foundation in Utah that supplies keyboards and keyboard instruction. She is already teaching conducting music classes once a week and would like to get people going on keyboard. Elder

Hodges came over this evening and we watched the first three quarters of the BYU - Mcneese game. One thing for sure, if BYU expects to beat University of Washington, they need to bring their "A" game and play all four quarters. A bad quarter against Washington could easily mean the game.

Photos: - With today being National Heritage Day, it is quite common to see people dressed in their traditional Xhosa clothing. - As we were walking this morning, I noticed a guy across the street with his wheel barrel. He was tired, had

stopped and was taking a rest. I crossed the street and told him I would take over. I pushed it about 1/2 mile to where he was stopping. Then, we told him we would bring back some bread for him. He got a bag with oranges, peanut butter, jam, a liter of juice and a half dozen bananas. He was grateful and we enjoyed our Matthew 25 experience.

We love you. Make good choices today!
Dad and Mom



With today being National Heritage Day, it is quite common to see people dressed in their traditional Xhosa clothing.

2018 SEPTEMBER 26 }

Sep_26_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We are back safely from Mthatha. We had a productive visit: Boarding inspection okay (missionaries got cookies from Mom), purchased a new washer for the flat, bought a bunch of other stuff for the missionaries, had a good lunch, kissed and made friends with a local physician that will now see our missionaries again, and, checked in with the local private hospital to make sure our missionaries would receive care there if ever needed. (FYI, the doctor's office could not get payment from our Aetna medical insurance, so they stopped seeing our missionaries. We arranged for them to bill us directly.)

Our accommodations were very nice - good clean room, super shower, very good meals and nice security. We enjoyed our time with the Hodges. They are a very nice, dedi-

cated couple. They are doing great considering they have only been here a little over a month. And, Elder Hodges knows more about the BYU football team than Daniel!

Photos:

- Cool company tag on a septic tank truck - Why are these birds always hanging around these cows?
- We have a few crosses marking places where people have died on our main road in Gonubie (which is a very safe road)? It is a busy road. Maybe they were hit by cars while trying to cross the road.

We love you,

Dad and Mom



Why are these birds always hanging around these cows?



Cool company tag on a septic tank truck.



We have a few crosses marking places where people have died on our main road in Gonubie (which is a very safe road)? It is a busy road. Maybe they were hit by cars while trying to cross the road.

Sep_27_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We executed a boarding inspection of two missionaries that live about an hour from our house. They were not ready for us. However, Mom noted that they needed quite a few things for their boarding. We made a list and we will deliver all their stuff at our district meeting tomorrow.

Then, a meeting with the Phakamile School Governing Board, the school administration and some of the staff. Went well, but there are some that think a certain person is getting special treatment. We think we put any of those misconceptions and concerns to rest.

We picked up some fruit for the missionaries after tomorrow's meeting. Mom has also made some delicious cinnamon rolls to go along with the fruit. I know, I have eaten two of

them!

I went out and purchased all the items the missionaries need from our list we made this morning. It will be like Christmas in September for them!

Photos:

- Nelson Mandela was all over the bed and breakfast where we stayed in Mthatha. I really like this quote of his. - You know about Izod, Polo and Nike, but did you know there is a brand out there called, "Soviet?" A whole shop dedicated to the beautiful fashion of the Russian, communist world!

We love you all very much. Have a great day making good choices!

Dad and Mom



You know about Izod, Polo and Nike, but did you know there is a brand out there called, "Soviet?" A whole shop dedicated to the beautiful fashion of the Russian, communist world!



Nelson Mandela was all over the bed and breakfast where we stayed in Mthatha. I really like this quote of his.

2018 SEPTEMBER 28 }

Sep_28_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a very good district meeting this morning. Hard to believe the week has gone by this quick. One of the things we like best about our meetings are sharing our impressions and thoughts as doctrinal topics are being discussed.

Mom was busier than a one-armed paper-hanger. She started at 12:30 with the ward librarian and was helping her make sense of all the clutter and materials in the library. They spent a couple hours and there is still a lot to do. We are happy she showed up. Sometimes you just never know.

Then, she had about 5 people come to her music conducting class. That seemed to go well. We should have plenty of people in our ward that will know how to stand up and do a great job of conducting. Mom does a good

job of teaching and making things simple.

I was on the run to confirm some information for one of our members about obtaining some training and a certificate for operating a forklift. Then, I went to the hardware store and purchased a shower head for one of our missionary boardings. Then, I checked on the availability of rental housing for missionaries to stay in the township. Then, a visit with the bishop who will have a new member of their household born today! I also took two missionaries with me to give a blessing to a less active sister that is about to go into the hospital. She has a serious lack of circulation problem in her lower legs.

Videos:

- These missionaries are very happy because they just ate some of Mom's cinnamon rolls. - This is

what happens when two rugby missionaries get together!

We love you all very, very much. Do good! Be good! Savor every moment being good!

Dad and Mom

Sep_29_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

This morning we attended two funerals. The first one was a packed cultural hall at our meeting house. This funeral was for the father of two young ladies that were baptized about a year ago. It was entirely in Xhosa. As the funeral progressed, you would all of a sudden hear someone start singing aloud and then, the whole congregation would join in. They would really get into, hand clapping, swaying, waving their arms, etc.

We went to the second funeral and the family was still at the church of the grandmother that passed away. They had their tent pitched in front of their house and the ladies were cooking up a storm. After the funeral service, they go to bury the deceased relative. Then, back to the house for food. With these large funerals, there is a huge amount of food that gets

prepared. Where the money comes from to prepare the meal is a question for us. Usually, family comes from all parts and they do contribute to the cost of the funeral.

Photos:

- The food for the funeral is not all the appealing to me. We think the beef has tripe in it to help create some volume. The chicken and potatoes are deep fried. Cabbage, rice, carrots, spinach, etc. fill the rest of the plate. - I said something and these ladies all started laughing. - The big pots cook the chicken, beef and rice. - Here is a recording of one of the songs they sang at one of the funerals.

We love you,

Dad and Mom



We think the beef has tripe in it to help create some volume.



The food for the funeral is not all the appealing to me.



The chicken and potatoes are deep fried. Cabbage, rice, carrots, spinach, etc. fill the rest of the plate.



I said something and these ladies all started laughing. The big pots cook the chicken, beef and rice.

Sep_30_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We are thankful for the blessing of attending church today and to partake of the sacrament. There is much I can do to change and I am grateful to know that part of the Atonement of Christ is to enable me to become more like Him.

We heard a very good talk today about the Book of Mormon. I think it was inspired as we had a few people in the congregation that were not members of the church. After Sacrament Meeting, I spoke with one of the people, an uncle to a member of the church. He wanted to have a copy of the Book of Mormon. I told him I could help. I went to the car and grabbed one English version where we have highlighted multiple scriptures about Jesus Christ, and, another copy that is in Xhosa. He was happy to receive them. We have a meeting with him and the mem-

ber's mother on Friday with the young missionaries. Should be a very good meeting.

This afternoon we attended a fire-side in East London where two of the speakers were our mission president and his wife. I think the two of them spoke for maybe 20 - 25 minutes combined. We were hoping for more time to hear from them. There were four other speakers. All had very good remarks. One was a young lady getting ready to go on a mission and another, a young lady who is a return missionary.

Photos:

- Our Mdantsane Zone missionaries - A house in the township we are looking at as a possible dwelling for some of our missionaries. Doesn't look too good - no security around the house, kind of a bad neighborhood, lots of armed robberies, etc. - We wish everyone in

Mdantsane would take note of this sign. One thing that is difficult to ignore and is a source of frustration is the indiscriminate dumping of rubbish everywhere you look.

We love you. Make good choices!

Dad and Mom

Tid Bits

Dear Family,

*1. Word of the week: "decry," publicly denounce. *Example:* The Church decries the recreational use of marijuana.

*2. Quote of the week: Elder Soares - *

3. Scripture of the week:

For there are many yet on the earth





among all sects, parties, and denominations, who are blinded by the subtle craftiness of men, whereby they lie in wait to deceive, and who are only kept from the truth because they know not where to find it— (D&C 123:12)

4. Joke of the week:

Q: Which prophet broke the most commandments?

A: Moses. He broke all ten at once.

5. Bee's Knees Award: I wish I was as cool as this kid. He is a boy with a

great imagination. He is happy, fun and full of energy. He loves his brothers and sisters. He obeys his dad and mom. He loves Primary and knows all the songs. He is a good example of what Jesus would say and do. He is a good example to those around him. He is smart and loves to learn. Yes, he is a fast runner, high jumper, strong lifter and a big helper around the house. He is a good cuddler. Everyone loves this kid. William, you are the Bee's Knees, brotha!!!

6. Gospel question of the week:

Michelle was the first one to correctly answer the gospel question from last week. Who was Abimalech? The answer, a king. This week's question: Where in the Book of Mormon does it address our pre-earth life?

7. If I were you (advice to grand kids): If I were you, I would learn to eat all kinds of vegetables and fruits and enjoy them. Do this everyday. Try it. I think you will like it.

8. What I learned this week: Humor is good, but be sensitive to the feelings of others so that you do not offend.

9. What I am grateful for: My new choice of favorite pizza - "The Russian." I like it thin crust, extra cheese. It has a fruity sauce on it with a million slices of sausage. Oh yeah, hold the onions.

10. My goal for the week: Be more serious.

11. Photo of the week: One of the most beautiful girls on the face of the planet!

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

Dad and Mom



We cannot allow ourselves to be confused by popular messages that are easily accepted by the world and that contradict the doctrine and true principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Many of these worldly messages represent nothing more than an attempt of our society to justify sin.

As we encounter these worldly messages, great courage and a solid knowledge of the plan of our Heavenly Father will be required to choose the right.

2018

OCTOBER 1 }

Oct_01_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Can you believe it? It is already October! Today was warm in the morning and started to feel a little like summer. By this afternoon, it became cloudy and we had some rain. We like the rain. It has been dry here for a few weeks. We spent the day visiting with the Russell's who came in from Jo-burg to interview various builders for the classroom project. We met with four potential builders today and will interview 2 more tomorrow. There is quite a mixed bag of builders to review.

Coming into this, Mom and I were a little concerned on how the church wanted to proceed. A lot of this was due to the senior couple Elder that would be the "Project Manager" on the job. He is new to the humanitarian job, inexperienced with the building trade and opinionated (a

bad combination for us!). To make a long story short, it has worked out just the way we were hoping for. The Church will focus solely on three classrooms on one foundation and our family will focus on another three classrooms once the Church is finished and gone. We are hoping that we end up with a minimum of five classrooms, but hopefully a total of 6. I go to bed a little bummed out as our Internet connection was not allowing us to watch the BYU-Washington game. I suppose I would be in worse shape if I could actually watch the game!

Photos: - Sitting with the school principal and a member of the School Governing Board and a couple builders.

Love you all very much!
Dad and Mom



Sitting with the school principal and a member of the School Governing

2018 OCTOBER 2 }

Oct_02_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had the chance to meet with two more builders this morning. But, the big news is that we chipped down through the slab of the foundation the Church will be building on and found that things are pretty solid - no voids. That pretty much gives us the green light to lay down a new slab over the top, reinforced with the appropriate amount of rebar and steel mesh.

I did learn something again today. It is important to listen.

Also, we had our Senior Council meeting today which is a Skype call that includes all the senior missionaries and the mission president. The best part of the meeting is the sharing of experiences by couples in different parts of the mission. It is an honor to be part of the Senior Missionary Battalion that is helping with

the gathering of Israel.

At the end of our meeting, Mom and I were touched by the heart-felt gratitude expressed by the mission president for the service rendered by the senior missionaries. We sensed his humility and sincerity. He is a great mission president because he is humble and diligently trying to do his best.

FYI, we have more senior missionaries than any other mission in the South East Africa Area. Five couples in the trenches and two couples in the office. This will lighten the load for any mission president. I am thinking he could sell off a two or three couples to another mission for a hefty profit!

Photos:

- Who says missionary work is easy? - Looks like solid ground underneath the settlement of the exist-

ing slab. We will have a church engineer here in three weeks that will confirm things and provide the sign off to build a new slab over the top.

Hang in there. Life is good. Savor the moment. We love you!

Dad and Mom





Who says
missionary
work is easy?



Oct_03_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We did a couple of boarding inspections this morning.

Both flats looked okay, but not stellar. Mom also took some extra time to make sure they had all the pots, pans, appliances, kitchenware, bedding, etc. they were allowed to have. Then, she went through their first aid kits to make sure they were up to snuff. Both sets of missionaries earned chocolate chip cookies.

I spent an hour doing mission paperwork - personal expenses reimbursement, mission credit card reconciliations, gas receipts and transfer amounts, etc. Most all of this stuff needs to be scanned and then, emailed to the mission financial secretary. We then send the original, hard copy receipts to the mission office via the next person going to Cape Town.

I met with one builder today and had a good discussion about foundations and South African building standards when dealing with the local municipality. We hope our friends in Joburg understand building in South Africa is a little different than the DRC (Democratic Republic of the Congo). If you don't do it right, you don't get municipality approval. If you don't get that, any future building plans are put on hold until things are rectified.

We went to a members house to pick up some of our younger missionaries. I went in and found there was a lively discussion going on with our member's daughter and her husband about religion. It dragged on and on for another 45 minutes. Poor Mom was waiting in the car. We finally concluded and hauled the missionaries over to another member's home where we had a cottage meeting. Our neighbor had about 5 of her

neighbor's come over. None of them looked too happy about being there. The whole thing didn't look or feel too good. We suspect that our member may have been drinking and the round up of her neighbor's was a quick, "Come, help bail me out. I need to have you at my house" plea for help.

We will continue to work with her and love her. However, her actions are under the magnifying glass by her friends and neighbors as a member of the church. It does not look too good when her actions deviate

from her beliefs.

Photos:

- Soso and Nathi Maluke - cute little girls that give Mom and I a hug each week at church - Solar heating for hot water is very common for those that have a few extra dollars to afford it.

We love you, you can take that to the bank!

Dad and Mom



Solar heating for hot water is very common for those that have a few extra dollars to afford it.



Soso and Nathi Maluke -
cute little girls that give
Mom and I a hug each
week at church

2018 OCTOBER 4 }

Oct_04_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a busy day running too many errands. This is a good example of how our days are changing to too much busy work and not enough getting out to see our members.

For example, today was getting a mission printer to the PC shop for repair. They couldn't help so I took it to another shop. Got some good advice to try at home first before having them look at it. Then, went to the bicycle shop to look at hitches so we don't use bike racks any more that will ruin our trunk and rear bumper. Then, banking. Then, shopping for missionary supplies. After that, racing out to our area to do a baptismal interview. Then back home to unload the car from shopping. Then off to the airport to pick up missionaries coming in from Cape Town. Then, some more shopping for a

dinner this evening where we had the Krull family over to eat.

(Very boring reading, but you get the idea of how some days might go.)

Mom spent a lot of the day getting ready for district meeting tomorrow and making a delicious dinner for our friends this evening. There is just a lot of running around, yet things that have to get done.

Some times they seem mundane, but they are things that help the work along and support the office staff that is 1000+ kilometers away. They do a wonderful work, but they also need us in the field to help out. Just medical alone can be a big time commitment.

Photos:

- Daniel Krull who broke his arm/elbow when jumped off a slide.
- They had to put a pin through the

elbow to hold things in place - comes out in a few more days. - The Krull family - stalwarts in the East London Stake. He was bishop of the East London Ward When we first came to South Africa. We were assigned to his ward for 2 two weeks and then, reassigned to the township after that. - Jessica during her turn at the stacking game.

We love you. Keep up the good fight.

Dad and Mom



Jessica during her turn at the stacking game.



The Krull family - stalwarts in the East London Stake.



They had to put a pin through the elbow to hold things in place - comes out in a few more days.



essica during her turn at the stacking game.

2018 OCTOBER 5 }

Oct_05_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had our zone leaders over today for breakfast. They dropped their car off here in Genubie for a service. We picked them up and brought them to the house before going to our district meeting. Mom fixed a delicious omelette of sorts with hash browns. District meeting was enjoyable. We had a review of things we have discussed over the last 6 weeks. We also took time to share what we like about our companions and other missionaries in the district. Mom had a busy day working with the new ward librarian and trying to cleanup and organize the ward library. Then, she had two students that came to her music conducting class. One sister is doing well, a quick learner.

We had some good visits today. One was to the sister that appeared to be drunk at our cottage meeting the

other night. She had called this morning at 5:30 to tell us she wanted us to visit her. She said, "I'm in trouble." We saw her this afternoon and she informed us that she has been on some HIV medication and she is having a reaction to it. She can't remember the day or evening of our cottage meeting. We want to believe her. She is scared and wants us to come with her to the clinic on Monday morning when she will be receiving more medication.

We met with two of our missionaries who were trying to teach a new family. The father and the mother are having marital problems. She works and he drinks! The missionaries were glad we were there because they had no idea what to tell them. Mom had some very good advice for them. I chimed in. We hope we were able to say something to give them hope. We might see them at the general conference broadcast.

We then went with these missionaries to speak with kids playing outdoor basketball on dirt. This is the first time I have seen a basketball in South Africa! I taught them how to play "Knock Out." Then we played a game of 7 on 7. These kids were having great fun (me too)! At the end, the missionaries gave them a sermonette about three simple things: prayer, scriptures and coming to church. We then visited a man to come to church last Sunday at the invitation of his niece. After the meeting, I gave him an English and Xhosa Book of Mormon to read (spe-

cially marked). He was so excited to see us. It was a good meeting. He is ready to make changes in his life. He lived under a bridge for many years and at age 16 went to prison. He does bead work on hats and slippers to earn money.

Love,

Dad and Mom



This is Amos with a hat and a pair of slippers he had beaded.

2018

OCTOBER 6 }

Oct_06_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We did our long walk this morning. Mom and I both picked up some rays. Starting to warm up around here. But, beautiful day!

We went to watch General Conference this evening at 6 PM. Mom and I enjoyed every minute of it. After the meeting and the lights went up, we were so pleased to see the couple we visited yesterday that were having some marital issues. They said they will come again tomorrow.

As much as we love conference, I sometimes worry about the language used to explain things so beautifully. One word used this evening was "synergistically." It is a great word that we understand, but what about the thousands of others that may not capture the meaning of some of the words used by our general authori-

ties. We have so many in the Church throughout the world that are not that well educated. Maybe upon reading the talks in the Liahona, they can look up any words they do not understand.

How great to have living prophets and Apostles!

Photos:

- We actually saw some surfers today and we saw one catch a wave and ride it for a while. - I don't think these are dandelions, even though they looked like it at first. We do see them here in South Africa.

We love you more and more each day. Good choices make for a good night's sleep.

Dad and Mom



We actually saw some surfers today and we saw one catch a wave and ride it for a while.





I don't think these are dandelions, even though they looked like it at first. We do see them here in South Africa.

Oct_07_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We thoroughly enjoyed General Conference today. Gret messages from great leaders of the Church. We live in perilous times. We must keep our eyes focused on the living prophets and apostles. They know the way.

We visited a young lady who has been less active for many years. She had a baby out of wedlock and was too embarrassed to return. She taught school in Johannesburg for a few years and has returned to Mdantsane. She has been unable to land a teaching job here and has now accepted a position to teach English in China. She will be gone at least one year and will leave her 3 year old daughter to the care of her mother.

We counselled her to take her scriptures and to pray. Also to search out any LDS groups that might be meet-

ing together and staying within the governing laws of the land. I think Mom and Thembisa made a good connection. Her dad is a member (also less active) and her mother is a Catholic. Both Dad and Thembisa came to the church today to watch conference.

We also went to visit Akhona, the blind guy that received the braille Book of Mormon. He has fallen off the radar map due to him being busy with things and the missionaries not being very persistent. We had a good visit. We told him we want him to be baptized as soon as he learns the truth for himself. He will be meeting with the missionaries again and hopefully good things will happen for him sooner than later.

Photos:

- Thembisa with her daughter and her parents. - While Mom was at the Women's Conference, I was out

with a fellowshipper to visit some people. I took a video of this Seventh Day Adventist group of young people marching through the neighborhood - Love, - - Dad and Mom

Tid Bits

Dear Family,

1. Word of the week: "abject," (of something bad) experienced or present to the maximum degree. *Example:* A majority of those living affluently in the United States fail to

understand what abject poverty in other parts of the world really is.

2. Quote of the week:

3. Scripture of the week:

The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying,

Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words.

Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels.





And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.

Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying,

O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel. (Jeremiah 18:1-6)

4. Joke of the week:

Young LDS man talking with Sidney:
Wow, are you the Iron Rod? Cause

I'm going to cling to you forever!

*5. Bee's Knees Award: *Are you a great soccer player? Do you take dance classes? This girl is happy all the time. She is a big helper around her house. She loves to have fun and to hang out with her younger sister. She is trying to be like Jesus. She is kind to everyone. She is pretty, smart, a good singer and loves all of her family like crazy. She wants to come stay in South Africa with her grand parents. Vivienne, you are the Bee's Knees, sistah!!!

6. Gospel question of the week: No one ventured forth an answer to last week's question: Where in the book of Mormon does it speak of the pre-earth life? Answer: Alma chapter 13. This week's question: Who is this person?

[image: image.png]

7. If I were you (Advice to grand kids): If I were you, I would read the conference talks when they become available in the Ensign. Try it. I think you will like it.

8. What I learned this week: Some people are brash and abrasive, but you need to learn how to work with them because they will surface in your life and you may need to work with them for some reason or another.

9. What I am grateful for: I love to see Mom smile. I love to hear her laugh.

10. My goal for the week: When problems arise, take a few deep breaths and realize things will work out okay. Approach challenges more calmly.

*11. Photo of the week: * Check out Daniel squeezing the heck out of poor Adelaide! Quick, someone call Social Services!

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

Dad and Mom

2018 OCTOBER 8 }

Oct_08_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We spent a large portion of our preparation day addressing medical problems. Our first adventure was to meet a sister from the 4th ward at the local medical clinic in Mdantsane. She left her house this morning around 5:30. The clinic opens at 8 AM but is so crowded that if you do not get there early enough, you may be there all day or even wait all day and not be seen.

We spent almost three hours there with her and really felt she received special attention because she was with us, the only white people in the whole clinic. She was first told they did not have her blood test results from last week and she would have to come back on Wednesday. Mom asked the doctor/nurse to call the lab. The nurse went right to the phone and called. Her results were fine.

We had to see a doctor. The receptionist had us go in right away to visit with the doctor. They could not find her file from last week so they had us go into a room and they started a new file. We went right to the dispensary window for her drugs. The message on the window said, "60 minute wait" for drugs. We got it in about 3-5 minutes! We felt a little bad about all the expedited attention because there were hundreds in lines waiting to get medical attention.

She has HIV and needs a certain medication. I have heard a statistic that as much as 16% of South Africans have HIV. Aids accounted for at least 125,000 deaths last year. She lives day to day worried about the disease. There were a few tears today as Mom scolded her a little by telling her she needed to take that medication every day. She has children she has to raise. She can die if

she doesn't take it. "No matter what, you have to take your medicine each day!"

Right after that we picked up two of our missionaries. They both have been battling colds, but one felt he needed to go see the doctor. Mom thought he was okay and just needed to take care of himself and the cold would be gone in a week to ten days. As is usually the case, the doctor loaded him up with an antibiotic, a syrup to loosen congestion in his chest and some flu medication.

There is no question that the Church is serious about taking care of their missionaries. Anywhere the missionaries are, they have access to whatever medical care they need. Healthy missionaries are productive missionaries.

Keep up the good work of being good! We love you,

Dad and Mom



Gasoline, "Petrol," is now R 16.49 a liter. That comes out to roughly, \$5.00 USD a gallon.

Oct_09_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

You may not believe this, but Mom baked some cookies this morning. We have a member of the 1st ward who's "granny" passed away. We stopped by this afternoon to pay our respects and to drop off some "biscuits."

We had some quality visits today. One was to drop off some birthday cupcakes and some chicken soup for Mama Keya. She turns 73 tomorrow. The cupcakes are for celebrating her birthday and the chicken soup is for helping her to feel better. She has been feeling ill for some weeks now. We have missed her at church.

We visited Sister Solomon. This was a good visit as we discussed the many challenges we confront in this life. She has a 50 year old daughter that is suffering with "Stomach TB" right now. She can't hold down

much food and she is as skinny as a rail. She may be going through some kidney failure. Evidently, she was hit by a car several years ago. Sister Solomon was told that she would not live. Miraculously, after two months of coma, she pulled through and is still alive.

We had the chance to visit two young ladies, Toni and Xabiso, that are converts of about one year. Fortunately, their mother was also there. They had a funeral about a week ago and laid to rest their father. We shared a scripture about the Resurrection from Alma, chapter 11, in the Book of Mormon.

We also gave them a challenge to personally invite the little girl next door to come to Primary and to be in Toni's class. The little girl's mother and father are being taught by the missionaries. Before we left Toni and Xabiso's house, we visited the father

next door who was working on a car in the front yard. We hope they continue to listen to the missionaries and join the church. Their marriage and family life would be greatly blessed.

One thing I noticed today is the connection Mom makes with these women. It is something the younger missionaries cannot do and certainly something I would not be able to do. They see Mom as a good role model and someone they can trust. They flat out like her!

Photos:

- This is a large bag of cookies going to the home for the funeral service or whenever they need them. (I have only had four cookies out of this round of baking. Horrible!) - Interesting wall painting at an orphanage where we stopped today to drop off some bags of clothing. (All we had were girl's clothing. We will take that to an all girls orphanage on Thursday.) - Little boy getting his head shaved with a razor blade at the orphanage - Sister Solomon on the right, her mother in the chair, and, her daughter, Pearl, on the



Interesting wall painting at an orphanage where we stopped today to drop off some bags of clothing. (All we had were girl's clothing. We will take that to an all girls orphanage on Thursday.)



Sister Solomon on the right, her mother in the chair, and, her daughter, Pearl, on the left.



This is a large bag of cookies going to the home for the funeral service or whenever they need them. (I have only had four cookies out of this round of baking. Horrible!)

left.

We love you very much. You are in our prayers daily. Be exceptionally good today!

Dad and Mom



Little boy getting his head shaved with a razor blade at the orphanage.

Oct_10_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Wow, what a busy day shuttling missionaries around to the airport, bus depot and different boardings. Then, around 5:30, I took two companionships out to their area for dinner appointments and then, brought them home. While they ate, I went to a local grocery store parking lot, ate cookies and read the Book of Mormon.

As we visited with a few Elders that will be returning to their homes, we asked them, "Share with us two experiences that stand out as most memorable during your mission." It is a neat thing to hear them share their experiences. We love them for being good missionaries and encourage them to go home and endure to the end just like they have instructed their investigators to do.

For us, visiting families, leaving

messages, teaching lessons and helping with encouragement is what we enjoy the most about our mission. We received a sweet text message this morning from a family we visited yesterday. She said our visit meant so much to her and made her day. She went on to say how much she loves the Savior and what he has done for us. It is hard to express just how rewarding and gratifying that is to hear. It means that Mom and I were instruments in the hands of the Lord to help bless some one's life. As some of you may know, I am always looking for good deals. Being on a mission is not a good deal, it is a great deal!

*Photos: *

- Just some of the missionaries that needed transportation getting to different places during transfer day - Elder Rebelo, Mom and I. When we first met Elder Rebelo, he was a very quiet, soft-spoken, not

outgoing missionary. It has been so interesting to see how he has changed as he took on a training assignment with a new missionary and served as a district leader. He has really blossomed and is a good missionary. (Yes, that is a bandage on my head. Read on.) - As I was emptying the trunk of our car, I managed to ram my head onto the corner of this cupboard when I went to put a box on the garage floor. It hurt, but I did not cry. However, I bled like a stuck pig! I do not like to admit this, but it is the second time I have done this on the same pointed

corner. If I do it again, I am afraid they will send me home for self-inflicted wounds or repeated stupidity.

We love you very much. Have a wonderful day!

Dad and Mom



However, I bled like a stuck pig! I do not like to admit this, but it is the second time I have done this on the same pointed corner. If I do it again, I am afraid they will send me home for self-inflicted wounds or repeated stupidity.



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Elder Rebelo, Mom and I. When we first met Elder Rebelo, he was a very quiet, soft-spoken, not outgoing missionary. It has been so interesting to see how he has changed as he took on a training assignment with a new missionary and served as a district leader. He has really blossomed and is a good missionary.

Oct_10_2018

Dear Family,

Sorry, I forgot to attach photos.

CAUTION: VIEWER DISCRETION IS ADVISED DUE TO THE GRAPHIC NATURE OF AT LEAST ONE OF THE ATTACHED PHOTOS



Just some of the missionaries that needed transportation getting to different places during transfer day

Oct_11_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

It appears that my email problems have miraculously resolved themselves.

This afternoon, Mom held a special session with a sister in one of our wards to help her learn about conducting music. While she did that, I went over to Brother Shakes' house as they are getting ready for granny's funeral on Saturday. He wanted to rehang a curtain rod. As it turned out, we rehung 4 curtain rods. They have a big tent out front of their house to accommodate family and friends that come by to visit.

Mom and I also went by a children's home to drop off some little girls clothing. The operators of the orphanage were very happy to receive the two bags of clothing and one bag of shoes. Mom took a lot of time to wash, dry and fold all the clothing.

She even sewed on buttons. She made sure I went to the store to purchase shoe laces for a couple of the shoes. We hope they get put to good use.

It is easy to get frustrated and discouraged in Africa. We just found out that both of our wards will be having a joint sacrament meeting at 9 AM this Sunday and then followed by watching the Sunday Afternoon session of General Conference. That is a good arrangement, but no one knows about it! This just came up today (Thursday). How are the ward members that normally start at 11 AM going to know about this change?

Hence, the great need of teaching the importance of a well-run Ward Council meeting. This is something we are really going to focus on. It is the best way Mom and I can see how to institute some good changes in

how things are run.

Photos:

- Brother Shakes hanging from the hooks we installed to help loosen up his spine. - Mom with an orphanage mother and a little girl that will benefit from some clothes we dropped off. - This is a RDP (Redevelopment Project) house. They are built by the government, but if you are not there to safeguard your property, this is what happens. Thieves will come and take everything!

FTP, CTR, WITL, RWH, FLG* We love you,

Dad and Mom

* Finger-lickin' Good



Brother Shakes hanging from the hooks we installed to help loosen up his spine.



This is a RDP (R edevelopment Project) house. They are built by the government, but if you are not there to safeguard your property, this is what happens. Thieves will come and take everything!



Mom with an orphanage mother and a little girl that will benefit from some clothes we dropped off.

Oct_12_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a very good district meeting this morning. We discussed the importance of "commitments" with those that we teach. People who follow through with commitments are demonstrating their intent to change, to repent. When we see these good people honor and keep their commitments, we can have greater confidence that they will be strong converts to the gospel.

Mom spent a couple hours in the ward library organizing everything. She brought an extra large storage bin from our boarding to put nursery toys in. The storage bin will be kept in the library during the week so toys are not spread all over the church. Then, Mom had a late-comer for the music conducting class. She stayed busy until 5:15 PM.

While Mom was doing all of that, I drove two of our missionaries around to teaching appointments. It is truly a spiritual experience for me to be in these teaching situations. It is a blessing to see people hear the message and take it in with such wonder and appreciation. The Holy Ghost is present in those settings and the people we teach can sense something different.

For example, today we taught a lady who has had a difficult time with losing her parents within a couple years of each other. She has always wondered about what happens after death? She wondered if they would recognize her if there is a life after this mortality? The missionaries were prepared to teach the Restoration, but changed their plan as she expressed her sorrow of missing her parents. It was a neat experience to see her eyes light up as she heard about the Spirit World and how we

can all be together as families. That nugget of truth meant so much to her!

We picked Mom up and went to another appointment. The brother we wanted to see was not there, but his wife and son were. We were able to teach them.

Photos:

- The "British Invasion," with two missionaries from Manchester, England, one from Coventry, England and one from Ireland (but has moved to London).

We love you more than boiled Egg Plant!

Dad and Mom



The "British Invasion," with two missionaries from Manchester, England, one from Coventry, England and one from Ireland (but has moved to London).

2018 OCTOBER 13 }

Oct_13_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Mom has been asked to help out with the Primary Program for the MD 1st Ward. We had to be at the church at 11 AM for the practice. When we arrived there was one of the counselors and a handful of children. The Primary President finally came an hour later. No surprise.

Mom was able to help the children with some of their songs and worked with the president to put together a Primary Program. All the president had was a very short skeleton of a program. Mom took her notes and spoke with her about some ideas. Then, Mom brought home everything and has been typing the program up for the last hour or two.

There is a practice scheduled for tomorrow after church. Mom will have parts for each child to take home and memorize, plus copies for the

leaders. It is a rather short program, but it will be very nice.

I spent a good portion of the time Mom was with the Primary, trying to learn how to say my testimony in Xhosa. I made some headway, but have a long way to go.

Mom and I are taking President Nelson's challenge to read the Book of Mormon by the end of the year. We continue to do our one chapter a day together, but we both are doing personal reading to accomplish the goal. We need to read 50 pages a week.

Photos:

- I stopped by a knife show this morning to see a man that was there displaying his leather work. He makes sheathes for knives and all kinds of other leather goods. I would like to get a crocodile belt, a custom made brief case and some game skin covers for my scriptures.

- A poor donkey that must have been hit by a vehicle. It has been laying by the roadside for weeks now. Pretty gross. - We see jerks like this once in a while who are in the middle of the street trying to raise money as part of a bachelor party. Very dumb, sick and offensive.

Don't be dumb, sick and offensive.
We love you,

Dad and Mom



I stopped by a knife show this morning to see a man that was there displaying his leather work. He makes sheathes for knives and all kinds of other leather goods. I would like to get a crocodile belt, a custom made brief case and some game skin covers for my scriptures.



We see jerks like this once in a while who are in the middle of the street trying to raise money as part of a bachelor party. Very dumb, sick and offensive.



A poor donkey that must have been hit by a vehicle. It has been laying by the roadside for weeks now. Pretty gross.

Tid Bits

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

1. Word of the week: "epithets," an adjective or phrase expressing a quality or attribute regarded as characteristic of the person or thing mentioned. *Example:* It was common in the 1950's to hear discriminating epithets about black peopel.

2. Quote of the week:

3. Scripture of the week:

And more blessed are you because you are called of me to preach my gospel— D&C 34:5 * (GO B-Dawg!)*

*4. Joke of the week: *

Q: What is the worst thing about BYU religion classes?

A: They tend to Babylon (babble on)

5. Bee's Knees Award: This is a girl who loves to have fun. She is a ball of energy. She loves to hike, camp, ride bikes, run like the wind, play with friends and do crazy things like zip lines. She is a very smart student and does fantastic at school. He is a great example of living the gospel and being a good friend to all. She loves hanging out and playing with cousins. She is a super helper around her home. She loves her Daddy, Mommy and brothers and sister. Olivia, you are the Bee's Knees, Sistah!!!

6. Gospel question of the week: Michelle was the first person to answer last week's question correctly, "Barbara Thompson." This week's gospel question: How many total temples in Utah (include operational, under construction or announced)? Can you name them all without looking them up? Mom and I did!

*7. If I were you (Advice to grand kids): * If I were you, I would learn to forgive people. Do you know someone that has offended you or hurt your feelings? In your heart, forgive them for what they have done. If you are having a hard time doing that, pray to Heavenly Father that he will help you. Try it. I think you will like it.

One time, Uncle Dan said he could beat me into the ground playing basketball. I am still trying to forgive him for hurting my feelings.

*8. What I learned this week: *One of the most important qualities or attributes a missionary can have is that of hard work. When missionaries back up their testimonies and their spirituality with hard work, miracles happen!

9. What I am grateful for: A gospel that embraces revelation as one of its main pillars. What a great blessing for each of us. However, it is something we need to work at, have faith for and patiently learn to receive.





10. My goal for the week: Help Bishop Lalendle plan and promote a great ward council meeting for November.

*11. Photo of the week: * That guy is almost as strong as Uncle Marl.

We love you guys. Have fun living the gospel this week! Remember, "Righteousness ever was Happiness!"

Love,

Dad and Mom

Oct_14_2018

Dear Family,

Today, we had a combined meeting between the Mdantsane 1st and 4th Wards. It was quite a site to see the chapel completely full of members. Afterward a member of the stake presidency and I were discussing that the day will come when both wards will be this full of members during their own sacrament meetings. That day will come!

After sacrament meeting we all watched the Sunday afternoon session of general conference. Right before the meeting, Mom and I had the idea to make a list of gospel topics (words), write them on a piece of paper, and then, give them to several children in the meeting with instructions to put a tick mark every time one of those words came up in a talk. It worked great! It was amazing to see how focused they were on listening to the speakers.

Of course, part of their intense listening was that for every 10 tick marks, they received one piece of candy. When conference was over, I was swarmed with kids surrounding me as we added up how many tick marks they had. The least amount of candy to one set of girls was 6 pieces. One girl is waiting for us to bring her 16 pieces of "sweets." Mom and I decided we will make this a more organized activity for the upcoming April Conference.

Photos:

- Libhongo Faku, working on a "busy" assignment I gave her to look up certain hymn numbers and then, write down the name of the

hymn. FYI, she sat next to us in conference and scored 16 pieces of candy while listening to conference. - Mom helping the Primary during a practice for the upcoming Primary Program.

Do Good! Love,

Dad and Mom



Libhongo Faku, working on a "busy" assignment I gave her to look up certain hymn numbers and then, write down the name of the hymn. FYI, she sat next to us in conference and scored 16 pieces of candy while listening to conference.



Mom helping the Primary during a practice for the upcoming Primary Program.

2018 OCTOBER 15 }

Oct_15_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Mom did a whole lot of work today getting the house clean and a boatload of ironing done. I spent a good portion of the day trying to pay a traffic ticket for some missionary who is now long gone, checking out B&B's for the Blasers (senior couple coming to visit East London from Queenstown), getting the car washed, and, watching the BYU-Hawaii game.

Thinking back on conference weekend, I believe it will be a great blessing to church members if they actually take advantage of the home-centered, church-supported curriculum for families. Families will grow closer together, testimonies will strengthen and there will be great love and harmony. Wonderful inspiration, revelation to move the Church forward.

We love you all very much. You are great!!!

Dad and Mom



Of course, being the son of Grandpa Stan Stevenson and the brother to Rabbi Greg Stevenstein, we were able to negotiate a super, red hot price for the room.



The view from the room we have lined up for the Blasers.



The world famous
"Bottle Brush Bush" in
bloom. Say that ten
times real fast in a row.

2018 OCTOBER 16 }

Oct_16_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We got sidelined a little today and never made it to our area.

This morning, Elder Hodges had a brother from his ward call and needed a tow to the auto repair shop. Because the Hodges had their car at the panel beaters, I picked him up and we went and gave the guy a tow. Of course, his tow strap broke two different times, so I went and got a heavy duty strap to get the job done.

Then, off to the auto body shop to check on their car. Then, drove Elder Hodges to a retail center where he needed to pick up his wife's laptop. After that, I had to go to downtown East London to pay for a traffic fine some missionary received about 6 months ago and is now gone from the mission.

Mom has been working hard on getting a meal prepared for tomorrow

night. Making lasagna and creating a delicious trifle desert takes time. It will be the mission president, the Hodges and Mom and I for dinner. Then, sewing for some missionaries and grocery shopping.

Mom and I have been reading the Book of Mormon together and individually. Individually, by the end of the year. As we underline or highlight all the different references to the Lord, we are amazed at how very central the Savior was to the prophets and the righteous people of their day. During times of righteousness and prosperity, worship and recognition of the Lord was pervasive. Maybe one of the messages from the Book of Mormon is for us to remember Him and his example every minute of the day. As we make him central to our lives, we will not want to do anything to tarnish our relationship with him.

Photos:

- Christmas decorations are up in a lot of the stores this week (mid October). - I begged and begged Mom to buy us some beef lung for dinner! Maybe I will get some for Christmas?

We love you very much. Please make good decisions today.

Dad and Mom



Christmas decorations are up in a lot of the stores this week (mid October).



I begged and begged Mom to buy us some beef lung for dinner! Maybe I will get some for Christmas?

Oct_17_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had some good visits today. I went out with Brother Shakes. Mom was home preparing for our dinner with the Hodges and the President Lebethoa this evening.

First, I took Brother Shakes to the Border Training School where he is going to sign up for fork lift training. It is a one week course that runs from 8 AM to 4 PM each day. He is excited for this because this will give him some leverage in the job-hunting arena.

Also, this is a good first step for him in self-reliance. He has come up with R 1,000 on his own. His past mission president from Uganda is putting up the other R 1,000. We like to see people doing what they can for themselves. Then, when someone helps out, it is a "Hand Up" and not a "Hand Out."

We also visited with President Magwaca, one of the first black branch presidents in Mdantsane. He is a very good man. He and his wife had been members for years. She passed away about 3-4 years ago. She was first to hear the missionaries and then, he took the lessons and joined. She is the person that translated the Book of Mormon into Xhosa. Evidently, there was quite a love story between them. In her last years, he needed to do everything for her. He is greatly loved by the members.

So, ask yourselves, "What am I doing to bless the lives of those around me?" When it is all said and done, I believe our service, love and caring for others is going to weigh very heavily in the scales of justice on judgment day.

We stopped by and visited with a person the young missionaries are teaching. Mom and I went to the first

lesson with this man, Amos. After that lesson, I took a photograph of him holding some sandals and a baseball cap he had beaded. I had the photo printed and we gave it to him. You would have thought he won the lottery! He was so happy to see himself.

We also stopped by an active member of the ward who laid her grandmother to rest about two weeks ago. We gave them photos of people who had been cooking for the funeral service. We need to use that family for cottage meetings in the future

where members and non-members can gather and share an hour of gospel discussion in a non-Sunday environment.

Photos:

- Dinner table is set for our VIP guests this evening. Mom has really done a tremendous job with the meal. (However, I did do some dusting.)



Dinner table is set for our VIP guests this evening. Mom has really done a tremendous job with the meal. (However, I did do some dusting.)

Oct_18_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

As I write this email, I am snacking on Frito curly chips with sweet chili flavoring. I like them. I think some of the food here, with all its different flavors, looks and textures, is starting to taste good. Or, maybe they are foods you just start to acquire a taste for? I do need to try the marrow from boiled chicken's feet before I go home.

Our dinner with President lebethoa and the Hodges was very nice yesterday evening. President Lebethoa strikes me as a man who deeply realizes the goodness of the Lord to him and his family. He is a dedicated servant of the Lord. This is not prophecy, just my conjecture, he will be a general authority one of these days. He is young, yet has a wealth of experience in the church.

There are truly several benefits of

having him as the president of this mission. One is that he was raised and brought up in the SOWETO Township. There is nothing that our missionaries see or experience that he has not seen or experienced. He knows exactly what the township life is all about. Secondly, he is a convert. He knows what it is like to be on the receiving end of hearing the missionary lessons. Thirdly, he gets out in the field and proselytes with the missionaries. He is in the trenches almost every week with the missionaries - finding, teaching, challenging.

He is a native African. This is a huge blessing for our fellow black missionaries to see. What a great role model. It is so healthy for them to see him leading this mission.

I cannot help but think of the great council in heaven where the Lord proclaimed that there were many

great and noble ones. In the Lord's planning and with His timetable, he has placed certain people here in Africa at this point in time because he knew they would be great leaders of the people. I thrill at the thought of meeting our fellow African brothers and sisters in the next life and come to understand the tremendous role they have had in the Lord's plan for the gathering of Israel.

Photos:

- This large garden area is well-kept and productive. We have been told that this is cared for and man-



This large garden area is well-kept and productive. We have been told that this is cared for and managed by a less-active member of the church. We plan to meet him soon.

aged by a less-active member of the church. We plan to meet him soon.

We love you very much. Do good. Be good. You will be happy!

Dad and Mom



2018 OCTOBER 19 }

Oct_19_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a busy day. Zone conference started at 8 AM. We received 1 hour training from our zone leaders and then, about 3 hours from our mission president. We hope our missionaries listened carefully to President Lebethoa. He provided some very good instruction today:

- Pages 7 - 27 of the Missionary Handbook, specifically about obedience and how we can best represent the Church. He addressed a missionary's schedule for the day, language, emailing, our appearance, etc. - The doctrinal instruction was built around the planting of a seed and what is needed for the development of that seed to grow to a full size tree and produce fruit. Suffice it to say, there is a lot to do and as missionaries, we cannot do it all. We need an active, caring Ward Council to help new members along. - We

discussed what I call the LDS cycle: Learn, Do, and, Share. As we share we actually learn more...the cycle continues - How do we hit the "reset button?" How do we increase our faith, diligence and obedience? How do we reach a higher level of commitment? We need to obligate ourselves to a new, higher course of action. - D&C 82:10 - When we do what the Lord commands, He is bound. - Budgeting. What you can learn on your mission regarding budgeting will help you the rest of your life.

We had a delicious lunch. It is amazing at how much food some of our missionaries can pack away!

This afternoon, Mom worked with one of the ward Primaries to help with their program. Then, she had a student come for music conducting instruction.

We then met up with our younger missionaries and went to visit a couple of mama's and a young man that was a son of one of them. Last visit, I had given them a specially marked Book of Mormon and challenged them to read some of the verses that were highlighted. They did not do their homework!

We talked a little about how the book is a companion scripture to the Bible and how it is such a strong testament of Jesus Christ. I had them open their Books of Mormon to a scripture in 2 Nephi. I had Mom start

a stopwatch to see how long it would take to read this one verse. 22 seconds! I told them they could find 22 seconds every day to read at least one verse, but Mom suggested they should do more than that. They said they would.

We had more visits with the young Elders and had the privilege to share our testimonies each place we visited.

We were saddened to come home and receive an email that one of our missionaries will be going home on



Zone Conference meeting



Great missionaries chowing down!



A close look at our lunch

Monday. This is never a joyful event. We just hope and pray that he will make whatever adjustments he needs to make and then, get right back to missionary work.

Photos:

- Zone Conference meeting - A close look at our lunch - Great missionaries chowing down!

We love you!

Dad and Mom

2018 OCTOBER 20 }

Oct_20_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We have been scrambling all day. This morning I had to go to a missionary flat and check out their washer that has been leaking all over there floor. I thought (and hoped) it was just some cheapo hose clamps that were not doing their job. I changed all of them to good clamps and it still leaked through some piece of plastic hardware. We will need to get a technician to fix it.

Mom worked hard to put together the lyrics of Primary songs so that children could see them on the front row as they sing in sacrament meeting tomorrow.

As it turned out, the chorister was not impressed with the layout and did not use them. Mom spent all afternoon helping the two different wards practice their program.

I went to help Brother Shakes hook

up his plumbing to the main line that runs in front of his house. We figured everything out, but could not finish the job because there is a special key that is used to shut off the main valve at the corner of the block where he lives. We will finish the job on Friday afternoon. This will greatly help him and his family who presently have to walk a block away to fill up five gallon buckets and carry them to their house.

We went to a cottage meeting at 4 PM. This is such a good idea that one of our missionary companions is doing. We meet in the home of a member and they invite friends and neighbors to come and be a part of it all. We only had two non-members there and a couple of members, but it is a start. They will do this once a month.

Our car was a mess. We felt like it was too dirty to drive to church to-

morrow, so the only thing we could do was wash it in the dark. (See photo)

South Africa is a nation steep in problems. One of which is rampant immorality. We have so many members (single mothers) with children. Where are the men? The women are left to care for the children with no father in the home. It is a huge problem for the nation and a huge problem for the Church. The men seem to come out of the woodwork at night, roaming the streets. You can only imagine where they are going

and what they are doing. It may take a generation or two to change things. This will happen over time in the Church as leaders stress the law of chastity and moral cleanness, but we are not so sure about the nation.

Photos:

- 1/3 of the plumbing problem -
Washing the car in the dark!

Love,

Dad and Mom



Washing the car in the dark!



1/3 of the plumbing problem

2018

OCTOBER 21 }

Oct_21_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Our sacrament meetings today were wonderful. In each ward we had the Primary Program. The children did very well with both their written parts and the music. Mom played the piano for both wards and did wonderful.

After church we did a few visits. While Mom was visiting with one sister, I was attacked by the kids in the neighborhood. Of course, having pieces of candy for each of them will draw their attention any time of the day. When we left the home, I noticed my clean white shirt sleeves were dirty from wrestling with the kids and them wiping their sticky hands and mouth from the candy on me.

Photos:

- This is Sister Lalenle with her new little baby girl, Minetle, which

means "beautiful day" in Xhosa. She is married to the Bishop of the MD 4th Ward - The MD 1st Ward Primary after their stellar Primary Program - The MD 2nd Ward Primary after their stellar Primary Program - Five of the crew that attacked me for candy and the primary offenders of transfer of dirt to my shirt.

We love you guys very much. Enjoy your Sabbath.

Love,

Dad and Mom!



The MD 1st Ward Primary after their stellar Primary Program



This is Sister Lalenle with her new little baby girl, Minetle, which means "beautiful day" in Xhosa. She is married to the Bishop of the MD 4th Ward



Five of the crew that attacked me for candy and the primary offenders of transfer of dirt to my shirt.



The MD 2nd Ward Primary after their stellar Primary Program

Oct_22_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We have had a delightful day taking the Queenstown senior missionaries, Elder and Sister Blaser, around to visit people their son baptized 20 years ago. It was neat to see the love that the members expressed toward this great missionary that came into their lives two decades ago. And, it was great for the Blasers to see the wonderful fruits of their son's diligence as a faithful missionary.

Tomorrow we take them to a game reserve to see wild animals. I was able to negotiate a discount of sorts for the six of us - complimentary lunch (which is a very good meal judging from the last time we went there). Let this be a lesson to you all, when you negotiate with a "middle man" you end up with less of a deal than if you are speaking with the owner/manager in person. I had to

swing this deal over the phone with an employee - not the way to go!

As we have talked with others living in our compound, we have never heard of any kind of burglary or break-ins. Well, that all changed a few days ago when two separate homes were broken into during the night. One single, elderly lady slept through the whole thing. That is probably a good thing. However, the bad news is that she left her keys in the car and left the doors to her house unlocked. That is called an open invitation.

Consequently, there is now a night security person on the premises and the HOA is examining how well things are being monitored by the hired security company they employ. Mom and I will be locking things up a lot better each night. I am also thinking of changing sides of the bed where we sleep with Mom so that

she is closer to any intruders than I would be.

One night, months ago, Mom woke up in the night and swore she could smell someone with a very strong scent just outside our bedroom window. (And, no, it was not me she was smelling. I shower once a week whether I need it or not.) It was easy to dismiss because we have never heard of a problem here. We are now thinking that perhaps there really was someone out there casing our joint. Pretty exciting stuff!!!

Earlier this afternoon, we took a missionary to the airport as he is returning home after only being on his mission about 6 to 8 weeks. We do not know all the details, but we hope and pray he will do whatever he needs to and return to fulfill his mission here in South Africa. He has the ability to be a great missionary and leader.

Photos:

- Too much beer over the weekend.
- Small beaded animal souvenirs. We do not know if anyone of our kids or grandchildren might



Too much beer over the weekend.



Mom and I with President Magwaca - one of the first branch presidents in Mdantsane several years ago. Very good man.

like one??? - Mom and I with President Magwaca - one of the first branch presidents in Mdantsane several years ago. Very good man.

Keep up the good work! We love you,
Dad and Mom

Tid Bits

Dear Family,

1. Word of the week: "Desaguar," the process of eliminating water from the body. * Example:* It is not uncommon in Latin America to see little children and men desaguar in public.

2. Quote of the week: "Sometimes is the process of self-evaluation, we realize the importance of hitting the reset button of life." -President Leb-

wthoa

*3. Scripture of the week: *

"The place where God resides is a great Urim and Thummim." -D&C 130:8

4. Joke of the week:

Q: What did the African cannibal say when he took a shower for the first time?

A: Do you have any Head and Shoulders?

5. Bee's Knees Award: How would you like to get paid to watch movies all day? This guy loves his family and goes out of his way to help and bless them anyway he can. He is a craetive carpenter. He does not require the spotlight in life. He is responsible, caring, sensitive, intelligent, a mediocre golfer, a grill master, and drives a very hot, high horsepower lawn mower - I mean Honda. He plans ahead. He keeps the commandments. Michael Stevenson, you are the Bee's Knees, brotha!!!

6. Gospel question of the week: Michelle was the first one to answer

the gospel question of the week, last week. However, it was off by one. The number of operational, under-construction or announced temples in Utah is not 19. What is the correct answer?

7. If I were you (Advice to grand kids): If I were you, I would make my bed every morning, first thing. When you make your bed, you start out the day having already accomplishing something. It is a good way to begin the next 24 hours. Try it. I think you will like it.

8. What I learned this week: Knowledge and intelligence is directly connected to diligence and obedience.

9. What I am grateful for: I love and admire the 24/7 commitment of the general authorites of the Church.

10. Goal for the week: I will take a more serious approach to our area book, updating it everyday after visiting the less active.

11. Phot of the week: Hard core biker with his woman!



Small beaded animal souvenirs. We do not know if anyone of our kids or grandchildren might like one???



2018 OCTOBER 23 }

Oct_23_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We have had a busy day of playing. We started out by picking up the Blasers at 6:30 this morning. Then, off to Inkwenkwezi Private Game Reserve. We had a 3 1/2 hour open Land Rover ride through the park seeing giraffes, impalas, blesboks, Wart hogs, zebras, lions, etc. Afterward, we had a delicious lunch. Our guide did an excellent job of explaining everything.

Riding around in the Land Rover is what they call the "African Massage!"

We took some time in the afternoon to just visit. We learned a lot about each other. We had typed up some slips of paper that had certain questions on them. We each had a turn to answer them:

- Tell us of an embarrassing moment in your life - Tell us your version of how you met and became

engaged - What is the craziest thing you did in your life? - Tell us two truths about yourself and one lie - What has been your most exciting adventure?

We then went out to eat at Sanook's. It was pretty good food, but I think there were a lot of tired people there. Our goal was to make sure the Blasers had a good time. They have been working hard up in Queenstown for three months and needed a little break. We think they enjoyed themselves and we all agreed we need to get together again in the future.

Love,

Dad and Mom



Dinner at the Cape Town Fish Market with the Blasers and the Hodges.



Cute little white baby lions. We were pretty close, but when the mama lion got up to check us out, our guide put it in reverse and said, "Photo shoot is over."

2018 OCTOBER 24 }

Oct_24_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We hope you don't get the feeling that we play all the time. Today we went with Rollo and Charlene Steenbeek to an area called the Hogsback. It is a small resort-type town in a "mountainous" part of the country about 2 hours+ away from where we live.

This time of the year is when the flowers are blooming and you have to catch the flowers at just the right time. Our timing was not perfect, but we did see some beautiful flowers. The variety of plants and colors was magnificent. It was a little bit of heaven on earth when compared to other parts of the country we have seen.

The beautiful flowers reminded me of an account experienced by Jedediah M. Grant. Here is the link to that marvelous experience:

<http://jod.mrm.org/4/135>

Look at the bottom on the first column of page 136. It is interesting to here him talk of the Spirit World Gardens.

Here is a link below to several photos of our trip today. Getting there was a chore as we had to go over a wash-boarded, gravel road for 45 kilometers. This was the back way into the area since we could not go through King Williams Town (the regular route) due to civil unrest. Too dangerous for us to pass through the town. Missionaries there were instructed to stay in their boarding. It took an extra hour to get where we needed to go.

The Steenbeek's have been good members of the Church despite some very rough edges by Rollo. Many years ago he was a branch president in King Williams Town

when there was some horrible unrest and tension between the white government and the black population. To protect the missionaries, he had about 10 of them staying at his house in a loft area. There were thousands of blacks marching up a hill to protest. It resulted in gunfire and death.

While the missionaries were there, Rollo received a telephone call from Salt Lake City inquiring on the health and welfare of the missionaries. It went something like this, "Hello, this is President Benson. How are my boys?" Rollo as able to account for all of them and reported they were safe.

Photos:

- <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1seVWABjUT9qlu-Ur3hAnet7gKP2ci7tMj>

We love you. Make good choices today!

Dad and Mom

2018

OCTOBER 25 }

Oct_25_2018_Update

FROM: Elder and Sister Stevenson



Dear Family,

We have four missionaries that are without a car. We try to help them when and where we can. Today, while Mom was waiting for her students to arrive, I took the missionaries to a couple of appointments. There is one car they all usually have access to, but right now, it is in the auto body shop for a week or more.

We have some flyers we put together regarding Ward Council this Sunday. We went around to the presidents of different Quorums and auxiliaries to make sure they knew about the meeting and to get their commitment to be there. We included a couple of paragraphs on the flyer that summarizes what ward council is all about. We hope we get everyone there and that they all participate. Ward Council is very important, especially as missionaries turn over a

new convert to the ward. It is hoped that the ward jumps in immediately to help that convert feel loved, welcomed and needed.

Think a little about new people to your ward or neighborhood. Make sure you befriend them to begin with and then, don't forget about them. Active members or less active members, members or non-members, be their friend. Be a good neighbor.

Video:

- Here are the Dinana children, Sibbo and Singa, sharing a Primary song.

Have a great day making good choices. We love you,

Dad and Mom

Oct_26_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

In our district meeting this morning we discussed the "Attributes of Christ." When we strive to acquire the attributes of faith, charity, hope, humility...we draw closer to the Spirit of the Lord. When that happens, we become more effective missionaries (tools) in the hands of the Lord.

Some times we are discouraged because our journey in becoming more like the Savior takes time. However, we need to remember that our hard, crusty outer shell of our "Natural Man" bodies took a long time to develop. We should be patient and realize that it takes a while to peel that back by yielding to the enticings of the Holy Spirit and become saints through the Atonement of Christ.

Mom helped some of the young women with baking goods for a bake sale tomorrow at the stake center

where they will be having a YSA activity. They made cupcakes and chocolate chip cookies. Mom has quite the reputation as a master baker. She has reached celebrity status in our two wards!

I went to help on a plumbing problem to get water from the street to a member's house. If you remember, I did that last week for another member. I received a phone call from that family and you would have thought they won the lottery! They were so happy.

I had an older brother in our ward helping and actually did the final connection. Now there are lots of people in the neighborhood that want the same thing. This may turn out to be a bit of a profit-making business for these members. Everyone in the neighborhood needs a hook up.

We went with our younger mission-

aries on some visits this evening. They do a fine job and Mom and I like to help with transporting them and taking part in the lessons. Our last visit was to a lady and her two children that are semi-active. It was her son's tenth birthday. It was a late night party between them and us missionaries - cake, chips, soda, marsh mellow, etc. Her daughter's birthday is in September, son's in October and hers is in November. Mom volunteered to bring her a cake for her birthday.

Photo:



Sister Lazola and her children, Elder Sibiyia from England and Elder Snell from Oregon. These are good, hard-working missionaries.

- Sister Lazola and her children, Elder Sibiyia from England and Elder Snell from Oregon. These are good, hard-working missionaries.

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

Dad and Mom

2018 OCTOBER 27 }

Oct_27_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Mom and I went to the Mdantsane Stake Center early this morning so we could deliver a bunch of baked goods for their bake sale today. The young women wanted to set up shop there because today was a YSA activity.

However, a couple of problems. First, there were only a total of 36 YSA at the activity and the stake provided lunch for them. Second, YSA don't have a lot of discretionary money. They barely have enough for transport money to get to and from their homes. Mom semi-predicted this from the beginning.

Anyway, we hope they made some money and that they learned from the experience. We especially hope they learned from Mom about baking. By far, the chocolate chip cookies were the best-selling item. When

I came by a 2:30 to pick up our plastic containers, there were still about 30 cookies there. I bought all of them and then distributed them to every one standing around.

We are fasting as a zone. Our prayers and thoughts are on how to find more father-led families. There is a crying need for good men to join the Church, be active and to hold the priesthood. There are one or two that are presently being taught, but we need a lot more. If you have any good ideas, please feel free to share.

Photos:

- We visited a family this morning and their yard was pretty trashy. The mother, Nandi, works for the city doing waste management and clean-up! I told the kids they each get 4 sweets if they pick up all the paper in the yard. They worked like busy bees and especially the little girl on the right. - Some of what was left

at the bake sale.

We love you. Have an enjoyable Sabbath tomorrow.

Dad and Mom



Some of what was left at the bake sale.



I told the kids they each get 4 sweets if they pick up all the paper in the yard. They worked like busy bees and especially the little girl on the right.



We visited a family this morning and their yard was pretty trashy. The mother, Nandi, works for the city doing waste management and clean-up!

Oct_28_2018_Update

FROM: Elder and Sister Stevenson



Dear Family,

Mom and I spoke in Church today. Mom spoke about Prophets and the need to follow them in these last days. I spoke about Faith. At the end of my talk, I closed with a neat story provided to us by Steve and Pat Songer. (The Songers are friends from our ward in Huntsville.) I am attaching it for your reading enjoyment and spiritual edification.

Our Mdantsane 4th Ward had a very good ward council today. We had representatives from each of the ward quorums and auxiliaries! *I came up with and shared this great analo*g*y**, that the ward council is like a spoked bicycle wheel. The Bishop is the hub and all the ward council members are the spokes. Without the spokes the wheel cannot operate at full strength and accuracy.

Photos:

- Quite a bit of glare from the dome! - Mom and Mavis from a hotel/restaurant in the Hogsback - Beautiful flowers

Have a wonderful Sabbath Day! We love you,

Dad and Mom

* As many of you know, my dear friend Arnold was the one that shared this analogy with us. I liked it so much, I had no problem plagiarizing it for our meeting today.

Tid Bits

Dear Family,

*1. Word of the week: * "contemn," treat or regard with contempt. *Example: *Why do people contemn the Cougars when they are capable of beating the best junior high school football teams in eastern Utah?

*2. Quote of the week: *

3. Scripture of the week:

And now, I say unto you, my

brethren, that after ye have known and have been taught all these things, if ye should transgress and go contrary to that which has been spoken, that ye do withdraw yourselves from the Spirit of the Lord, that it may have no place in you to guide you in wisdom's paths that ye may be blessed, prospered, and preserved— (Mosiah 2:36)

*4. Joke of the week: *

Q: Did you hear about the U of U student who went ice fishing?

A: He brought home 100 lbs of ice



Quite a bit of glare from the dome!



Mom and Mavis from a hotel/restaurant in the Hogsback

5. Bee's Knees Award: This kid is 110% boy. Can you crack a bull whip like the man from Snowy River? Probably not. He loves to work with his dad on the ranch. He is a big helper around the house. He loves animals, including snakes. He is a great example to his younger brothers and is a best friend to them. He works hard at school to be a good student and does his homework every night. He is a very good reader. He is a very good example of the gospel and helps his friends make good choices. When people see him, they want to be better. He is hand-

some like a dawg! He can run faster than the wind. His parents count on him because they know he will always be obedient. Burke, you are the Bee's Knees, brotha!!!

6. Gospel question of the week: Where did Great, Great Grandpa Edward Stevenson go on his first mission?

7. If I were you (Advice to grand kids): If I were you, I would secretly do something nice for someone and make sure they never find out who did it. Try it. I think you will like

it.

*8. What I learned this week: *The more we do our part to learn something, the more the Lord is willing to help us learn that one thing.

9. What I am grateful for: I am so grateful for running, clean water. I am thankful I have it so easy. I do not have to haul water for blocks and in some cases miles, for cooking, cleaning, flushing toilets, etc.

10. My goal for the week: I was able to help the bishop set up a ward council meeting. We had every quorum and auxiliary represented today! My goal this week is to be more patient.

*11. Photo of the week: *One of the most beautiful girls on the face of Planet Earth!



Beautiful
flowers



Oct_30_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Not only cars, but washing machines can take up our valuable time. This morning, I had to insure that a technician would be out to one of our missionary boardings to repair a washing machine. They started yesterday and then, never came back to the boarding with the part they went to retrieve. The only time they could come was 4 PM. Mom and I made arrangements with the missionaries to give us their house key and we went to their place around 3:30 to wait for the repairman. We figured it was better for us to wait than our missionaries that could be out finding new people to teach.

Then, had a call from one set of missionaries that said their car threw off the serpentine belt, again! I told them to head home because I did not want them stranded on a dark road

at night with a dead battery. Fortunately, they made it home safely. We will run their car into the dealership tomorrow since this is the second time it has happened.

Photos:

- This is Mrs. Goje, the mother of our Elder Goje who is now serving in Zimbabwe. Very nice elderly lady. She attends the Anglican Church and knows all the verses to "Come, Come Ye Saints," a popular hymn in many of the local churches. She is reading an email from her son. - Someone was very creative with the use of pallets. My guess is that those pallets were not purchased.

Love,
Dad and Mom

move on.

One of the items, a pillow case, had a bunch of rust stains on it. Mom used some good old home remedy solution to completely remove it. Other things that were stained and dirty have been cleaned and can be used again, thus saving Church funds by not needing to purchase new items.

"Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without." We have been looking online to find accommodations, tickets, car rental, etc. for the upcoming visit to South Africa by Daniel,



This is Mrs. Goje, the mother of our Elder Goje who is now serving in Zimbabwe. Very nice elderly lady. She attends the Anglican Church and knows all the verses to "Come, Come Ye Saints," a popular hymn in many of the local churches. She is reading an email from her son.



Someone was very creative with the use of pallets. My guess is that those pallets were not purchased.



The Blasers with Brother Thwani. Their son baptized him and many in his family some 20 years ago. Sweet reunion!

Michael, Elizabeth and David. It is a busy time of the year and things are filling up quickly. They may have to bring sleeping bags and granola bars to survive the week.

our young people involved and associating together.

We love you. Have a great day,

Dad and Mom

Four of our missionaries are walking. There usually is one car, but it is in the shop for a rear-end collision it suffered four months ago. So tonight, I drove out to the area and picked people up and safely delivered them to their boarding. One set of missionaries was holding a FHE with YSA members. They had 11 people attend. This is a good habit to get



This is a photo of our table cloth. It is now missing. If any of you locate it, please let us know so we can pick it up.

2018 OCTOBER 31 }

Oct_31_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Happy Halloween! We hope that you collect a ton of candy, and then, send it to us. There is no sign of Halloween in South Africa. However, Mom did wear a black outfit with an orange sweater.

Most notable thing we did today: Mom made some delicious split pea soup with ham in it and some sweet cornbread. We took that and some homemade chocolate covered peanut bars to the Bishop and his family. We also took a bag of new baby clothes for their baby. And, a box of crayons and a coloring book for their little boy, Lee.

We helped get a missionary car to the shop. We went to Medicross. I bought pizza. We ran some other errands. But, the best thing was taking dinner to the bishop's family. We hope he knows how much we love

and appreciate him. He is a good man.

Photos:

- Cabbage any one? - Lee with his new crayons and coloring book
- Mom holding the new little "Minentle" which means "beautiful day" in Xhosa

As they say in South Africa, "Stay well" We love you,

Dad and Mom



Cabbage any one?



Lee with his new crayons and coloring book.



Mom holding the new little "Minentle" which means "beautiful day" in Xhosa

Nov_01_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Wow, we did a lot of helping missionaries today. It is a very important aid to the mission president, but it is also a little discouraging because it keeps us from working our area and meeting with members of the church.

This evening, we were on our way home from Mdantsane and hit a awful lot of traffic on the "feeway." I suggested it was a bad accident.

Mom thought maybe a traffic check. As we drove through the bottle neck, there were several police vehicles and some civilian cars parked to the side of the road. Standing there, under guard, appeared about 4 or 5 guys with nylon ties around their wrists and behind their backs. It was refreshing to finally see the police doing something. I don't care if the people are innocent, just get out there and "Book'em Dano."

Earlier today, I was making a right hand turn and failed to see the curb-ing that was in front of me. Yes, I hit it pretty hard and was waiting for the tire to go flat. Mom says she warned me, but I need the warnings 1-2 minutes before I hit something, not split seconds. So far, she has a much better driving record than I do - like flawless. I checked everything when we reached home and fortunately, no damage to the body or the wheel.

I was thinking about wicked King Noah yesterday and drew some parallels between his experience with Abinadi and what we sometimes see today. With King Noah, he, his priests and his subjects all knew they were doing wrong, yet they were in denial. They said "Who is this Abinadi fellow to tell you and us that we are wrong and that we will be destroyed if we do not repent. Oh, mighty King, you haven't done any-

thing wrong. We are not evil. Away with this prophet."

Today we find people who are in direct opposition to the teachings and warnings of the prophets. They say, "Who is this prophet that says my child is living in sin. He is a good boy. His cohabitation is a beautiful and lvoing relationship. We have done no wrong. Away with the counsel and teachings of this prophet."

I think a lot of people know they are doing wrong but do not want to face up to it. They are too comfortable

living in denial of their transgres-sions. Anyway, just a thought I had. I welcome any and all comments.

Photos:

- A lot of poor people rummage through the trash. It seems that cer-tain people have claim to certain areas and no one infringes on their turf. We see this lady and a few others every Thursday morning go-ing through their routine. We keep certain things in a separate bag from our wet garbage that we think they can use in some way to make money - plastic bottles, old electronics like



A lot of poor people rummage through the trash. It seems that certain people have claim to certain areas and no one infringes on their turf. We see this lady and a few others every Thursday morning going through their routine. We keep certain things in a separate bag from our wet garbage that we think they can use in some way to make money - plastic bottles, old electronics like a wall clock, aluminum



One thing you do not want to do is take a parking space that is intended for a mother and her "tots." ("Clamping" means a wheel boot.)

a wall clock, aluminum cans, shoes, etc. - One thing you do not want to do is take a parking space that is intended for a mother and her "tots." ("Clamping" means a wheel boot.)

Do what is right and you will be very happy. We love you,

Dad and Mom

2018 NOVEMBER 2 }

Nov_02_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a very good district meeting today. We discussed some of the attributes of Christ that we are personally trying to develop. Then, we discussed the importance of the Book of Mormon as the key-stone of our religion. I shared the conversion story of Virginia Posselt and how all of that journey started with a "borrowed" Book of Mormon from our home when she would babysit Uncle Thom and I.

Mom had 4 or 5 people in her music conducting class! She is doing a great job. This is a good example of how we can help by teaching a skill that will continue on after we have left. This is so much better than us doing the music conducting in meetings. They learn. They do. We leave.

We were with the younger missionaries until about 8 PM tonight. We

usually give them rides out to an area that is too far for them to walk to. We are happy to help and happy to take part in their teaching lessons and to share our testimonies.

One teaching point we try to make is how the Bible and the Book of Mormon work hand-in-hand. For example, we might read about the baptism of Jesus in Matthew chapter 3. Then, we follow up with 2 Nephi 31, opening verses that shed light on why Jesus was baptized. We do not learn about that in the Bible.

It is a sweet experience to visit and teach others the gospel. And, the Book of Mormon is such a powerful tool in teaching the restored gospel. Here is what Elder Boyd K. Packer said, "In a world ever more dangerous...the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ has the nourishing power to heal starving spirits of the world."

Photos:

- The twins (amawele) - The twins and their sister, Nosipho. Nosipho is a member and is a counselor in the Primary presidency. She is a little on the shy side, but intelligent.

We love you. We miss you. We pray for you.

Dad and Mom



The twins (amawele).



The twins and their sister, Nosipho. Nosipho is a member and is a counselor in the Primary presidency. She is a little on the shy side, but intelligent.

2018 NOVEMBER 3 }

Nov_03_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

An eventful day! We were invited to a traditional celebration by a family that laid to rest a brother back in 1991. Evidently, this is a tradition where family, neighbors and friends get together to remember their relative. Mom and I think it was more a time to have a party and drink ample amounts of homemade beer.

The centerpiece of the celebration is the slaughtering of a cow and cooking it up for all in attendance. It is a little bit different than an American barbeque!

WARNING: The attached link will take you to my Google Drive where there are graphic and disturbing photos/videos. In other words, blood and guts!

We spent an hour and a half there.

We learned that the men do their thing in butchering the cow and the women do their thing of cooking certain parts of the cow and other food by themselves. Men on the front side of the house, women on the side of the house. Every part of the cow is used or eaten. The blood of the cow goes into the earth and conjures up the spirit of their loved one or perhaps an ancestor.

Mom was feeling rather repulsed by it all. Everyone that came up to speak with her had bloody hands. One guy, 90% inebriated, we think propositioned Mom in Xhosa. A mama standing nearby waved her finger at him, "No, no." When asked what he was saying, the mama didn't want to say.

On a separate note, I feel very African today. Last night we had dropped off some missionaries at their boarding. On the way home,

everything looked rather yellow - I need to use a restroom, badly. Surprisingly, Mom recommended I just do as so many of the South African men do, pull over and use the bushes. I was not going to argue with her in my uncomfortable condition. Let's just leave it right there. I do not see the need for any further details.

Photos/videos:

- The 27th anniversary of the passing away of a brother.

Tid Bits

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

1. Word of the week: "Decalogue," the Ten Commandments. *Example:* The Decalogue of the Old Testament is fundamental to civil society.

*2. Quote of the week: *

3. Scripture of the week:

Remember Lot's wife. -Luke 17:32

4. Joke of the week:

Q: Which prophet took forever to make a point?

A: "I - Say - UHH"

5. Bee's Knees Award: Do you look down on people? Are you tall, white and handsome? Can you speak Spanish? Can you play awesome basketball? Does your family love you and think you are the best? Do

all your friends and people you meet, just love you? Are you trying to be the best missionary in the Church? Do you love your family to pieces? Are you willing to serve full time for two years in the greatest work on the face of the earth? Are you smarter than 10 rocket scientists all smushed together? Does the Lord look upon you as one of the great and noble? Elder Brayden Roberts, your are the Bee's Knees, brotha!!!

*6. Gospel Question of the week: *No one has yet answered where Great, Great Grandpa Edward Stevenson went on his first mission. This week's gospel question of the week: How many missions in Bolivia?

7. If I were you (Advice to grand kids): If I were you, I would learn my school subjects so well that I could teach them to someone myself. Try it. I think you will like it.

8. What I learned this week: One needs to have a high degree of patience in Africa.

*9. What I am grateful for: *I am thankful for and simply love the oatmeal cake Mom makes!

10. My goal for the week: Discuss with both our bishops the idea of a two-ward dinner and party when some of our children come to visit in January.

*11. Photo from the past: *Can you believe these three incredibly beau-

tiful princesses?

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

Dad and Mom





Nov_04_2018

Dear Family,

It has been a spiritually uplifting day for Mom and I. There was a very good spirit in our two Fast and Testimony Meetings as members shared their testimonies. Three or four of them related the wonderful experience of just returning from a trip to the temple (this morning!). We had very good meetings.

Mom has been utilizing her sewing

expertise patching together missionary pants, shirts and ties that seem an impossibility to mend. She is amazing! The missionaries truly appreciate what she does for them.

One of the people that returned from the temple and was just aglow, was Sister Linda Faku. In addition to her temple experience, her daughter Libhongo was baptized. I had the privilege of performing the baptism. She is a sweet girl. Unfortunately, her father is not a member (yet). It would be great if he could perform the next two baptisms for their re-

maining children.

Another great experience for me is to hold baptismal interviews for someone when they have had a serious problem in their background. We did an interview this evening. It is always gratifying to hear their stories, their conversion, their testimonies and their determination to serve God and follow his commandments.

Photos:

- Libhongo - Sister Faku and family

We love you very much. You are in our prayers every day.

Dad and Mom



Libhongo



Sister Faku and family

Nov_05_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We did a lot of small things today to prepare for the upcoming week. I even got the car washed with our local car wash ladies. They do an amazing job inside and out - all for \$4.20! Of course, I rewarded the with Kit Kat candy bars.

Mom made a delicious dinner that included chicken breast smothered in diced tomatoes. This is the type of meal Mom enjoys very much. It is not my favorite way to eat chicken. So, what does one do in a situation like this. Please do not do what I did with my body language and moaning as if in great pain. The right thing to do is eat the food, be grateful for it, thank the person for making it and clean your plate.

I apologized to Mom and hope I can be more polite in the future. Mom is a great cook and I am so fortunate to

have 3 squares a day. I have absolutely nothing to complain about with ample food to eat, food that is good and healthy and a wonderful companion to prepare a meal for me. It is so juvenile to put up a stink about something so minor when there is so much to be grateful for. No more whining!

I had our super clean car in the garage when it started to sprinkle outside. I had beaten the odds of getting our car rained on! Mom and I had decided we would read our scriptures, start a movie and have some popcorn. Then, 7:30 PM, our young missionaries called from the township to please help by coming to pick them up and take them home. They are without a car for right now and the taxis stopped running around 6 PM.

I was a little perturbed by the request. Nevertheless, I got out of my

PJ's and into my missionary whites. Then, our clean car left the garage and ventured 25 minutes in the rain to pick up 4 missionaries. As I drove, I thought I need to change my attitude and be grateful we were in a position to help. Even though they climbed into the car with their muddy shoes, I was happy we could lend a helping hand.

"If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude." - Maya Angelou

Photos:

- From left to right: Mom, Sister Lubelwanna, Sister Booi - Brother "T" turned 47 years old - a great, faithful member of the ward. Mom baked him a cake for his birthday and the young missionaries supplied the birthday card. We all joined in with the singing, "Happy Birthday to You." - - We love you. Be good!

Dad and Mom



Brother "T" turned 47 years old - a great, faithful member of the ward. Mom baked him a cake for his birthday and the young missionaries supplied the birthday card. We all joined in with the singing, "Happy Birthday to You."



From left to right: Mom,
Sister Lubelwanna,
Sister Booi

2018 NOVEMBER 6 }

Nov_06_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We have had a cold, rainy and windy day. Kind of funny, since Summer is suppose to be right around the corner. It is one of those few days where I have actually put on a light jacket.

We met with the mother of one of our missionaries that is serving in Zimbabwe. His mother is not a member of the Church, but very sweet. She is a member of the Anglican Church. Her son will write us an email for her, we print it off and then, deliver it. We visit, leave a spiritual message and then close with prayer. She enjoys our visits and really likes Mom.

We also met with a young couple at the church house who are planning to get married on December 15th in the Johannesburg Temple. He is a return missionary. She is from

Mdantsane, but moved to Joburg about 3 Years ago. We are proud of this young man and his fiance for wanting to get married the Lord's way - in the temple. This is the kind of priesthood leadership that will greatly bless the people wherever they live.

They have reached out to Mom because of her tremendous reputation for baking. They asked her if she could make some cupcakes for the wedding dinner. They were cute, but pretty timid about asking. They initially said 50 cupcakes, thinking that was going to be a lot of pressure on Mom. Mom probed a little and before we left, the cupcake count was up to 100. The dinner is scheduled for Nov. 23rd in Mdantsane.

Photos:

- This is one of the cutest girls around. She is the daughter of our new institute instructor, Hlumelo,

for our two wards. - This is Sister Maluke, Olivia (granddaughter) and two great granddaughters - Soso and Nathi. The little girls are great huggers! - Nkululeko and his bride-to-be, Sinethemba.

Love,

Dad and Mom



Nkululeko and his bride-to-be, Sinethemba.



This is one of the cutest girls around. She is the daughter of our new institute instructor, Hlumelo, for our two wards.



This is Sister Maluke, Olivia (granddaughter) and two great granddaughters - Soso and Nathi. The little girls are great huggers!

Nov_07_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a delightful morning reading with the 2nd graders at the Phakamile School. Most of them have a hard time with reading, but some could follow along and read with us just fine. Today we read the Hare and the Tortoise. The children enjoyed it very much.

After reading, I dropped Mom off at the house and I went to visit Rollo Steenbeek regarding some matters on the additional school classrooms. When I arrived there were also three young missionaries in P-day attire and the Hodges (our other senior couple from East London) also in their P-day attire. I felt a little out of place! Anyway, I think the younger missionaries felt a little uncomfortable knowing they were a ways from home, in the wrong clothing and taking too long for their visit.

I fortunately avoided lunch (I don't like their food or their eating environment) by explaining I had already eaten a bunch of pizza. However, I did eat a chicken leg after stripping away the skin which had a few pin feathers. For desert, chocolate cake with custard pudding all over it.

*Photos: * - I was so shocked to go to the grocery store and see this not posted by Mom. I try to be a good provider. She doesn't have to try to supplement our living while we are here. I plan to speak with her and discourage any part-time work while we are serving our mission. We love you guys mas que cebollas con egg plant.

Dad and Mom



Mom reading with the grade 2 children



I was so shocked to go to the grocery store and see this not posted by Mom. I try to be a good provider. She doesn't have to try to supplement our living while we are here. I plan to speak with her and discourage any part-time work while we are serving our mission.



I want to buy some of this "Character Juice" and send it to some of our politicians in the United States.

Nov_08_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

One of the things that made our district meeting so edifying this morning was that Mom lead us all in a doctrinal discussion. She did great, using Joshua 24:17 as the beginning point of her presentation. Then, she had us all participate by answering questions of who, what, where, how, when...do we serve? The young Elders love it.

Mom was very busy teaching her music class and then, music conducting class. I spent time reading the Book of Mormon in the car. Our goal to individually read the Book of Mormon before the end of the year.

We then picked up the missionaries for the MD 4th Ward and went to lessons with them. We enjoy meeting with "people to teach" (instead of investigators) and to help with our comments or to share our testi-

monies.

We are impressed with the two missionaries we worked with today. They are hard workers and hard work coupled with knowledge of the lessons and strong testimony always yields results. Presently, they are teaching at least two father-led families that look pretty good.

Photos:

- One of our lessons today. Elder Sibiya, on the left, is a convert of three years and does a great job in both training a new Elder and teaching the gospel. - When we arrived at this house for a lesson, this little girl was like ten Energizer Bunnies all smushed together. As soon as she held still, she was out for the count!

Remember, control you thoughts, your tongue and your actions! We love you,

Dad and Mom

Dear Family,

Our time got a little eaten up today with getting our car in for a brake job and then, picking up missionaries this afternoon at the airport. Mom was still able to knock out a whole bunch of things around the house - making pumpkin chocolate chip cookies, cleaning the kitchen, two bathrooms and catching up on

her Book of Mormon reading. She has taken President Nelson's challenge to read the Book of Mormon by the end of the year very seriously.

I feel rather conflicted. Some times I feel absolutely horrible. Other times I feel like I am in hog heaven. When Mom makes cookies, she fails to take into consideration that I can consume quite a few of them. Instead of having them accessible to me, she will package them up and have me deliver them to other people. For example, today, the maintenance man and the two landscaper guys that



One of our lessons today. Elder Sibiya, on the left, is a convert of three years and does a great job in both training a new Elder and teaching the gospel.



When we arrived at this house for a lesson, this little girl was like ten Energizer Bunnies all smushed together. As soon as she held still, she was out for the count!

saw in one of the Phakamile classrooms – Mom took an old white shirt that one of the missionaries left behind and made these cool pajamas for a little girl in our ward. The shirt was free, the lace for the trim was \$0.49 USD, and the labor, yards and yards of love!

We love you and we miss you. Make good choices today!

Dad and Mom

work for him. What? These guys are eating the very cookies I should be eating!

Hence, the source of my dichotomous mood. When I have to resort to sneaking cookies for myself, I feel just horrible. If I am caught, then there is a severe reprimand. However, as I eat them, my body begins to shake and I slip into catatonic oblivion. My life is so difficult.

We delivered some photographs this afternoon to various people in the MD 4th Ward. It amazes us at how

absolutely elated people are when they see a printed picture of them or their family. They smile big and start to laugh. The main family we wanted to get to was the Faku family, where the little girl, Libhongo, was baptized this last Sunday. The father is someone we want to get to know better and see if we can do any good in getting him interested in the Church and receiving the missionaries.

Photos:

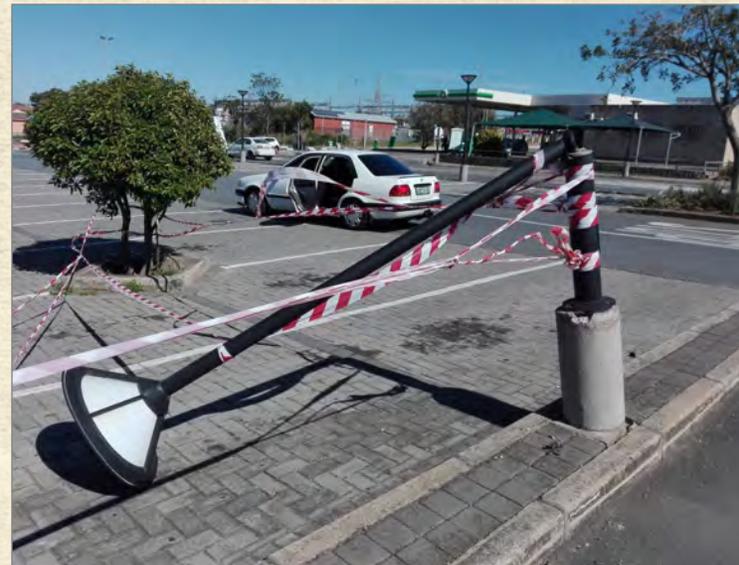
– We do get some serious wind in East London – This is a prayer we



Mom took an old white shirt that one of the missionaries left behind and made these cool pajamas for a little girl in our ward. The shirt was free, the lace for the trim was \$0.49 USD, and the labor, yards and yards of love!



This is a prayer we saw in one of the Phakamile classrooms.



We do get some serious wind in East London.

2018

NOVEMBER 10 }

4 Years

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Today marks the 4th anniversary of the passing of my amawele (twin in Xhosa), Annette's husband, a great father, a favorite uncle, a beloved brother. Some times it seems like such a long time ago. Other times, it seems like it was just yesterday.

I have been thinking about Thom quite a bit. The longer he is gone, the more I miss him! I love him and cherish our pre-mortal and mortal experiences together. The great news is there is a whole lot more to come.

The temple was a special place for Thom. It is a vivid memory in my mind of the two of us sitting in the Celestial Room of the Provo Temple shortly after returning from our missions. It was one of those sweet moments that resides in the mind

for a long, long time. He said something that became a bit of a theme for him throughout his life, "It is worth everything." That is such good advice for all of us to remember.

He use to tell me of the time he and Annette spent in the Oakland Temple and how absolutely priceless that time was together. It was a sacrifice to leave their real estate work and travel so far in ugly traffic to spend a busy day in the temple. Then, travel all the way home the same day - Annette doing all the driving. But it was worth everything to them to be there together.

I like to kid around with people we meet here in South Africa that my amawele is probably teaching their ancestors on the other side of the veil. That would be awesome because he would do such a great job.

I have an idea. Let's all live our lives

in such a fashion that we can be worthy to reunite together in the next world. It would be worth it to leave any bad habits behind, change any behavior or attitudes, step up to living the gospel 24/7, and, to continually strive for the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost in our lives.

Photo: Thom and I eating taquitos at Olvera Street in Los Angeles

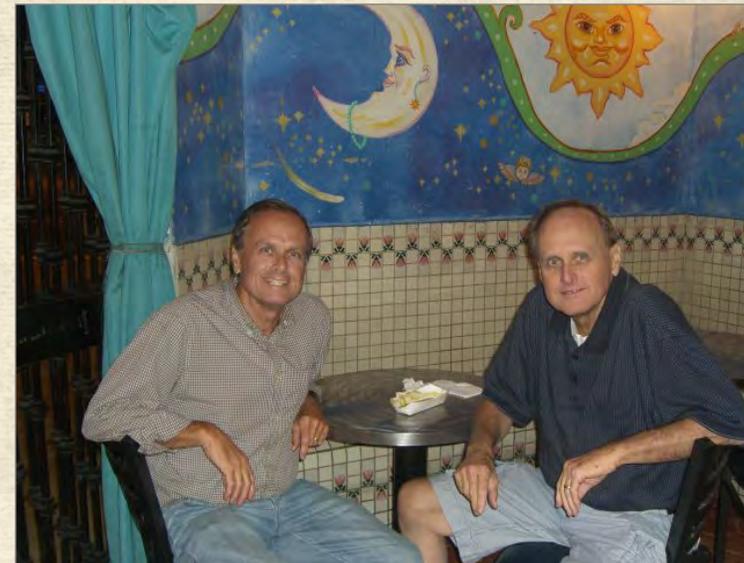
Love,

Chris

Nov_10_2018

Dear Family,

We were treated today to a broadcast from Cape Town with a four hour training meeting with various General Authorities, including Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve. The bad news is that the video and audio quality were poor to annoying. (The audio sounded like the 'scarching eels" from the movie, Princess Bride were in the background.) The good news was that we



Thom and I eating taquitos at Olvera Street in Los Angeles.



This is a bridge that was built accidentally in the wrong place. "The bridge to nowhere." The real bridge was constructed about a quarter mile away in the correct location.

Photos:

- Sister Mhini, the Stake Relief Society President and long-time member of the Church. I believe the girl in front of her is a daughter or granddaughter. - This is a bridge that was built accidentally in the wrong place. "The bridge to nowhere." The real bridge was constructed about a quarter mile away in the correct location.

We love you!

Dad and Mom

heard so many pearls of wisdom and golden nuggets of truth.

It was a long meeting but very beneficial for the stake and ward leadership people that attended. A lot of the meeting was dealing and answering questions from various leaders in the audience. A good amount of time spent on ministering. One thing Elder Andersen said that I chuckled at, "Talks and meetings do not have to be everlasting to be eternal."

It was hot today. So, I got the car

washed and into the garage before there could be any rain. There wasn't any. Great day for a walk, which I did and came back drenched in perspiration. I cooled down and then, got a free hair cut from my favorite barber.

We had a funny text message from one of our missionaries. They have been teaching a couple young men and they are ready to be baptized. The missionaries asked one of them who he wanted to baptize him. He asked if "Sister Stevenson" could baptize him!



Sister Mhini, the Stake Relief Society President and long-time member of the Church. I believe the girl in front of her is a daughter or granddaughter.

Tid Bits

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

1. Word of the week: "fray," a usually disorderly or protracted fight, struggle or dispute. *Example:* I will never jump into the fray with Andrew about the merits of diesel over regular petrol trucks.

2. Quote of the week:

3. Scripture of the week:

But this much I can tell you, that if ye do not watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds, and observe the commandments of God, and continue in the faith of what ye have heard concerning the coming of our Lord, even unto the end of your lives, ye must perish. And now, O man, remember, and perish not. -Mosiah 4:30

4. Joke of the week:

Q: What did the lawyer's wife say when she was having a difficult time getting to sleep?

A: "Honey, please tell me about your work today."

5. Bee's Knees Award: This girl is like the ultimate mother! She is athletic (kind of, she's a runner), she is creative, she sensitive to the needs of her children, she can operate a front end loader, she can cook like a maniac, and, she has one of the most beautiful smiles on planet earth. She loves the Lord and you see this in everything she does. She is a missionary. She never complains or criticizes anyone. She is unselfish. She is fellowshipping her husband. She gives people the benefit of a doubt. She sets the standard for beauty queen pageants. Amanda, you are the Bee's Knees, sistah!!!

6. Gospel question of the week: Michael Stevenson was the first one

to correctly answer last week" question: Where did Edward Stevenson serve his first mission? The answer: Gibraltar, Spain. This week's question: Name the four sons of Mosiah?

*7. If I were you (Advice to grand kids): * If I were you, I would live in the moment. Don't spend too much time thinking about yesterday or too much time thinking about what is to come. Enjoy the moment right now. Savor what is in front of you now. Even if things are unpleasant, learn from them and learn how to change things. Try it. I think you will

like it.

*8. What I learned this week: *It is okay to offer to give someone a priesthood blessing. For example, a woman who is without a husband or priesthood holder in the home. Children going back to school and there is no father.

9. What I am grateful for: I am thankful for the blessing of the sacrament each Sunday. Here is a video that you might enjoy about that.:

<https://www.lds.org/media-library/>





video/2016-01-4000-that-they-do-always-remember-him?lang=eng

*10. Goal for the week: * Meet with Bishop Lalendle re: running the ward and see how we can help.

*11. Photo of the week: * Like father, like son!

We love you all very much. We think of you often. We remember you in our daily prayers. Have fun living the gospel this week!

Dad and Mom

NOV_11_2018

Dear Family,

Our first order of business this morning was to go to the local drug store and purchase some Milk of Magnesia for one of our missionaries. He has been having some problems and the area medical director is hoping this will be the cure. We just informed him that he should plan the day so he is close to a restroom should the dam decide to break open!

We took some photos today of the Mahlangabeza family. The mother in this photo was one of the first members in the church in Mdantsane. Since her baptism, there has been two generations that have benefited from the blessings of the gospel. They are powerful examples in the stake. One son is the stake president and another is a bishop.

Can you ever feel bad eating a delicious roast beef dinner on a Sunday afternoon. It was so very good today, but, living in South Africa and working with people who have very little material goods, I feel like I want to share it with everyone. I know that is impossible. The least we can do is be very, very generous with our offerings.

Let's all be grateful for the abundant temporal and spiritual blessings we enjoy!

Photos:

- Mom with Mama Mahlangabeza
- Mahlangabeza family

We love you all so very much. Keep the commandments - in this there is safety and peace.

Dad and Mom33



Mom with
Mama
Mahlangabeza.



Mahlangabeza
family.

2018 NOVEMBER 12 }

Nov_12_2018_Update

FROM: Elder and Sister Stevenson



Dear Family,

Mom and I took a long walk this morning. There was a lot of sun, so we look a little like raccoons this afternoon having worn our sunglasses.

We covered books, Mom ironed, I chased down health insurance information and of course, I watched the BYU-Umas football game. Great to see the Cougars win. I think they should win the New Mexico State game easy enough. I really hope they pull it all together for Utah and put a "W" in the win column.

We continue to get a lot of wind. It seems the last three months have been very windy.

Photos:

- This is the back of a local grocery store - not very big, kind of like an oversized 7/11. It is always freez-

ing cold in there. These are the air conditioner units that keep the place cool. We hope you find this very, very interesting!

Love,

Dad and Mom



This is the back of a local grocery store - not very big, kind of like an oversized 7/11. It is always freezing cold in there. These are the air conditioner units that keep the place cool. We hope you find this very, very interesting!

2018

NOVEMBER 13 }

Nov_13_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Today was one of those days where we have not been hampered by doctor office visits for the Elders, boarding maintenance, transfers, vehicle issues...it has been a day where we had the pleasure and blessing of being with members. We love being in the trenches.

We visited with one family and had a good visit talking about articles in the December Liahona, the grandchildren, activity at church, etc. Before we left, we asked, "Do you have any questions you would like to ask us?"

The brother became very serious. we could see that he was concerned about something and did not know whether he should bring it up with us. He finally told of their 16 year old granddaughter that lives with them that is pregnant. Of course, they are

saddened and embarrassed. They wanted to know if the girl should come to church. They are concerned about what the other church members will say.

We explained that those in the church that suggest she should stay away from church until she has the baby are horribly misinformed. We explained just how a hospital is for the sick and physically ill, so church is for the spiritually ill. None of us are free from sin and making mistakes. We need the church more than ever. We hope she comes and we hope the members will welcome her, not judge her and be a blessing to her.

We also explained how important it was for them to sit down with the child and explain how much they love her and to discuss what she needs to do to get back on the covenant path. We discussed D&C

58:42-43. We said we hope she comes to church and sits by us.

Photos:

- Another manhole type covering that is missing (actually fallen into the hole). We need to get it fix before there is a serious accident. - Our new tow hitch. The owner of the installation company and his wife are very nice. We plan to become good friends with them and hope they will allow the missionaries to come to their home. They are what you call "Coloreds." They are a mix of Black African and Afrikaans. - Nadine

(Amanda's daughter) is such a brainiac that she has her on special bus and chauffeur to get to school.

Love,

Dad and Mom



Nadine (Amanda's daughter) is such a brainiac that she has her on special bus and chauffeur to get to school.



Our new tow hitch. The owner of the installation company and his wife are very nice. We plan to become good friends with them and hope they will allow the missionaries to come to their home. They are what you call "Coloreds." They are a mix of Black African and Afrikaans.



Another manhole type covering that is missing (actually fallen into the hole). We need to get it fixed before there is a serious accident.

2018

NOVEMBER 14 }

Nov_14_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

It has been a busy 15 hour day for us. We started this morning by leaving the house at 6:30 AM to do a boarding inspection in King Williams Town (1 hour away) and ended at 9:30 PM after delivering supplies to some sick missionaries. We look back on today and give thanks where we have been able to help or in some small way make a difference for good.

After reading with our Phakamile learners, we went to the boarding of four of our missionaries. They had been up all night before throwing up or sitting on the porcelain throne. A miserable night for them, especially one of our missionaries from England. Evidently the curry rice with chicken they made the night before took its toll on them.

Mothers, when your children go on

their missions, make sure they cook their chicken all the way through. Make sure they have a clean, sanitary kitchen, i.e., clean cutting boards, clean counters, clean knives and utensils, etc. Help them to know if meat is bad coming out of the freezer or refrigerator. Better to throw the meat away if it smells bad, feels bad, looks bad.

Mom has been helping them through it all with good advice on what and when to eat. She also made some homemade chicken soup and corn-bread for them so that when they got their strength back, they could have some hearty soup.

Photos:

- Mom and a non-member, Mrs. Gadlela. Her brother, who was a member of the church, died about 6 months ago. We still try to visit her. She loves Mom and she said she will come to our church for

Christmas. If she did not have so much money invested in her burial plan with her church, we think she would become a member. If she left the church she goes to, she loses all her money she put into a burial plan. - Mama Mcata with her great granddaughter. - Four very ill missionaries - food poisoning. (I drink Coke to kill any potentially-lethal bacteria I might accidentally consume.)

We love you!

Dad and Mom



Four very ill missionaries - food poisoning. (I drink Coke to kill any potentially-lethal bacteria I might accidentally consume.)



Mama Mcata
with her great
granddaughter



Mom and a
non-member,
Mrs. Gadlela.
Her brother,
who was a
member of the
church, died
about 6
months ago.
We still try to
visit her. She
loves Mom and
she said she
will come to
our church for
Christmas. If
she did not
have so much
money
invested in her
burial plan
with her
church, we
think she
would become
a member. If
she left the
church she
goes to, she
loses all her
money she put
into a burial
plan.

2018

NOVEMBER 15 }

Nov_15_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

It has been one of those days where cars, sick missionaries and boardings needed our attention. It has been a busy day running around getting everything done. We just need to keep in mind that these are important tasks that need to get completed. By having senior missionaries in some of these remote areas, the mission president and office missionaries have a huge burden taken off their shoulders.

Photos:

- We had a little cottage meeting the other night at the home of one of our faithful members. We had 15 people there besides missionaries. They were all members of the church, but so healthy for them to be meeting, discussing the gospel and running the show. - Elder Collett from Flaming Gorge. Great missionary and about to leave us and go

into the office as an Assistant to the President. He is one of those missionaries a mission president never has to worry about. - This is Elder Methembu from Durban. He calls us "Mommy" and "Daddy." Who does he look the most like, me or Mom?

We love you guys very, very much!

Dad and Mom



This is Elder Methembu from Durban. He calls us "Mommy" and "Daddy." Who does he look the most like, me or Mom?



Elder Collett from Flaming Gorge. Great missionary and about to leave us and go into the office as an Assistant to the President. He is one of those missionaries a mission president never has to worry about.



We had a little cottage meeting the other night at the home of one of our faithful members. We had 15 people there besides missionaries. They were all members of the church, but so healthy for them to be meeting, discussing the gospel and running the show.

2018

NOVEMBER 16 }

Nov_16_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

You might not believe this, but we had a busy day today!

If you recall, last Friday Mom lead the doctrinal discussion in our district meeting. As part of the agenda in our meeting, this morning, the district leader asked about our training last week. Wow, they all remembered Mom's discussion and how it helped them during the week. (FYI, Mom was worried last week that things might not go as well as she wanted. Ha, ha, ha, they love her. She is a rock star!)

I took one of our zone leaders to the airport today. He is going to be an assistant to the president. I made two requests of him as he contemplates his new assignment:

1. Remember that the transition into missionary life can be fairly abrupt and difficult for new mis-

sionaries. What can be done to ease them into their new environment and help them reach a comfort level quickly? 2. Find a way to teach unity in companionships. What can be done to avoid some of the tension and challenges of all of a sudden living with a stranger 24/7?

Mom and I are on track to have the Book of Mormon read individually by the end of the year. How are you guys doing? If you read 100 pages a week, starting now, you will get it done! I read Moroni's epistle to Pahoran today. What passion, righteous indignation, fire, patriotism, testimony in his letter. And some think Joseph Smith made it all up on his own! Absolutely, no way!

Photos:

- My reading group studying the literary value and writing style of, "The Hare and the Tortoise."

We love you,

Dad and Mom



My reading group studying the literary value and writing style of , "The Hare and the Tortoise."

Nov_17_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a nice baptism today. Sister Ncoyi and two young men were baptised. It has taken Sister Ncoyi a while, but she has been converted. She has gone through two or three sets of missionaries, but finally received that confirmation of the Spirit for herself. We hope and pray she will be well-received into the ward and be a great member of the Church the rest of her life.

Before she was baptized, she told the missionaries she had to do something. She did not tell them what it was. She took her Book of Mormon to her old church and testified to everyone that it was a book from God. She heard all kinds of responses to her testimony, but they did not phase her. She took the plunge and her neighbor that came to witness her baptism is next in line.

The two young men had their Young Men's President there. He gave a good talk and helped these guys feel very welcomed. That is the way it should be done.

Our fourth ward had an activity at the beach. We tried to find them after the baptism, but were unsuccessful. Hopefully it was well-attended and they had a good time. We are a little leary of activities where people have to fork out money from their own pocket to go somewhere. It would have been \$2.25 per person, round trip, for the transport. It doesn't sound like much, but for so many people, it is a big expense.

Photos:

- Mom took part in the baptism by holding her foot on the hose to fill the font and conducting the music.
- We have seen a few of these creatures outside. Fortunately, never in the house. Maybe good on the bar-

bque? - Mom and I when we went to the beach to find our 4th ward members. - Great baptism today. Sister Ncoyi and a couple young men that are nice additions to our MD 1st Ward.

Our love and prayers go out to all you guys!

Dad and Mom



Mom and I when we went to the beach to find our 4th ward members.



Mom took part in the baptism by holding her foot on the hose to fill the font and conducting the music.



Great baptism today. Sister Ncoyi and a couple young men that are nice additions to our MD 1st Ward.



We have seen a few of these creatures outside. Fortunately, never in the house. Maybe good on the barbque?

Nov_18_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We ran out of data yesterday and could not make phone calls, send emails or watch church videos (Sunday). So, let's see if I can remember all the way back 24 hours?

It seemed that our church attendance was up yesterday at both of our wards. We had an Area Seventy from Joburg in our MD 1st Ward. He is probably in his fifties, but loves to run. He spoke about preparing for a marathon. 8 weeks before the race he has a weekly routine he practises religiously to build up a good foundation for the marathon. He spoke of his preparation enabling him to maintain his pace and to push through the "Wall" that comes up during the race.

He drew the comparison of building a strong foundation on Christ and

how that can help us when the adversary constantly tries to derail us. The good old basics of scripture study, personal and family prayer and partaking of the sacrament each week are the keys to developing that foundation.

Mom spent time working with the music in both Primaries. Then, after church, she worked with the youth on learning and practicing a Christmas hymn.

We then went to a sister's house that is having a mastectomy this week and who needed a priesthood blessing. She is faithful and courageous. We are hoping that this surgery will take care of the problem and that cancer does not spread any further. Mom is working to purchase her a prosthetic bra. Since we have been here, she has come a long way and has been through a lot of trials. We love her and hope we can strengthen

her as she moves forward in life.

Dad and Mom

Photos:

- Mama Maxama - long time member of the Church, endowed and faithful as they come. She has a great sense of humor as she makes periodic comments in the Gospel Doctrine Class. - Mom, Sister Xamane and some of the young women in the MD 4th Ward. - Nandi Xamane, her Mother, Mama Whaca, Libo and Joy.

We love you all very much. Make good choices!



Nandi Xamane, her Mother, Mama Whaca, Libo and Joy.



Mama Maxama - long time member of the Church, endowed and faithful as they come. She has a great sense of humor as she makes periodic comments in the Gospel Doctrine Class.



Mom, Sister Xamane and some of the young women in the MD 4th Ward.

Tid Bits

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

*1. Word of the week: * "erudition," the quality of having or showing great knowledge or learning; scholarship. * Example:* Each of our grandchildren have the erudition of 10 geniuses all smushed together.

*2. Quote of the week: *

3. Scripture of the week:

And this is not all. Do ye not suppose that I know of these things myself? Behold, I testify unto you that I do know that these things whereof I have spoken are true. And how do ye suppose that I know of their surety?

Behold, I say unto you they are made known unto me by the Holy Spirit of God. Behold, I have fasted and prayed many days that I might know these things of myself. And now I do

know of myself that they are true; for the Lord God hath made them manifest unto me by his Holy Spirit; and this is the spirit of revelation which is in me. (Alma 5:45,46)

* 4. Joke of the week:*

Q: Why do missionaries have such large bladders?

A: Because they only have one P-day a week!

*5. Bee's Knees Award: *Are you a math wizard? Are you an expert on high performance cars? Are you a handsome dawg? This kid is simply great! He is a fabulous brother to his brothers and sisters. He loves school and is a very good student. Best of all, he is a great example pf living the gospel. He is a good friend to everyone. He does his part around the house. Everyone likes this young man. He lives the gospel at home and away from home. Jojo, you are the Bee's Knees, brotha!!!

6. Gospel question of the week: Daniel was the first to answer last week's question correctly. Who were the four sons of Mosiah? Answer: Aaron, Ammon, Himner and Omni. This week's question: Who was the King of Judah when Lehi and his family left Jerusalem?

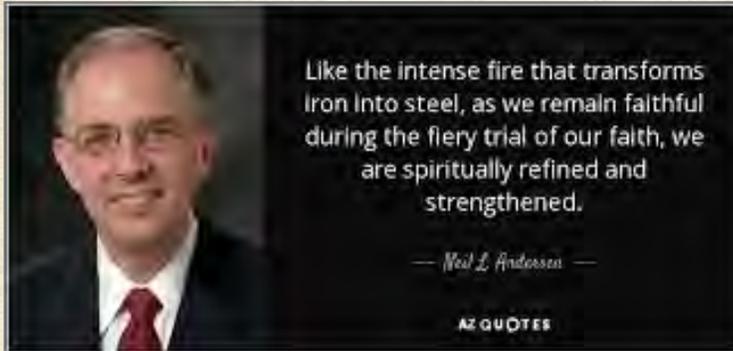
*7. If I were you (Advice to grand kids): * If I were you, I would learn how to get along with all kinds of people. This is important, because you will have all types of companions when you go on a mission. Try it. I think you will like it.

*8. What I learned this week: *Trust in the Lord. It will all work out to our good in the long run if we exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

9. What I am grateful for: I am thankful for not only the divine inspiration the living prophets and apostles receive, but also for the wealth of knowledge and life experience they all have individually and collectively.

10. My goal for this week: I have tried to work with the EQ president and the YM president to sit down





and have a meeting about how to run the show. I will try again this week.

*11. Photo of the week: * Mama sheep and her babies!

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

Dad and Mom

Nov_20_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We spent most of the day with a delightful group of kindergarten age children during their graduation at the Dumiso Junior Primary School. There were about 60 children and they all looked so cute in their little graduation robes. Mom and I took pictures of them so we can get them printed up and then, distributed to the school for the families to have before December break. Mom took individual shots. I took a picture of each child with their teachers.

We sat up close to the head table and during the ceremony felt that too much attention were given to "The man and woman of God." They seemed to be honored that we would be there and told the audience that we were the great grand parents of one of the children. We went to take pictures of "Junior" who is the son of

an active couple, Brother and Sister Booii, in our MD 4th Ward.

We thought is was especially thoughtful of them to translate some of the speech that the principal gave from Xhosa to English for us. She used an analogy of a farmer planting a seed of corn and how much care is taken to insure its nurturing and growth. She preached that such is the calling of mothers and teachers in today's world - nurturing and caring as we work with children.

Some thoughts on a different subject. We all have been amazed at how fast Nephite and Lamanite society changed from being righteous to being a wicked and perverse people. In some cases it was only a matter of a few years. We live in a wicked world today. Society seems immersed in sin. We should all be aware of how quickly things can slide from the present state of wickedness into a

condition where the Spirit of the Lord ceases to abide with man and the people are left to themselves. How extremely important for all of us to live the principles of the gospel in our homes in both word and deed!

Dad and Mom

Photos:

- Mom as master photographer -
- Mom and I with the principal and teachers of the graduating kindergarten class -
- Having lunch with the kids. (I paid for my own)

Keep up the good work of doing good. We love you,



Mom as master photographer.



Mom and I with the principal.



Mom and I with the principal and teachers of the graduating kindergarten class



Having lunch with the kids. (I paid for my own).

2018 NOVEMBER 21 }

Nov_21_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Transfer day. This meant a lot of transporting missionaries, handing out passports, collecting passports and saying farewell to missionaries going home. We were happy to report that all of the missionaries coming through our part of the country left and arrived to their destinations safely. Now, we pray that any new companionships will come together in unity and serve as powerful instruments in the hands of the Lord.

Mom stayed home today and baked cupcakes like a maniac. She is helping a young couple getting married in December, but are having a wedding dinner this Friday. They asked her to make cupcakes - 200 of them! They are very appreciative of what Mom is doing to help.

The young couple are good examples

to so many others in our stake. He is a return missionary and they will be sealed for time and all eternity on December 15th. They are happy together and they will be great members of the church wherever they land,

This evening we delivered some photos to a member family we took of the graduating kindergarten class at the Dumisa Junior Primary School. We gave them about 6 photos of their son. Approximately 200 photographs, 1/2 page size will go to the school for distribution. It will be a smash hit with the school administration and the parents.

Photos:

- Myself and Elder Bagley who played basketball for Logan High School with our grandson, Brayden Roberts. He will be in Queenstown, about 2 1/2 hours away from us. -
Cupcakes, cupcakes, cupcakes!

We love you guys very, very much.
Make good choices every minute,
every hour, every day!

Dad and Mom



Myself and Elder Bagley who played basketball for Logan High School with our grandson, Brayden Roberts. He will be in Queenstown, about 2 1/2 hours away from us.



Cupcakes!



Cupcakes,
cupcakes,
cupcakes!

2018 NOVEMBER 22 }

Nov_22_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Kind of a busy day today. I was able to trade a badly-needed wardrobe (closet) for a bunch of furniture junk that we had stored in a missionary boarding's garage. He delivered and hauled away. Heck of a deal. He'll make money and a set of our missionaries get a place to hang up slacks and shirts and drawers to put away socks, underwear, etc.

Mom put applied the finishing touches on the cupcakes for the wedding dinner. They are all ready to deliver tomorrow. On top of that, she made pumpkin pie for our district meeting in celebration of Thanksgiving. Of course, I insisted we have a can of whipped cream available to top off each piece. Personally, I like a little pumpkin pie with my whipped cream.

Mom worked with some young

women today at the kitchen at the church, helping them get ready for yet another bake sale. Then, she taught a piano class. Then, she taught 7 students in music conducting class.

While Mom was busy at the church house, Brother Shakes and I went visiting and chasing down some lost sheep. We made contact with two that were baptized a year ago and have gone less active. Both said they would be at church this Sunday. We will pray and keep our fingers crossed.

Photos:

- Here is a link to some videos of traditional dancers I caught at the airport:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1BCHgPo9EZDjsTm-BKKgT1sC4LHnHR11-r>

- Shakes and his certificate from

forklift school - Shakes and his family painted their house for Granny's funeral a month or two ago - looks pretty good - This is Brother Nthozini - he is the man that manages the big garden area in the township (NU1). I told him we miss him at church and invited him to come sit by Mom and I this Sunday.

We love you people!

Dad and Mom



Shakes and his family painted their house for Granny's funeral a month or two ago - looks pretty good.



Shakes and his certificate from forklift school.



This is Brother Nthozini - he is the man that manages the big garden area in the township (NU1). I told him we miss him at church and invited him to come sit by Mom and I this Sunday.

2018 NOVEMBER 23 }

Nov_23_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had an interesting district meeting this morning. We sat in with a different district than we normally do. We think we caught them a little by surprise. It would be easy to say the instruction and training was a little rough, but all four of these missionaries are very new. We are sure that over time their ability to teach and instruct only gets better.

Mom went to an eye doctor today. She has far away vision like an eagle! The doc seemed to think that part of the pressure she is feeling in and around her eyes is due mainly to the glands in the corners of the eyes being a little clogged. A warm wash cloth in the morning to open things up is the first thing to try. She also got an antibiotic and some eye drops if the warm cloth treatment isn't doing the trick. (She will probably have

to give you better details than me. I think the above is at least 40 - 50 % correct.)

We delivered 200 cupcakes this evening for the wedding dinner of Nkululeko and Sinethemba. It was a very nice event. Almost everything was in Xhosa. However, toward the end of the program, right before they served dinner, the bride and groom shared some remarks. We were really proud of Nkuja (nickname). He stood up and declared how the gospel has made all the difference in his life. He spoke of their pending temple marriage and how they will be sealed together for eternity. It was great for him to talk about these things since a lot of the audience were not members of the church.

Photos:

- Photos from the wedding dinner. Nkululeko and Sinethemba will be

married in the Johannesburg Temple on December 15th.

Love,

Dad and Mom



Wedding dinner for Nkululeko and Sinethemba.



Wedding dinner.



Nkululeko and Sinethemba will be married in the Johannesburg Temple on December 15th.

Nov_24_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Wow, I did a long walk this morning and about burned up in the sun. it was a little warm and it was only about 9 AM half way through my route. Isn't it great to have enough health to get out and walk? So far, so good. Mom and I do not take any prescription drugs. That's probably good, because my Diet Coke and Russian pizza would kill off any of the good effects of the drugs.

I took cookies out to the young men cleaning the church this morning. Mom was finishing a couple cupcakes with some frosting for a bake sale today. It was good to see the young men and young women getting the job done. They were hampered by the fact that the municipality workers are on strike and there was no water available anywhere.

This afternoon we took some baked goods that the young women advisers made earlier in the week to the Seminary and Institute graduation for a young women's bake sale. It looked like things were going pretty well for them even though there were other refreshments for the graduation audience.

How wonderful to see so many young people involved in Seminary and Institute! There has been a healthy increase in participation and it appears it will continue into this next year. Hats off to the hard work of the CES people. These graduates will make great missionaries and future leaders of the Church.

Photos:

- Libo Xamane, Nandi's son, graduating from Kindergarten. Nandi was in the hospital undergoing surgery. - Some wiener dogs I made friends with. When I reached

to give them a scratch, these ferocious watch dogs about lick me to death.

We love you. Have a great day making good choices!

Dad and Mom!



Libo Xamane, Nandi's son, graduating from Kindergarten. Nandi was in the hospital undergoing surgery.



Some wiener dogs I
made friends with.
When I reached to give
them a scratch, these
ferocious watch dogs
about lick me to death.

Nov_25_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We thought we were in for 5 hours of church meetings today, but were notified that the last hour of our MD 4th Ward was cancelled by the stake presidency because there was no water to the building due to a strike by the municipality workers. Probably a good call, since no water means no way to flush the toilets that get used quite a bit at the church house.

Mom and I went to the home of a lady (Mavreen) that works in the Sweet Shop to deliver a wedding gift. She and her husband were just married on October 9th of this year. We are happy they made a good decision for themselves and their two boys. We had purchased a small microwave, but did not realize they already had one. (Unusual for poor people living in government housing.)

So, we agreed to take the gift back and get them a slow-cooker (crock pot). That might be a good gift since she works 6 days a week and gets home late. This way the father can maybe get things started and then, have dinner when she arrives home. He is presently unemployed like so many others in the townships.

The missionaries were teaching this family for a while, but they live so far from the church house, it is difficult for them to make it as a family. They would need taxi money each week that they simply do not have. We believe their day is coming as the church becomes closer to them geographically.

Photos:

- Brother Magwaca, one of the first branch presidents in Mdantsane. Wonderful man with a lot of love and influence for the members. - The Mehlangabeza ex-

tended family. The man on the right is the stake president. His twin brother is on the back left. Another brother on the left. Mama/Makulu (grandmother) is in the middle.

Great family that is part of the foundation of the stake. - Mama Maxama. Great, endowed member of the MD 1st Ward. Been a member for many years.

We love you all very much. Have a wonderful Sabbath Day!

Dad and Mom

Tid Bits

Dear Family,

1. Word of the week: "tractate," A tractate is a written work dealing formally and systematically with a subject. *Example:* Future generations will read the tractates found in the D.O.P.E. Manual and marvel that their ancestors could be so wise.

2. Quote of the week: (President Gordon B. Hinckley)



Mama Maxama. Great, endowed member of the MD 1st Ward. Been a member for many years.



Brother Magwaca, one of the first branch presidents in Mdantsane. Wonderful man with a lot of love and influence for the members.

How do we know the things of the Spirit? How do we know that it is from God? By the fruits of it. If it leads to growth and development, if it leads to faith and testimony, if it leads to a better way of doing things, if it leads to godliness, then it is of God. If it tears us down, if it brings us into darkness, if it confuses us and worries us, if it leads to faithlessness, then it is of the devil.¹³ <<https://www.lds.org/manual/teachings-of-presidents-of-the-church-gordon-b-hinckley/chapter-7-the-whispering-of-the-spirit?lang=eng#note13>>

You recognize the promptings of the Spirit by the fruits of the Spirit—that which enlighteneth, that which buildeth up, that which is positive and affirmative and uplifting and leads us to better thoughts and better words and better deeds is of the Spirit of God. That which tears down, which leads us into forbidden paths—that is of the adversary. I think it is just that plain, just that simple.

3. Scripture of the week:

If thou turn away thy foot from the

sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath <<https://www.lds.org/scriptures/search?lang=eng&query=Sabbath+is+a+delight&x=0&y=0#note13a>> a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: -Isiah 58:3

4. Joke of the week:

Q: What is the fastest way to speak with God?

A: Knee Mail

*5. Bee's Knees Award: * Did your mother ever give you the nickname, "Beauty?" Are you happy and love life? This girl loves her husband and adores her children. She is a peacemaker. She does not criticize or talk behind people's backs. She loves the gospel and practises it in her home and in public. She has an award-winning smile. She has a crazy, funny sense of humor. She is not caught up in the world. She loves to watch old movies with her mother while sitting on the love sofa eating pop-

corn. She is perfect. Mookie, you are the Bee's Knees, sistah!!!

*6. Gospel question of the week: * Last week's question was answered correctly by Michael Beckstead, followed closely by the Chandlers and Michael Stevenson. Answer: Zedekiah was the king at the time Lehi left Jerusalem. This week's question: What is the scriptural reference for the "Stick of Joseph" and the "Stick of Judah?"

*7. If I were you (Advice to grand kids): * If I were you, I would learn how to swim a half mile. Try it. I think you will like it. (Make sure your parent or an adult is close by to help.)

*8. What I learned this week: * Re-learned that our Heavenly Father will not force us to do anything. He holds our agency and ability to choose inviolate.

*9. What I am grateful for: * I love faithful members of the Church. The ones that just keep going like they are on energizer batteries 24/7. They are converted and "All In."

10. My goal for the week: Speak with three young men about mission plans.

*11. Photo of the week: * Awesome missionary!

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

Dad and Mom



The Mehlangabeza extended family. The man on the right is the stake president. His twin brother is on the back left. Another brother on the left. Mama/Makulu (grandmother) is in the middle. Great family that is part of the foundation of the stake



Awesome missionary!

2018

NOVEMBER 26 }

Nov_26_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,
Mom and I did our long walk this morning. Please do not laugh at our old people speed - 7 miles in two hours. It was not as hot this morning as Saturday, but it seemed a lot more humid. Consequently, I was drenched by the time we arrived at our house.

Unfortunately, the condition of our yard required me to get out the clippers and go to work. I made my way around to the back of the house and started to whack away on a flowering bush. To my surprise, an elderly lady came our from the house behind us and told me to stop! She saw the last time I had trimmed that bush and she was not happy. It happens to be right in her rear patio window view. She said, "Please don't cut that beautiful bush down to a skeleton." I told her thanks for stopping me. It was a lot less clean up for me.

I watched the BYU - Utah game today with Elder Hodges. He is a dyed-in-the-wool BYU fan. It was painful. "IF" there was an extra point on our first touchdown. "IF" there was not the pick-six interception. "IF" the Kafusi boys had not gone out of the game. Wow, that was a tough loss. However, my testimony is still intact and life moves on. (Where was David Walker and Carter Roberts when they needed them?)

Photos:

- One of the hedges before and after. - One of our granddaughters asked what kind of shoes they wear here in South Africa. These are a few from our Sunday meeting.

We love you!!! Have a great day!

Dad and Mom



One of the hedges before and after.



One of our granddaughters asked what kind of shoes they wear here in South Africa.



These are a few from our Sunday meeting.

2018

NOVEMBER 27 }

Nov_27_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

This morning was hot and humid, but later on today it cooled off and we had a nice breeze.

Yesterday, I mentioned the BYU - Utah game. Some times in life we look back and say, "If only..." It reminds me of the short poem, The saddest words of tongue and pen, are these, it might have been." So, when we live life today by making good choices, we will not have many times when we look back with regret. My sermon for the day.

Outside of a meeting at the Phakamile School, it has been a fairly uneventful day. There was no school today due to no water. The municipality workers are on strike. From what I can ascertain, they are not looking for an increase in wages, they just want to the city to pay them what they owe the workers. Either

horrible financial planning or some one is lining their pockets.

We are planning on taking a meal into the Xamane family, where Sister Xamane has been in the hospital undergoing surgery. She returned home last night, but we want to take in a meal and some flowers to cheer her up. She likes funeral potatoes after tasting them for the first time a number of months ago. I think that is what Mom might be planning.

Photos:

- The Daily Dispatch is the local newspaper. - Trash piling up because there are no workers to collect it all.

Have a great day. We love you,

Dad and Mom



Trash piling up because there are no workers to collect it all.



The Daily Dispatch is the local newspaper.

Nov_28_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

A lot of running around today, but we were able to get a lot done. I had a doctor appointment right in the middle of the afternoon and it made it difficult to get to our area. Besides, Mom spent a lot of time getting a delicious dinner ready for our mission president who came to visit us while he is here for zone conference.

I saw a dermatologist because of some spots on my forehead that looked a little suspicious. As you can see in the photograph below, everywhere he circles a spot is where there is the potential for things to become cancerous. About two percent end up cancerous. So the treatment is to freeze anything that looks out of order with liquid nitrogen. It burns and blisters, but zaps the bad cells so that cancer never develops.

We had a very nice meal with President Lebethoa. He is dedicated to his calling as a mission president and has the full respect of all the missionaries. What is great about him is the fact that he comes from the largest township in South Africa. He has seen it all. There is nothing that our missionaries see or experience that he hasn't seen or experienced. He can positively relate to what our missionaries are doing.

Photos:

- We think this is a gold fish cracker that got wet and grew 200 times its normal size. - Me with the white spots that have been frozen with liquid nitrogen.

We love you! Stay faithful!

Dad and Mom



We think this is a gold fish cracker that got wet and grew 200 times its normal size.



Me with the white spots that have been frozen with liquid nitrogen.

2018

NOVEMBER 29 }

Nov_29_2018

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We took lunch out to a sister that just had surgery and has returned home. Mom made a delicious meat loaf, funeral potatoes and a bag of chocolate chip cookies. We also gave her a box of chocolates which is a proven medicine for rapid healing from surgery, fortunately, her mother is here from Joburg and is helping. There are two very active little boys in the family that require a lot of attention.

We also stopped by the church and saw where thieves had tried to break in during the previous night. We saw about four or five broken windows and one door that they had tried to bust open. It appears that that the deadbolts on the doors and the security bars on the windows did their job of keeping them out.

Unfortunately, with uber high un-

employment and people who are hungry or are trying to feed a drug habit, we will probably continue to see things like this happen. How wonderful when the day comes that we can live as a Zion people and there will be no poor among us!

Photos:

We love you. Have a great day doing good!

Dad and Mom

Nov_29_2018

Dad asked me to send a quick note letting everyone know that the power is out and they don't have electricity today so the update won't happen until tomorrow. Power is out because of a big thunderstorm and they're doing great.

Nov_30_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Many of you received an email from Daniel stating that the power is down here in our area and that we would probably not get an update out this evening. It just came back on. One more hour and we would have been sawing logs.

Every six months we have a zone conference. During this time we have our mission president come and instruct, train, teach, exhort, testify and bless. We had an enjoyable training. President Lebethoa is a very good man that loves being a missionary!

Mom taught her piano lesson and music conducting class this afternoon. On our way home, we discussed for just a few minutes, goals for the balance of our mission. One thing she would like to do is teach another set of piano and conducting

classes and then, teach simple sewing and mending to some of the sisters in our wards.

We had quite the thunder and lightning storm this evening. It was one of those storms where you see lightning streak after lightening streak flashing through dark clouds in the sky. Mother Nature is awesome. And, we certainly needed the water.

Mom and I received our family history book, "They Walked With Us in Truth." I started reading it right away. I love my parents and siblings, but reading their history does something a little more to turn your hearts toward them. However, I am withholding judgment for tight now. I just want to make sure that Uncle Thom and I have received an adequate amount of attention and good press from our sisters.

Photos:

- This little bag of "American Dough Nuts" cost 42 cents. You can see how small the dough nuts are. They have no idea of the real American Dough nuts. How about a maple bar with bacon, a raspberry filled sugar dough nut, a French crueller or a hot glaze dough nut from Krispy Creme? - New lighting in our chapel - This is a broken hammer, stuck in the back door of the church, where thieves tried to break in. 36 hours later, one cop showed up.

We love you,

Dad and Mom



This is a broken hammer, stuck in the back door of the church, where thieves tried to break in. 36 hours later, one cop showed up.



This little bag of "American Dough Nuts" cost 42 cents. You can see how small the dough nuts are. They have no idea of the real American Dough nuts. How about a maple bar with bacon, a raspberry filled sugar dough nut, a French crueller or a hot glaze dough nut from Krispy Creme?



Dec_01_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Is it okay to say, "Merry Christmas" now that it is officially the month of December? Before we know it, we will be celebrating the new year and we can watch BYU play in the Rose Bowl!

This morning the Primary leaders of the 4th ward took about 20 children to the beach. They are awfully brave women to do that! Mom was asked to whip up some cookies (yesterday afternoon) and to supply some grapes for the outing. Since the beach was near our house, we drove there and delivered the goods.

The children were having a good time and they appeared to be well-mannered and obedient to their leaders. For breakfast, they had buttered bread with a mixture of mixed up Pilchard (like small fish) in a tomato sauce and mayonnaise. I did

not eat a sandwich, thank you anyway!

We have a landlord for one of our missionary boardings that isn't following through on repairing some things. I texted her today to let her know that we are beginning our search for another boarding. I received a semi-panicked call about 15 minutes later. We will see if anything happens. Mom and I still went looking this afternoon for a rental place just in case our landlord friend fails to do her part.

Photos:

- MD 4th Ward Primary children at Bonza Bay Beach
- Dedicated Primary workers
- Libhongo with a jump rope (almost as good as Mom)

We love you!!!

Dad and Mom



Dedicated Primary workers



Libhongo with a jump rope (almost as good as Mom)



MD 4th Ward Primary
children at Bonza Bay
Beach

Dec_02_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

It was a blessing to attend church today and to partake of the sacrament and hear the bearing of testimonies. We felt a good spirit in our meetings today

After the MD 4th Ward we had a missionary fireside. This was well-attended given the problems this ward has had over this last year with attendance. And, what is great is the Ward Mission Leader conducting the show! The fireside focused on the "Light the World" campaign. We hope all get involved and do their part to make this world a little better.

We heard a faith-promoting story today in priesthood meeting. The Lubelwana family is a devoted and strong family in the MD 4th Ward. Brother Lubelwana described his brother and his wife as very argumentative with their membership in

the LDS Church. His sister-in-law was a high ranking leader in a certain protestant church. She had cancer and died a few years back.

On a trip to Johannesburg, Sister Lubelwana took the sister-in-law's name to the temple so that someone could do the work for her. A number of months ago, she called her husband who was traveling in a far away city. She told him of the sister-in-law appearing to her in a dream. She said nothing, but looked very sad.

A couple of months ago, out of the blue, Sister Lubelwana asked her husband if he thought that maybe the work for the sister-in-law never got completed. He told her she could easily find out on the upcoming ward temple trip. This she did only to find out that the work had not been done. She was able to complete the work for her on this trip.

Weeks later, she reported to her husband that the sister-in-law appeared again in a dream. Like the last time, she said nothing, but she was smiling and so visibly happy.

Tonight we will drop off a wedding gift to our Sweet Shop lady, Mavreen, since she and her husband are now married as of October 9th. We bought them a crock pot, a roast, bag of potatoes, bag of carrots, and a bag of onions. Also, Mom made a chocolate wedding cake for them.

Photos:

- Members attending the missionary fireside

We love you more today than yesterday!

Dad and Mom



Members attending the missionary fireside



Dec_03_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Car problems today. One car had to go in for a regular maintenance service. No big deal. However, we had another car where the battery went dead and their car was left in the church parking lot last night. Our fleet manager said to just have it towed to the dealership. I did not think that was a good idea, so I borrowed a battery from our auto body friends and went to the church parking lot and swapped out the battery. Mom drove our car and I drove the other one to our friendly mechanic guy in Gonubie.

Whatever the problem, his cost will be a half to a third less money than the dealership.

It appears the alternator is okay, but the battery was deader than a door nail. He is charging it up over night and it will be ready in the morning.

As a precaution, we'll take the car to a starter/alternator/battery shop to specifically have the alternator checked out.

I met with a gentleman this afternoon (preparation day) regarding leather work. He is quite good, but expensive. I plan to have him make a crocodile belt for me.

Photos:

- Some of the leather work that Dale Bicknell does.

Keep doing good things. We love you!

Dad and Mom!



Some of the leather work that Dale Bicknell does.



Dec_04_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

It has been one of those days where car repairs, reports, Senior Council meeting, delivering passports, transporting missionaries to the airport and high finance banking have taken way too much time!

We heard some very good news today. When one of our ZL's came on his mission his parents were not members of the church. He has been a good, faithful missionary. He just learned yesterday that his mother was baptized. His younger brother, getting ready to go on a mission, baptized her. His older brother, who returned home from a mission, confirmed her a member of the church. His father has sat in on a lesson or two. He was very excited. And, so were we. What a great blessing to think that in a short year or two, their whole family could be sealed

together in the Durban Temple!

FYI, this Elder is from Durban and said he had known of Uncle Greg and Aunt Sandy. They were in the same stake. I am reluctant to say this, but he mentioned Greg was a notoriously bad driver and that he snored and drooled in church. (JK, folks, JK!)

During our Senior Council telephone conference, we heard from one of the senior office couples that their son, who has been less active for the last 25 years, is going to the temple to receive his endowment. What a great blessing for this dedicated office couple! What a great blessing for their son!

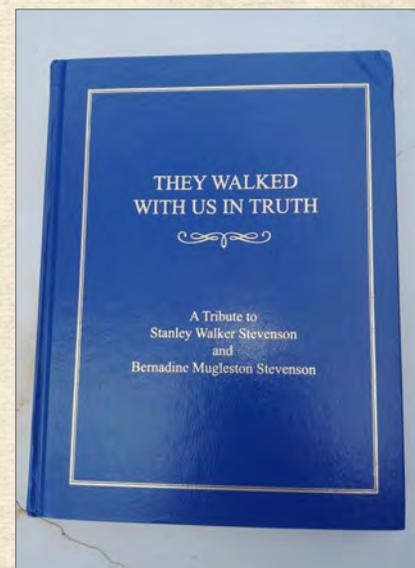
Missions generate blessings. For us, it is to hear that our grandson crammed four people on prom night, all in formal attire, into the Porsche on a double date.

Photos:

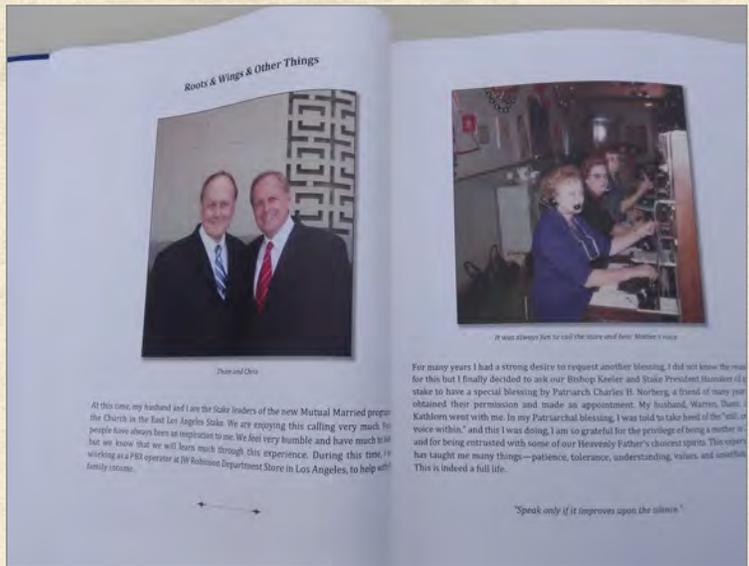
- Aunts Diane and Kathy put together a marvelous family history book as a tribute to our father and mother. They were kind enough to send our copy across the Atlantic Ocean to South Africa for us to enjoy. It has been a joy to peruse and read. Lots of choice history, color photographs and even some poetry.

We love you all so very much!

Dad and Mom



Aunts Diane and Kathy put together a marvelous family history book as a tribute to our father and mother.



They were kind enough to send our copy across the Atlantic Ocean to South Africa for us to enjoy.



It has been a joy to peruse and read. Lots of choice history, color photographs and even some poetry.

Dec_05_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

You won't believe this, but yea, we had some car problems this morning. Actually, last night we had a missionary back up into a block wall. It made a small dent in the bumper but also broke the tail light assembly. I will take it to the panel beaters on Monday and they will fix it plus some additional damage the car has for \$500 or less.

The same car is having some type of electrical issues. It is not the battery or the alternator. We are taking it to the dealership first thing in the morning.

I also went to the pawn shop to sell some weight plates, a long bar and a barbell bar. They told me R 500 a week ago. I walked out of the shop with R 600. They got a good deal and I was able to transfer to money to the missionary that went home and

had left the set here.

We met with a family this afternoon where the son died just yesterday. He was a member of the Church. He was in the "Bush" and was about ready to come home. The Bush is a ritual, ceremony were young men live in makeshift grass huts and eventually are circumcised by a tribal doctor with a sharp traditional type knife. They are to remain quiet during the "surgical procedure," After it happens, he yells out, "I'm a man!" Apparently he had an asthma attack while out there. Those around him were unable to help him. Supposedly, his inhaler did not work. It was very sad for the entire community where he lives.

We also visited Mama Keya. She is about 80 years old and helps run a soup kitchen for old people. She is going into the hospital tomorrow for some surgery on her right arm. She

experiences a lot of pain when she tries to wash and hang clothes, give herself a bath, dress and undress, etc. After they operate on her right arm, she comes home and recuperates. Then 6 weeks later they will do the left arm.

We saw her at the old folks kitchen. She went home later in the afternoon and we met her at her house where I was able to give her a priesthood blessing. She has a grandson that is serving a mission in Johannesburg. They didn't believe he could serve a mission because he has

HIV from his mother at birth. Fortunately, it was made possible and how has done a great job (according to her completely unbiased opinion)! She loves this boy and he comes home in March. She is very excited to see him!

Photos:

- Mama Keya is the second from the left - Results from the big accident. The first question the mission president is going to ask is, "Was there someone backing you up?" Unfortunately, contrary to mission rules, no one was backing him up.



Results from the big accident. The first question the mission president is going to ask is, "Was there someone backing you up?" Unfortunately, contrary to mission rules, no one was backing him up.



Mama Keya is
the second
from the left

We love you. Make good choices to-
day!

Dad and Mom

Dec_06_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Today was another car repair, boarding maintenance and transporting missionaries day. I will spare you the details.

Mom was asked yesterday by the bishop of the MD 4th Ward to put together a program for our Christmas Sacrament Meeting. She has spent a good portion of today reading and writing. She has a finished program she wants to show to the bishop tomorrow and get his approval. It will be very nice with just the right balance of scripture and song.

I was so busy today running from here to there and back, I forgot to capture any photos. So, I thought I would steal a few from our archive of photos we have taken so far on our mission.

Here is a great quote from my

grandfather Albert Mugleston, "I never learned anything when I was talking."

Photos:

- It seems like it was just a few weeks ago that we stood at the wall map at the MTC and pointed to the other side of the world from Huntsville, Utah. - This cat, a Caracal by name, scared the water out of me as I was harassing it when it was trying to eat. It thought I was trying to take his meal. The thing hissed at me and I jumped back about ten feet!

We love you! Be good. Be extra good.

Dad and Mom



This cat, a Caracal by name, scared the water out of me as I was harassing it when it was trying to eat. It thought I was trying to take his meal. The thing hissed at me and I jumped back about ten feet!



It seems like it was just a few weeks ago that we stood at the wall map at the MTC and pointed to the other side of the world from Huntsville, Utah.

2018

DECEMBER 7 }

Dec_07_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

District meeting today. Good discussion on Acts 8:26-38.

After our meeting we came home to work on some Christmas program stuff, but after an hour or two, we received a phone call from our ZL's. One of our missionaries, Elder Sovereign from Arizona, was jumping on a trampoline and came off landing weird on his foot. He felt like he broke it and the office suggested taking him in for x-rays.

We were at the clinic for about 3 1/2 hours. End diagnosis, maybe some pulled ligaments in his foot, but no broken bones. So, the doctor prescribed an anti-inflammatory and a heavy pain killer. He left the clinic with crutches and a walking boot.

Photos:

- Elder Sovereign (L) and Elder

Boyer (R) in the waiting room. - Aids/HIV is a huge problem in South Africa and there is quite a bit of public education on prevention, testing and medical help.

We love you all very much. FTP, CTR, WITL, RWH, ETC.

Dad and Mom



Aids/HIV is a huge problem in South Africa and there is quite a bit of public education on prevention, testing and medical help.



Elder Sovereign (L) and Elder Boyer (R) in the waiting room.



2018

DECEMBER 8 }

Dec_08_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear family,

I read a newspaper article a few days ago where a total of 9 initiates have died so far this "Bush Season." The last one was a member of one of our wards. He was 18 and died of an asthma attack. Another one was burnt alive as his grass hut caught on fire around 3 AM. He was gone before any one could rescue him. This particular tradition is pretty scary when you consider the number of deaths that occur from it each season.

Mom and I went to a marriage fire-side. We were asked to speak by the 1st ward Elder's Quorum President. When we arrived, it was really his 6th wedding anniversary we were speaking at. (Our fault for not clearly understanding his invitation.) It was well-attended and several people were asked to share their sage advice with the couple.

Mom and I took about ten minutes each. In my little presentation, I shared our family history book as an example of what they can start in the way of setting great examples for their posterity. It was truly wonderful to see this couple stand in front of their friends and share how much they love each other. He is a return missionary and they were married in the temple. They are helping to lay a very important foundation for their family and for the other members of the Church in Mdantsane.

I ate some of the sausage and the pork. Maybe not a good idea. Mom was a witness to the huber unsanitary methods of handling the meat. I will know better tomorrow morning. Mom brought a Napa Cabbage salad and some brownies.

We ran a candy bar, granola bar and eight cupcakes over to a four-man missionary flat to celebrate Elder

Sovereign's birthday. Mom likes to make sure they feel good about having their birthday even though they are far a way from home. Just what you would expect from a mother!

Photos:

- The men! - The women! -
The meat eaters! - The happily
married couple!



The men!

The women!



The meat eaters!



The happily married couple!



Tid Bits

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

*1. Word of the week: *"confluence," the junction of two rivers, especially rivers of approximately equal width. * Example:* In General Conference, Elder Soares uses the description of the confluence of two rivers forming the mighty Amazon River and how we in the church have the great blessing of a confluence of members from all over the world.

*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? (Alma 5:26)

4. Joke of the week:

Q: Where was the first baseball game?

A: The big inning. Eve stole first. Adam took second. Cain struck out Abel.

5. Bee's Knees Award: Do you have ninja turtle blood running through your body? Probably not. This kid is dedicated to his family. He loves and adores his wife. He will do anything for his children (as long as it is for their own good). He is honest with his fellow men. He is a true entrepreneur. He keeps the commandments. He is a natural athlete and weight lifter extraordinaire. He loves children and they love him. He has a kind heart and is sensitive to other's needs. He is flat out awesome. David, you are the Bee's Knees, brotha!!!

*6. Gospel question of the week: * The answer to last week's question is the "Danites," answered first by Michael Beckstead and then, 6 min-

utes later by Michelle Terry. This week's question: In what land was Aaron and his brethren imprisoned?

7. If I were you (Advice to grandchildren): If I were you, I would remember to smile at everyone. Your smile can lift the depressed, discouraged and down-hearted. And, people will see you as a happy, lovely person. Try it. I think you will like it.

8. What I learned this week: In the church, personal righteousness and "Blooming where you are planted" is more important than recognition.

9. What I am grateful for: Family history. How wonderful to read about parents, grand parents and other ancestors. Their faith can help us in our daily lives, struggles and choices we make.

10: My goal for the week: Have more meaningful, sincere private prayer.

11. Photo of the week: The day Mom and I became parents to 9 beautiful Black Labrador puppies!





Dec_09_2018

Dear Family,

We enjoyed a pleasant Sabbath attending our meetings, renewing covenants and learning more about the Restored Gospel. Usually, we use Sunday afternoons to make phone calls and catch up on emails to family and our Mdantsane missionaries that have left us and are serving in the field.

It has also been a day of revelation.

When we arrived home, I mentioned to Mom that I should probably stay in my white shirt and tie as our missionaries without a car (in the shop) might call and need a ride back to their boarding. At 7:30 PM, I decided to change into my comfortable pajamas and get ready for some enjoyable and relaxing reading.

I received a phone call from one of our missionaries at 7:50 saying they could use a ride home. Needless to say, I was a little put out. I told them I would try to pick them up at 8:30. It is a 35 minute trip, one way, from

where we live. Fortunately, I had some time to settle down my feelings of strangling people.

First of all, they should not be in the township after dark. Bad things happen. Secondly, why are four of them together, with a fellowshipping, visiting one home? That is a little overkill for a family. Thirdly, was this a social gathering or a teaching appointment (One Elder's birthday today. Several young people leaving the home when I picked them up). Lastly, if you do not have a car, use the transport money the mission provides you to get a taxi and leave the township before dark. Reschedule your appointments so you are not in your area in the dark.

As I was traveling to pick them up, I thought of how President Nelson might handle this matter. I think I had a few strokes of inspiration. One, ask some questions to first try and understand with them what the mission rules and policies are. Second, we should include the Zone Leaders in the future. When missionaries are having problems, they don't call the Assistants to the President, they are to call their Zone

Leaders. Similarly, if you have a transportation problem, don't call senior missionaries as if they are your personal taxi, call your Zone Leaders.

So, we had a very good conversation on the way to their flat. In the future, if they get into a pickle, they are to call their Zone Leaders. If things cannot be resolved at that level, the ZL's can contact us for assistance.

Photos:

- Look what I saw the other day going to the grocery store! This is an early 60's bath tub Porsche. Upon close inspection, it has some problems. However, cool to see. Maybe the only one in the Eastern Cape. FYI, I saw a 1959 Convertible D Porsche about three years ago in Monterey. The owner had been offered \$185K and he turned it down. I sold mine back in 1980 +/- for around \$5,000. Excuse me, please. I think I am feeling sick!

We love you more than fried mosquito knuckles!

Dad and Mom



Look what I saw the other day going to the grocery store! This is an early 60's bath tub Porsche. Upon close inspection, it has some problems. However, cool to see. Maybe the only one in the Eastern Cape.



FYI, I saw a 1959 Convertible D Porsche about three years ago in Monterey. The owner had been offered \$185K and he turned it down. I sold mine back in 1980 +/- for around \$5,000. Excuse me, please. I think I am feeling sick!

2018 DECEMBER 10 }

Dec_10_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

It has been a fairly relaxing preparation day. That is, until I saw the BYU - Utah basketball game and Yoli Childs performing an acrobatic tomahawk slam dunk over two U of U redwoods trying to block his shot! I have been riled up ever since. And the guy is only 6'7"? A good way for a defender to get his wrists broken.

Mom and I had a good walk this morning. Fortunately, it was a little overcast and not too hot. The nice thing about this weather is in the Summer, you get some ugly hot days, but they are not all that way. Today was very moderate and pleasant. In the Winter, you get your cold days but most of the time fairly moderate. Maybe a light jacket on a handful of days.

Thank you for your love and sup-

port. We feel your prayers and appreciate all you do for us.

However, we understand that David has set his email to reject any of our updates. This hurts so bad! Would some one please inform him that he is responsible for the games we will be playing at the two-ward party here in Mdantsane. He should plan on 200 people. Our kids, Mom and I should be team captains. Maybe also the bishops and counselors, depending on how many you want on a team.

Photos:

- Sambe, son of Brother and Sister Xingashe - Michael and Annie Beckstead are coming this way in February. We have to do comprehensive research to know what types of cold cereal are available for Michael. He will starve to death if there is not good cold cereal and hot pizza and Coke Zero.

We love you. We think you are great and pray for you continually!

Dad and Mom



Sambe, son of Brother and Sister Xingashe



Michael and Annie Beckstead are coming this way in February.



We have to do comprehensive research to know what types of cold cereal are available for Michael. He will starve to death if there is not good cold cereal and hot pizza and Coke Zero.

Dec_11_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

I called the Chevy dealership this morning to see if our car would be ready today. They still had not fixed it. I asked why it is taking so long. They said they are waiting for a part. I said it was totally unacceptable (they have had it now for 5 days). They said the alternator should be in by the end of the week. This meant that it would be next week before we could have that car back in the field. I told them to get the car ready for me to pick up in one hour.

I called our friendly mechanic here in Gonubie. He said he could do the job. Within an hour, he had a replacement alternator at his shop. We took the car over to him and we are hoping we will drive it away tomorrow at half the price Chevy was going to charge. I spent much of the morning fixing a missionary bed

with wood glue, a bolt, a bracket and some screws. I also loaded up a box spring on top of our car and hauled it over to another missionary boarding.

We have one four man boarding that Mom and I are little concerned about. Here is what you can say when it comes to missionary boardings:

- 2 man boarding is perfect
- 4 man boarding is a party
- 6 man boarding is a frat house

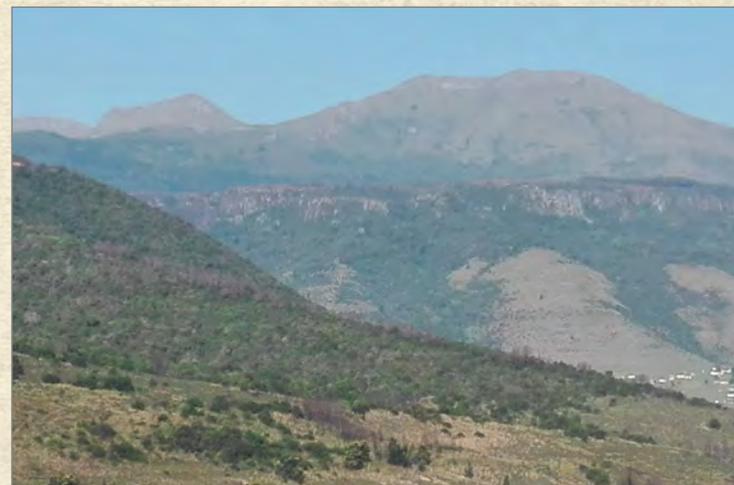
I purchased some lamb chops from a higher-priced grocery store than we normally go to on the recommendation of our mission president. I baked one up for dinner (Mom elected to have chicken). It was pretty good, but nothing like a fillet Mignon or an end cut of some prime rib! At the risk of offending my son-in-law, Klave, I think lamb is a little too greasy for me.

We love to hear from our "Mdantsane Missionaries," the ones that have left from here to go on a mission somewhere else. One just spent time with Elder Sitati of the Quorum of the Seventy, visiting less active members in their area. It was quite an experience for him. He will be a very strong member of the church when he returns to Mdantsane. This is one of the missionaries you helped with his initial clothing requirements. Good job!

Photos: - The braai (barbecue) is just what you see there, half of a

barrel with some type of grate. They use whatever wood they can find to make the coals. - This is a photo of the Hogs Back Mountains. The elevation might be around 3,000 feet. The area for this particular location is pretty small - maybe like Ogden Valley. However, very nicely wooded, secluded and a bit of a resort destination for some. It is about 2 1/2 hours from our place in Gonubie. - Elder Molteno from our MD 1st Ward, serving in Johannes-

burg. Love,



This is a photo of the Hogs Back Mountains. The elevation might be around 3,000 feet. The area for this particular location is pretty small - maybe like Ogden Valley. However, very nicely wooded, secluded and a bit of a resort destination for some. It is about 2 1/2 hours from our place in Gonubie.



The braai (barbecue) is just what you see there, half of a barrel with some type of grate. They use whatever wood they can find to make the coals.

Dad and Mom



Elder Molteno from our MD 1st Ward, serving in Johannesburg.

2018 DECEMBER 12 }

Dec_12_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Great news. Our mechanic friend here in Gonubie had a refurbished alternator back in the missionary car and it was back on the road before the end of business today. We have not seen the bill yet, but I am guessing around \$ 4,000 Rand or about \$280 USD. (The dealer was going to charge \$420+) Needless to say, our missionaries were very excited to have some wheels again.

We went and looked at a new boarding today just in case the land lords of two other boardings do not come through with some repairs they have promised. The basically have until the end of the month. This new boarding would be very comfortable for two missionaries. I will attach a couple of photos for you to give you an idea.

We had a very nice cottage meeting

this evening. 20 people there, including missionaries. Our YM president gave the lesson about setting goals. We had two members of the bishopric there. A few of the young men talked of preparations for missions. Sister Booi handled all the refreshments. They really did not need the cookies that Mom brought. These are very healthy activities for the ward members to have.

Photos:

- Potential boarding - Good attendance to cottage meeting

We love you very much! Really!

Dad and Mom



Potential boarding



Good attendance to cottage meeting

Dec_13_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We did a boarding inspection today in King Williams Town, about an hour away. Things went okay. We took some time to do a little shopping there for some items the missionaries needed for their boarding. Good missionaries. One is Elder Buxton, the older brother to one of Barrett Roberts' basketball buddy.

I spent time at the airport to make sure we distributed and collected passports form coming and going missionaries. The ones I keep are in a wall safe within our closet. The mission president is very serious about safeguarding passports. The main reason is the complete hassle in getting new ones put together. It takes time, travel and money. He would rather have the missionaries working.

Mom spent some time mending missionary pants, making chocolate zucchini muffins and also a large bag of cookies for a funeral on Saturday. I worked on paperwork from two small car accidents. I also forwarding the invoice for the alternator repair on one of our cars. It was R 2,820 compared to the dealer who wanted R 5,900. We also sent in a recommendation with photos of a new boarding we have checked out. Unfortunately, we have some landlords that are not following through on needed repairs.

I had a pleasant surprise this evening. Adam Stevenson called me. We had a great visit. I love this boy and so glad he considers me a friend. He told me that the Tesla Coupe, Model 3 goes 0 to 60 in 1.5 seconds. I had to correct him. It is 1.9 seconds. Here is a link to some absolutely crazy cars for 2019: <https://edition.cnn.com/style/article>

[/best-luxury-cars-in-2019/index.html](#)

Photos:

- It is interesting to see the presence of the Islamic culture here in South Africa. This is mosque is in a remote part of South Africa. How did Islam show up here? Fortunately, South African society seems to appreciate a diversity of religions. The religions that get a bad name are those that continually pry for money or where you have pastors embracing sexual relationships with parishioners. For example: - <http>

[s://ewn.co.za/2018/12/10/omotoso-trial-to-resume-today-in-port-elizabeth](http://ewn.co.za/2018/12/10/omotoso-trial-to-resume-today-in-port-elizabeth)

We love you. Be strong as a bear in the gospel. Stay on the covenant path!

Dad and Mom



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2018

DECEMBER 14 }

Dec_14_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had district meeting today. I left early because I had a phone call from a member of one of our wards who is fabricating the barbecue grills for our January 7th combined two-ward party with Elizabeth, Daniel, Michael and David as special guests. I had to pick them up today because they are shutting down for the holidays. The party should be great fun if David comes up with the right games and is prepared to rev up the masses.

I hope our children will be polite enough to eat chicken feet and chicken heads when they are offered to them.

Mom spent a lot of time at the organ/piano today. At 3 PM no one showed up for choir practice for the funeral that is being held tomorrow. At 3:30 the choir director appeared.

Slowly, several youth showed up and we practiced two hymns. We hope we will have a lot more people attend tomorrow morning's 8 AM practice.

I saw a headline the other day that the top 5 "cash-in-transit-heists" (armored cars) have been in and around Mthatha. It is estimated that R 20 million has been stolen. We are glad we do not go to Mthatha any more. The Hodges get to do that. Two weeks ago, the missionaries were robbed on two separate occasions.

The continual advice to our missionaries is to comply, comply, comply. Give the robbers what they want. We can always replace R 50 and a lousy, outdated Nokia phone. I was telling some of our missionaries today that part of our training as male senior missionaries is to comply, comply, comply when our companions ask us

to do something! Point of clarification: I am not comparing our wives to robbers and thugs.

Photo:

- This is what it looks like when you are trying to discourage any midnight visitors to your property or business.

We love you, plain and simple. We love you!

Dad and Mom



This is what it looks like when you are trying to discourage any midnight visitors to your property or business.

2018

DECEMBER 15 }

Dec_15_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We attended a funeral today for an 18 year old member of the Church who died on Dec. 4th while at a traditional initiation for himself. He had asthma, had an attack while in the "bush" and was not able to control it. It was a very sad and tragic experience for everyone.

The funeral lasted about 2 hours and 15 minutes. You would have thought it was a Stevenson funeral! Nevertheless, it was an interesting service. Mom and I sang in the choir. That's right, I sang in the choir! I was so happy that through out the practises and the actual performance, the choir director did not request, not even once, that I just move my lips.

During the funeral, I thought how blessed we are to have the knowledge we do in the Church. To so many, death is a mystery. Losing a

loved one is never easy, but to see them go and not know what happens, if anything, after this life must be a source of great sorrow. This is one reason I love section 138 of the Doctrine and Covenants.

Photos:

- We have a very large church building. This photo is taken from the last row of the choir seats. The chapel and the whole cultural hall was filled with people for the funeral. Probably about 300+ people.
- Liyema was only 18 years old. It was kind of weird as the funeral parlor people were passing out bottles of water during the service. Then, later on, they started to pass out some fruit. It was then that the bishopric went down and instructed them differently.

Love,

Dad and Mom



Liyema was only 18 years old. It was kind of weird as the funeral parlor people were passing out bottles of water during the service. Then, later on, they started to pass out some fruit. It was then that the bishopric went down and instructed them differently.





We have a very large church building. This photo is taken from the last row of the choir seats. The chapel and the whole cultural hall was filled with people for the funeral. Probably about 300+ people.

Tid Bits

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

*1. Word of the week: *"inanimate," not alive. *Example:*

A Porsche is an inanimate object until you step on the accelerator!

*2. Quote of the week: *

3. Scripture of the week:

And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. (Joshua 24:15)

4. Joke of the week:

Q: Why didn't the Pioneers take chickens with them?

A: Because they use fowl language.

*5. Bee's Knees Award: * Are you an expert volley ball player? Probably not. This girl is athletic - she plays volley ball, soccer and basketball. She is fearless when it comes to being brave and trying new things. She is as sweet as they come. She lives the gospel all the time. She is obedient. She loves her family like crazy. She is a big helper around the house. She has a beautiful smile and a beautiful singing voice. She enjoys life. Adelaide, you are the Bee's Knees, sistah!!!

*6. Gospel question of the week: * Last week's question was answered correctly first by Michael Beckstead. In what land was Aaron and the other Sons of Mosiah imprisoned? Answer: Middoni. This week's question: Joseph Smith had a plural wife who was also one of our ancestors. Who is that person?

*7. If I were you (Advice to grand

kids): * If I were you, I would learn to listen before I talk. Don't jump in on some one's words and cut them off. Listen first, then, speak. Try it. I think you will like it.

*8. What I learned this week: * We are going to be so surprised when we eventually see the Savior and our Heavenly Parents because they will seem so familiar to us.

*9. What I am grateful for: * A posterity that walks in righteousness.

*10. My goal for the week: *Contin-

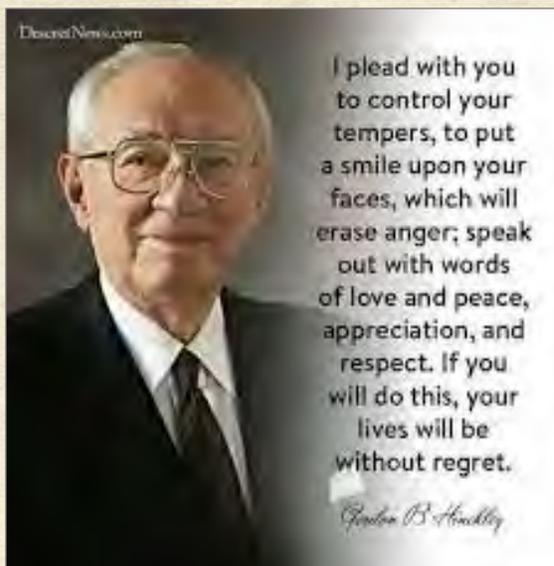
ue to work on sincere prayer.

*11. Photo of the week: * Ride 'em cowboys!!!

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

Dad and Mom





Dec_16_2018

Dear Family,

We had good meetings today and, of course, a great blessing to partake of the sacrament. We hope your Sabbath day is equally as rewarding.

Mom had her hands full today. She was in two separate Primaries today, helping with teaching some new songs to the children. Then, she had a good, long practice with the narrators for next Sunday's Christmas

program mixed with singing from the Young Women and the Young Men.

Interesting that this coming Saturday is a 1st ward activity at 10 AM. It is also a 4th ward activity at 10 AM. It is also a wedding at 10 AM. It is also a baptism at 10 AM. (Supposedly, the 4th ward activity is after the baptism.) One of our goals this coming year is to find a way to get our wards talking to each other so we do not have scheduling problems. Unfortunately, the bishops do not seem to coordinate very much.

Tomorrow, Mom and I are traveling to Queenstown. It will be 101 degrees there and high humidity. We are spending the night and I do not know if I will have Internet access to send out an update. Maybe, everyone will get lucky and I won't be able to send one!

Photos:

- Mom has never won the Gingerbread Man Decorating Contest. Would it be asking too much for you guys to make sure she wins this year. She really needs this. Do you love her? Make sure she wins! Her entry is the Xhosa warrior with the dead lion at the end of his spear.

We love you guys mas que frijoles duros!

Dad and Mom



Mom has never won the Gingerbread Man Decorating Contest. Would it be asking too much for you guys to make sure she wins this year. She really needs this. Do you love her? Make sure she wins! Her entry is the Xhosa warrior with the dead lion at the end of his spear.



Dec_18_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Many of you have heard of various conspiracy theories.

For example, some say the USA never landed a man on the moon, that it was all a fake. There are some that say 911 was perpetrated by the U.S. Government. We have now uncovered another theory: There are no Rhinos in Queenstown. It is all a phony story to build tourism.

That's right, folks, we went to Queens town to visit the Blaser's, a very nice senior couple, but despite repeated attempts to meet the incredible animals, we were disappointed! So, proof positive that there are not two mother rhinos , each with babies, and, a bull rhino.

We had dinner last night on the patio of a very nice restaurant. We had an awesome display of lightening and thunder. We did not get wet, but it

was quite the show. Then, again this afternoon with tremendous lightning and "crashing freight train" noise. Then, again when we arrived home, two hours away, There was enormous, deafening thunder and amazing streak lightening. We are grateful for the rain, we really need it.

We enjoyed visiting with the Blasers and discussing what is working for them and how we can make greater contributions to the work. Mom and I believe, that if we were to go on another mission some day, we would know a lot more and be able to hit the ground running.

Photos:

- The Blasers and us returning from a game ride - lots of Giraffes, Springboks, Wildebeest, Elans. Wart Hogs and Zebras, but no rhinos! - The young lady in this photo is leaving on a mission in a few weeks to

Madagascar. She will be a powerful missionary! And, her family will be greatly blessed. - Met the Bishop and his wife of the Queenstown 2nd Ward. It is amazing to see how the Lord helps establish His Church in a certain area with truly "Great and Noble" people that become the rocks of the church. They do so much. We hope and pray that they do not tire, that they keep going strong and steady.

We love you,

Dad and Mom



The Blasers and us returning from a game ride - lots of Giraffes, Springboks, Wildebeest, Elans. Wart Hogs and Zebras, but no rhinos!



The young lady in this photo is leaving on a mission in a few weeks to Madagascar. She will be a powerful missionary! And, her family will be greatly blessed.



Met the Bishop and his wife of the Queenstown 2nd Ward. It is amazing to see how the Lord helps establish His Church in a certain area with truly "Great and Noble" people that become the rocks of the church. They do so much. We hope and pray that they do not tire, that they keep going strong and steady.

2018

DECEMBER 19 }

Dec_19_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

I had quite the experience this morning. I went with two of our missionaries to visit two members of the MD 1st Ward who are staying in the bush. Tomorrow is the last day for one. Saturday for the other. They stay for a total of 3 weeks. I am kicking myself for not asking the leader if I could take some pictures! However, here are some National Geographic photos that give you a very good idea of what I saw up close and personal.

[image: image.png]

[image: image.png]

When we greet the young men, they are not allowed to shake your hand. They all have sticks and they extend those for you to shake. No women are allowed. It is customary to take them some fruit or drink if you are

coming to visit. We took them two liters of a milk type product. They live in what they call a "Bhoma" or a grass hut that is usually draped with plastic to keep rain out. The men of the village cut down branches to form the structure. The Mama's cut grass that is applied all around the branches.

Here are some links to some more specifics about this Eastern Cape ritual. It is a very important event in the life of young Xhosa men.

<https://www.blanketsandweaves.com/blogs/lovely-blanket-blog/37272961-the-story-of-the-abakwetha-blanket>

<https://magazine.africageographic.com/weekly/issue-48/xhosa-circumcision-ritual-south-africa-its-hard-to-be-a-man/>

Mavis spent time today doing some household type activities. We had a real estate agent come by at 3:30 Pm

to show their client what one of the Hazy Ridge homes looks like. Mom felt like she needed to get the house looking presentable and worked like a maniac. The agent and client were here for about 5 minutes and then, left.

I spent hours helping a pair of our missionaries move back to a boarding that had just completed some refurbishing to prevent moisture from getting into the block walls and bubbling up the paint with mold. We hope it is now fixed. I have recommended to our Housing Missionary

in the office that we do a month-to-month lease at first to make sure the problems are truly corrected. We did a lot of cleaning and we perspired profusely.

Photos:

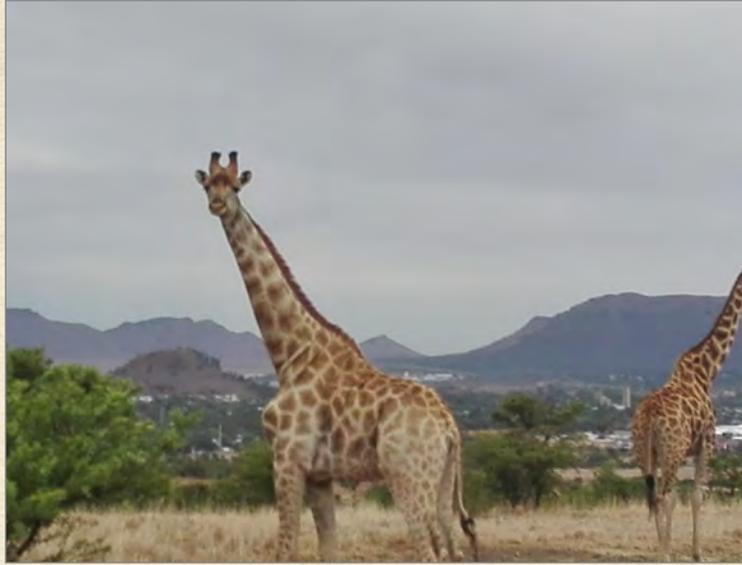
- Some African animals for your viewing pleasure. One photo is of baboons running away from us. There had to be 50 to 100 of them.

Love,

Dad and Mom



Some African animals for your viewing pleasure. One photo is of baboons running away from us. There had to be 50 to 100 of them.



2018

DECEMBER 20 }

Dec_20_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Boarding inspections today.

This is the second time we have visited one set of missionaries and their flat has come up wanting! We are scheduled for a revisit a week from today. Mom was doing the "fingers over horizontal ledges" test. We kind of think one elder is very diligent and will respond, but the other one is not very interested in cleanliness.

It is really too bad because the gingerbread man cookies they would have received for passing were consumed by me! Too bad, so sad, don't get mad when the cookies go to dad.

Mom is working like crazy getting some things baked for district meeting, 100 cupcakes for a ward activity, missionary Christmas gift bags, etc. I spent the whole afternoon running errands and banking. It was pretty

hot and humid and I did perspire. Things should start to slow down a little after this weekend.

I meant to mention that last Sunday, a young lady that has confided in Mom somewhat regarding some personal problems, gave a talk in sacrament meeting. (FYI, Mom advised her to see the bishop) She is a very timid person and speaking in front of a congregation is a huge challenge for her. She did great! She spoke of repentance and the difference it has made in her life. She tearfully mentioned people who have helped her along. After the meeting, I gave her a big hug and told her she is wonderful!

Photos:

- Beautiful blossoms on a very interesting-looking tree - "Lifts" or elevators - A Mercedes pick-up truck! I never knew they started making those. This is the second

one I have seen in the last two days.

Love,

Dad and Mom



A Mercedes pick-up truck! I never knew they started making those. This is the second one I have seen in the last two days.



"Lifts" or elevators



Beautiful blossoms on a very interesting-looking tree

2018

DECEMBER 21 }

Dec_21_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We love you and we miss you. We think of you often and remember you in our prayers daily. Thank you for all your thoughts, interest and prayers!

We spent our district meeting with one district that seems to be a little unprepared. We may have caught them off guard by meeting with them. We alternate between three different districts. This is a four man district that use to all live in the same boarding. That has now changed with each set being in their own place. This is a much better arrangement! At the end of our meeting, Mom had Christmas sugar cookies and milk plus two pieces of fruit each. She really does spoil them. Mom is getting some things ready for our ward activity tomorrow. She is putting frosting on about 100 cupcakes! She is also making

small loaves of banana bread for each of our missionaries. I had the car washed - inside and out - for \$4.20. That is a hard deal to beat. We also had some Christmas Programs printed up for Sunday's sacrament meeting where Mom has put together the program with narration and songs. (See Attached)

We are thinking seriously about mission goals for the rest of our mission. We hope you are also setting goals that will help you move forward in life and especially with the spiritual growth and development of your testimonies.

Here are some ideas around goal-setting:

1. Have your values firmly in place before you set goals - what is most important to you?
2. Write down your goals
3. List the steps you will take to accomplish that goal
4. Assign dates to each step so you have a

check point to see how you are doing

5. Place your written goals somewhere so you can see them and review them daily
6. Try as hard as you can to reach your goals, but do not be frustrated if there is a need to recalibrate and modify your goals

We are so fortunate and blessed to know the truthfulness of the gospel and to work every day to become a little better as a person - a son or daughter of our Heavenly Father. We should be full of joy knowing that we are drawing closer and closer to the

Savior each day of our lives!

Photos: - This is the first donut-making machine I have seen that cranks out real size donuts. They are still not the same as American donuts. For one thing, the texture seems to be substantially different. And, a greasy after taste. I know because I ate 6 of them.

We love you. Have an absolutely fantastic day!

Dad and Mom



This is the first donut-making machine I have seen that cranks out real size donuts. They are still not the same as American donuts. For one thing, the texture seems to be substantially different. And, a greasy after taste. I know because I ate 6 of them.



2018

DECEMBER 22 }

Dec_22_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had an interesting day and an extreme trial of our patience. This morning we went to a baptism of a young lady that is crippled and confined to a wheelchair. The baptism was suppose to begin at 10 AM followed by a ward activity at 11 AM. When Mom and I showed up at 10 AM, no one was there and there was no water in the font.

Without going into all the details, the baptism started at 11:30 and it was evident that there was little preparation and planning involved. We felt bad for the new convert. This is a big event in someone's life and it should be perfect. Fortunately, there were three brethren that were in the font helping with the baptism.

The activity was to include barbecued meat, bean salad and potato salad. Then, Mom's cupcakes for

desert. We waited and waited for the bishop to get back to the church house with the meat from the butcher shop and for the food to be prepared in the kitchen. Efforts were made to keep people entertained with some games - "Steal the Bacon," and, Musical chairs. They started serving the food at 4:30.

Mom and I had to leave about then due to another engagement. However, prior to our departure, Mom was able to get a practice in with some of the Primary children for tomorrow's sacrament meeting Christmas program.

Some times, it takes a lot of patience when you see the lack of planning, unsanitary food preparation, irreverent, undisciplined children, cluttering of the church building and grounds, lack of fellowshiping the new convert, etc. Our plan is to tackle these issues by advising bish-

oprics and working with Ward Council Meetings. Things will change, but probably not during our tenure here.

When the Lord created the earth, it did not happen overnight. There were seven progressive periods to the creation. With this new stake and our new ward, it will not happen overnight. We have to remember we are on about day two of this new unit creation. At some point in the future, day seven will arrive. In the meantime, we must patiently and gently recommend, advise, suggest and emphasize the positive.

Photos:

We love you! Do good! Help Light the World!

Dad and Mom

Dec_23_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Let me begin by saying I reread my update from yesterday and I think it came across as being pretty negative. Yes, it was frustrating, but when you weigh everything in the balance, there are so many good things happening in our mission, you can live with the things that bother you. We realize that things will change and get better as time goes on.

One of our wards today presented the Christmas program that Mom had put together. We were both worried at the beginning of the meeting that very few people would be in attendance. By the time the program began, it was just fine. The Primary, the Young Men, the Young Women and the narrators did a great job. And, all the congregational singing was very nice. Mom did a fantastic job.

The length of the program was perfect. The total sacrament meeting was exactly one hour. How's that for timing?

Mom and I watched the First Presidency Christmas Devotional this afternoon. Great speakers, great stories, great messages and awesome music. How is the condition of our spiritual hearts? One of the keys to a healthy spiritual heart is to give as He gave. That would be a good goal for all of us this coming year.

Photos:

- Members playing "Duck, Duck, Goose" at our ward activity yesterday
- A health clinic that was burnt down because the locals were unhappy and protesting about something. They also set afire two police vehicles.
- Brother Fatein holding the bishop and his wife's baby
- The Young Men that sang during the Christmas program

Love,

Dad and Mom



The Young Men that sang during the Christmas program



A health clinic that was burnt down because the locals were unhappy and protesting about something. They also set afire two police vehicles.



Members playing "Duck, Duck, Goose" at our ward activity yesterday



Brother Fatein holding the bishop and his wife's baby

Dec_24_2018

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

For us, Christmas Eve is almost over. For you guys, you will still be wrapping presents for the next 6 hours! Once again, a very different Christmas for Mom and I.

Earlier today, Mom and I were going somewhere with one of our fellow-shippers. Mom asked, "What will you be having for dinner tomorrow?" We did not expect to hear what his answer was. "Oh, Sister Stevenson, that's a hard question." Mom asked, "If you don't mind me asking, why is that a hard question to answer." Quietly, "Because the cupboards are empty. We don't have any food." This was not an indirect way to beg for some assistance. It was simply the truth that he timidly shared with us.

We dropped him off at the church to help with a ward activity. Mom and I knew what we had to do. We went to

Fruit and Veg Market and loaded up with large bags of potatoes, carrots, onions, a chicken, a loaf of bread, butternut squash, mangoes, apples and some corn. While he was at the church, we dropped the food off at his home. His cousin/sister and elderly aunt were there. They could not believe the large quantities of food we stacked on their table. The aunt (who does not speak English) was clapping her hands and saying over and over again, "Happy, happy, happy." The sister threw her arms around me and gave me a big hug. Mom gave them each a hug and wished them a Merry Christmas.

We checked their electricity and they were almost down to zero. We asked for their meter number. The sister gave us an old receipt from their last purchase. They had purchased 20 Rand. We went to the local store and bought them 200 Rand. When we came back to the house

and punched in the 20 digit code to their meter, the amount of electricity on the meter display skyrocketed. Once again, sounds of incredulity and a big hug of heart-felt gratitude.

Mom and I drove away and we did not say much. We did not have to. We were floating on the absolute good feeling of helping someone in desperate need. It has made our Christmas time a little extra special.

We gave cookies to our gas station people (34 of them) and we made special Christmas bags of goodies

for our 12 missionaries. But, these were all people who had something - a job, full time missionaries fed by members. Giving to our dear South African friends who had nothing was truly an act that did so much more for us than it did for them.

Photos:

- Christmas bags for the missionaries - Cookies for the gas station crew, store and kitchen - The sign we posted in the waiting room of the petrol attendants

We love you! We are especially



Christmas bags for the missionaries



The sign we posted in the waiting room of the petrol attendants



Cookies for the gas station crew, store and kitchen

mindful of you this Christmas season. We might get a little teary eyed when we think of you because we miss you so. But, we are happy here in the full time service of the Lord.

Dad and Mom

2018 DECEMBER 25 }

Jodie Clemens Story

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Since Mom and I are not with you this Christmas, we thought it would be a good idea to maybe add a Christmas story to your collection of Jodie Clemens stories you already have.

Please take time to read this together as a family. We hope the message is clear enough for our beautiful grandchildren to understand. Christmas giving and being a disciple of the Savior is a year round blessing for each of us.

We love you all so very much. Have Merry Christmas!

Love,

Dad and Mom

Dec_25_2018

Dear Family,

Merry Christmas! We trust everyone had a visit from Santa and that each household is alive with lots of good food, family visiting and thankful hearts for the goodness of the Lord in our lives.

We had a very laid back Christmas Day. We didn't know if we were going to get some missionaries over to use our Internet. We make our home available in case there is some kind of problem with the place they lined up. Everything must have gone well because we had no visitors.

The highlight of our day was to Skype with one of our Mdantsane missionaries that went to Zimbabwe. What a joy to see him growing in the gospel and becoming a powerful

priesthood holder. He is doing well and making a difference wherever he labors. Mom asked him to share with us his testimony. It was sincere, strong and born of the Spirit. We love the boy and look forward to staying in contact with him over the years.

Our dinner today was superb. As you would expect, Mom prepared a delicious turkey meal with all the trimmings. I think I would have eaten more except I had a couple pieces of oatmeal cake prior to the meal! I sincerely hope all of us are very grateful

for food to eat. We have seen firsthand the poverty and hunger of people here in South Africa. Many times we fail to recognize just how blessed we are to basically eat what we want, when we want and how much we want.

This Christmas Day, we extend our love to each of you. Let's remember Him. Let's make the year 2019 the year of discipleship. To show our love we need to "Feed His Sheep." That is indeed a rich blessing no matter where we live.



Does this baby look a little overheated? This lady was in a hot kitchen and her kid was sweating like there was tomorrow. Hot day, hot blanket. You can see how the babies are held against the mama like doing the splits.



This might be the place we get our meat for the big two ward party on January 7th. Someone please remind David he is in charge of the games.



Photos:

Dad and Mom

- This might be the place we get our meat for the big two ward party on January 7th. Someone please remind David he is in charge of the games. - Does this baby look a little overheated? This lady was in a hot kitchen and her kid was sweating like there was tomorrow. Hot day, hot blanket. You can see how the babies are held against the mama like doing the splits.

We love you all. Be good and please stay on the covenant path.

2018 DECEMBER 26 }

Dec_26_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Wow a lot of running around today in the heat. Unfortunately, a lot of it was unproductive as today is a national holiday, "Boxing Day." Before 1994 it was called "Boxing Day" but now it is called "Good Will Day." Nevertheless a lot of places closed.

The idea behind Good Will Day is that right after Christmas, we may have extra or plenty and we should be thinking about and giving to the less fortunate. This is a wonderful concept. The country should follow the pattern of the Lord's Church and institute a monthly fast day! The good news is that it would generate a lot of money for the poor and the needy. The bad news is that the money may never reach those it is intended to help!

We tried to wrap up some details for

the visit of Daniel, Michael, Elizabeth and David to South Africa. They are a high maintenance group and require a lot of attention. We fully expect to hear someone yelling in the middle of the night, "Mom, I'm thirsty. Can you bring me a glass of water?"

It will be a fun trip - shark cage diving, hiking Table Mountain and Lion's Head (just like WHW), touring Victoria and Albert Harbour, eating African food, going on photo safaris, hosting a two-ward party in the township, getting up close and personal with a python, etc. The biggest problem is the two old tour guides they have to drag along!

Photos:

- Our delicious 10 pound turkey
- Elder and Sister Hodges of Alpine, Utah. They are the other senior couple in the East London area.
- Cool-looking sky, clouds

We love you all very much - more than raw egg plant!

Dad and Mom



Cool-looking sky, clouds



Elder and Sister Hodges of Alpine, Utah. They are the other senior couple in the East London area.



Our delicious 10 pound turkey

Dec_27_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We did three boarding inspections this morning. Two passed. The third one Mom was leaning toward awarding them cookies, but I thought their apartment was in bad shape. So, I ate their cookies on the way to the next boarding!

We went grocery shopping with Brother and Sister Booi for food we will need for the two-ward party on January 7th. David is in charge of games. Elizabeth is in charge of prizes. We will have to figure out something for Daniel and Michael - maybe plucking feathers off the chickens?

The menu is chicken, pork, pap (like corn grits), African bean salad, potato salad, pasta, mango and pineapple drink and cookies. It should be a fun 2 or 3 hours.

The objectives of the party are:

1. Have as many of the ward members (especially less active members) come and have an enjoyable time as fellow brothers and sisters.
2. Give our children a chance to meet some wonderful people; to get a feel for who and where Mom and I work as missionaries.

Photos:

- This is a visual reminder of just how fortunate we are in this life. Most of us will never know the depth of poverty or the pangs of hunger like so many do around the world. We need to be ever grateful for the Lord's bounteous blessings.

- It was raining outside so the birds decided to come into the grocery store and stay dry.

We love you. Live the Stevenson Motto!

Dad and Mom



This is a visual reminder of just how fortunate we are in this life. Most of us will never know the depth of poverty or the pangs of hunger like so many do around the world. We need to be ever grateful for the Lord's bounteous blessings.



It was raining outside so the birds decided to come into the grocery store and stay dry.

2018

DECEMBER 28 }

Dec_28_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a rather short district meeting this morning which was good because Mom had an early piano lesson and I had to run around with one of our fellowshippers to make assignments for the big part coming up on the 7th of January. We are hoping to have approximately 200 people there.

However, we had a good lesson on companion unity. Examples we studied were Alma and Amulek, and, Elijah and Elisha. The missionaries were interested in some of our thoughts as senior couples who have been companions for a long, long time. Mom emphasized the need for patience with each other. I mentioned humility - in the relationship, it is not "Who's right," it is all about "What's right" and then, following that line of thinking and setting aside your pride.

Main objectives of the party:

1. To get as many members of the Church in these two wards together to enjoy each others company and feel the camaraderie as brothers and sisters - especially the less active members.
2. Give our children an opportunity to meet the good people we work with each and every day.

Due to a shortage of cars (one in the shop for repairs) I made a trip out to the township to pick up four missionaries at 8 PM. Miracle of miracles, they were ready to go when I arrived there. In their planning, they knew they would be out late due to the ward party they attended. So, they called their zone leaders this morning and then, the ZL's called me because they were unable to help them. That is the way it should be.

Photos:

- The Grill Masters! - Azee Jada, Shakes Ztishu and Phumlani - Old mama in her typical South African mama dress

Be extra good today! We love you,

Dad and Mom



The Grill Masters! - Azee Jada, Shakes Ztishu and Phumlani



Old mama in her typical South African mama dress

2018

DECEMBER 29 }

Dec_29_2018_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

It has been a busy day cleaning, car repairs, banking, PACKING, passport certifications, mail for missionaries, etc. Mom and I leave tomorrow for Cape Town. We meet Michael and David at 10 PM. We have instructed them to bring a flea collar, a bullet proof vest and a pair of Nike running shoes. Cape Town has become a pretty rough city, leading South Africa in murders. Not to worry, though, we will not be frequenting any places in town that are of any danger.

I have been re-reading talks from the last general conference. What amazing council, direction and teachings. I hope we all have taken President Nelson's instruction to avoid the use of the term, "Mormon" when we are referring to the Lord's Church. I love it when he says, "The Lord has impressed upon my

mind..." or, "Today I feel compelled..." We are thankful for a living prophet to guide us in these last days!

Information on transfers for the missionaries will be sent out this evening. We already have some advance notice of changes, but we need the whole enchilada by tonight. Mom and I manage the passports for the missionaries. When new ones arrive, we collect passports. When missionaries are leaving, we distribute them. Instead of carrying actual passports, missionaries carry a "certified" copy of their passport that is suppose to be good for 3 months. Tomorrow we will hand over the passport task, with a list of what to do, to the Hodges since we will be gone.

We are not sure if we will be able to send out a daily update during our time away. What a welcome relief for you people!

Photos:

- Because a lot of money passes through ATM's, money transport vehicles become a popular target. It is very common, usually protocol, for armed guards with automatic weapons to escort money in and out of buildings, i.e., banks - On my walk today, I came across this "Night Adder" (already expired) right in the walkway. The Puff Adder is deadly. The Night Adder will just make you very sick. - I first met this monster dog about a year ago when he was a puppy. The dog is so huge now! His name is Kaiser and

is owned by Gary and Lindz, our "Panel Beater" friends.

Stay on the covenant path! Avoid the distractions and detours the Devil has designed to destroy you. We love you,

Dad and Mom



Because a lot of money passes through ATM's, money transport vehicles become a popular target. It is very common, usually protocol, for armed guards with automatic weapons to escort money in and out of buildings, i.e., banks



I first met this monster dog about a year ago when he was a puppy. The dog is so huge now! His name is Kaiser and is owned by Gary and Lindz, our "Panel Beater" friends.

Tid Bits

Dear Family,

*1. Word of the week: *"inculcate," instill (an idea, attitude, or habit) by persistent instruction. *Example:* Mission presidents continually strive to inculcate their missionaries with the importance of "Always Finding in All Ways."

*2. Quote of the week: *

3. Scripture of the week:

Yea, humble yourselves, and continue in prayer unto him. (Alma 34:19)

4. Joke of the week:

Q: What type of pet did Lehi have?
A: A Flea. The Lord told Lehi to take his family and flea into the wilderness.

5. Bee's Knees Award: You have to have extreme energy to keep up with this girl. She can p[lay the piano. She is an artist. She can throw the best tea parties on planet earth. She is a camper. She is a fantastic student in

school. And, a million other things. But, the best thing about this girl is her dedication to living the gospel and trying to be like Jesus every day. She loves her family and is a giant helper around the house. She does not chase boys at recess. She is prettier than 10 queens and princesses all smushed together. Sadie, you are the Bee's Knees, sistah!!!

6. Gospel question of the week:
What is Elder David A. Bednar's middle name?

7. If I were you (Advice to grand kids): If I were you, I would travel to the areas of interest close by you home. Too many times we live close to an interesting place and we do not take advantage of going there. Try it. I think you will like it.

8. What I learned this week: According to the locals, "Jimmy Sauce" is the best marinade for pork.

9. What I am grateful for: I am thankful for men and women who take a stand for truth, not matter what the consequences are.

10. My goal for the week: Have a

safe and enjoyable time with some of our kids while we do a little touring of South Africa.

11. Photo of the week: The old indian trick that didn't seem to work no matter how long or hard David rubbed two sticks together!

We love you all so very much. You are in our prayers daily and some times more than that. Have fun living the gospel this week!

Dad and Mom



On my walk today, I came across this "Night Adder" (already expired) right in the walkway. The Puff Adder is deadly. The Night Adder will just make you very sick.



Joy is a gift for the faithful. It is the gift that comes from intentionally trying to live a righteous life, as taught by Jesus Christ.

-Russell M. Nelson

A portrait of Russell M. Nelson, a man with short, light-colored hair, wearing a dark suit jacket, a white shirt, and a patterned tie. He is smiling slightly and looking directly at the camera.

2019 JANUARY 10 }

Jan_10_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We were out of commission for about 10 days with the visit of Daniel, Michael, Elizabeth and David. Then, on top of that, our computer decided to have issues that required a tech to come and fix. So, it is good to be back in the saddle again.

We plan to provide everyone with a link to a photo album we will be putting together of last week's trip. It was fun to have four of the family here with us. We all had a good time just hanging out together.

The highlight of the trip was not climbing Table Mountain. It was not eating wild game like Kudu, Spring Bok or Crocodile. It was not seeing lions and other wild life up close on a game drive. The highlight was for our kids to meet and visit with the members of the church that we get

to associate with day in and day out. It was good to see our family interact with our South African family.

It was great for our kids to attend two Fast and Testimony Meetings so they could feel the Spirit of the saints in this area. Now they will know why it will be so hard for us to leave one of these days.

Being out of the loop for a few days, we have a lot of catch up to do. Today was running all over to try to get a handle on things - landlord issues, boarding problems, supply needs, passport control, shopping, car wash, etc.

Photos:

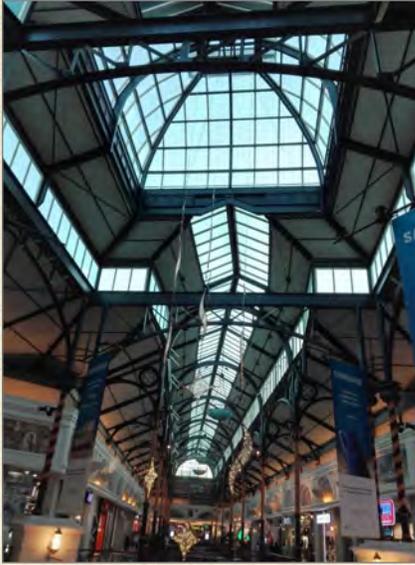
- Canal Walk Mall, Cape Town - Michael and David playing around in the Cape Town Airport - Daniel and Elizabeth playing around in the Cape Town Airport

We love you! Have a great day!

Dad and Mom



These penguins are easy to catch.



Market in Cape Town



Michael and David trying to blend in with the local wildlife.

Jan_11_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Quite an interesting day! After our very good district meeting this morning, a missionary sat down with Mom and explained he was not feeling well. He had been nauseous and generally not feeling well. He went on to say that he did not want to be on a mission. He had just been active in church for about 8 months before he left for his mission. He tried to leave a couple times while in the Provo MTC, but was persuaded to keep on trying to make it work. Mom recommended he give it a good, solid try and see where things were at transfer time.

I took a fellow brother with me as a fellowshipper while Mom was teaching her music classes this afternoon. Evidently, this guy did not feeling too well. He mentioned he had some intestinal cramping and diarrhea through the night. It seemed all of a

sudden he was feeling very uncomfortable. I pulled over and he was sweating and wanting to lay down. I went to his side of the car and helped him lower the back of his seat. Then, he asked me to help him remove his shoes. It was about this time I detected an awful odor from his side of the car.

We stopped running any of the errands we were trying to wrap up so we could get him back home. The poor guy was horribly embarrassed. He did not throw up and it was not his bare feet that stunk. It was the unimaginable all over the car seat and onto the floor mat. The smell was almost unbearable as we started the 20 minute drive to his house. He was laid back and looked like he was totally asleep. I thought, "Oh, great. This guy is going to die in our missionary car!"

About the time we were half way to

his house, I get a call from the companion of the missionary that wants to go home. They are in their boarding , an hour away, and his companion had just fainted and fell down some stairs. He had hit his head. They wanted to know what they should do. To make a long story short, the mission office and I decided to have them come into East London and go to the clinic here. I had to drop off my fellowshipper at his house and then travel 30 minutes to meet the missionaries coming to the clinic. The stench in the car was getting worse by the minute with the

heat of the day.

The local doctor seems to think our missionary is going to be okay. He prescribed rest and fluids. The area office LDS doctor seems to think he may have a concussion. Both missionaries are staying the night in East London so they will be near medical attention if needed.

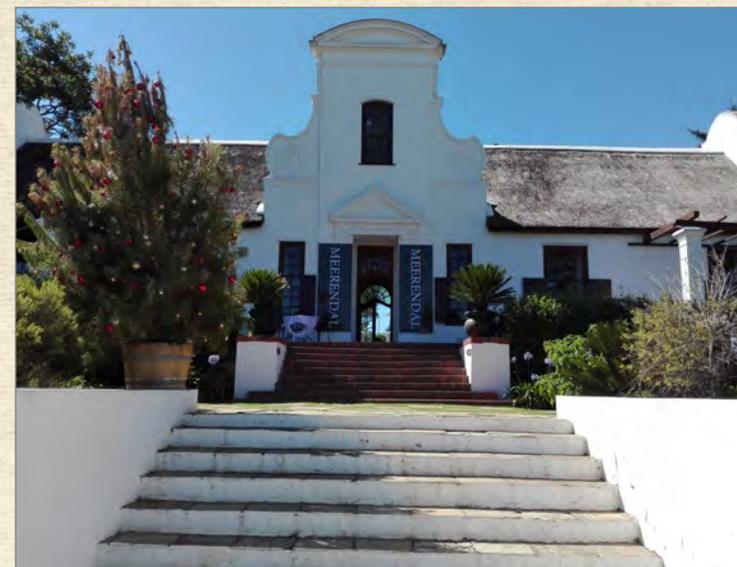
We hope our friendly fellowshipper is doing well and getting better. I spent about 2 hours working on the clean up project - no fun! The biggest problem is that stinker prob-



Vineyards at Meerendal



Each room received a complimentary bottle of wine. I noticed that Michael and David's bottle was missing the morning of our departure???(JK)



While in Cape Town we stayed in the wine country at the Meerendal Boutique Hotel

lem happened on Mom's side of the car. Our goal is complete remediation of any bacteria or germs and an odorless cockpit. Wish us luck!

Dad and Mom

Photos:

- While in Cape Town we stayed in the wine country at the Meerendal Boutique Hotel - Each room received a complimentary bottle of wine. I noticed that Michael and David's bottle was missing the morning of our departure???(JK)

We love you very much,

Jan_12_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We went to the church today to take part in a YSA activity.

Basically, the bishop had the youth in his ward come and spoke to them about this upcoming year and the importance of holding to our standards. He had asked Mom to play the piano during one part of the activity where they sang a number of church hymns.

While Mom was waiting for her portion of the activity, she swung into action and started cleaning the church bathrooms. Then, the kitchen....she must have heard Grandpa Stevenson's addage, "It is better to wear away than rust away."

We went with our ZL's to a lesson with the mother of a recently baptized sister. This mother's niece was also there. They are both on date for baptism. The lesson was on the Law

of Chastity. What was really good was their follow through on commitments to read the Book of Mormon and take notes. Both of them were able to report back to the missionaries on what they had read. This is a sign of a solid baptismal candidate - when they take seriously the commitments given them by the missionaries.

The granny has stopped drinking coffee. The niece has thoroughly digested the pamphlet on the Word of Wisdom and does not drink any more to manage her depression. She knows alcohol only adds to her problems. They are scheduled to be baptized on February 16th.

It was good to see our bishop working with the young people in our ward. He is still very new, but very eager to learn and to just do what he can to be a good bishop. He is clay in the potter's hands (Jeremiah 18:1-6).

The Lord can work with humble, dedicated servants.

Photos:

- This little girl was so fun to watch! Only she could touch my nose and make the key to the car pop out.

Love,

Dad and Mom

Tid Bits

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

1. Word of the week: "sub-
juration," the action of
bringing someone or something un-
der domination or control.* Exam-
ple:* We learned on the latest
African Safari that he who has the
money also controls the subjugation
of the visitors.

2. Quote of the week:

3. Scripture of the week:

11 And Moroni was a strong and a
mighty man; he was a man of a
perfect understanding;
yea, a man that did not delight in
bloodshed; a man whose soul did joy
in the liberty and the freedom of his
country, and his brethren from
bondage and slavery;

12 Yea, a man whose heart did swell
with thanksgiving to his God, for the
many privileges and blessings which

he bestowed upon his people; a man
who did labor exceedingly for the
welfare and safety of his people.

13 Yea, and he was a man who was
firm in the faith of Christ, and he
had sworn with an oath to defend his
people, his rights, and his country,
and his religion, even to the loss of
his blood. (Alma 48:11-13)

4. Joke of the week:

Q: Did you hear about the great
restaurant on the moon?

A: Excellent cheese, but no atmos-
phere!

*5. Bee"s Knees Award: *Sorry we do
not have enough space to adequately
describe this person. She is flat out
awesome. This girl has tremendous
determination. Better yet, she
tremendous determination to do
what is right! She loves the gospel

and sees how it has blessed her life
and the lives of her family members.
She is kind, generous, and service-
minded. She is a top shelf mother
with an abounding love for here
children. She does so much to bless
their lives. She stays in great physi-
cal shape and helps others do the
same. She is competitive and has
helped instill that in her children.
She is an awesome Realtor and ex-
pert interior designer. She loves the
Lord. Elizabeth, you are the Bee's
Knees, sistah!!!

*6. Gospel question of the week:

*Who are the only two U. S. Presi-
dential candidates that were assassi-
nated during their respective cam-
paigns?

*7. If I were you (Advice to grand
kids): * If I were you, I would scrip-
ture chain scriptures together for
various gospel topics. For example,
at the end of a scripture on "Faith"
you might write down another
scripture you can turn to that sup-
ports the topic you are studying. Try
it. I think you will like it.

8. What I learned this week: The



Dad and Mom



Lord always tries to maximize our mortal experiences. Instead of simply revealing things to us all the time, most of the time he has us DO things that will reinforce our learning.

*9. What I am grateful for: *I am so grateful for the sacrament where we can focus our attention on the great sacrifice of the Savior and how we get to be better in the coming week. I am grateful we can entertain these thoughts throughout the week, not just in sacrament meeting.

*10. My goal for the week: *To write down my goal for the upcoming year using the following format: Objective, Steps on how I will reach that goal, What kind of timing I am looking at and how will I know I am making progress toward that goal.

*11. Photo of the week: *The "Orange Family" who will be visiting the Orange State of South Africa

We continue to love you people more and more each day! Have fun living the gospel this week!

2019

JANUARY 14 }

Jan_14_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Today was Preparation Day and we got a lot done - Mom hemming drapes for a missionary apartment, me chasing down some study chairs for a new set of missionaries to our zone, applying a probiotic/enzyme deodorizer to the passenger side seat of our car, etc.

Last week we had two of our missionaries robbed in our work area. What worries me is that it was in plain daylight (12:30 in the afternoon). The missionaries did as they were suppose to - comply. They lost their watches, about \$5 USD in Rand money and an inexpensive camera. Another concern is that criminals talk and we are afraid that the word will get out that the missionaries are an "easy target." I hope they do not rob us, because while I am trying to comply, Mom will be beating the tar out of them!

This is the first incident we are aware of in our two ward area. There were three guys asking the missionaries for money. This is common. However, they continued to follow them. Eventually, one of the thugs came up between them, put his arm around their shoulders and threateningly said, "I'm going to cut you." Well, at that point, you don't ask to prove he has a knife. You comply.

Next time, the missionaries will not be carrying more than a couple dollars in money, will not have an expensive watch if any and will not have a camera. That is the safe way to walk the area. After a while, the thugs realize missionaries are worth the hassle.

Photos:

- Climbing Table Mountain via Skeleton Gorge was a killer for me. I will be forever grateful they did not abandon me as my legs cramped

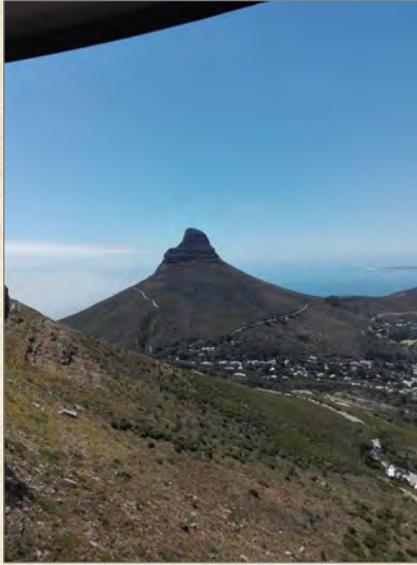
up like Lebron James in the play-offs. Mom and the kids conquered the 3,000 feet of elevation like pure mountain goats. - The intimidating Lion's Head. WHW and his two companions climbed this mountain with a guide and dedicated the area for their labors as the first missionaries in South Africa.

Keep the commandments! We love you,

Dad and Mom



The intimidating Lion's Head. WHW and his two companions climbed this mountain with a guide and dedicated the area for their labors as the first missionaries in South Africa.



Climbing Table Mountain via Skeleton Gorge was a killer for me. I will be forever grateful they did not abandon me as my legs cramped up like Lebron James in the playoffs. Mom and the kids conquered the 3,000 feet of elevation like pure mountain goats.



2019

JANUARY 15 }

Jan_15_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Mom has undertaken a huge project. She is fitting new drapes for a missionary boarding and then, hemming up the old drapes that are already there for two sets of windows and some sliding glass doors. It is literally a three day ordeal. The boarding will look great when she finishes everything.

I had to meet missionaries at the airport for passport management. I then went looking for a couple study chairs for two new missionaries in our zone. It is a little frustrating because a stackable, padded banquet chair is what we are looking for and we are finding them anywhere from \$42 - \$50 USD. That is a rip off. We think we will just go to a used furniture store where we can purchase some solid wood, yet padded, chairs that will work just fine at \$19 USD each. We hate to spend (waste)

church money!

Besides a bunch of administrative paperwork, we finished up with the plans for Annie and Michael to come visit in February. The last four kids to come and visit were an experiment. Now we know what is good and what to avoid. Mom and I are approaching septuagenarian age and hope we can keep up with them. They are a pretty active couple.

I believe in the eternities, we will come to fully understand and appreciate the inestimable value of experience in this mortal probation. I believe every little thing we do will be of value to us in our future exalted stations. So, live in the moment. Learn everything we can right now. We cannot dwell on the past for too long and as we look ahead in life, we need to make sure we savor every minute of the present.

Photos:

- This is a cute little bug Mom saw on our walk this morning. - If you have monkeys in the neighborhood, you must keep you doors and windows shut or else you can expect one big royal mess from these unruly visitors.

We love you very much. Have a great day!

Dad and Mom



This is a cute little bug Mom saw on our walk this morning.



If you have monkeys in the neighborhood, you must keep your doors and windows shut or else you can expect one big royal mess from these unruly visitors.

2019

JANUARY 16 }

Jan_16_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

This morning we delivered and helped hang some drapes at our ZL's boarding. Mom did an outstanding job! The curtains in the bedroom match the drapes in the living area. She is finishing up two more sets of drapes and we will hang them up tomorrow morning.

We drove out to King Williams Town to check on medical providers for the mission office. The mission Nurse (who is not a nurse) asked us to check out a few things there like a specific doctor and the local hospital. She and her husband (the Hamilton's) are leaving in March and she wants to have all the "nurse details and information" organized for the next person to take over. The doctor's office looks okay but they need same day payment or no deal. The office said they can transfer funds the same day they issue an invoice.

The hospital in KWT is a different story. We checked out one public hospital and it did not look like a place you would want to spend more than ten minutes. Between medical attention and the food, we think you are signing a death certificate to be admitted there. We then looked for a Private Hospital that the office wanted us to evaluate. Not there any more - permanently closed. So, anything urgent, the missionaries need to drive 30-40 minutes to East London.

Thanks to Michael for bringing me Golden Island Korean Pork Jerky. I am savoring some right now as I write this update. Thanks to David for bringing me some good old Walmart sugar-free grape drink. I am drinking some right now. (For now, I drink a Diet Coke in the morning and then grape drink the rest of the day.) Thanks to Daniel and Elizabeth for bringing me some delicious and

highly nutritious Almond Roca. I am down to my last box. Wow, if this is torture, chain me to the wall.

Photos:

- A photo of Lion's Head as we descended from Table Mountain on the tramway. We will be scaling this intimidating and challenging monster of nature on February 19th with Annie and Michael. - Charl, our guide at Schotia Game Reserve, tearing apart elephant dung to graphically show us that elephants do not digest a lot of their food well - only about 40%. - Yes, we fi-

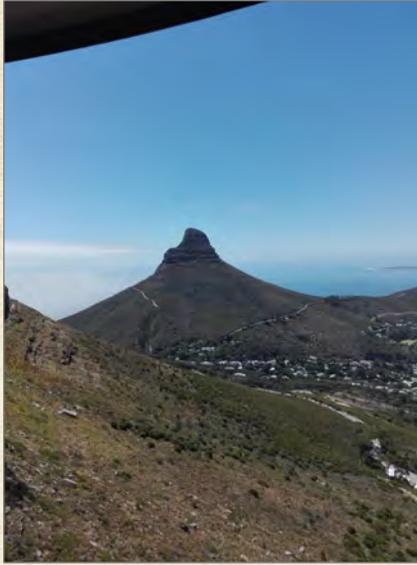
nally got to see a rhino up close, but not too close. Every guide at this park has been charged by these two rhinos at least once. They are very strong and can do some serious damage to a vehicle. Our guide was kind enough to act out for us the rhino's body language and movements when it is getting ready to charge.

Have a great day making good choices. We love you,

Dad and Mom



Yes, we finally got to see a rhino up close, but not too close. Every guide at this park has been charged by these two rhinos at least once. They are very strong and can do some serious damage to a vehicle. Our guide was kind enough to act out for us the rhino's body language and movements when it is getting ready to charge.



A photo of Lion's Head as we descended from Table Mountain on the tramway. We will be scaling this intimidating and challenging monster of nature on February 19th with Annie and Michael.



Charl, our guide at Schotia Game Reserve, tearing apart elephant dung to graphically show us that elephants do not digest a lot of their food well - only about 40%.

Jan_17_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

One of our responsibilities is to make sure water filters are changed out on all our zone's boardings. Today was the day for January. Mission accomplished. We also finished hanging some drapes at our ZL's boarding.

At one of the boardings, we delivered some Happy Birthday cupcakes to Elder Gamble. He received 8 cupcakes, so we are hoping he will share with the other 3 missionaries residing there.

We purchased some fruit for district meeting tomorrow. Then, off to the airport to deliver a passport to a ZL traveling to Cape Town and then, pick up a passport from an Elder returning from Cape Town.

We also finally broke down and paid too much money for some study

chairs for two new missionaries in our zone. They are sturdy and somewhat comfortable. They will be better than the plastic fold-up chairs they are presently using.

We had a very interesting visit with a lady who works in a government office (Survey) downtown East London. We were trying to locate some maps of Mdantsane, especially for the new missionaries we have and their specific area. I had met this lady about a year ago and remembered she was very religious and loved to study her Bible.

Before long, we were involved in a pleasant religious conversation with her. She explained a lot of things to us about her Assemblies of God Church. She is very active in her church. During our conversation we had the chance to share some of our beliefs with her. Mom presented information on the Book of Mormon.

She went right to the Internet to check it out. We directed her to LDS.Org. She was very open to our teaching of the Book of Mormon being a record of some of God's other children in Ancient America.

While on the Internet, we directed her to the Articles of Faith. She found this summary of our teachings and doctrine very intriguing. She read Article of Faith # 4 and became very surprised. She went to her brief case and pulled out some of her notes she had been taking during the week. She showed us one note in

particular. It went something like this, "Repentance, faith in Jesus Christ, baptism and receiving the Holy Ghost." We told her that it was no coincidence that she happened to write those things from her Bible study. We are going back to visit her with a highlighted Book of Mormon which she said she is very interested in reading!

And yes, we did walk out with a map she printed for us.

Photos:

- This is how we looked before we



Dinner at the Sirocco Restaurant in Knysna



This is how we looked before we climbed Skeleton Gorge. I almost returned in a stretcher.



Six monkeys crossing a suspension bridge at Monkey Land.

climbed Skeleton Gorge. I almost returned in a stretcher. - Dinner at the Sirocco Restaurant in Knysna - Six monkeys crossing a suspension bridge at Monkey Land.

We love you all very much. Keep the faith!

Dad and Mom

2019

JANUARY 18 }

Jan_18_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Both Mom and I had the distinct feeling today in the district meeting we attended that all is not well with the missionaries in that group. There seems to be some friction between the district leader and the other missionaries. We are hoping that things sort themselves out. In the mean time, we will put a bug in the mission president's ear about this. He will be interviewing the missionaries this coming week.

Next week is our "Mission Tour" where a member of the Area Presidency, his wife, the mission president and his wife, tour the mission and visit and train in every zone. The general authority visiting our mission is Elder Sitati. Grandpa and Grandma McKay knew him when they were on their mission in Kenya. They spoke very highly of him.

Mom had a bout a half dozen people in her music conducting class today. She also handed out a few keyboards for people to start using. We are hoping a lot of these young men who came today hang in there and stick it out for the whole course.

I met with Shakes and Phumlani today about their interest in starting a braai business (barbecue) right out their back door where so many people pass each day as they leave the train to walk home. They are excited about getting started and seeing if they can make a go of it. I stressed that to begin with, stay small and test the concept.

Photos: - "Lord of the Rings"

We love you. We miss you. You are in our prayers each and every day. Make good choices today!

Dad and Mom



"Lord of the Rings"



plastic recycler

Jan_19_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Mom met a few young men at the church today to help them finish up their music conducting course. Now they can receive a certificate at the beginning of sacrament meeting tomorrow. They also qualify to now start the keyboard course.

I met some missionaries at the airport to pass out passports. I was running late. I took a back route known as Buffalo Pass. This is a winding, pot hole infested drive with only two lanes of opposing traffic. I usually do not take this road because if you hit a pot hole or otherwise break down, you are in the middle of no where and bad things are known to happen on this particular road. Fortunately, nothing of a negative nature occurred. .

We went looking for another mis-

sionary boarding today. We found one house for rent which would be very nice except, it is too big for just two missionaries, it has a moisture mold problem and it cost too much. One of the East London bishops lives in the same area and he thinks there is a member that has a nice place to rent. We would like to see the end to four-man boardings.

Photos:

- Someone tried to break in to the church again. You can see the huge rock they used to break the window and tried to break down the security bars on the inside. - This is a sign for seal coating asphalt like David does. Too bad he doesn't have co-advertisers with better taste. You are judged by the company you keep! - Here is a driveway being laid down in brick. It looks pretty cool. We will see how well it holds up.

Have a great day getting ready for

the Sabbath. We love you,

Dad and Mom

Dad,

Fun game to watch from last night if you get a chance. David says he already sent you the Hudl login info. If you need it again, just let me know. Big game against new rival Farmington.

Great update. Bummer about the church. I'm at a track meet w Jake today. Makes me appreciate you guys - these meets don't go very fast, but glad I get to be here to watch them.

Work has been crazier than usual. We'll have to talk about it one of these days when I can. Nice to see Domo stock performing better last week. I can tell you better than ever that the stock market is a fickle



Someone tried to break in to the church again. You can see the huge rock they used to break the window and tried to break down the security bars on the inside.



Here is a driveway being laid down in brick. It looks pretty cool. We will see how well it holds up.



This is a sign for seal coating asphalt like David does. Toobad he doesn't have co-advertisers with better taste. You are judged by the company you keep!

place. Good place for speculative money, but dangerous place for any money you'll need in the short term.

Love you guys!!

Jan_20_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

It was a beautiful day in South Africa and more beautiful because we went to church and there had the privilege of partaking of the sacrament to renew important covenants with the Lord. Who else in the world gets to do that besides the members of this great church. We need to be thankful every minute of the day for the great blessings we enjoy and the great truths that have been distilled from heaven on the pages of the scriptures and the through the words of living prophets and apostles.

While Mom was trying to recruit people to come sing and learn new songs, I took missionaries to the airport to fly to Cape Town for a zone leaders meeting. Normally, they would never be flying on Sunday but, tomorrow they need to be in Cape Town for a meeting with Elder Sitati,

a counselor in the Southeast Africa Area. I needed to make sure they all had their passports and boarding passes.

When we arrived at home, Mom treated me to some delicious fried mac 'n cheese. Please do not be angry. If you are jealous, just simply make your own and stop being so covetous!

We saw 5 monkeys on the way to church today. That is a new record.

Pray for the Cougs! They will need it as they play Gonzaga and St. Mary's.

Photos:

- David photo-bombs a picture with Mom and I - The crew about ready to eat dinner at World Famous Marco's!!!

We love you. Have a great Sabbath!

Dad and Mom

Tid Bits

Dear Family,

1. Word of the week: "acquiesce," accept something reluctantly but without protest. **Example:** Sometimes we acquiesce to the teachings of the world because we believe they have answers to questions from scientific and intellectual research.

2. Quote of the week:

3. Scripture of the week:

8 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.

9 And our spirits must have become like unto him, and we become devils, angels to a devil, to be shut out from the presence of our God, and to remain with the father of lies, in misery, like unto himself; yea, to that being who beguiled our first parents,



David photo-bombs a picture with Mom and I



The crew about ready to eat dinner at World Famous Marco's!!!

who transformeth himself night unto an angel of light, and stirreth up the children of men unto secret combinations of murder and all manner of secret works of darkness. (Alma 9:8-9)

4. Joke of the week:

Q: What do you call a fake noodle?
A: An impasta!

5. Bee's Knees Award: She is intelligent. She is beautiful. She has a wonderful smile and is a very happy girl. She loves her daddy and mom-

my and big brother. She loves to talk. She loves to play with other children. She loves to go to nursery at church. She reads the scriptures with her family and is learning about Jesus. Sarah, you are the Bee's Knees, sistah!!!

6. Gospel question of the week: Last week's question about two presidential candidates that were assassinated before there was an election? Joseph Smith, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy. This week's question: What is the name Jacob gave the location where he wrestled

with an angel?

7. If I were you (Advice to grand kids): If I were you, I would get in the habit of hugging people to show your affection for them. Try it. I think you will like it. (Teenagers - a quick hug and no kissing!)

8. What I learned this week: Read documents and ask questions before you sign them.

*9. What I am grateful for: * The equality of blessings that come to each of God's children based on personal righteousness.

10: My goal for the week: We did have a bishopric meeting and I was able to help the bishop think beforehand about goal setting as a bishopric. My goal this week is to meet with the Elder's Quorum President and his counselor to discuss goals, responsibilities, meetings, quorum instruction, etc.

11. Photo of the week: Michael and David eating Springbok, which is a type of wild Bambi meat. Sick, sick individuals!

Stay loyal to the Royal! Have fun living the gospel this week!

Dad and Mom



2019

JANUARY 21 }

Jan_21_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We rented a trailer today and picked up a bunch of old appliances that have been sitting around our missionary boardings for quite sometime. I took two refrigerators and a small counter top oven to Bishop Lalendle. He is hoping to get one to work so that he has a cold place to store meat when he starts his bone soup and cow head braai (barbecue) business. The rest of the stuff went to our maintenance man here at Hazy Ridge. He is going to try to fix them and sell them.

Two very great events today:

1. Elder Hodges and I watched BYU beat Pepperdine in basketball. 2. David Walker playing a great game in basketball and beating Farmington High School.

Mom washed the sheets today and I made the bed. Making the bed is a

very laborious and time-consuming activity. I get tired when I think about all the things I do around here. There are some days when I make the bed *and* sweep the kitchen floor! I am not complaining. I just want people to know the amount of blood, sweat and tears I put into this place.

The weather today was hot and a little muggy. However, by late afternoon/evening it becomes very nice and pleasant. We understand Utah is having quite a bit of snow this year. We hope it will be melted off the driveway by June!

Photos:

- These lions are stuffed. They just finished off a Wildebeest and are not too interested in eating any humans right now. - Braai (pronounced, "Br-eye") is very popular when there is a special event or celebration. It taste pretty good un-

less you witness how it gets cooked. Sometimes, not very sanitary and you can expect a lot of gristle.

We love you,

Dad and Mom



These lions are stuffed. They just finished off a Wildebeest and are not too interested in eating any humans right now.



Braai (pronounced, "Br-eye") is very popular when there is a special event or celebration. It taste pretty good unless you witness how it gets cooked. Sometimes, not very sanitary and you can expect a lot of gristle.

2019 JANUARY 22 }

Jan_22_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Another great day in South Africa! The morning was just right for an hour long walk.

The daytime was a little hot and muggy. The late afternoon and evening was perfect weather. As a matter of fact, Elder Hodges and I visited for about an hour on their backyard deck while Mom and Sister Hodges discussed some things they want to do for the upcoming mission tour lunch.

I met 6 of our missionaries at the airport and picked up their passports. Then, took our ZL's to lunch at K F Grease (KFC). Factoid #1: Missionaries love to eat. Factoid #2: Missionaries can eat a lot of food at one sitting.

Mom was at home waiting for a appliance repairman to come. He never came.

I met with Phumlani and Shakes about their Braai business plan. They are scheduled to start their first day of barbecue sales on Monday. The train stops close to their homes and unloads people at 1:30 PM and then continues to unload passengers about every hour at that stop. Today, at 1 :30, 25 - 30 people got off the train. The big rush hour is 4:30 - 5:30. We hope they do well.

At 4 PM I had the chance to meet with Brothers Makeke and Toli who presently constitute the Elder's Quorum Presidency in the MD 4th Ward. The purpose of the meeting was to share with them what their duties and responsibilities are and how to set and reach goals that will help them magnify their callings. It was a very productive meeting. Both of these brethren are very teachable and thirsty to learn how to go about their callings.

Photos:

- *An Elephant* - *Zebras* -

Daniel riding his bike through South Africa - *David, (he's the white boy in the photo) teaching ward members how to play one of his games*

Zebras





An Elephant



David, (he's the white boy in the photo) teaching ward members how to play one of his games



Daniel riding his bike through South Africa

2019

JANUARY 23 }

Jan_23_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We went to the Phakamile School today to drop off some math flash cards and science encyclopedia-type books that Daniel, Michael, Elizabeth and David brought with them from the States. Unfortunately, the school was busy with a bunch of other things going on, i.e. meetings. They will hopefully call us to come next week.

We had a chance to visit some old mamas in the township and once again I had it reinforced in my mind the value of Sister Stevenson conversing and listening to these women. We visited three different women and all of them were not members of our church. Mom listens intently, smiles, sympathizes, gives words of comfort, etc. One lady just lost her husband and this was our first time to meet her. Mom talked about the reassuring comfort of the

resurrection.

We took a Book of Mormon to "Pap" who is the lady that works downtown East London in the municipal survey office. Over the last three or four days you could tell she has listened to a lot of "ex-Mormons" on YouTube or other sources. I think we were able to get her calmed down somewhat and she said she would diligently study the Book of Mormon. We will plan to visit her in the near future and someone else she wants to invite (probably a preacher). We believe that if she will earnestly study the Book of Mormon with an open heart and mind, she will feel a witness that it is the word of God.

We looked at a prospective missionary boarding this afternoon. It looks acceptable and we will recommend it to the mission office. We took pictures and discussed some other

maters like, lease amount, electricity, water, rubbish, security, etc. It would be nice to get rid of the four-man situation we presently have at one of the boardings.

Photos:

- Beautiful tree photos - Cement benches at the end of our compound for people to come to and enjoy the view and sunsets.

We love you. Be good!

Dad and Mom



Beautiful tree photos



Cement benches at the end of our compound for people to come to and enjoy the view and sunsets.



2019

JANUARY 25 }

Jan_25_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a wonderful day of training from Elder and Sister Sitati and President and Sister Lebethoa. One of the highlights was to hear the conversion story of the Sitati Family.

As a young married couple with children, he worked very hard as an engineer. His focus was to make as much money and move up the corporate ladder the best he could so he could provide for his family. As an engineer, everything had to fit just right, all the math he knew helped put things just right, and yet, he was missing something. He felt disconnected. Then he went to a cottage meeting at some friend's home.

He went merely to be sociable and polite to his friend's invitation. He had been to several other churches in his search for that something that

was missing. He did not get that feeling of connection at any of those churches. However, he felt something different at that cottage meeting. He liked it so much, he and his wife came back for the next meeting. Then, it was attending church and all along enjoying this new sense of feeling good each time. Most churches seemed to be in the business of entertaining its members. This church was about the personal connection he needed to have with the Lord.

Then, he attended a fireside with Elder Cammock (sp.). After the fireside he approached this general authority and visited with him. He said he felt like this man could read his thoughts. He was once again swayed by the feelings he had. He and his family joined the church and have never looked back. And, what a great leader of the church in Africa!

We love our church leaders. the pace they set for themselves and the long hours and sacrifice are grueling. These are the last days. It is vitally important that we listen to and fully employ the direction, counsel and teachings of the living prophets and apostles!

Chris and Mavis

Photos:

- 45 missionaries in total with Elder Sitati and company included.

Stay true to the gospel. Both hands on the Iron Rod! We love you,

45 missionaries in total with Elder Sitati and company included.



2019 JANUARY 26 }

Jan_26_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

This morning we went with the Blazers (senior couple working in Queenstown about 2 hours from us) to a local souvenir lady, Ivy, and a member of the church. She sells most of her goods down by the beach front.

Unfortunately, the Blazers and she had a misunderstanding. Ivy thought the Blazers wanted five (5) nativity scenes with beaded figurines. Not the case. Nevertheless, Ivy ordered 5 sets from a man that puts these things together. It was urgent for Ivy to sell the sets because the man was pressuring her to pay him the money he was due. The Blazers did not like the nativity scenes at all. The most they would do is purchase one. This would still put Ivy way behind on the money she needed. She started to cry. Tears were coming down her cheeks.

So, the Blazers bought one and we bought one. Now, she only has three to go. We hope she can get them sold.

**Important Plea for Help!* I have challenged a young missionary to a chicken soup cook-off. One of the contest rules is that the noodles must be homemade. I tried making some test noodles this evening. I am not happy with them - too fat and they take a long time to cook. We have agreed that it is okay to solicit help from family. * I need help*. Does any one have a good recipe, cooking tips, suggestions, recommendations, etc.? The contest is this Friday and the missionaries in the zone (14 of them) will be the final judges.*

Photos:

- The beautiful nativity scene!
Does any one want to buy one?
Hand-beaded by real Xhosa locals.

One of a kind! Only \$70 and we will make sure it gets to the USA for you. They make great Christmas gifts. You can buy two for \$135.

We love you. You are great! CTR and SOTCP*

Dad and Mom

**Stay On The Covenant Path. Stay on the Good Ship Zion. Remember, the people that had to put up with all the smells, crowding and inconveniences of Noah's ark were a lot better off on the ark than with the rest*



The beautiful nativity scene! Does any one want to buy one? Hand-beaded by real Xhosa locals. One of a kind! Only \$70 and we will make sure it gets to the USA for you. They make great Christmas gifts. You can buy two for \$135.

Jan_27_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We like the new church schedule, especially when you have two wards to cover! We heard a good talk today in church about the "Come Follow Me" manual for the home being compared to the protection the Israelites received when they applied the blood of a lamb on the door frames of their homes. A gospel-centered study of the scriptures in the home will help provide vital protection for our families.

I went to the MD 1st Ward priesthood meeting today. Normally I do not attend because under the old schedule I was always with the MD 4th Ward. I was so surprised to see Phumlani conducting the Elder's Quorum meeting. I need to ask him what has happened. Maybe he has been called to be the president of the quorum? That would be simply amazing. One of the great beauties of

the gospel is the repentance and forgiveness that can come to each person who has a contrite spirit and a broken heart. So much can be healed and forgotten by the Lord. So much pain and sorrow can be alleviated through the Atonement of Christ. Yet, we can still remember sins we have committed. I believe that memory and experience we have in this mortality is going to be so extremely useful to us in our future callings throughout eternity.

Photos: - I forgot to get some pictures taken yesterday and today. So, you have to look at the van we rented when some of the kids came to Cape Town. It was a Hyundai, 8 passenger, diesel and good storage space in the back. It worked out very well for us.

Love,
Dad and Mom

Tid Bits

Dear Family,

*1. Word of the week: * "basal," forming or belonging to a bottom layer or base. *Example: * Sometimes the basal Oreo cookie crust of a cheesecake is the best part.

*2. Quote of the week: *

*3. Scripture of the week: *

And Moroni yielded up the com-

mand of his armies into the hands of his son, whose name was Moroni-hah; and he retired to his own house that he might spend the remainder of his days in peace. (Alma 62:43)

*4. Joke of the week: *

Q: Did you hear what happened to a piece of paper?

A: It was so tearable!

*5. Bee's Knees Award: *This girl is awesome. She has long, beautiful, thick hair. She is more pretty than a truckload of princesses. She is



I forgot to get some pictures taken yesterday and today. So, you have to look at the van we rented when some of the kids came to Cape Town. It was a Hyundai, 8 passenger, diesel and good storage space in the back. It worked out very well for us.



smart. She loves to play and have fun. She has the most lovely smile. She loves to obey the commandments and tries to be like Jesus. She loves to go to Primary. She is a very big helper around the house. She can run fast, jump high and lift heavy things, Juliet, you are the Bee's Knees, sistah!!!

6. Gospel question of the week: Last week's question was what was the name of the place where Jacob wrestled with an angel? Answer: Penuel. This week's question: Where in the scriptures does it say a Priest

in the Aaronic Priesthood can baptize and confirm people as members of the Church?

7. If I were you (Advice to grand kids): If I were you, I would memorize missionary scriptures. Maybe you could do one a week. Try it. I think you will like it.

*8. What I learned this week: *Good teachers are also good listeners.

*9. What I am grateful for: *The wives of General Authorities that are so patient and understanding with

all the duties, demands on time and responsibilities of their husbands.

10. My goal for the week: I had a good meeting with the Elder's Quorum Presidency last week. This week I plan to make the greatest chicken noodle soup the world has ever known!

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

Dad and Mom

A few thoughts

Dear Children,
I guess it has been a while since I have sent a note. Sorry if what I say here has already been said. First I want to thank each of you for your love and support and let you know that we miss you very much. We will be home in a blink of an eye. Here are a few thing that I have been thinking about.

Last week one morning when Dad and I were out for a walk we passed a man who was walking the same path with his head down looking in-

tently at the side of the path as he walked. We always greet people when we pass them. He did not respond nor look up. The interesting thing about this man was that I believe he is homeless and probably hungry. After we passed him I saw a Mcdonalds' bag in the road. When we looped back from our walking we passed this man again and he was carrying the discarded bag. This man did not have any pants on. He had underwear and he had wrapped a dirty piece of clear plastic around his waist to "cover" himself and protect him from the elements. I wondered where he came from and what his circumstances were. A few weeks earlier there was a man walking down the middle of the road next to the separating barriers. He was wearing 1 flip flop and his other foot was bare. He was fully clothed but his clothing was dirty and ragged. I often wonder when we see people like this what we can do to ease suffering. We never carry cash with us on our walks and we have been cautioned not to bring people to our boarding. We were a mile or so from home so I didn't think to ask him to follow us back and wait outside our complex and take him some food or

a pair of pants. There are some regular beggars on some corners with signs asking for cash. Again I do not know their circumstances. I know people come to our area looking for work or handouts. We have been approached more than once by someone asking for food because they have none and their children are hungry. I always have this argument with myself in my mind about what to do. If we give them something now does it set us up and our neighbors as a target in the future. Is what they are telling us the truth and whether it is or not should we just give to them anyway because we can and let the Lord judge their circumstances. Our encounters are brief as they walk on and we walk the opposite direction. We always have our name tags on so I wonder are we representing the Lord's church in the best way we can? By the time we reach home and then go to look for them they are not longer in sight. We sometimes keep granola bars and water in the car and have given those to people asking for food. Still struggling for answers to this day to day. Learning self reliance is the ultimate goal but there is so much to do in getting to that

point. Having skills and education would help but it seems that opportunities are also limited. People willing to do manual labor are many and therefore they often work hard for a minimal wage. Still a lot of prejudice here in South Africa related to color and fear on both sides.

The woman Ivy that we sometimes purchase souvenirs from has an interesting story. She is a member of the church and is now the Relief Society president in her ward. She has been the young women's president. She is working to put one of her son's thru university. She is from Zimbabwe and goes there to purchase things to sell to tourists. She is also helping her sister who was pregnant. Because of the large size of her sister it was a high risk pregnancy. They took the baby a couple of days ago because of high blood pressure issues and Ivy said that neither her sister nor the baby are doing very well. The baby was about 7 months along. She said she has never seen a baby so tiny. The thing about the public hospital where the baby was born is that they do not provide food. Friends and family are relied upon to take food to the pa-

tients. So Ivy and some friends take food in to her sister twice a day. It is a great burden on them because they lack transportation and either walk the distance or hire a taxi that adds to the blessing of service. I do not believe they get very good medical care in that facility. Ivy had received a phone call that the baby had passed away but the hospital had made a mistake and called the wrong person. We have gone to a clinic with another member of the church in Mdantsane and were shocked at the lack of organization of records. Files and pages recording patients

visits are piled up on desks and they often cannot find some one's files. Each patient carries a booklet to the clinic with the info from their previous visits and that is the best record.

So Ivy's parting words to us is that the outcome is in God's hands. We told her we would pray for her sister and the baby.

When a few of you were here a couple of weeks ago we had a combined ward party. We had more food than we needed and it was distributed to people in the ward. We were not a part of that as the Sisters who did





Is this beautiful girl gurgling at the dinner table?

the cooking and cleaning up took care of the food. The next week I greeted a sister and asked how she was doing. She said she was so happy, so very happy all week because of our kindness. She also had shared with some of her neighbors. I surmised from her comment that she took home some of the left overs from the party.

Many of you sent some toys to be used in the Nursery because they only had some large lego blocks. I have put the toys in a large tub in the library and told and showed the Pri-

mary presidents where the toys are for their use and suggested they take a few to the nursery each week and then teach the children how to clean up after their play time. I have looked in the Nursery the last couple of weeks and they are only using the same lego blocks. I told the nursery leaders about the supply of toys in the library and they said they did not know about them. I am not sure what to do now. Do I go with them to choose a few toys and walk them thru the process or just let them figure it out. I think I need to talk to the Bishop's to get the library

opened so they can access the toys. The library is usually locked unless you can get a Bishop to open it for you. The librarians do not know what to do in the library and they often miss coming to church and are never early. I have tried to show them but I am not a very effective teacher I guess. They still think of the library as a storage room. There are a lot of chalk and whiteboard erasers in the library but I find in the classrooms toilet paper that has been used for cleaning the chalkboard. Still thinking about what my next steps should be. Maybe an effective library is not a priority.

Any thoughts or inspiration I am open to ideas. I went to both wards primary this week to see if I could help with the music time. One ward has a chorister but she did not come to church and the other does not have a chorister. So I worked on teaching them the song "Jesus once was a little child". I am not very good at playing and leading at the same time but that particular song is pretty easy and it is nice for them to hear the music that goes with the song. The music time passes very quickly. There were 25 children in

one of the primary's and only about 6 were boys, but I had they boys sing a verse together and then the girls sing the verse. I asked them to sing the song all week so they could remember it. Next week is our Stake Conference so there will not be primary for a couple of weeks. Sister George the Primary President has asked me to come to Primary to teach the songs. I am happy to help but would like to teach a song leader that can do it when I leave. I am teaching a conducting course and a piano course. There are 6 people who have completed the first conducting course that I taught. They are 5 young men and 1 woman (the primary chorister in the 4th ward) They are supposed to bring their keyboards to the class to practice and learn new skills. It is too dangerous for them to carry the keyboards to the class as they become targets for robbery. So it may take us a little longer to get through the piano course as they one by one play at the electric keyboard in the chapel. We have just begun the piano course and it has not been offered in this area before. There seems to be a great interest in learning. The church recommends that

the conducting course be completed before taking the piano course. I have 13 people who have begun the second conducting course. We will see if they consistently keep coming.

There are 5 to 7 young men deacon age. One young woman and a young man about 15 or 16, a young mother (who is the Ward music director in the 1st ward) and 4 elderly sisters and 1 elderly man. I am hoping we can complete both courses and then those that complete the courses will be able to continue to teach in the Wards after I leave.

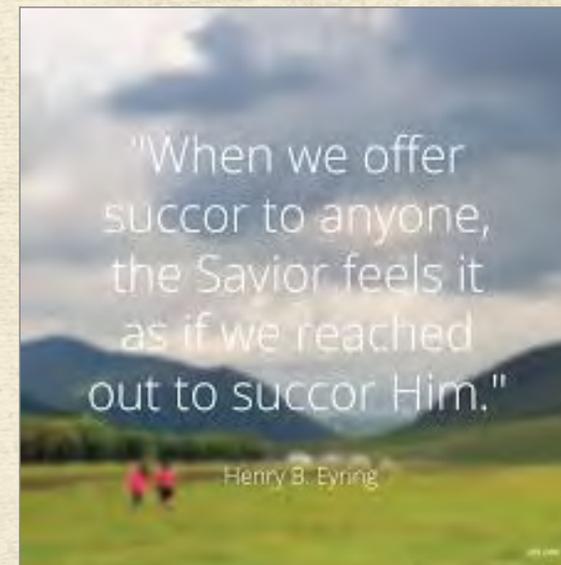
When we visited a game park with our guests I had begun a conversation with our guide who seemed to be a christian by a few of his comments. He also stated his father and grandfather were pastors or ministers. I had asked what church he goes to and he said something like "he does not think the Messiah cares what the name of the church is." I have been thinking about that and am preparing some information to leave with him when/if we see him again next month. Part of what I will say is that it does matter to the Savior what his church is called and reference the knowledge that comes to

us through a modern day prophet through revelation and from the Book of Mormon an ancient record that is a companion to the Bible in learning about Jesus Christ. I will include a copy of the Book of Mormon and my testimony. I also am thinking about including a fireside talk by a convert Judy Brummer who is from South Africa and helped translate the Book of Mormon into Xhosa. You can hear/read her address for yourselves if you like at churchhistorianspress.org. He may reject the whole thing but I cannot think it is in vain to share what we know.

Our time here is quickly drawing to a close. The time passes very quickly each day. I was given a copy of the narrative history book, "Saints, The Standard of Truth". I was aware of some of the trials of the early church members but have read many things that I did not know. I feel very blessed to have the gospel in my life and to have been blessed with that knowledge for most of my life. I am ever thankful for those who sacrificed so much to follow the prophet and to study the scriptures to learn God's plan for us. I know the

Church of Jesus Christ of latter-day saints is his church and that we must hold fast to the iron rod and press forward in faith. I have not endured many trials as many of you have. I am not asking for trials but I pray that I may ever be faithful in my own little way. God loves all of his children and wants all of us to come home to him. I bear testimony that Jesus Christ is the redeemer of the world and we must follow him and keep all of the commandments to have joy in this world and qualify for joy in the world to come. We must sincerely pray each day for guidance.

There is power and strength is given to us when we read the Book of Mormon daily. Serving in the church gives us many opportunities to grow and step out of our comfort zone. I know there are many who could do what I am doing better than what I do but I have been given this opportunity to do the best that I can. It has been a great blessing to me. Thank you for your prayers and support. We love you and pray for you in return. Have a wonderful week. Hugs and kisses, Mom/Grandmother



Jan_28_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

NOTE: I am using a new gmail address because I have used up all mt storage on my "benevations" account. I am going to try to use this one as much as possible from now on.

While Mom worked on some things here at the house, I had a busy day helping Phumlani and Shakes set up their brand new business/partnership. They started selling barbecue meat just out their back door to people leaving the train station and heading home right past their stand. Good location. Good food. Good target audience.

I just sent them a text to see how they are doing. Things are selling, but i haven't receive an exact reading on if they sold all the meat they started with this morning. They had 10 chicken legs, 10 chicken thighs, 10

pieces of sausage and 10 pieces of pork (which they cut in half, so make it 20 pieces). If things go well, they can save their money and reinvest it in the business.

They were very excited this morning to get going. It is great to see them look at being more self-reliant. If they can make a good profit, it is the perfect business for them. Close to home braai stand. Purchase meat just across they highway. Chop wood in the bush instead of buying briquettes...let's hope and pray it goes well for them

The reason Phumlani was at the front of priesthood class on Sunday is because he was called to be the Elder's Quorum instructor. Good for him. That is a great calling for him.

Of course, I bought two large pizzas today on special promotion - Approximately \$7.00 USD for the two of

them. "Russians" with some extra cheese accidentally spilled on each one!) 50% profit.)

Photos:

- This is Phumlani and Shakes doing their braai business. We are hoping this works for them so they can go to work every Monday through Friday! (Late bit of news - they sold about 30 pieces of the 40 they had. That's a good first day. Tomorrow we go to the butcher shop and buy more meat with *their* money. We have priced things so they are making a clean



This is Phumlani and Shakes doing their braai business.



We are hoping this works for them so they can go to work every Monday through Friday! (Late bit of news - they sold about 30 pieces of the 40 they had. That's a good first day).



Tomorrow we go to the butcher shop and buy more meat with *their* money. We have priced things so they are making a clean 50% profit.

2019 JANUARY 29 }

Jan_29_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

I did some highly technical maneuvering to free up some space on my "beneventions" gmail account. It is way over your heads so I won't take time to try and explain it all to you. In short, it's called the delete button.

Day two of the great braai experiment looks okay. Unfortunately, they got rain this afternoon. Hopefully they sold out of product. The big day might be on Friday, the 1st of February. That and the previous day is payday! We are hoping when people get money in their pocket they will want to spend it on delicious braai cooking.

Today we ran to the Survey Office for Buffalo City (another name for East London) to try and locate some maps for our new missionaries opening up an area in Mdantsane.

After talking to several people in several offices, we were directed to another building across the street where the GIS (Geographical Information Systems) was located. Success! The very nice young lady we met said she can deliver to us what we need. We will email the exact areas we need and she will provide hard copy maps and provide us an electronic version for our computer.

We bought a roasted chicken on our way home from work. I will be using one like this to 1) provide the meat I need for my award-winning chicken soup, and 2) use the drippings and flavoring of the carcass to create a delicious broth, certain to win me the chicken soup cook-off contest on Friday at our district meeting. In a sense, we all win because Mom will be serving delicious cornbread with each bowl of soup!

Awesome, scary, loud, pounding,

dramatic, explosive, spectacular thunder and lightening this evening!!!

Photos:

- Pretty good job of camouflage -
We had some very delicious cooking during our overnight safari with the kids. I am not a big lamb chop fan, but these were very good!

We love you very much. And, if we truly love the Lord, we will obey His commandments.

Dad and Mom



Pretty good job of camouflage



We had some very delicious cooking during our overnight safari with the kids.



I am not a big lamb chop fan, but these were very good!

2019 JANUARY 30 }

Jan_30_2019

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

It's late, so a quick update:

1. Helped my boys with the braai stand in the township until about 10:30
2. Did some quick shopping for groceries. Listened to the car radio about government corruption testimony before the "State Capture Commission" (corruption).
3. Took care of all our month end receipts - scanning, notating, summary sheets, etc.
4. Had a delightful dinner with President Lebethoa. Mom fixed Cheesy Chicken Skillet. We had peach cobbler with vanilla ice cream for desert. We had some very good discussions on various topics relating to the mission.
5. Mom spent 55 minutes waiting on the line for a Social Security representative in the U.S.

It's time to hit the sack. I have to

take a missionary to the airport at 6 AM tomorrow morning.

Photos:

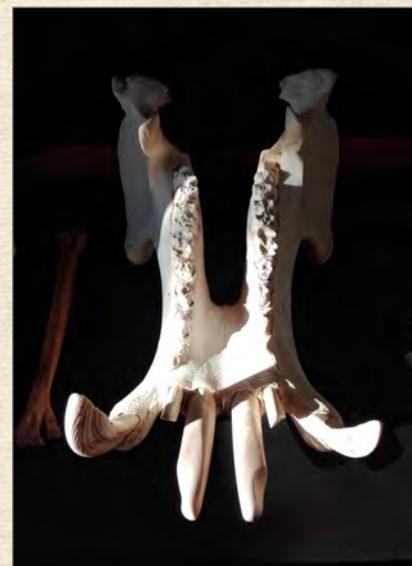
- The devil of our trip - Charl, the Great White Schotia Ranger - This use to be something with big teeth or tusks!

Love,

Dad and Mom



Charl, the Great White Schotia Ranger



This use to be something with big teeth or tusks!



The devil of our trip

Jan_31_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

I took a missionary to the airport this morning, Elder Lillback. He is at the end of his two years and ready to return to Germany. It was fun to be his companion for two hours. I asked him what Mom and I usually ask missionaries as they leave for home from the East London via Cape Town. "Tell us about two of your most memorable experiences during your mission.

His first memory was having a brand new missionary that didn't want to be on his mission. He was able to talk to him, encourage him and help him along. He finally made the decision to hang in there and focus on his mission. Elder Lillback got a letter from him later on in his mission from this Elder, thanking him for his patience and encouragement.

Another memory was teaching a sis-

ter the gospel and how she was truly converted. He and his companion knew it by the why she completed commitments, read scriptures, prayed, attended church, etc. She has stayed active in the church this whole time. Some times you have converts that don't always make it, even in their first 6 months. It was a true blessing for him to know this sister and to help her embrace the truth of the Restored Gospel.

I went and had the front car seats professionally cleaned by an upholstery cleaning company. They did a good good. It has taken a long time for the seats to dry and impacted our ability to get out to our area like we had planned. Carpets and seats are pretty much back to normal.

We were able to get a map from the East London City GIS department. In a full page printout, you cannot really identify the numbers of the

homes. I had a 3 ft X 3 ft print put together. It is big enough that we can easily see house numbers. If the new missionaries for that area like it, we will have it laminated so they can hang it in their boarding and use a whiteboard marker on it.

Mom has finished the new "Saints" history book by the church history department. I just started reading it. Fascinating to read and I think an effort on the part of the church to address some of the "History Critics" that seem to dog the Internet with their slant on LDS history. *How im-

portant to keep our eyes and ears focused on the living prophets and apostles*!

I hope all of you had a chance to watch the YSA fireside with Elder and Sister Renlund, broadcast from Hawaii. It was absolutely excellent. I highly recommend it to all of you.

<https://www.lds.org/broadcasts/watch/worldwide-devotionals/2019/01?lang=eng&vid=5989060130001>

Photos:

- All the missionaries from Queenstown, East London and

All the missionaries from Queenstown, East London and Mdantsane with President Lebethoa, Sister Lebethoa, Elder and Sister Sitati. It takes a lot of food to feed that many missionaries!



Mdantsane with President Le-
bethoa, Sister Lebethoa, Elder and
Sister Sitati. It takes a lot of food to
feed that many missionaries!

Love,

Dad and Mom

Feb_01_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We were fortunate to have President Lebethoa at our district meetings today. Even though we attended separate meetings, the missionaries love him and enjoy having him around. After the meeting, he went out with one of the missionaries to work in the area. That is great for the missionaries to see and experience.

After the meeting, we had the Great Chicken Soup Cook Off. Elder Tervort brought his best chicken noodle soup and I brought mine. I was "Soup A" and his concoction was "Soup B." His was thick and mine was more of a broth type soup. Each of the 15 missionaries there (including the president) had a chance to taste both soups. They then had to cast their ballot on which one they would select first if they had a hankering for soup. To top things off, Mom had her

extraordinarily good cornbread there.

The mission president and one other missionary counted the ballot. I was confident of a victory, but never thought it would be a landslide. As the final results were announced, my arrogant grin became a picture of total embarrassment. I was smoked by Elder Tervort, 13 to 2! I congratulated him as we shook hands and we gave each other a big hug.

Now, truth be known, I was so happy that Elder Tervort experienced such a tremendous victory. This is the missionary that had a discussion with Mom a few weeks ago and wanted so badly, to the point of tears, to go home. Since that time, Mom and I have been trying to help him feel more comfortable with his new environment. Fortunately, he has a great companion that is patient and understanding. We are hoping

this victory has made him feel absolutely great!

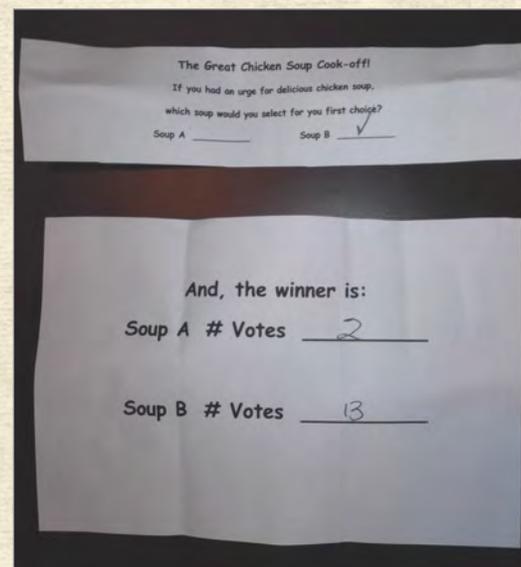
We had some quality visits today with some older mamas. One is Sister Goje (not a member of the church) who has a son on a mission in Zimbabwe. Another is Sister Gadlela (not a member of the church) who's brother and a member of the church passed away last year. Also, another lady that is not a member who's husband died a few weeks ago. Mom baked cupcakes for her. Also, a single sister about age 45 who loves it when we come to visit.

Mom just fits right in with these ladies. She teaches them a simple yet meaningful lesson. They love her and she really makes them feel special.

Mom had a whole bunch of people to her music class today. There are a lot of people that are interested in learning from both wards. Mom mentioned the young ones learn very quickly and the old ones...well, we are just glad they come.

Photos:

- Sister Goje. Her English is not



The sad, pitiful results of the chicken soup cook-off. This proves that missionaries have no taste whatsoever! I was deeply hurt by the vote after slaving in the kitchen for hours and finally making some decent homemade noodles.



Sister Goje. Her English is not that good, but always a pleasure to visit her. We left her with a couple bowls of the "losing soup"



Mom teaching her music class

that good, but always a pleasure to visit her. We left her with a couple bowls of the "losing soup" - Mom teaching her music class - The sad, pitiful results of the chicken soup cook-off. This proves that missionaries have no taste whatsoever! I was deeply hurt by the vote after slaving in the kitchen for hours and finally making some decent homemade noodles.

Dad and Mom

We love you all very much and hope and pray you will have a great day today!!!

Feb_02_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We received an interesting text message from Elder Ter-vort after I had sent him a text congratulating him on his stunning chicken soup victory:

"Thanks for the fun and to be fair, I thought your soup was better than mine. This was the best day I have had so far. Thanks again."

I had a huge wall map printed up today (black and white) for \$3.50 USD. The size is over 3 ft. x 3 ft. Getting it laminated will be 4 times the expense of the print job. I think it is a pretty good bargain.

We went to our stake conference leadership training meeting this afternoon. The Elder's Quorum President from our MD 4th Ward spoke. He was not surprised when he was asked to speak at conference be-

cause he had the distinct impression he was going to speak while sitting in the congregation at the last stake conference. He did a fine job speaking about the importance of families.

In the adult session later in the afternoon we also heard some good talks and the last hour was a Q&A sort of meeting. A lot of the discussion from members in the congregation centered on our marriage relationships and dating and courtship. The stake presidency expressed their concern regarding YSA not getting married. They also stressed getting married to someone within the church.

I will be sending in a D.O.P.E. Manual submission tomorrow. But, it has dawned on me that we have a few family members that have not yet contributed to the manual. They must repent or run the risk of a "Pink Belly" or "The Circle" at the

next family reunion. Publish or perish, baby!!!

Dad and Mom

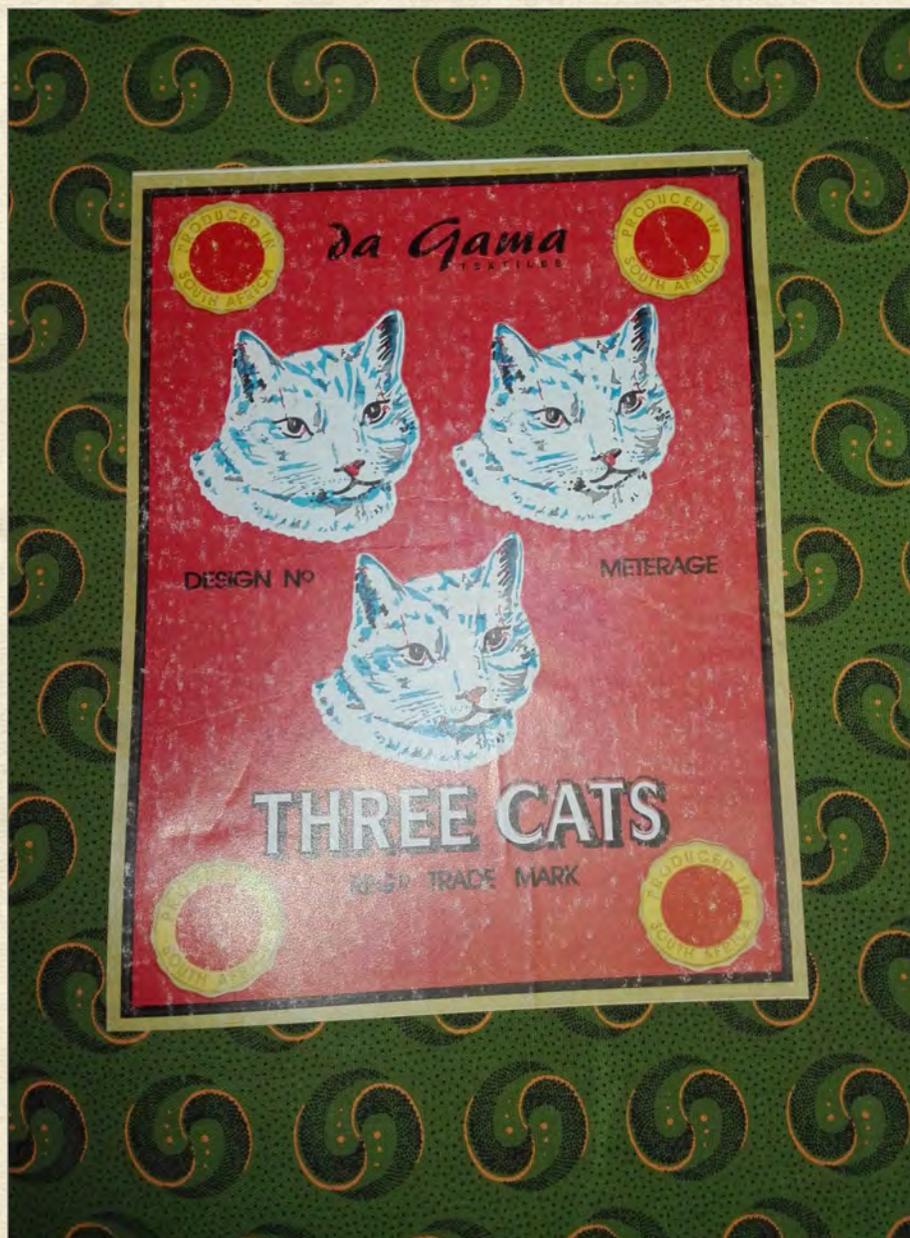
Photos:

- This is Shay-Shay (sp.) that is a 100% cotton fabric made in South Africa. It is known for its bright colors and patterns. You know it is original if it has the official "Three Cats" stamp on the back of the fabric. Of course, this does not stop the Chinese from duplicating it in China and then shipping it and selling it here.

We love you,



This is Shay-Shay (sp.) that is a 100% cotton fabric made in South Africa. It is known for its bright colors and patterns.



You know it is original if it has the official "Three Cats" stamp on the back of the fabric. Of course, this does not stop the Chinese from duplicating it in China and then shipping it and selling it here.

Feb_03_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We just experienced a wonderful Sunday Stake Conference session. We heard great talks from different stake members, our mission president and his wife and our stake president. It is simply wonderful to see the church in action here in Mdantsane. We have great members of faith and powerful testimonies. Our hearts are filled to overflowing with joy as we see these faithful members of the church move forward in the gospel.

A young man who was called on to share his testimony extemporaneously, said something to this effect. "For those who seek to believe, proof is not possible. For those who do believe, proof is not required." I think this points out the need for faith no matter who we are. We are not given to have a perfect knowledge of things to begin with. We start with a

desire to believe and then, take the beginnings of faith and start to nourish it with all diligence.

Sister Lebethoa said, "Love is spelled T.I.M.E." She delivered a marvelous talk on the importance of family and how we can actively bless the lives of our children - FHE, scripture study together, family councils, family prayer, etc. The Lebethos's are a very good example of a couple and family that do more than just talk about how to develop strong families.

Our stake president emphasized yesterday and today that in the pre-earth life we "fought" for the right to have agency! We fought to have the blessing of receiving a body of flesh and bones. Our agency was a principle so important that the war in heaven resulted in the expulsion of 1/3 of Heavenly Father's spirit children. That is pretty serious stuff! We

need to safeguard and cherish our agency and use it wisely to help us achieve eternal life.

Well, it was a great stake conference, right here in Mdantsane. It is so good for our members to see their black church leaders and other members speak with such power and conviction. We hope and pray all of us will apply what we have heard and to what the Holy Ghost bore testimony of to our hearts.

Photos:

- Can you see the Cape Buffalo in

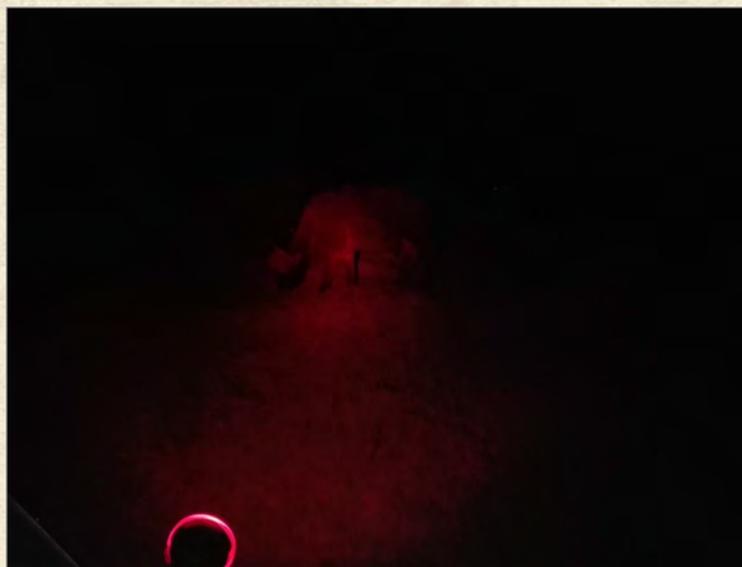
the darkness of the night. It was a little eerie as we we came upon 20 or so of this giants in the middle of the night. - Skinny Flamingo - Colorful bird at the Birds of Eden park

We love you all very much. Make good, very good, decisions today that will bring you the greatest happiness and joy!

Dad and Mom



Colorful bird at the Birds of Eden park



Can you see the Cape Buffalo in the darkness of the night. It was a little eerie as we came upon 20 or so of this giants in the middle of the night.

Tid Bits

Dear Family,

*1. Word of the week: * "magnanimous," generous or forgiving, especially towards a rival or less powerful person. *Example:* It was a magnanimous gesture on the part of BYU to allow the Gonzaga basketball team to win the game the other night.

*2. Quote of the week: *

"Since most couples are yoked together in marriage, they will only go in circles if they do not work together to move forward."

3. Scripture of the week:

Wherefore, be faithful; stand in the office which I have appointed unto you; succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees. (D&C 81:5)

4. Joke of the week:

Father: I am missing \$20 from my wallet.

Sin: Dad, I am sorry. I took that money and spent it.

Father: Well, son, you are going to have to pay it back, with lots of smiles.

Son: Whew! I thought you were going to make me pay it back with cash.

5. Bee's Knees Award: Are you a hard-worker? Probably not. This kid really gets after it when he makes his mind up to do something. 110% determination. He runs like the wind. He received an "A" in Mathe by working his behind off. He is handsome, intelligent, athletic, fun...the list goes on and on. Best of all, he is a righteous priesthood holder and tries to be the best example of the gospel he can be. He loves his family and loves to be with them. He will be n awesome missionary. Jacod, you are the Bee's Knees, brotha!!!

6. Gospel question of the week: Last week was a trick question. Nice try Annie and Amanda. No where in the scriptures or the Church Handbook, does it say a Priest can perform both the baptism and confir-

mation. He can only perform the water baptism. This week's question: Where were the written testimonies of the three and eight witnesses to the Book of Mormon located in the first edition of the Book of Mormon?

7. What I learned this week: I so enjoyed the fireside that Elder Renlund and his wife held for the YSA. Their important message, "Stay in the boat." It may not be a luxury cruise liner, but, it is the church is the boat that will deliver you safely to your eternal destination.

*8. If I were you (Advice to grand kids): * If I were you, I would read over and over again the testimony of Joseph Smith and the First Vision. Then, continually pray about it until you receive an unmistakable witness from the Holy Ghost that it is true! Try it. I think you will like it.

9. What I am grateful for: Revelation. We saw that in our stake conference this weekend. The Lord works through his chosen servants.

*10. My goal for the week: *Ask both of our bishops about setting up a missionary preparation class for the

youth.

11. Photo of the week: Patiently waiting for a missionary to come home from the Philippines!

Have fun living the gospel this week!
Stay loyal to the Royal!!!

Dad and Mom



Skinny Flamingo



2019

FEBRUARY 4 }

Feb_04_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Just like clock work, I washed the car and it rained within 24 hours! I can predict weather better than the TV weatherman.

I paid off the wager I had with Elder Tervort today. I met him, his companion and two other missionaries from their district with him. What started out as a milkshake pay-off for two missionaries became lunch at a local steakhouse and then, double thick milkshakes around the corner at a place called the "Milky Lane" for all four. I think I will back off the betting for a while.

Mom had ordered another four keyboards from Salt Lake and they came in today. That is a total of 8 keyboards she will have out on loan. As you may already know, if the students go through the whole course successfully, they get to keep the

keyboard as a reward. Pretty good deal. Anyway, Mom was excited to see them today.

Michael and Annie Beckstead will be here in two weeks. The first group of kids to come here was an experiment. We now know what to really go do and what kind of timetable we need to meet. We are adding a couple of things this time around to make the trip way more cooler!

Photos:

- This car accident just left the driver hanging there and held up traffic like crazy today! - I hit my head again today on the same set of cupboards in the garage - this time from the other direction. So, I banged my right side instead of my left side. I have trained myself to be careful from the left side, but not the right side yet. I think one or two more times on the right side and I will be fully motivated to remember

the pointed cupboard corner is right there waiting for me! - This is the weapon of mass destruction! Most men would have fainted from the level of pain I went through. I managed to stay on my feet and finish the job of sweeping the garage floor.

We love you. Be good, very good!

Dad and Mom



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2019

FEBRUARY 5 }

Feb_05_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We did two boarding inspections today. They both looked pretty good - good enough to earn some of Mom's cookies. The one car I inspected was pretty bad. I reminded them that the mission president said if missionaries do not take care of their cars, we will take them away and give them to missionaries that will appreciate the blessing of having one.

I have encountered a gentleman that does very nice leather work. I met with him today on a couple projects. He is a little backlogged, so I hope he can get some things done for us before we leave.

We tried to find some lost sheep today. We were able to dig up information on a few. One has moved to Cape Town. Another to an area west of Johannesburg. Several were not

home. We should probably go back on weekends. If they are working, they may not be at their homes during the day during the week.

One gentleman has been a member of the church for quite sometime. He had left Mdantsane years ago but has been back here for the last year or so. According to him, he has been ordained an Elder. He has never been to church since we have been here. Presently, he works as a bouncer at the Blue Horse Bar in downtown East London. What happened? What went wrong? There are too many of these less-active situations.

Photos:

- This is Anan Moyake. She is not a member of the Church because her family is pretty much less active. She is a pretty girl that could really use the gospel in her life. We are trying to encourage the mother (who is a

member) to come back to church regularly with her daughter so one day she can be baptized - when she is ready. Her hair is braided into such tiny and tight corn rows. This takes several hours, some times all day, to complete.

We love you! We love you a lot!

Dad and Mom



This is Anan Moyake. She is not a member of the Church because her family is pretty much less active. She is a pretty girl that could really use the gospel in her life. We are trying to encourage the mother (who is a member) to come back to church regularly with her daughter so one day she can be baptized - when she is ready. Her hair is braided into such tiny and tight corn rows. This takes several hours, some times all day,

2019

FEBRUARY 6 }

Feb_06_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We completed three boarding inspections this morning. All passed, all received a bag of home-made cookies. I was a little disappointed because when they do not pass, I usually get to eat the cookies!

We spent some time sorting through bags of clothing left by missionaries, Mom doing mending, me running to retail stores to buy supplies for our missionaries, etc.

Then...we took some time to watch the State of the Union address by President Trump. I guess every president delivering a State of the Union speech does everything in their power to highlight up their achievements. I felt a little like a person looking to buy a very nice sports car from a used car salesman. You see the high gloss paint job, the meticulously clean interior, the good

rubber, but, somehow, you do not feel you are getting everything you need to make a great buying decision. I love the employment numbers, I love the direction of the economy, I agree with some of his political agenda items, but I just have a problem with Donald Trump the person.

Mom and I watched a Hollywood version of "David and Goliath." We are glad we did because we have now learned some new things about that particular Bible account we did not glean from the scriptures:

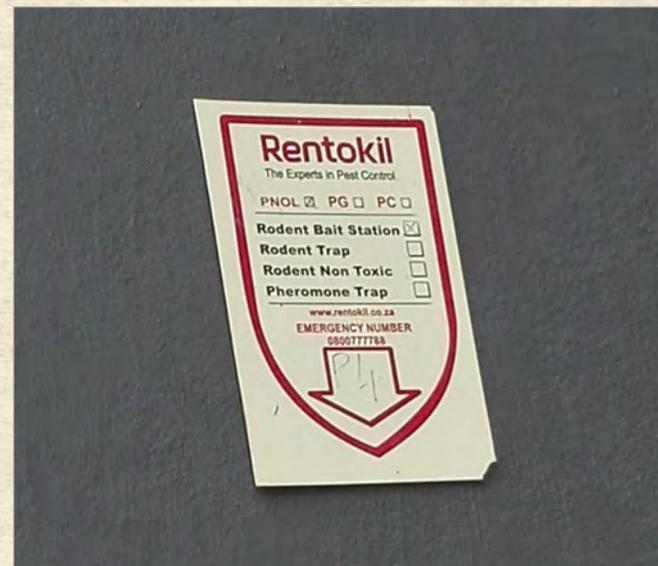
1. The Prophet Samuel was a mighty warrior along with King Saul and had killed many people
2. Samuel wears an old, tattered gunny sack type robe with a hoodie
3. Samuel looks old, but when he disrobes to his battle-training clothes, he is a muscle on muscle type guy
4. David goes through extensive training with Samuel and three oth-

- er muscular guys that continually spar with David to toughen him up
5. David actually fights Goliath with a shield and sword, but gets tossed around like a rag doll
6. David slings a type of "iron" stone at Goliath that leaves his sling like a glowing meteor and explodes into his forehead
7. David has the hint of a romance going on with King Saul's daughter

Love,
Dad and Mom

Photos:

- Saw this sign on the local McDonald's shop



Saw this sign on the local McDonald's shop

2019

FEBRUARY 7 }

Feb_07_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

It was raining when we travelled to King Williams Town this morning for a boarding inspection (I would rather call them a "boarding consultation"). On our way, there was a traffic bottleneck due to a horrific automobile accident. From what we could see, people were badly hurt or worse. It reinforced for me just how important it is for all of us, *in South Africa or the United States*, to be so very careful. Car accidents can kill loved ones.

Some of you have inquired about the great Braai (barbecue) experiment. So far, so good. The other day, Mom and I stopped by to say hello. Shakes had taken a taxi to go buy some meat and Phumlani was going to head into the bush to cut some wood. The jury is still out, but how neat they are actively doing something and spend-

ing, investing their own money.

President Lebethoa has asked us to look for potential boarding arrangements in Mdantsane. This would be a radical change to house our missionaries in the township. There are a few areas where it could work and have our missionaries living right in their work area. Still, the Area Presidency would have to approve it.

The other day Mom received a phone call from the mission nurse (who isn't a nurse) and asked that she take a missionary into the clinic to see a doctor. The missionary had sent a picture home of him wrapped up in a blanket and band aids all over his face, explaining to his mother that he is being eaten alive by mosquitoes. The mother was alarmed and called the mission office. Mom told the mission nurse that she would go look at the mis-

sionary and report back.

Well, the missionary was mostly joking, of course. He had a few bites on his face and one on his arm. Nothing at all to be concerned about. He was properly scolded, Mom reported back to the office and a trip to the doctor office was averted. Mothers rightfully get concerned about their babies!

Photos:

- I had two of these giant crepes today for about \$1.00 USD. Maybe not the best deal in the world, but

they were sure very good.

Have a great day making good choices! We love you!

Dad and Mom



I had two of these giant crepes today for about \$1.00 USD. Maybe not the best deal in the world, but they were sure very good.

Feb_08_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a very good training this morning in our district meeting. It was taught by Elder Mofokeng, the only black Elder in this particular district. It was very good. I could not help but think what a valuable leader of the church he will be after his mission. He is mature, on target with his scriptures, well-spoken and well-organized.

While Mom started her music-conducting class, I took off for NU 17, a part of the township that seems to be better off financially than most units and has a reputation for being safe. President Lebethoa has asked that we locate two new boardings so we can start to house Mdantsane missionaries in the areas where they work. I spent about an hour and a half driving around the area and did not see any clues of houses for rent.

I then went to the only property management office we know of in Mdantsane only to find them closed. However, I saw one advertisement sign for a ReMax agent. I called her number and left a message. She is the self-proclaimed "Area Specialist." Therefore, our problems are over and she will be able to help us!

Mom had about a dozen people in here class today. From what I saw, they seem to be getting it as they practiced conducting to different church hymns. She is teaching them about, beats, measures, rhythm, tempo, hymn intros, quarter notes, etc. - All Greek to me!

Photos:

- We spent some time this afternoon looking over bolt after bolt of Shweshwe fabric. This is a special cotton fabric that is made in South Africa. It is known for its rich colors and intricate designs. - Shakes at

the Braai cooking his pork and chicken. I bought some pork and it was really pretty good with "Six Gun" seasoning! - The district of elders we attended this morning - Elder Mofokeng is the black missionary and led our discussion this morning. Back row (L to R): Elders Willoughby, Gamble and Mofokeng. Front row (L to R): Elders Viner, Boyer and Stimpson.

We love you more and more each day, if that is even possible!

Dad and Mom



The district of elders we attended this morning - Elder Mofokeng is the black missionary and led our discussion this morning. Back row (L to R): Elders Willoughby, Gamble and Mofokeng. Front row (L to R): Elders Viner, Boyer and Stimpson.



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Shakes at the Braai cooking his pork and chicken. I bought some pork and it was really pretty good with "Six Gun" seasoning!

2019 FEBRUARY 9 }

Feb_09_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We have had a pretty laid back day. I ran some errands this morning. Mom has been sorting out left-behind clothing and bedding from missionaries, then, cleaning it. We have a large bag we will be taking to a local charity on Monday.

We are also figuring out our taxes for 2018. So much fun!

Mom has read the book, "Saints" and I am reading it now. It is amazing at how much division and adversity there was in the early days of the church. Ones gets the impression that Satan was trying with all his might to tear down the Church, the prophet and anyone who had an interest in furthering the Restored Gospel.

It is also interesting to read of people like John Taylor and others who

had received a testimony born of the Spirit and were true and faithful to the light and knowledge they had received no matter what the trials and challenges were.

Things have not change much in this day and age. Satan continues to fight the advancement of the work throughout the world on all levels. He has managed to distract and deceive many. And now, those individuals seemed obsessed in attacking the Church and its leaders. Like John Taylor, we must have our own testimonies deeply rooted in the gospel as administered by the Lord's prophets and apostles to survive the heat of the opposition. "Follow the prophet, he knows the way."

Photos:

- Shweshwe fabric by DaGama Textiles, a South African manufacture.

Stay loyal to the Royal! We love you,

Dad and Mom



Shweshwe fabric by DaGama Textiles, a South African manufacture.



Tid Bits

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

*1. Word of the week: *"draconian," excessively harsh and severe. * Example: *Senator Mike Lee has convinced Americans that many of the country's sentencing rules for criminal offenses are draconian and overly burdensome.

2. Quote of the week:

[image: image.png]

3. Scripture of the week:

And now my sons, behold I have somewhat more to desire of you, which desire is, that ye may not do these things that ye may boast, but that ye may do these things to lay up for yourselves a treasure in heaven, yea, which is eternal, and which fadeth not away; yea, that ye may have that precious gift of eternal life, which we have reason to suppose

hath been given to our fathers. (Helaman 5:8)

4. Joke of the week: (Sorry about another lawyer joke)

On his deathbed, a wealthy man gathered his priest, his accountant, and his lawyer together. He had spent his life amassing a fortune and he couldn't stand the thought of being parted with it.

He made each of them swear to withdraw 1/3 of his money and sneak it into his coffin at his funeral so that he would be buried with it. He died soon after.

Following the funeral the three men were walking back to their vehicles and begin talking to each other about the deceased man's odd request.

The priest said "Forgive me, for I

have sinned. I withheld 10% of my portion of his fortune from his coffin so that I could help the poor."

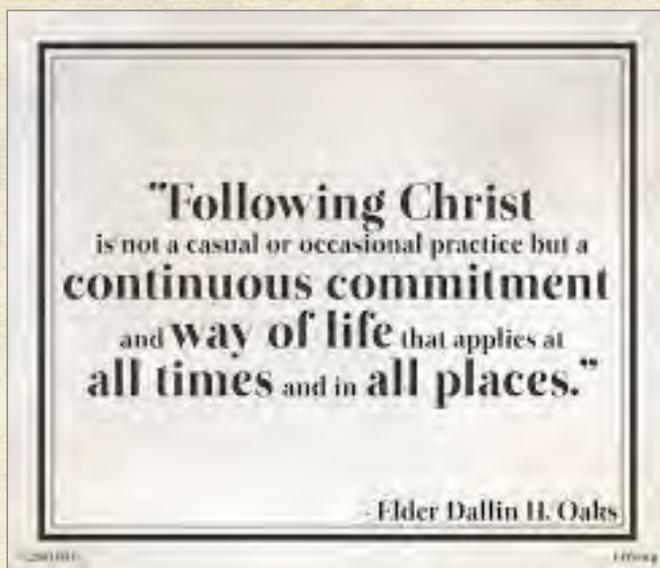
The accountant said "I too have not followed his instructions exactly. I withheld 20% of my portion of his fortune as compensation for my services."

The lawyer said "Shame on you both! I followed his instructions perfectly: I left a check for my full portion in his coffin."

5. Bee's Knees Award: Can you

sing like a celebrity? Probably not. This girl is incredible - she can sing, ride horses, cut hair and train dogs. She has her own, super obedient, Border Collie. She has so much potential to do what ever she wants to do. She is prettier than all the Disney queens and princesses all smushed together. She has a smile that warms the heart. She is kind and tries to be a friend to everyone. She is super smart - she can learn and o anything she puts her mind to. She has great determination. Lucy, you are the Bee's Knees, sistah!!!





*6. Gospel question of the week: *Last week's question* was, where was the location of the three and eight witnesses' testimonies of the Book of Mormon in the first printing of the Book of Mormon? Annie nailed it with the correct answer: In the back of the book. *This week's question*: Who did the Savior, Moses, Elias and Elijah appear to in the Kirtland Temple: *A: *Joseph and Oliver Cowdery, *B: *Joseph and Sidney Rigdon, *C: *Joseph and Hyrum Smith, *D: *Joseph and Brigham Young?

7. If I were you (Advice to grand kids): If I were you, I would develop a fun hobby that you enjoy and can become very good at. Try it. I think you will like it.

*8. What I learned this week: *One form of pride is to withhold recognition and praise from people that do well or have good qualities.

*9. What I am grateful for: *The strong testimonies and loyalty of many of the early saints of the Restored Church. Good examples to all of us!

10. My goal for the week: File our 2018 income taxes.

11. Photo of the week: Uncle Thom being cool with one of the brothers at Venice Beach, California.

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

Dad and Mom

Feb_10_2019

Dear Family,

I think we are noticing the difference between what used to be 5 hours of meetings for us down to 3 hours. It is quite nice, but the real question is, what do we do with the extra time that is freed up? I know we need to study "Come Follow Me," but, when we arrived home today, I took a long nap. Wow, did it feel good!

We receive transfer information yesterday and we are definitely feeling the increase in missionaries to the South Africa Cape Town Mission. Our zone is receiving an extra four

missionaries. That is all good news, however, it also means we will be having three (3) four-man boardings until we can find additional accommodations.

A counselor in the MD 1st Ward Bishopric moved and now resides in our MD 4th Ward. We were pretty excited about this because he would make a fantastic YM president for our Aaronic Priesthood age boys which we desperately need. A member of the stake presidency came today to release him. Just after releasing him, they called him to be a Stake High Councilor! Ouch, that hurt.

We were impressed today in our fast and testimony meeting to see so many of our young men stand and bare their testimonies. We need to make sure these young men stay strong as they will be the next missionaries out the door. We do have a lot of young women that need attention also. It would be great if we see them preparing for missions too.

Photos:

- Less active family we found to teach! - Tree

Have a delightful Sabbath. We love you,

Dad and Mom



Less active family we found to teach!



Tree

2019

FEBRUARY 11 }

Feb_11_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We have had some badly-needed rain all day today. We especially hope they get rain in Queenstown where things are very dry. Everything is turning greener here with the little rain we are receiving.

On our way to Mdantsane, we stopped and purchased some meat for Phumlani and Shakes. When we arrived at Phumlani's house, I gave him the meat and he gave me the money to cover the purchase. We are hoping they can make things work and start making some good profit.

We also visited some ladies that do a bunch of sewing for people in the community. That is their main business. For example, they will make wedding dresses, funeral clothing, traditional wear, etc. The younger missionaries have been teaching

them off and on, but we think they are so involved in their own church (meaning they probably have been contributing to a funeral fund) that they are not very serious about the lessons the missionaries deliver.

Mom knocked out some mending for missionaries today. I purchased some furniture for new missionaries coming to our zone. Over the next couple weeks, we will be buying quite a bit of appliances and furnishings. The management of missions takes money!

We have established a contact in Mdantsane to look for rental homes for us. He is a Realtor, but is well enough connected in the area that he might be able to find us some acceptable rental houses. We will see if he calls us back? Please feel free to mention our task of finding new lodging in your personal and family prayers. We are finding this assign-

ment a little challenging, but very interesting at the same time.

Photos:

- Mom doing her magic at the sewing machine - One of the keyboards that Mom's class members get to use and on which to practice in their homes.

We love you and pray for you daily!

Dad and Mom



One of the keyboards that Mom's class members get to use and on which to practice in their homes.



Mom doing her magic at the sewing machine

2019

FEBRUARY 13 }

Feb_13_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had transfers today. We lost 6 missionaries, but picked up 14. That meant a lot of transporting of luggage and missionaries. Happy to do it. One missionary, Elder Warren, is on his way home to England. He is an outstanding missionary. As is our practice, I asked him from Mom and I, "What are two of your most memorable experiences from your mission?"

His first experience was that he helped slaughter a pig for a celebration a family was having. (Okay, that was not what I had in mind for a memorable experience.) The second was a baptism he had early on in his mission. It seemed that the whole ward came out to the baptism and there was standing room only. The young man felt very welcomed and is still very active and about ready to go out on a mission himself.

From now on, I think Mom and I will ask, "What two SPIRITUAL experiences will you remember the most from your mission?" It is exciting to know this young man will go home and be a real strength to whatever ward he attends.

Transfers went well for the most part. We had a few hick-ups, but everyone made their flight or their bus and arrived at their respective destinations in good shape. We had four missionaries that started about 3 AM this morning in Port Elizabeth and did not finish the day travelling until about 8 PM tonight after a 3 hour bus ride from East London to Queenstown.

Mom spent the day at the sewing machine, washing old missionary leave-behinds, the oven (Valentine cookies) and visiting with Sister Hodges. I think Sister Hodges really enjoys another female to talk to. Un-

fortunately, Mom is not available that much.

Photos:

- Most people start their game of "Uno" with a toast of red wine. Not us, we start with a toast of Walmart sugar free grape drink. - This is the inside of "Marcos." It is suppose to be a good restaurant for authentic African Food and music. The food was 50/50. Daniel's Jo-burg burger was lacking to say the least. My crocodile tail was interesting. David's Kudu was good. Elizabeth and Mom's fish was good. We never

heard any music, so we did not get charged with the R 25 per person.

Happy Valentine's Day! Love,

Dad and Mom



Most people start their game of "Uno" with a toast of red wine. Not us, we start with a toast of Walmart sugar free grape drink.



This is the inside of "Marcos." It is supposed to be a good restaurant for authentic African food and music. The food was 50/50. Daniel's Jo-burg burger was lacking to say the least. My crocodile tail was interesting. David's Kudu was good. Elizabeth and Mom's fish was good. We never heard any music, so we did not get charged with the R 25 per person.

2019

FEBRUARY 15 }

Feb_15_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Once again, a very good district meeting. One portion of the meeting focused on using the scriptures more in our teach (as opposed to teaching from a pamphlet that has pictures). This is important for a lot of good reasons. One is that using the Bible and other scriptures lends credibility to our message. Another point, our investigators know the Bible and it is a good starting point for discussion. And, someone once said, "When we want to speak with God, we pray. When God wants to speak to us, we read the scriptures."

While Mom was busy with music lessons, I went out with two of our missionaries and visited and taught. One lesson was on the Plan of Salvation. Folks, it is a miracle that our young missionaries find, teach and baptize. I felt that the lesson was

pretty choppy and lacked some clarity. But...at the end of the lesson, one of the mamas said that she enjoyed the visit and learned some important things about what happens after death.

Let me restate the above. This is the Lord's work and His missionaries are set apart to teach His Restored Gospel. Irrespective of the presentation, the Holy Ghost is in these meetings and the people they teach feel the witness that comes to them as they humbly listen and exercise their faith.

Today was one of those hot and humid, dripping-with-perspiration days. My shirt felt soaked by the end of the day.

Photos:

- Almonds ready to be roasted for my oatmeal in the mornings. - The South African Springboks (Rugby) on

an outdoor advertisement.

Love you all very much,

Dad and Mom



Almonds ready to be roasted for my oatmeal in the mornings.

The South African Springboks (Rugby) on an outdoor advertisement.



2019

FEBRUARY 16 }

Feb_16_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Another hot and humid day. I went for a walk this morning and I feel like I never have cooled down. Hyper active sweat glands! February here is like August in the USA. I think a couple more weeks and then, great, great weather!

We had a good baptism today. Two women, one about twenty or so and the other 75 years old! We had a lady that was baptised about a month ago, Sister Ncoyi, and these two women are her mother and niece. The niece, Siyolise, is very impressive. She is the best prepared person for baptism I have met in South Africa. And, Mama Matshoba, what an awesome example!

Sister Ncoyi was ready to get baptized a while ago, but told the missionaries there was something she had to do first. She would not tell the

missionaries what it was. A week or two later it all came out. She took the Book of Mormon and went to her old church to preach to them about this second witness of Jesus Christ! With that under her belt, they set the baptismal date and the rest is history.

The Young Men and Young Women of the MD 4th ward had an activity today. Mom made them some cupcakes and I came up with a couple games. The rest of the activity was all theirs. They bought and prepared the food and drinks. They made some Valentine cards (I think). I instructed one of our missionaries how to run the games and then, Mom and I left early.

We went to a members home that said they were interested in some of the items that were left behind by missionaries. We were going to donate it to charity but, would rather

have it go to a member of the church. This family used to have a car but wrecked it in a rollover a few months ago. We are going to have our panel-beater friends, Gary and Lindz, take a look at it and see if they will provide a quote. The family has someone already in mind, but they do not seem too comfortable with him.

Photos:

- This is what's left of a VW Polo hatchback. Looks totaled to me. -
From left to right: Siyolise Mazomba, Sister Ncoyi, Mama Thobeka Mat-

shoba. At 75 years old, it took some real work and coaching to get her to go under the water. But she did it!

We love you more today than yesterday!

Dad and Mom



This is what's left of a VW Polo hatchback. Looks totaled to me.



From left to right: Siyolise Mazomba, Sister Ncoyi, Mama Thobeka Matshoba. At 75 years old, it took some real work and coaching to get her to go under the water. But she did it!

Tid Bits

Dear Family,

*1. Word of the week: * "platitude," a remark or statement, especially one with a moral content, that has been used too often to be interesting or thoughtful. *Example:* Some platitudes, although frequently used by people for decades, can have substantial meaning when you analyze them.

*2. Quote of the week: *

[image: image.png]

3. Scripture of the week:

And we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins. (2 Nephi 2:26)

4. Joke of the week:

Q: What is PINK and PINK and PINK all over?

A: Lexie

*5. Bee's Knees Award: *She is so beautiful. She is sharp as a tack. She has a great personality and makes friends easily. She is a disciple of Jesus Christ. She is kind, funny, happy, gregarious, confident, creative, helpful, thoughtful...she is like totally everything good. She loves her family. She shares "twin power" which is something very special. She promises no boyfriends until age 30. She will be married in the temple one day. Nadine, you are the Bee's Knees, sistah!!!

*6. Gospel Question of the week: *Daniel asked last week's question - Who did the Savior appear to in the Kirtland Temple? Answer: Joseph and Oliver Cowdery. This week's question: Why was Jesus Baptized?

*7. If I were you (Advice to grand kids): * If I were you, I would plan to go on a mission. Being a missionary is cool and the greatest work anyone can be doing on the face of the planet. Try it. I think you will like it.

8. What I learned this week: It is perhaps unimaginable the love, re-

spect, admiration, reverence and awe we had of our Heavenly Parents before we came to this earth.

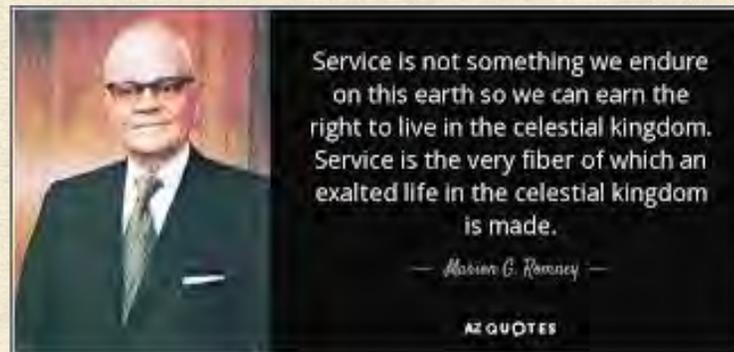
9. What I am grateful for: Our agency. It was so vitally important to the Lord that we all fought fiercely for the right to choose in our pre-earth life.

10. My goal this week: For Mom and I to have a blast with Michael and Annie!

11. Photo of the week: Look at the beautiful smile on this girl's face!

We love you and think about you all the time. Sometimes Mom cries when she is praying for you. Have fun living the gospel this week!

Dad and Mom



Feb_17_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We thought we were stuck without a computer this morning. The laptop refused to boot up. However, this afternoon Mom tried and it magically booted up just fine. She has the magic touch! We are now hoping that it will last a few more months.

Yesterday, we had two baptisms and the missionaries were suggesting I help with the confirmations today in Sacrament Meeting. I told them I was happy to help out any way I can, but felt that someone from the ward would be a better choice. I will be gone in June, the bishop and others will be here for a much longer time. It seems it would be more meaningful to have one of them perform the ordinance. Local ward members should become a part of a convert's life.

So, today Siyolise was confirmed by the bishop's counselor and the grandma was confirmed by the bishop. The bishop did the confirmation in Xhosa. This is another reason it is good for the members to be involved. Her English is not that good. It is wonderful that she can have this ordinance performed in her native tongue. I am sure it meant a lot to her.

We will be out of town starting tomorrow. We are traveling to Cape Town to meet up with Michael and Annie. After a day and a half in Cape Town, we start our journey to the Eastern Cape via rental car. Should be a good time. Consequently, we will not be sending out updates since our computer will be here at our house.

It will be so nice for your guys to have a break from all the babble.

Photos:

- Michael will want cold cereal when he is here. Any guesses which cereal he will want to have?

Have a good Sabbath! Have a great week! Do Good! We love you,

Dad and Mom



Michael will want cold cereal when he is here.



Any guesses which cereal he will want to have?



Feb_25_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

It has been an exciting week with the visit of Michael and Annie Beckstead. It was non-stop fun culminating in a busy Saturday and Sunday where Mom and Annie pulled off the incredible by preparing and serving a lovely "New Beginnings" luncheon for the Young Women in the MD 4th Ward.

By no means, was this some kind of a cake walk. It involved the cutting, sewing and ironing of 4 new table clothes reflecting the Young Women colors/values (8 different colors of fabric sewn together). They cooked and made the chicken salad for at least 60 half croissant sandwiches. They prepared fruit shish kabobs with fresh pineapple, apples, cantaloupe, grapes, etc. . Mom made her favorite Humis to dip the celery, carrots and peppers. And, a tortilla wrap cut into small slices. Then, the

piste de le resistance - brownies with vanilla ice cream and chocolate syrup. Bottom line, the dynamic duo were inspiring, amazing and uber wunderbar!!!

Michael and I stood out of the way and watched the BYU basketball team blow a 13 point lead over the University of San Francisco at the Marriott Center no less! No need for four women in the same kitchen at the same time.

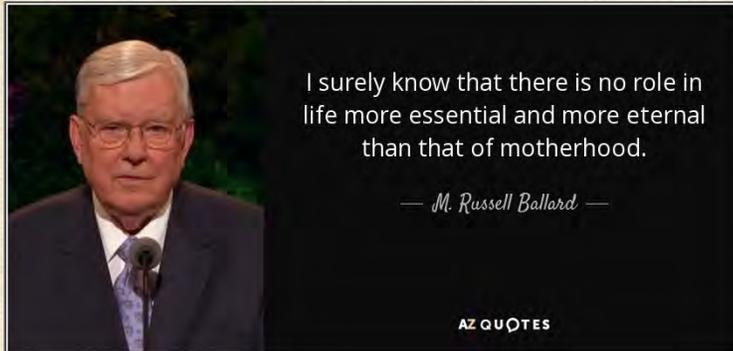
We are in for a busy week as we have a lot of catching up to do. We are back in our missionary attire and anxious to concentrate on our assigned responsibilities. A big part of that is to prepare a new boarding for some of our missionaries - new refrigerator, oven, microwave, furniture, beds, kitchenware, blankets, etc.

Photos:

- There are close to one million photos from last week. We have posted a few on our Google Drive for you to review. A couple comments; - Our speed boat was very cool. We went out into the ocean and marvelled at the awesome coastline, watched dolphins, whales and a few seals. The coast is only surpassed by the beauty of the lovely Annie Beckstead. - The silver colored monkey scared the daylight out of me. I was not harassing it, but I was having a stare-down contest with it. It bared its teeth and then lunged at me. I thought it was all

over! - The kayak trip was fun. Jumping off the rock was anti-climatic to the jump we did down at Arizona Hot Springs for Michael Stevenson's birthday camp out. I still have nightmares about that - not the height, but my white, flabby body! - The Lions at Schotia Safaris were active and loud. You hear them in the recording, but being there in person is an unnerving experience! - Mom, Michael and Annie climbed Table Mountain (I took the tramway to save everyone time). It was a rugged hike, like working 2 -3 hours on a stairmas-





ter! – Our ranger at Schotia was Charl. He did a great job as usual. Mom gave him a present of a Book of Mormon upon leaving. She also wrote a two page letter to him explaining the name of the church and sharing her testimony. – We cannot share any photos of the rhinos on social media at the request of the Schotia owners. They are an endangered group of animals as poaching continues to be a huge problem in the country. About 2,000 rhinos killed each year by poachers. However, we saw the rhinos up close and personal (meaning photos and

video of them adding to their dung pile).

Dad and Mom

Tid Bits

Dear Family,

(JUST FOUND THIS IN MY EMAIL DRAFTS. DON'T KNOW IF I HAVE ALREADY SENT IT?)

*1. Word of the week: * "Paltry," (of an amount) very small or meagre.

Example: Collecting rocks for my brothers in the Dragon's Club during our neighborhood rock fights with the Torres family, was a paltry sacrifice for the honor to be associated with such a fine organization.

*2. Quote of the week: *
[image: image.png]

*3. Scripture of the week: *

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. (Isiah 55:8)

4. Joke of the week:

Q: What happened to the guy that did not chose the Bread of Life?

A: He was toast!

5. Bee's Knees Award: Everyone likes this guy. He always has a smile on his face. He loves his wife and children and will do anything for them. He is a friend to all. If you need his help, he is there and always happy to lend assistance. He can fix cars, do yard work, seal and patch asphalt, paint...whatever you need, he can help. He is very giving person, unselfish and generous. He is a

hard worker. He is strong like a bear. He is committed to the gospel and is a faithful priesthood holder. Andrew, you are the Bee's Knees, brotha!!!

6. Gospel question of the week: I do not recall anyone answering last week's gospel question, which of our relatives was a plural wife of Joseph Smith? This week's question: Who was Issac's wife?

7. If I were you (Advice to grand kids): If I were you, I would always "XYZ" before I left the bathroom or the house. This stands for "examine your zipper." Try it. I think you will like it.

*8. What I learned this week: *Just as the Lord is patient with all my weaknesses, shortcomings and frailties, I need to be patient with others when I see things that do not go like I think they should.

*9. What I am grateful for: * The knowledge we have of the great Plan of Salvation, the Plan of Redemption, the Plan of Happiness.

*10. My goal for the week: * Do

more sincere complimenting. Look for the positive. Remember what our family says: "Hey, that glass is half full and filling up. Quick, get a bucket because it's going to spill over."

*11. Photo of the week: * Why is that baby crying? Who is that baby?

We love you very much. Each of you are our favorite children. Have fun living the gospel this week!

Dad and Mom

2019

FEBRUARY 26 }

Feb _26_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

It has been one of those days with a lot of running around. I will not bore you with the details. However, it has distilled upon my simple, little brain that what we do as senior couples to assist the mission office and the missionaries in the field is very important. Simply said, with the office 1,000 kilometers away from East London and Mdantsane, senior missionaries fill a void that is absolutely critical and vitally necessary to support.

I arranged for a trailer to rent tomorrow. We need to pick up study desks and beds from another boarding that has them in storage. These will go into a new boarding we will assume on March 1st. We also need to purchase kitchen appliances, a washing machine, furniture and a long list of household goods. If we purchase them at Game (Walmart)

tomorrow, we receive a 10% discount as "pensioners" or retired people.

Mom and I have both read "Saints," the historical narrative published by the Church about the restoration and the events of the Church up until the death of Joseph Smith and the beginning of the migration West. There is a lot of good information and lessons learned from our early Church history, but the one lesson that stands out the most in our minds is the supreme importance of obtaining our own testimonies and heeding the counsel and direction of the living prophets and apostles.

With that thought in mind, here is a link to a BYU talk by Elder Lawrence E. Corbridge that addresses the importance of having our own revelation and testimonies. Daniel shared this link with me:

https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/lawrence-corbridge_stand-for-ever/

In this day and age, an extremely important talk to help us combat the rhetoric and distractions of the world. *Please read it*.

Photos:

- This is typical of South African Police cars. Most of the time there is a shell on the back with a rear door to contain people they might arrest. - This is not an LGBTXYZQML flag. This is a table cloth that Mom made for the

Young Women's "New Beginnings." It contains all the colors associated with the Young Women's Values.

We love you. We pray for your welfare and happiness.

Dad and Mom



This is typical of South African Police cars. Most of the time there is a shell on the back with a rear door to contain people they might arrest.



This is not an LGBTQYZQML flag. This is a table cloth that Mom made for the Young Women's "New Beginnings." It contains all the colors associated with the Young Women's Values.

2019

FEBRUARY 27 }

Feb_27_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

A hectic day moving furniture, buying appliances, household items, etc. Then, we had to scramble home to make sure Mom had dinner ready for the mission president who was coming to visit. I stayed in my Levi's and T-shirt, no time to change into my white shirt and tie.

Our mission president stays busy. There is a lot on his plate. Each 6 weeks he interviews approximately 110 missionaries. He has to preside over 8 zone conference trainings where he takes the lion's portion of the time to train. He conducts leadership training with the zone and district leaders. He and his wife travel to stake conferences and fire-sides all the time to speak. He has bottom line responsibility for the mission finances. And, there is a lot more, including his family of four children.

We had a sister in one of our wards that sent us a text message telling us that a car had driven into their house and everything was a mess. Unfortunately, we could not get out there to help in any way with our commitments in town and with the mission president. I notified the bishop and hopefully he was able to get over to see her. We'll try to get there tomorrow afternoon.

Photos:

- Here are a couple of the appliances we purchased today for the new boarding we are setting up. We spent about \$1,500 today and we will spend another \$500 by Saturday.

We love you and think about you all the time. Stay loyal to the Royal.

Dad and Mom



We spent about \$1,500 today



Here are a couple of the appliances we purchased today for the new boarding we are setting up.



and we will spend
another \$500 by
Saturday.

2019

FEBRUARY 28 }

Feb_28_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We enjoyed a great zone conference today with President Lebethoa and 30 young missionaries. We received some good instruction. We hope and pray all of us as missionaries will take it to heart and seriously strive to apply the instruction in our day to day missionary lives.

We discussed again the "learning cycle." First we listen and learn. Secondly, we "Do." We need to apply what we have learned in our own lives. Our learning is enhanced when we have experiences with what we have learned. Thirdly, we share. We can teach others with confidence because we have internalized the message. In other words, "LDS-" Learn, Do, Share.

All in all, it was good training, good company and good food.

Photos:

- This is a photo of the front part of Sister George's house. A neighbor from across the street was drunk, backed his car down his driveway and then, through Sister George's yard and into her house. She and her grandchildren were sitting in their lounge when the car struck the house. It scared them half to death. We shared our sympathy with her and directed her to go to the bishop since she and her family do not have any money to repair the damage (about \$420 USD). - This photo of a bunch of laborers in the back of a "bakkie" (truck) is a common sight.

We love you all. Take care of each other.

Dad and Mom



Sister George's house. A neighbor from across the street was drunk, backed his car down his driveway and then, through Sister George's yard and into her house. We shared our sympathy with her and directed her to go to the bishop since she and her family do not have any money to repair the damage (about \$420 USD).



Laborers in the back of a "bakkie" (truck) is a common sight.

2019

MARCH 1 }

Dad and Mom

Mar_01_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a busy day - resolving banking issues, buying more items for the new missionary boarding, music lessons and an outing with the Hodges to a place called Cintas, a beach area where they have a restaurant called "tea in the trees.". It's an outdoor restaurant environment with several food booths, live entertainment and lots of liquor.

While Mom was teaching her music lessons, I ran out to observe the Braai operation. Brother Shakes quit the partnership a week or so ago. It appears that Phumlani is trying to still make a go of it. One thing that is hurting him is serving out braai food on the promise that his customers will pay him back later. Even though we advised him against this at the onset, we thin he has not listened too carefully. We wish him luck.

We are hoping things will die down a little beginning with next week. Personally, I would like to get into some type of a schedule and routine that includes daily exercise and an hour-long scripture study. Both of those things would really help me. Like we always say, "You make the habits and the habits make you!"

Photos:

- A fancy stool made from a car tire (or "tyre" as they say in South Africa). - Some interesting signs at the local pawn shop. - Some interesting signs at a local beach. - This guy was a one-man show. The music was loud and I cannot understand why people congregate in places like this and then, expect to carry on a conversation???

We love you. Who can you help, lift, compliment, encourage, serve....today?



This guy was a one-man show. The music was loud and I cannot understand why people congregate in places like this and then, expect to carry on a conversation???



Interesting signs at a local beach.



A fancy stool made from a car tyre (or "tyre" as they say in South Africa).



Some interesting signs at the local pawn shop.

Mar_02_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We have some very happy missionaries that moved into their new boarding today. It will definitely be a much better situation than the four-man boarding they have been living in. We are glad they are happy.

We did some work today to get ready for some "Next Steps" within the MD 4th Ward. I had some year-long calendars printed up, some sample agendas for a Bishopric Meeting, and, sample agendas for a Ward Council Meeting. Tomorrow I share these with the Bishop in hopes that he will start using these tools on a regular basis. Mom sifted through some Primary photos and came up with a number of pictures that we had printed off for making a new themed bulletin board for the Primary. Wait, maybe it was for teaching a song? I can't remember, but,

Primary theme or learning a song, she plans to move the ball forward with them.

I spoke with one of our bishops today and was lamenting the fact that he is losing key people in the ward and how is he ever going to hold things together. He said something significant, "The Lord will provide." There is a lesson in that response for me to learn! I appreciate his faith.

Photos:

- You people probably know nothing or very little about lawn bowling.

For example, did you know that the small white ball is called the "jack?" Did you know that official balls are weighted heavier on one side? Did you know that an official lawn bowling ball has a number stamped on it, i.e., "22" that means that ball is only good until the year 2022? The object of the game is similar to shuffleboard. You try to get your

team's balls closet to the jack. In doing so, you can bump other balls out of the way.

Love,

Dad and Mom



You people probably know nothing or very little about lawn bowling. For example, did you know that the small white ball is called the "jack?"



Did you know that official balls are weighted heavier on one side? Did you know that an official lawn bowling ball has a number stamped on it, i.e., "22" that means that ball is only good until the year 2022?



The object of the game is similar to shuffleboard. You try to get your team's balls closet to the jack. In doing so, you can bump other balls out of the way.

Mar_03_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We enjoyed our Fast and Testimony Meetings today. It is always great to see the members come to the podium to share their testimonies and not have any "down time." As I listened to their testimonies, I felt an assurance that all was going to be just fine for the Church in South Africa as time marches forward. Things will just get better and better week to week, month to month, year to year.

We have some specific goals we want to achieve before we leave here. Mainly, we would like to see each ward operating regular leadership meetings (Bishopric, EQ, RS, YW, YM, etc), complete music conducting and keyboard courses, complete work on finding lost sheep, teaching families how to hold FHE by doing it with them and trying to set up temple prep and missionary prep class-

es.

I probably have shared this before, but when I arrived in Bolivia over 45 years ago, it wasn't even it's own mission, there were no wards, no stakes, no temple and not a lot of members. I thought to myself, the Church just isn't going to make it here. How wrong I was and how little faith I had.

Today Bolivia comprises five mission, has one temple, stakes and wards all over the country and thousands and thousands of members. The same will happen in South Africa but at a faster rate of growth.

* Photos:*

- The beautiful Gonubie River - one shot facing the mouth of the river where it reaches the Indian Ocean (4 degrees Celsius warmer than the Atlantic Ocean). Daniel, Michael, Elizabeth and David walked

from the ocean up this river part way. Nice place to visit, but don't drink the water. - This Brother Ovayo Imgijima. He was mugged in broad daylight by a man with a nasty-looking switchblade. Ovayo resisted and ended up slugging the guy in the head and dislocated his knuckle. Fortunately it did not end up worse than that.

We love you. Be good. Keep all of the commandments and you will be happy!

Dad and Mom

Tid Bits

Dear Family,

*1. Word of the week: "deprecation," to say that you think something is of little value or importance. *Example:* Some politicians use self-deprecation to draw attention to themselves.

2. Quote of the week:

[image: image.png]



The beautiful Gonubie River - one shot facing the mouth of the river where it reaches the Indian Ocean (4 degrees Celsius warmer than the Atlantic Ocean).



Daniel, Michael, Elizabeth and David walked from the ocean up this river part way. Nice place to visit, but don't drink the water.

3. Scripture of the week:

If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. (John 7:17)

4. Joke of the week:

Q: How many apples grow on a tree?

A: All of them, silly!

5. Bee's Knees Award: This is a really fantastic, cool, happy, crazy girl! She is always so happy. She loves to

play with her sister and brothers. She can have accidents if she is not careful. She loves her daddy and mommy. She is kind. She likes to share. She is always trying to be like Jesus. She is a big helper around her house. She is a fast runner and a high jumper. Claire, you are the Bee's Knees, sistah!!!

6. Gospel question of the week:

Annie nailed the question from last week. Jesus was baptized because he was humble and showed obedience to the Father. This week's question: Who gave Grandpa McKay a blessing

shortly before he died in the First Presidency Meeting Room in the old Church Office Administration Building?

7. If I were you (Advice to grand kids): If I were you, I would learn as much as I could about my ancestors - who were they? What did they do? What are some of their stories about life? What can you learn from them? Try it. I think you will like it.

8. What I learned this week: Today, missionaries have it considerably easier than missionaries from previous time periods. At the same time, missionaries today have a tremendous advantage in the tools and the time they have to find, teach and baptize.

9. What I am grateful for: I am thankful for the relative wealth the Church is presently enjoying which allows them the means to better achieve the mission of the Church.

10. My goal for the week: Yes, we had a blast with Michael and Annie when they came to town! This week I plan to hold personal, daily scripture study.

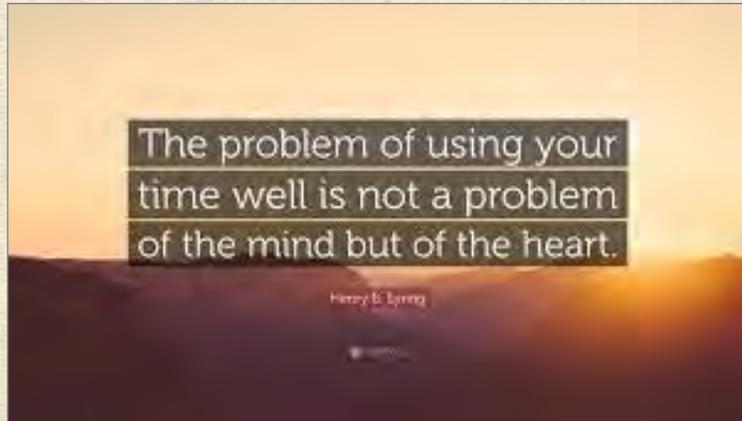
***11. Photo of the week: ***Kicking back and relaxing in Weiser!

Please have a good week blessing the lives of others. Have fun living the gospel this week! We love you very much,

Dad and Mom



This Brother Ovayo Imgijima. He was mugged in broad daylight by a man with a nasty-looking switchblade. Ovayo resisted and ended up slugging the guy in the head and dislocated his knuckle. Fortunately it did not end up worse than that.



Mar_04_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Today, as I worked to trim hedges and pull weeds around our boarding, I was reminded of my years of farming in Huntsville. I believe we are now 97.3% weed free in our front and back yards. Just as Scarlett O'Hara in "Gone with the Wind," came up with a name for her place of abode, I felt we needed to name our place of shelter here in South Africa. As I perspired, uprooted weeds and worked the soil, I came up with the perfect name, "Three Palms."

What do you do when missionaries lose a phone. You pull one from our inventory and run it out to them - this time in King Williams Town, about one hour away from our place. These phones are very inexpensive, cheap Nokia phones. When our missionaries get robbed, the muggers ask for their phone. When they see

it, they express zero interest and usually say, "You can keep it." The day missionaries start carrying smart phones in the township, they become a prime target.

Mom has about two million 8 x 10 pictures from church magazines all over the living room. She brought home two boxes full from church yesterday. She is trying to get them organized for the library. It looks to be a three week, non-stop, 25 hour a day job.

I finished off buying things for the new missionary boarding today. Wow, these guys have it pretty sweet! New couch, throw rug, night stands, reading lamps, microwave, oven/stove top, I think we all agree, refrigerator, blender, toaster, kitchen table....I remember the days when real missionaries had out-houses, thatched roofs and bathing in a river. Let's all agree right now,

Bolivia was the only true mission on the face of the earth.

Mom and I are reading in 3rd Nephi when the Savior visits the Nephites at the temple in Bountiful. It struck me that administering the sacrament to them must have been such an emotional moment for Jesus. This was probably the first time the sacrament was administered since his crucifixion. How would it have been to be there and experience that sacred event?

Photos:

- Sister Margaret - Seminary Teacher in the MD 1st Ward (Member for about 4-5 years) - Toni Mthithi - Seminary Teacher in the MD 4th Ward (Member for about a year and a half)

Let's remember to be kind and good examples of the gospel. We love you very, very much!

Dad and Mom



Sister Margaret - Seminary Teacher in the MD 1st Ward (Member for about 4-5 years)



Toni Mthithi - Seminary
Teacher in the MD 4th
Ward (Member for
about a year and a half)

Mar_05_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Mom's cookies have done it again! I went downtown to the GIS (Geographic Information Systems) department of Buffalo City and arranged to have aerial maps of the Mdantsane Township put together for us in an electronic version. I then take that to the local "Kinkos" type store and have large wall maps printed up. They are then laminated and the missionaries use them as excellent tools for their respective areas. Mom's cookies went to the manager of the department and one bag went to Sibongile, the girl that actually puts the files together for us.

I met six zone leaders at the airport to hand them their passports. They are going into Cape Town for MLC (Mission Leadership Council). They do this each first Tuesday of the month. A bit of an expense, but so

much more effective than trying to do it over the telephone on a conference call.

I took two of the ZL's to lunch at McDonald's prior to going to the airport. Since being in South Africa, I have come to the conclusion that McDonald's is not good food. It would be fine with me if I never eat there again. It is usually a lot of carbs and industrial-strength grease!

Photos:

- Mom is in charge of making sure first aid kits are stocked and available for each boarding in our zone. Today I spent over \$200 USD purchasing medical items to restock kits. (In Bolivia, where real missionaries served, you did not have first aid kits. You either got better on your own or you died.) - A Makulu (grandma), Mama Keya, in our MD 4th Ward just had a grand-

son return from his mission today. She is so proud of him! He has HIV but has been able to serve his mission. He picked up HIV from his mother, who unfortunately died from AIDS. Of course, Sister Keya, who loves Mom's baking, asked Mom to make something for the big event. So, Mom made these cupcakes for tomorrow and will be doing some cookies for Sunday when there will be a little homecoming celebration at the church house.

We love you all very much and hope you have a wonderful day,

Dad and Mom

Correction and Comment

Dear Family,

1. Correction - Mom's project of organizing photos for the ward library is NOT cutting photos from magazines and filing them. She is taking photos that already exist from several sources that were in the library and she is organizing them into



Mom is in charge of making sure first aid kits are stocked and available for each boarding in our zone. Today I spent over \$200 USD purchasing medical items to restock kits. (In Bolivia, where real missionaries served, you did not have first aid kits. You either got better on your own or you died.)



Mom made these cupcakes for tomorrow and will be doing some cookies for Sunday when there will be a little homecoming celebration at the church house for Mama Keya's grandson.

some type of a referenceable order. Love,

2. Comment - The other day I heard a radio commentator expressing her glee in seeing a father taking an active part in the life of his child. For many of us, this is not an unusual sight to see. However, here in South Africa, most children have no idea who their father is. Fathers, unfortunately, are pretty much "missing in action." Mom and I feel very blessed when we see how active a role both parents are taking with the lives of our grandchildren. Dad

Mar_06_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a pleasant visit with a return missionary today. He is the grandson of Sister Keya and she is so proud of this young man. His plan is to do BYU Pathways and work (if he can get a job). I hope the bishop puts him right to work with a calling and especially working with the young men.

As with any missionary going home or just finishing a mission, Mom and I ask, "Can you share with us two memorable, spiritual experiences you had during your mission?" The first experience was when he and his companion were given the responsibility to foster along a "Cluster" or group in an area the stake and ward wants to grow. He mentioned how it was a big assignment, turning out to be a bigger challenge than what the mission president had described. However, with all the challenges

came great blessings and a very strong unity in his companionship.

The second experience was holding a baptismal interview with a lady that had some skeletons in the closet and had not told anyone about. He said that during the interview he could sense her sincerity to repent and to join the Church. Because an abortion had been involved, he called the mission president and they all had a conference on the speaker phone. He related to the president the spirit he felt while interviewing her and how she was ready to make changes in her life. He said he learned that it is never too late to make changes and repent.

It has been a hot and muggy day. On our way home from our area, we heard a thunder clap and it sounded like the roof of the car was caving in! It about scared the water out of me. Now, all we need is a lot of rain to

come along with the lightening and thunder. We have too much dry grass and dry flower beds.

Stay true to the gospel, it is the "Good Ship Zion." Remember, life on Noah's ark might have been a little inconvenient, but it was sure a lot better deal than leaving the boat! We love you!

Dad and Mom

Photos:

- A small boat yard on Gonubie Main Road. The boats I have seen

here do not look too sea-worthy. - Snake skin on our walking path - probably from a Night Adder. They are called "Night Adder" because when they lose their skins they get cold and want to snuggle up to human beings. They will hide just outside a house and at night add up how many people go into the house. The more people, the better the chances of getting warm. Then, when no one is looking, they slip through an open door and head for your bed. If you move in the night time, they will latch on to your earlobe and inject enough toxins to



A small boat yard on Gonubie Main Road. The boats I have seen here do not look too sea-worthy.



Snake skin on our walking path - probably from a Night Adder. They are called "Night Adder" because when they lose their skins they get cold and want to snuggle up to human beings. They will hide just outside a house and at night add up how many people go into the house. The more people, the better the chances of getting warm.



Mom, Sister Keya and her grandson, Kwanele, who just returned home from a mission in Johannesburg. Great kid. We need hundreds more of these guys!

make you motionless and sleep for a week! That is how they get a nice, warm, unagitated bed to sleep in.
- Mom, Sister Keya and her grandson, Kwanele, who just returned home from a mission in Johannesburg. Great kid. We need hundreds more of these guys!

2019

MARCH 7 }

Mar_07_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had an exciting day of completing our federal taxes, downloading Social Security/Medicare forms, waiting on hold to speak with Social Security Administration for 45 minutes, and, working on our state tax return. On top of that, collecting passports from 6 zone leaders returning from Cape Town. The, Mom and I went to buy fruit to add to the cookies she made for tomorrow's district meeting.

We discovered that two of our missionaries were mugged in Mdantsane (NU8) yesterday. The three robbers, armed with knives, took R 150 (roughly \$11 USD) and decided not to take their crummy, old fashioned Nokia phone. This is the third mugging we personally know of in the last couple months.

Photos:

- "Tata" in Xhosa means father. As a show of respect, many times people will address me by saying, "Molo tata. Molo" meaning, "Hello father, hello." However, this truck is made by the Tata automotive manufacture in India. - We have sweet potatoes here, but they are called "Orange Potatoes." - These are small pineapples. When we buy pineapple, we go to the street vendors who tend to have a much larger product.

Have a good day making good choices! We love you,

Dad and Mom!



We have sweet potatoes here, but they are called "Orange Potatoes."



"Tata" in Xhosa means father. As a show of respect, many times people will address me by saying, "Molo tata. Molo" meaning, "Hello father, hello." However, this truck is made by the Tata automotive manufacture in India.



These are small pineapples. When we buy pineapple, we go to the street vendors who tend to have a much larger product.

2019

MARCH 8 }

Mar_08_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We are getting some very good rain here in East London and Mdantsane. When we have been working in the yard, we have noticed how very dry everything was. This rain is constant and really giving the ground a good soaking.

We had our Senior Council meeting this morning. Even though it was two hours long, we had some good discussion and clarification on various issues. One thing we really like about President Lebethoa is his un-failing support for anything that comes down the pipe from the General Authorities or the Missionary Department. He is exactly the type of mission president that Salt Lake would never have to worry about because you know he is by the book and 110% behind the brethren.

While Mom did her music classes to-

day I went out with Brother Shakes to visit some of our less active members in our MD 1st Ward. We tried to make the distinction between an invitation to come to church and an invitation to come to Christ. The idea is that coming to Church is important, but the most important thing we can do at Church is to partake of the sacrament. This is what helps to keep us connected to Christ.

Mom baked a large bag of cookies that we took over to the home of a elderly brother who died a bout five weeks ago. Can you believe that the funeral is tomorrow? Anyway, we just hope it is not an open casket funeral! The cookies were a big hit and we are planning to attend the funeral tomorrow. Attending funerals in South Africa is very important. It is not uncommon for family members to travel great distances to come to a funeral. It's a big deal and can cause some ill-feeling if you do not attend.

Here's the link for watching the video below on our Google Drive:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/18VdOZ3_v28LuyvFfBPhkapQWjQZQ5FLB/view?usp=sharing

VID_20190301_164218.mp4 <https://drive.google.com/file/d/18VdOZ3_v28LuyvFfBPhkapQWjQZQ5FLB/view?usp=drive_web>

- This video clip is an unauthorized and clandestine attempt to demonstrate to you the high level of music training there is at the renowned Mavis McKay Stevenson School of Advanced Music. Don't even think of applying because you probably wouldn't get accepted.

We love you guys. Be especially good today.

Dad and Mom

Mar_09_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Today was the funeral of John Seneli. He was an older member of MD Ward 4 and a gentleman who has been battling poor health since we first met him when we arrived in South Africa. He used to be in the bishopric years ago. The times we have gone to visit him in his home it have been a good experience for us. One of our last visits, his daughter was there with her husband and extolling the merits of their new "born again" church and trying to refute the doctrine of John's Mormon faith. (Hope it is okay to use that word since it was before President Nelson's plea for the inspired name change.)

We got off easy today, the funeral was only 2 hours and 45 minutes. The last three speakers were members of our church, but seemed to really drag things on and on. And,

Mom and I scratch our heads a little when speakers use terminology (i.e., The Preexistence), names (i.e., Lehi) and references to scriptures (i.e., Doctrine and Covenants) that must be nothing but Greek to 95% of the people attending the funeral who are not members of our church.

We went to the funeral early for choir practice. Mom was selected to operate the pre-recorded songs in the church organ. She did great. The main task is to adjust the timing of the song being played to the conducting of the person leading the music. They were light on choir members so they asked the young missionaries and *me *to come sing.

Singing in today's choir is a landmark event in my life. I do not believe I have sung in a choir since my days in the Language Training Mission (LTM) as a new missionary. When we were practicing to sing as a

district for a sacrament meeting I must have been singing way off key all through the practice session. Finally, the choir director said, "Elder Stevenson, maybe you can just move your lips." Oh, the embarrassment, the psychological scarring, the trauma of ever opening my mouth again to sing a tune! Even to this day, singing in the shower is a challenge for me. As I sing, I am constantly afraid that Mom will come in with a bucket of ice cold water and throw it on me. My poor singing ability is further insulted when driving in the car and I start to sing and Mom

turns on the radio to drowned out my horrific, monotone voice. I am such a poor fellow.

Mom and I finally tried a Mexican food restaurant, Cantina and Kraft, that is a few minutes away from our house. The nachos were pretty good, lots of cheese. However, Mom felt they were a little too greasy. My fajitas were marginal. They were suppose to be sweet pork fajitas, but it seemed more like sweet *fat* fajitas. Mom's salad was good (according to her), but the sour cream looked so thick, like it was whipped. Michelle



Some interesting shoes worn by a lady sitting in front of me at the funeral. I am thinking of starting a new shoe company called, "Shoes Tattooed."



My fajitas

would have liked it. Bottom line: maybe come a next time for nachos and a Diet Coke.

I have learned a new trick. When Mom is baking cookies I will periodically drop in to give her a kiss. While there, I will grab a couple cookies. She gets upset and tells me, "No, put them back." I then start to lick the cookies before I start to return them to the cooling rack. Of course, she says, "No, don't put them back, just get out of the kitchen."

We continue to get good spurts of

rain today. We are grateful for it. We need it.

Photos:

- Some interesting shoes worn by a lady sitting in front of me at the funeral. I am thinking of starting a new shoe company called, "Shoes Tattooed." - The menu at the Mexican Restaurant we visited. Notice the Milkshake in the bottom right corner called the "Dirty Mexican." Probably not politically correct, and, the main ingredients are ice cream, ***Nutella** and chili*. - My fajitas and Mom's salad.

We love you and hope you have a great day!

Dad and Mom

Tid Bits

Dear Family,

1. Word of the week: ***"cortege," a solemn procession, especially for a funeral. ***Example: At some weddings, you wonder if the wedding march should be considered more as a funeral cortege.

***2. Quote of the week: ***

[image: image.png]

3. Scripture of the week:

Draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you; seek me diligently and ye shall find me; ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. (D&C 88:63)

4. Joke of the week:

Q: Why did the husband not report the stolen credit card from the purse of his wife who an insatiable inclina-

tion to spend like a drunken sailor?

A: Because the thief was spending so much less than his wife.

5. Bee's Knees Award: Can you say "Mega Mom?" This lady loves her family and does everything she can for the benefit of her children - whatever is in their best interest and welfare. She is super athletic - cyclist, marathon runner, workout maniac, etc. Her testimony of the gospel is as Strong as a Bear. She is kind, generous, hard-working, prettier than 100 princesses all smushed together, smart, wise, humble, understanding and works hard to honor her covenants with the Lord. She has taken on a difficult and long-term fellowshiping project. She has a warm and friendly smile. Grace, you are the Bee's Knees, sistah!!!

6. Gospel question of the week: Last week's answer: President James E. Faust gave Grandpa McKay a priesthood blessing at the old Church Administration Building. This week's Question: Prior to the Word of Wisdom, did Joseph Smith occasionally partake of alcohol?

7. If I were you (Advice to grand kids): If I were you, I would never take my eyes off of the First Presidency of the Church. They are the ones the Lord has chosen to help guide us in the way of life and salvation. Try it. I think you will like it.

8. What I learned this week: Everything counts. When you are on a mission, everything you do counts. If you just smile at someone, or you stop your car to let a person cross the street, or you deliver some cookies to a family...everything you do counts toward good and blessing the lives of others. Do not minimize any good act, no matter how small it may seem.

9. What I am grateful for: Mom and I are so thankful for our sons and daughters in law. We do not consider them as anything else other than our own children. We love them. They are all so wonderful.

10. My goal this week: I plan to speak with Sinethemba Toli on Wednesday, a counselor in our EQ Presidency, about having a showing of the movie, "Meet the Mormons" at the church for all of our non-mem-

ber neighbors to some see. Free Popcorn!!!

*11. Photo of the week: * Wow, who is this good-looking couple?

Have fun living the gospel this week! We love you - that means we only want the very best for you. Make the right choice when you hear the voice.

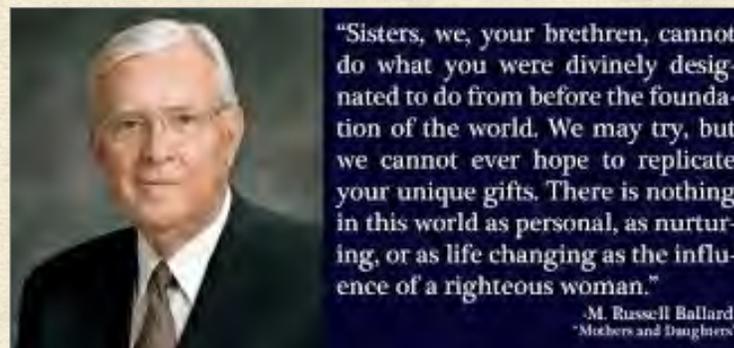
Dad and Mom



The menu at the Mexican Restaurant we visited. Notice the Milkshake in the bottom right corner called the "Dirty Mexican." Probably not politically correct, and, the main ingredients are ice cream, Nutella and chili*



Mom's salad.



2019 MARCH 10 }

Mar_10_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

You can call me a cry baby if you want, but this morning it was such a beautiful sight to see so many members of our MD 4th Ward come up to Elder Kwanele Keya and give him a big, happy hug. It was a little emotional for me to see this good young man be welcomed home from his mission by so many and to see the happiness that radiated from everyone. And, his grandmother was just beaming through it all.

If I would have been speaking this morning in church, I would draw the comparison between a missionary like Elder Keya returning home and ourselves who have been sent on a mission to earth and who will eventually have the blessing of returning to heavenly parents. We think many times of returning to our Heavenly Father, but this morning, it became vivid to my mind that we have a

Heavenly Mother that will be so proud of us and so anxious to welcome us home with all the hugs and kisses. I hope we all will live worthy of that great day!

I spoke with Jolisa today who is a recent convert of about 1-2 months. She is a bright, intelligent, outgoing person. She will be starting to study law in Johannesburg one of these days. After speaking with her for a while I told her she should go on a mission before going to school. Mom and I will continue to visit with her about that. She would be a strong missionary.

This evening we go down to the Hodges' house to have dinner with them and another senior couple, the Blazers from Queenstown. Then, tomorrow, the Hodges and the Blazers go to Schotia Private Game Reserve and sleep in tents among the lions and rhinos.

Photos:

- Jolisa, Mom and I after church.

We love you all very much. Please make this Sabbath Day a delight for you and your families.

Dad and Mom



Jolisa, Mom and I after church.

2019

MARCH 11 }

Mar_11_2019_Update

FROM: Elder and Sister Stevenson



Dear Family,

We really used our preparation day well. We met up with Rollo and Charlene Steenbeek at the Neo Cafe in East London and had lunch. After the ribs Rollo and I had, and, the salads that our two lady friends had, we went to the movies. We each had a drink and a large popcorn and our 3D glasses so we could watch "Captain Marvel."

This is a good movie if you like sci fi. I was more intrigued by the visual effects and the different look and feel from 3D. Mom and I do not feel we will be watching that movie again any time soon. What I find funny is that these super heroes have unusual strength and can destroy buildings and giant spaceships. However, when it comes to battling their arch enemies, they just slug and kick each other around.

Two senior couples went to the Schotia Private Game Reserve this morning. Unfortunately, the weather has been very cool, wet and windy. The reserve is 3 hours from here. We hope it was much better weather there than here in East London.

Photos:

- This is a photo from our last zone conference. The tallest black missionary on the back row played basketball for Corner Canyon High School. He remembers playing against Bountiful High and told us that David was a great point guard. The missionary, fourth from the left on the front row, was recruited heavily by the Lakers and the Celtics right out of high school.

Have a very good day doing good things! We love you,

Dad and Mom



Our last zone conference. The tallest black missionary on the back row played basketball for Corner Canyon High School. He remembers playing against Bountiful High and told us that David was a great point guard. The missionary, fourth from the left on the front row, was recruited heavily by the Lakers and the Celtics right out of high school.

Mar_13_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

An interesting day. I started out at 10 AM with Brother Mpiyaki, who was just sustained as the new Elder's Quorum President in the MD 1st Ward. The goal was to see as many people on his list of Elders in his quorum as possible. We had a brief interlude as I left to go get Mom and bring her to the church to teach some music lessons. Then, back with Brother Mpiyaki until 6:30 PM.

I really enjoyed this because he was the boss. I was simply the driver, the taxi. And, most importantly, this is the best way to reach the lost sheep - when a member of the ward is going and doing all the talking. That person is here for the next 20 years. That is who the less active will see for a long time. Mom and I are gone in three months.

Unfortunately, Mom only had one person show up today. After that lesson she practiced the piano and then, did a whole bunch of cleaning up in the church house. With all the rain we have had over a four day period, we have had some bad leaks in the foyer of the church. The bishop said he was going to report it. I hope he did because it really needs attention.

When you drive in South Africa, be careful not to keep your window down too far. We had a sister in the East London Stake driving her car downtown. When she came to a stop light, a man was knocking on her passenger side window. As she looked to see who it was, another man from the driver's side, reached in her window and stole her cell phone. Then, to make matters worse, the thieves sent text messages to all her contacts informing them she was in a bad car accident

and they need to transfer funds to a certain bank account to help her out (obviously, not her bank account).

Photos:

- This is some of what a missionary boarding first aid kit is stocked with - Have you ever seen a sweeter guitar than this one?

We love you. We just simply love you.

Dad and Mom



This is some of what a missionary boarding first aid kit is stocked with.



Have you ever seen a sweeter guitar than this one?

2019

MARCH 14 }

Mar_14_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Today was a day for one boarding inspection and delivering supplies to King Williams Town, handing out a passport to a travelling ZL coming from Queenstown and heading to the mission office, taking a missionary into the medical clinic for a boil, a power nap and getting fruit for tomorrow's district meetings.

It was interesting to hear from Elder and Sister Hodges that a poisonous snake was in our next door neighbor's house. They are on vacation right now, but we will ask them when they return what they found in their house. We do not like snakes.

After taking a companionship to the medical clinic, we took them to lunch at the Cape Town Fish Market (in East London). I had steak. Mom had a teriyaki salmon and our two

missionaries had a seafood bowl that had some pretty ugly stuff in it - squid, prawns with heads, mussels, etc. They seemed to enjoy it. No thank you!

Video:

- After dinner at the Schotia Game Reserve, the tradition is to drink a Springbok which is some type of liquor in a shot glass. Forgive me if I have sent this to you in the past. Before they drink, they do some well-wishing in their native tongue and the others repeat it. Cheers.

Love,

Dad and Mom

2019 MARCH 15 }

Mar_15_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

District meetings this morning. Part of our meeting was on developing Christlike attributes. We were told to select one area we need to work on. I chose daily scripture study (meaning personal scripture study). Mom and I read from the Book of Mormon every day, but I need to work on my *personal* study. Mom selected something along the lines of sticking to a job until it is done. Actually, I could have picked several areas where I need plenty of work!

While Mom taught her music classes, Brother Shakes and I went out to do some visiting. They were good visits. One older couple are the parents of one of our missionaries we sent out about 6 months ago. They are not members of the church. But, we delivered an email letter from their missionary son who is in Zimbabwe

and a large print Book of Mormon in Xhosa. The younger missionaries in our area will be going by on Tuesday with a Xhosa-speaking fellowshipper to teach them about the Book of Mormon.

Mom has quite a few students and a number of them want to finish their conducting course so they can start learning the keyboard.

Phumlani is still doing his barbecue business. Shakes and I stopped by and I bought some pork from him. I decided I did not want it and Mom is not a big meat-eater, so I had Shakes take it home. I hope Phumlani makes it with this business. He cannot afford to hand out his finished product on credit. That is going to mess up his ability to buy more meat from the butcher put himself out of business.

FYI, Shakes decided not to do the

braai business with Phumlani. He said Phumlani gets too angry too often. I think we saw this split coming from the beginning, but it was worth a shot. Now, it should be easier with only one person to manage the profit.

Where is David Walker going on his mission???

Photo:

- Two boys that were watching Phumlani cook his pork. I gave them some candy and they were all smiles.



Two boys that were watching Phumlani cook his pork. I gave them some candy and they were all smiles.

We love you,
Dad and Mom

Mar_16_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Kind of a warm, muggy day. We had a baptismal service at 11 AM and I about perspired to death. Plus, we had a lot of little children that like to come sit by Mom and I and that only made me sweat more with kids crawling all over me. Many are fascinated with our white skin and soft hair. They like to rub their hands up and down our arms to feel how soft it is.

We witnessed four people baptized today. One young boy about 10 years old, a couple young men that might be Aaronic Priesthood age and a man about 20 years old. They will all be confirmed tomorrow and one week later, those that are of age, will receive the Aaronic Priesthood. That is good to see!

We scrambled right off to the airport to deliver a boarding pass and pick

up a passport from a returning ZL from Cape Town. We were 50% successful. The Assistant to the President was their and we gave him his boarding pass, but the missionary coming from Cape Town missed his flight. We are waiting to hear if he was able to catch a later flight.

Before going to the airport, we left a large platter filled with Mom's homemade cookies. We had around 35 - 40 people at the baptism. We hope there were enough cookies so that everyone could have a least a couple. Sometimes, people will take a handful or two and the cookies disappear very quickly.

Photos:

- This is the beginning of a new Primary board that Mom is putting together - not finished yet. Each child will trace an outline of their foot, write their name on the foot print and then, it is placed on the

board. - Alatha and his mother - Nice photo of Mom and the little sister of one of the boys getting baptized. - The children are sweet and fun to play with.

Hope you all have a wonderful Saturday. We love you!

Dad and Mom



This is the beginning of a new Primary board that Mom is putting together - not finished yet. Each child will trace an outline of their foot, write their name on the foot print and then, it is placed on the board.



The children are sweet and fun to play with.



Alatha and his mother.



Nice photo of Mom and the little sister of one of the boys getting baptized.

Tid Bits

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

*1. Word of the week: * "co-gent," (of an argument or case) clear, logical, and convincing. * Example: * It is virtually impossible to make a cogent argument against ice cold Diet Coke and hot pepperoni pizza. (Ask Michael Beckstead.)

*2. Quote of the week: *

[image: image.png]

*3. Scripture of the week: *

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. (Isa. 55:8)

*4. Joke of the week: *

Son: "Can I have a book Mark?" Dad (Breaking into tears): My son is 11 years old and he still doesn't know my name is Brian!"

*5. Bee's Knees Award: *Do you have a memory like a steel trap? Probably not. This guy is a dyed-in-the-wool Cougar fan and knows every statistic imaginable about the BYU Cougars -and, the Los Angeles Lakers, and, the New York Yankees, and, (I can't remember the NFL team. Maybe the 49's?). He knows how to make a plan and then, how to make the plan work. He loves his wife and children and sees an eternal family. He loves the temple. He loves to learn. He can play basketball with the best of them. Michael Beckstead, you are the Bee's Knees, brotha!!!

*6. Gospel question of the week: * Daniel nudged out Annie with the correct answer to: Did Joseph Smith partake of alcohol prior to the Word of Wisdom? Answer is, yes. This week's question: Where did President Thomas S. Monson serve as a mission president?

7. If I were you (Advice to grand kids): If I were you, I would not make the habit of criticising people. Look for the good in others. Try it. I think you will like it.

*8. What I learned this week: *Genuinely praising and complimenting people is a good thing to do.

*9. What I am grateful for: * I am grateful for modern-day medications to help people. (I am still trying to recover from Dr. Michael Stevenson accusing me of seeking "Better living through chemistry" as if that is

something to be ashamed of. It is hurtful and it will take some time to forgive him.)

*10. My goal for the week: * Meet with Bishop Lalendle and discuss his plans to start an in-home business.

*11. Photo of the week: * Who the heck are these clowns!!!

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

Dad and Mom





Mar_17_2019

Dear Family,

Since today is St. Patrick's Day, I would like to share a few dumb St. Paddy Day jokes that my sister sent me.

Question: What's Irish and stays out all night?

Answer: Pati O'Furniture!

Question: Why do people wear shamrocks on St. Patrick's Day?

Answer: Real rocks would look funny!

Question: How can you tell if an Irishman is having a good time? Answer: He's DubLin over with laughter!

We are going to have our electricity shut off in less than an hour. (Yes, we did pay our bill.) It is what the electric company calls, "Load Shedding." Basically, there is not enough power to support the whole nation so they shut down parts of the country (parts of different cities) for a pe-

riod of time as a way to conserve.

There are various levels of load shedding from 1 to 3b, 3b being the most severe cut back. Usually, the shut downs are for 2 hours at a time. For us, this morning was from 8 to 10. Tonight we have more from 6 to 10 PM. On Monday, we actually have three separate 2 hour blocks when the electricity will be down.

Most everyone is accusing the government-run power company with mismanagement and corruption. First, they say incompetent people are in charge and do not know what they are doing. Secondly, people blame greed and corruption. For example, the power company buys the coal they need for an inflated price. Then, the extra money that was charged is kicked back to management in the power company as their share of the fraudulent scheme.

National elections are coming up on May 8th. It will be interesting to see the politics over the next few weeks.

We enjoyed our church meetings today!

Photos:

- For those of you that did know hear, my gingerbread man won the competition AGAIN this year! (Notice that Sandile is missing his left leg from a recent lion attack.) Please do not feel bad. You can try again next year.

We love you!

Dad and Mom

--

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



Mar_18_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Mom is working with the Young Women in our 4th Ward on how to knit, how to make scarves and beanie caps. If the Young Women can pick up this skill, they can start making items and selling them so they have money to go on the temple trip to Johannesburg. Of course, Mom is going to have to spend some time with them to teach them, but if they can get it down, it is a skill they use for years to come even though Mom is long gone.

I met with Bishop Lalendle this afternoon. He is interested in starting a home grown business of selling various prepared food items to the local schools, people going to the hospital and neighbors. This would be food like Fat Cakes, Quarters and bone soup. a "quarter" is 1/4 of a loaf of bread with meat or eggs salad

stuffed in it. Here are the five questions I had for him:

1. *What is the idea, the product or service you plan to market? *One sure way to failure is simply to have a really dumb idea or product that will fly about as good as a lead balloon.
2. *What is your level of knowledge and expertise in this business? *Typically a cashier at a grocery store would have a hard time starting a manufacturing company of high tech computer processors.
3. *Do you have the right location?* Great ideas and brilliant people can lose it all if no one knows about them. You need exposure.
4. *Pricing? *Can you price your product or service at a price point that is good for the customer and still allow you to make your profit margins? You can't buy watermelons for \$1.00 and then sell them at \$0.90 and make a profit.
5. *Start-up capital?* Do you have enough funds to start the business

right and sustain it during the start up phase? Lots of companies fold because their great idea was not supported by enough cash.

The bishop seemed to think he passes the test with the exception of enough start-up capital. He has already begun experimenting with some fat cakes and knows that there is a market in and around his neighborhood. We hope he is wildly successful.

We have been fortunate enough to have digital maps pulled together for

us from the Buffalo City GIS Department. I am in the process of downloading 6 GB's of aerial maps (65 files) with a house number overlay. They really make for some good wall maps for the missionaries. We did one already for a set of Elders and it has proven to be an effective tool for them.

Next step is to see how to electronically cut and paste the maps together for each missionary companionship and their respective areas and then print and laminate. Each map is about 4 feet square.



Mama Keya's house. She had it painted so it would look nice when her grandson returned home from his mission.



A scarf that Mom has started to knit.

We pray every day for you. We hope you remember who you are and act accordingly. We can show our gratitude, appreciation and thanks to the Lord through exact obedience and service to others. And, at the same time it brings great joy and satisfaction to our souls. That is one heck of a deal!!!

We love you,
Dad and Mom

Photos:

- A scarf that Mom has started to knit. - Mama Keya's house. She had it painted so it would look nice when her grandson returned home from his mission.

2019

MARCH 20 }

Mar_20_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

I ran a Brazilian passport over to a missionary that needed to convert some of his Brazilian money into South African Rand. Of course, there was a period of time when it seemed like most of the missionaries in the world were from the United States. Not any more. Our mission has such a wide variety of countries represented - Brazil, Guatemala, New Zealand, Australia, the UK, USA, Pacific Islands, Italy...all over the world.

Mom is busy making knitting bags that the Young Women can use to hold their yarn, needles and other accessories. Her plan is to make 20 bags, provide some yarn with which to begin a project, needles, etc. She would like the young ladies to learn this skill and then, translate that skill into a way to earn money. Yeah, some good old capitalism!

I had a good visit with Bishop Lalendle today. I am afraid that he and others do not put a lot of thought into what they hope to achieve when they have a Ward Council meeting or a Bishop's Youth Council. For any of us, we need to think what we want to accomplish in our meetings. We want members to leave the meeting and say, "That was such a productive and spiritually uplifting meeting." Any of us that are in charge of conducting a meeting should really think about that.

Photos:

- Mom and I with four of the top learners at the Amy Bell Orphanage in Cradock. - These are a couple of the bags Mom is making. They will be in several different colors and designs. (They are not men's boxer shorts.) And, each bag will have webbed straps for a handle and an inside pocket for holding needles.

You guys are wonderful. We love you. Be careful out in the world.

Dad and Mom



Mom and I with four of the top learners at the Amy Bell Orphanage in Cradock.



These are a couple of the bags Mom is making. They will be in several different colors and designs. (They are not men's boxer shorts.) And, each bag will have webbed straps for a handle and an inside pocket for holding needles.

2019

MARCH 21 }

Mar_21_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Mom has spent quite a bit of time getting ready for today's knitting course with the Young Women. I don't think she was planning on 17 young people being there. It was a great turn out (two of them were young men). The biggest challenge was so many kids and really, only one person to demonstrate, Mom. It was obvious that teaching these kids the art of making scarves and hats will take more than one session.

It is past ten o'clock at night here. We had "Load Shedding" between 8 PM and 10 PM. From what we hear on the radio and speaking with others, this problem of not enough electrical power to service the whole nation is going to be with us for a long time.

Good night, I am going to bed!

Photos:

- Mom and the Young Women and Young Men.

We love you,

Dad and Mom



Professor
Sister
Stevenson



Mom and the
Young Women
and Young
Men.

Knitting class



Mar_22_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a good district meeting this morning. Elder Gamble leading the discussion. Basically, we reviewed the first missionary lesson, "The Restoration," and shared different ways in which missionaries taught this lesson. I think one of the most important items we covered this morning was the importance of relating the account of Joseph Smith's first vision slowly, using his words, making sure that the person we are teaching understands exactly what we are teaching.

Then, follow up with questions that ask "Why, what, how..." These are questions where the individual needs to respond with more than a "Yes" or "No" answer. We start to hear what they feel or what type of questions they might have. Then, of course, bearing our testimonies of the truthfulness of that sacred event.

Mom had her music classes today. One sister is the mother in a wonderful family in our ward that has had their home broken into a couple times. They had just moved there and are renting. Now they want to leave and find a safer area. They have had their TV, laptop, make-up, and other things stolen. We feel sorry for them.

I spent some time this afternoon with Bishop Lalendle. Yesterday we dropped him off at a young sister's house who was recently raped and having a difficult time. We did not get into the details of the situation, but this new bishop is really getting a lot of experience encountering all types of situations with his members - good and bad.

I believe we need to be grateful to our Heavenly Father every day of our lives for the Book of Mormon. I guess the Lord could have arranged

for all of us to simply accept everything in the Church on faith alone. However, He has given us a convincing piece of evidence that is irrefutable, The Book of Mormon, Another Testament of Jesus Christ. Our testimony of that book confirms so many other things. For example: Joseph Smith is a true prophet of God, Every prophet since him has had proper authority and keys given him, there really was an apostasy, there is only one true church, His church, upon the face of the earth.

AND WE ALL GET TO BE A PART OF

THIS MOST IMPORTANT WORK ON THE EARTH. Nothing is more important than the gathering of Israel. It is a sobering thought for me.

Photos:

- All of us singing happy birthday to Elder Viner (England). Mom made cupcakes for the occasion. - This is one district of missionaries that share a meal on district meeting day prior to going out to their assigned areas. Today was a large casserole dish of spaghetti. - Final touches to the Primary board that Mom put together. Note the border



All of us singing happy birthday to Elder Viner (England). Mom made cupcakes for the occasion.



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Final touches to the Primary board that Mom put together. Note the order of foot prints with alternating colors of the Primary - Blue, Red and Yellow.

of foot prints with alternating colors of the Primary - Blue, Red and Yellow.

We hope you have a truly wonderful day. Remember the covenants you have made. We love you,

Dad and Mom

2019

MARCH 24 }

Mar_24_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Another great Sabbath where we have had the privilege of remember and worshipping the Lord. We are grateful for the blessing for the saints being able to partake of the sacrament anywhere in the world.

We are looking forward to General Conference in two weeks. It is truly a blessing to be able to watch and listen to every session of conference even though we are on the other side of the world. We hope we are all praying for those that will speak to us during Conference. And, we hope and pray all of us are preparing ourselves to receive the messages they will be delivering.

One of our speakers today in sacrament meeting was a single lady who was about as timid and shy as you could ever imagine 20 months ago.

Since that time, and with help from missionaries and other church leaders, she has been so brave to share her testimony and at least twice give talks in sacrament meeting. We have seen a beautiful change in her over the months.

Video

- Mom helping the Primary children learn a new song.

VID_20190324_120607.mp4 <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IHTEEQ11TAPpnbLc5ls7fXa2FpbU71yo/view?usp=drive_web> Have a great day. We love you. Make good choices.

Dad and Mom

Tid Bits

Dear Family,

**1. Word of the week:* "compunction," a feeling of guilt or moral scruple that prevents or follows the doing of something bad. ** Example:* Some TV evangelists have no compunction asking their congregations for millions of dollars to fund their ministry.

**2. Quote of the week:*

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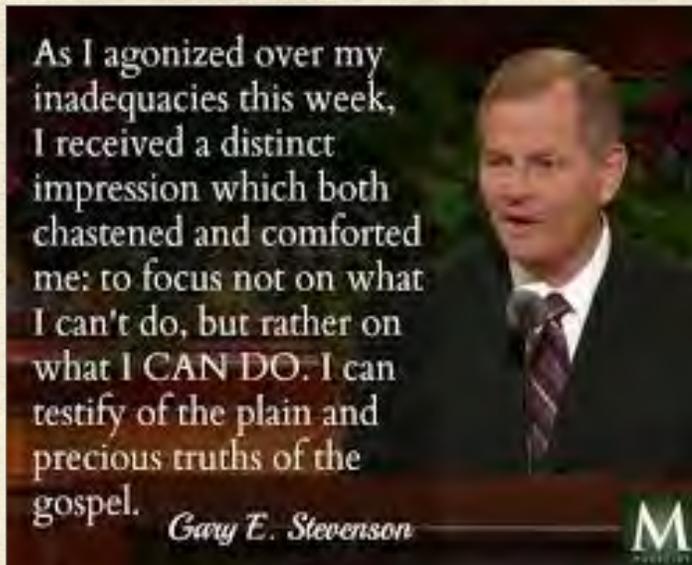
**3. Scripture of the week:* *

(D&C 19:15-18)

15 Therefore I command you to repent—repent, lest I smite you by the rod of my mouth, and by my wrath, and by my anger, and your sufferings be sore—how sore you know not, how exquisite you know not, yea, how hard to bear you know not.

16 For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that





they might not suffer if they would repent;

17 But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I;

18 Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink— *4. Joke of the week:*

DAD: I was just listening to the radio on my way in to town, apparently an

actress just killed herself.

MOM: Oh my! Who!?

DAD: Uh, I can't remember... I think her name was Reese something?

MOM: WITHERSPOON!!!!???????

DAD: No, it was with a knife...

*5 Bee's Knees Award: * Do you know how to build a really nice house? Probably not. This guy is a quality home builder and a quality husband, father and member of the

Church. He is respectful, considerate, kind, generous, industrious, hard-working and best of all, he plays round ball. He loves his wife and his children. He is a good provider and role model. He has a solid testimony to keep him on the covenant path. His wife says he is handsome? Chad, you are the Bee's Knees, brotha!!!

6. Gospel question of the week: Last week's question was answered by Michael Beckstead and then, shortly followed by Andrew. The answer to what mission President Monson presided over is, Toronto, Canada Mission. This week's question: Who was it that turned the plates over to Mormon?

*7. If I were you (Advice to grand kids): * If I were you, I would not interrupt people when they are talking. Listen to what they have to say, then, respond. Interrupting is bad manners, and, manners matter. Try it. I think you will like it.

*8. What I learned this week: * Problems, personalities, habits I observed in missionaries when I was serving in Bolivia, we even see to a

certain degree today with senior missionaries.

*9. What I am grateful for: * American ingenuity. It is amazing to see what great ideas come from creative, clever, crazy Americans.

*10. My goal for the week: *Finish helping the bishop with his plans for his new home business.

11. Photo of the week: My oh my how things have changed!!!

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

Dad and Mom

2019

MARCH 25 }

Mar_25_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

I had to scramble a little this morning to arrange for a trailer for Elder Hodges who was helping a companionship move to a new boarding. We had one reserved but, our regular trailer person said we could not use one of his trailers because we did not have an electrical hook up for the lights. To make a long story short, I found a trailer for rent, hooked it up drove off without any paperwork, deposit, ID or proof of residency. It took all of 10 minutes. I was fortunate to get the trailer from a gentleman we have done business with in the past and he has no problems trusting Mom and I as missionaries from the church..

Unfortunately for Elder Hodges and the missionaries he was moving, it rained off and on all day. When I called him to see how it was going, he did not sound too happy.

I spent time with Bishop Lalendle talking about Bishop's Youth Committee and helping him to pick up items for his new business. It would be very difficult for him to get everything since a lot of what he needs is spread out all over town.

Mom continues to work on her several projects and is making headway.

Photos:

- This is a photo of a Mercedes SLK sports car. This is one similar to what Uncle Greg and Aunt Sandy just purchased. Personally, if it doesn't have a high horsepower Chevy engine in it, I would avoid it like the plague. - This is the vacuum cleaner at the church. No one ever empties out the bag and clean the filter. Consequently, the bag split open with so much junk in it. We will try to get a new one and help members think about maintaining it properly.

We love you!!!

Dad and Mom



This is the vacuum cleaner at the church. No one ever empties out the bag and clean the filter. Consequently, the bag split open with so much junk in it. We will try to get a new one and help members think about maintaining it properly.



This is a photo of a Mercedes SLK sports car. This is one similar to what Uncle Greg and Aunt Sandy just purchased. Personally, if it doesn't have a high horsepower Chevy engine in it, I would avoid it like the plague.

2019

MARCH 26 }

Old Primary Manuals

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Hi all,
I am wondering what your
Wards are doing with the Pri-
mary manuals and pictures
that went with them? Now that we
have a new curriculum.
Just wondering, Thanks,
Love you,
Mom

Mar_26_2019

Dear Family,

A lot of running around today. Won't
bore you with the details. However,
did take two missionaries into the
doctor's office for flu shots. I have
debated on whether to get one or
not. I think I will because I do not
want to have the flu in South Africa.

We have a missionary coming home
today from Sierra Leone. We were
suppose to have a little welcoming

and homecoming activity for him
this evening but we never got the
details on where and when. We al-
most went on a chance it would be
this evening and at the church
house. Good thing we did not go.
The welcoming is going to be on
Sunday. We are constantly confused
at how little information gets dis-
seminated. We knew a couple of
people that were planning on being
there this evening. We hope they
some how got the word.

We have received all of our mission-
ary transfer information for tomor-
row. I will be handing out 8 pass-
ports throughout the day and then,
collecting about a dozen from mis-
sionaries coming into town on
planes, busses and Ferrari's.

Photos:

- When I pass away, I am thinking
about having bottled water with my
photo on it, In-n-Our Burgers, Mc-

Donald's french fries and Mom's
baked cheesecake. - The caves
from the Count of Monte Cristo -
Dutch oven dinner at Schotia Game
Reserve

Have a great day making good choic-
es! We love you,

Dad and Mom

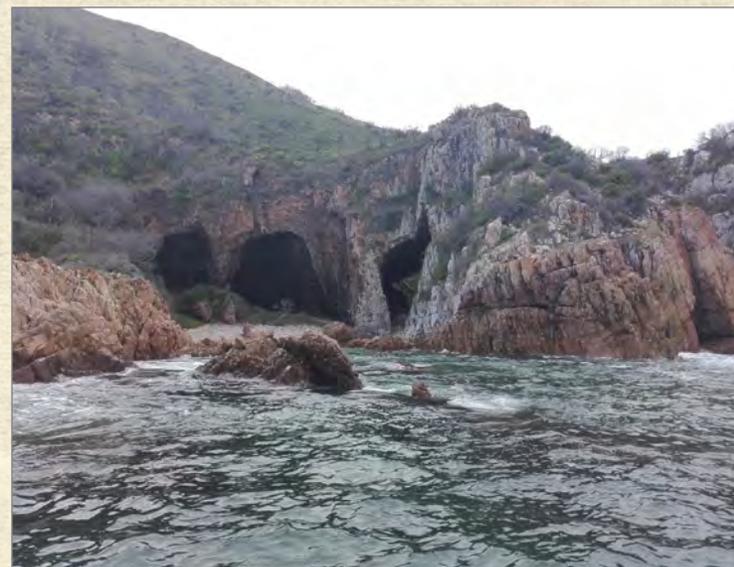
No I do not need the old primary
manuals. The library here has prob-
ably 20 manuals still unopened and
never used. I was thinking about
setting them out to see if members
might like them but I wanted to
check to see if that might be appro-
priate. There are tons of the pic-
tures from manuals in boxe and I
had started to organized them and
then decided it probably does not
matter. I did organize the Gospel art
picture kits and I didn't know what



Dutch oven
dinner at
Schotia Game
Reserve.



When I pass away, I am thinking about having bottled water with my photo on it, In-n-Our Burgers, McDonald's french fries and Mom's baked cheesecake.



The caves from the Count of Monte Cristo.

else to do with the pictures so I will just let the Primary presidents know they can use them however they want. Thanks for responding. Congratulations to David. Now that we are more awake we will do some reading up about the Ivory Coast mission.
Love to all,
Mom

2019

MARCH 27 }

Mar_27_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

Transfer days are always busy. We are finally learning that it is best not to try and schedule other things on that day because the "normal" for that day is actually the "abnormal." You can regularly anticipate that there will be some problems with late missionaries to the airport or bus depot, traffic delays, missing your plane or bus, overweight luggage that needs to be paid for, etc. Such was the case today when we had scheduled some other things on the calendar.

Today I was running a late to get to the airport and decided to take Buffalo Pass. This is a remote back road to the airport. It is winding and full of pot holes. Also, passing other vehicles can be dangerous since there is not a lot of visibility for oncoming traffic. I was just amazed at how many and how big the pot holes

were. This would definitely be the wrong road to take at night. When we first came to East London, we travelled this road with a couple of missionaries driving at 5 AM in the morning. It was scary, especially with all the people walking down the road to get to their work.

Mom and I see a lot of missionaries come and go through our little part of the mission. All the missionaries are good, but some are "more gooder" than others. We would love to have a couple missionaries like Elder Roberts and the almost new missionary, David Walker. Those are the types of missionaries mission presidents dream about and pray for every day!

Photos:

- 20 months ago, we had no idea of what to expect in South Africa. It has been a pleasant experience so far. Now, it's time to sprint to the

end and cross the finish line with no gas in the tank!

Love,

Dad and Mom



20 months ago, we had no idea of what to expect in South Africa.



It has been a pleasant experience so far. Now, it's time to sprint to the end and cross the finish line with no gas in the tank!

2019 MARCH 28 }

Mar_28_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

I enjoyed today because, once again, I was a taxi driver and our Elder's Quorum President, Brother Mpiyaki, was the passenger. I simply went to wherever he wanted me to take him. Consequently, we were able to visit a lot of less active members. I was called on to prayer or to add my two cents to his message, but for the most part, it was all his show. That's the way it should be.

Visiting the less active and having the local members spearhead that operation is so very important and in the long run, so much more effective than having the missionaries do it.

We had brought home the vacuum cleaner from the church to clean and fix. Mom spent a fair amount of time cleaning out the trash from the bag that split open because it was too

full. It included a latex glove, screws and many other things that should be picked up by hand instead of sucking them up with a vacuum cleaner. She also worked on the filter that was so clogged up. It is no wonder that the vacuum did not pick up anything. Now that it has a new bag and filter, we will start a campaign on how to maintain the vacuum cleaner. One has to remember that this is the type of household equipment they have never used before or ever had in their homes.

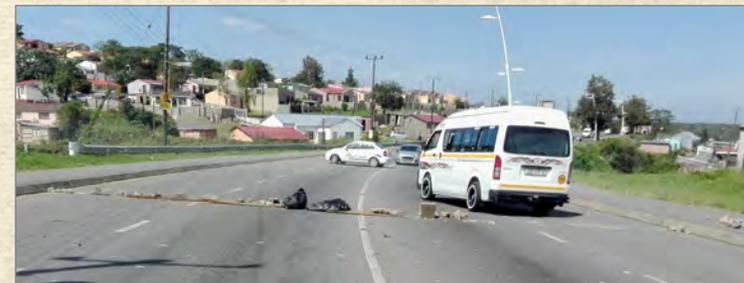
Photos:

- This is Sister Mkwando's new little great grand baby boy. Her granddaughter of about 14 years old had the baby. Not an uncommon occurrence in South Africa. - There was a strike today. I think it was the truck driver's union. Anyway, as I came into the township, the road was blocked off with liter, rocks and rubbish set on fire. These

photos are after it was broken up by the police and some of the larger debris was moved away.

Have a great day. We love you!

Dad and Mom



There was a strike today. I think it was the truck driver's union. Anyway, as I came into the township, the road was blocked off with liter, rocks and rubbish set on fire.



These photos are after it was broken up by the police and some of the larger debris was moved away.



This is Sister Mkwando's new little great grand baby boy. Her granddaughter of about 14 years old had the baby. Not an uncommon occurrence in South Africa.

2019

MARCH 29 }

Mar_29_2019_Update

FROM: *Elder and Sister Stevenson*



Dear Family,

We had a very good district meeting this morning discussing the purpose of our mission. We also covered the importance of teaching by the Spirit. A good example of those who have done this are Alma and the Sons of Mosiah (Alma 17:2-4) These missionaries not only studied and knew the word of God, but they also lived their lives in such a way to have the Spirit of the Lord with them as they taught the Lamanites.

Mom taught class today from 2 - 5:30. I visited with the bishop and did some personal scripture study. I enjoyed reading online the commentary from other ministers, or I should say, their own interpretation, of James chapter 2. They manage to twist the words to support their "faith only" point of view. So, tell me why there is a Judgment Day or why

are we instructed to repent if faith is all we need and we are then safe at home base?

Photos:

- I do not have any new photos. So, here are a couple I'm just pulling from our archive.

We love you all very much. Do good today. Make choices that invite real joy and happiness into your lives.

Dad and Mom