

SUBJECT: "Pioneering"

DATE: July 28 2024

Quote/Idea from the text	My thoughts/response
<p data-bbox="126 237 771 331">Well, hello there brothers and sisters. Let me take care of the introductions for his talk. My name is Bryan Hiatt.</p> <p data-bbox="126 373 803 604">For those of you interested in following along, you can access the transcript of this talk at bryanhiatt.com, as there will be links and pictures that I describe here. I know you'll be on your phone anyway, so go ahead, it's ok. That's Bryan with a "Y" and Hiatt with an "I" dot com. Then follow the link to a google document.</p>	<p data-bbox="841 237 1534 573">STARR: I've been married to Starr Sutton, for some 30 years now, and she is the daughter of the late Jesse Sutton and his lovely wife, Linda, who many of you know. In fact, when Starr mentions to Mormon folk that Linda is her mother, they always say something like "I just love your mother." Recently, Linda fell, broke her hip, and had surgery to repair it. She is in good spirits and is currently in rehab at Citizens Nursing Home in Frederick, room 119A, if you'd like to visit.</p> <p data-bbox="841 604 1518 846">Back to Starr: she builds things, really cool things, like modern furniture, and has been the mastermind of all our other builds, like a deck, a shed, a kitchen and basement remodel. I can also carry things and swing a hammer decently, but Starr is most def the OG when it comes to projects at the house. She is also a pretty great Occupational Therapist.</p> <p data-bbox="841 877 1534 1108">EMILY: Our daughter Emily begins the second year of her PHD program at Oregon State University in September. She is a Chemistry graduate of Weber State University in Ogden Utah (my home town), and we're super proud to call her daughter. It feels a little weird to be a ward where only a few people know her, so now you do.</p> <p data-bbox="841 1140 1534 1476">JOB: I teach at FCC. That means the bread and butter courses like ENGL101/102. I also help support dual enrollment instructors in our county high schools. Go ahead and check me out on ratemyprofessor.com. I'm rated as "awesome." BTW. For funsies, I like to trail run, as it's helped order a scattered mind, and it's also helped me to lose many LBS, and feel more like myself. But it seems like in recent weeks, I've been doing more falling than running.</p> <p data-bbox="841 1507 1518 1644">MISSIONS: I served a mission in another century, from 1984-1986, in Michigan. Starr served in the Utah, Provo South mission after vowing to never set foot in Utah again after her experiences in Provo.</p> <p data-bbox="841 1675 1534 1969">Where We Met: I met Starr in a singles ward in Las Vegas, where I had taken my first job after college. She was attending UNLV and generally driving the boys there crazy. We bonded at the weekly Friday dances, and late night dollar plates of Ham and eggs at the Rio. I asked her to marry me on a mountain bike trail in Park City, and we've spent our time since raising a daughter and biking as much as we can together.</p>

<p>This is our third “go around” in the Mt. Airy ward. Our first run came over 25 years ago after we left Oregon after grad school for a summer to dry out intending to move to Bend or Asheville, but we had a baby, and lived for two years in the ward. We blessed our daughter in this chapel, right over there (Bryan points), where I invoked the legacy of the REV Dr. Martin Luther King by asking that she would not judge a person by the color of their skin but rather by the content of their character. Emily is perhaps the most empathetic person I know, giving everyone the benefit of the doubt, even if they might not deserve it.</p> <p>After stints in rental homes in the Frederick and Walkersville ward, we bought our home in Lake Linganore and returned to the Mt. Airy ward for the second time, where we stayed for another few years.</p>	<p>Eleven years ago, the stake formed up the Urbana ward, and though it was weird at first, I came to love that ward, especially at the end. At first it was like a regular old ward, but COVID wrecked us, I mean WRECKED US (all cap emphasis) with half our numbers never really coming back. On top of that, many families heard the old siren song call to move back to Utah or Arizona, and though many awesome families moved in, our numbers never stabilized or returned to pre-COVID levels. By the end, we were little more than a branch, and it was really tough on the YM/YW. But we were tight. Still, I miss the ward and my friends farmed out into 3-4 other wards. When we had the stake sorting hat meeting recently, at the end, I saw one of my friends up front and I was way in the back, separated by a few hundred people. I gave him the dude two finger salute, he returned it, and that was that. As Brother Tyler mentioned last week in his talk, “it’s nice to see so many from the Urbana ward here” and that keeps me going most days when I’m not feeling the new vibe here.</p>
<p>Since it’s the week of July 24, my talk is on “what it means to be a PIONEER.” I’m just making that last part up, since Brother Kigin’s only direction was that it’s “Pioneer Sunday.” So there’s that.</p> <p>When I think of pioneers, I often think of the apocryphal story of Brigham Young marching into the Salt Lake Valley at the head of the wagon trail saying the phrase we’ve all heard: “This. is. the place.” I have to wonder if there wasn’t someone in the back of that trail letting their intrusive thoughts come out and say something like “are you sure about that?” Utah was rough and wild in them days, kids. No AC, as I’ve learned. We know how hard that can be. And CA isn’t that much further.</p>	<p>For my talk today, I’m drawing content from David Bednar’s “In the Path of their Duty” from October 2023 and from others, as noted.</p> <p>Elder Bednar begins his talk recalling the year 1947, at the “100th anniversary of the first Latter-day Saint pioneers arriving in the Salt Lake Valley” (Bednar). He mentions President J. Reuben Clark, First Counselor in the First Presidency, who gave “memorable and touching tributes to these faithful pioneers in the October 1947 general conference” (Bednar).</p>
<p>President Clark declared, “They of the last wagon pressed forward, worn and tired, footsore, sometimes almost disheartened, borne up by their faith that God loved them, that the restored gospel was true, and that the Lord led and directed the Brethren out in front” (Bednar).</p> <p>“He concluded his message with this stirring commendation: ‘To these humble souls, great in faith, great in work, great in righteous living, great in fashioning our priceless heritage, I humbly render my love, my respect, my reverent homage’” (Bednar)</p>	<p>The spirit of this talk is ALL ABOUT giving cred to those saints who made the pilgrimage to Utah, and established what is known as Zion in the west. But I want to focus on that turn of phrase “priceless heritage.” We all have it, whether our forebears were part of actual pioneer treks, or joined the church at various other points in time. While preparing this talk, I came across a letter I’d written to my daughter that was given to her on Trek in 2016, based on submitted documents through Ancestry.com.</p>

The first Hiatt to join the church was James Madison Hiatt, who met missionaries just after the American Civil War. Not long after his conversion, he left North Carolina in 1869 with his bride Martha Ellen Taylor Peel (a Civil War widow) for Zion and the west. They traveled for Utah “in the company of his wife’s mother and father, three brothers, and one sister along with a large group of converts led by missionary Henry G. Boyle from Payson, Utah.”

James grew up a farmer, and when his father became ill, he took on more responsibilities in raising crops to feed the family. Later, he ran another farm that added to the family’s increase. His youth kept him out of the Civil War and eventually he met two missionaries. In 1868-9, James was baptized by Howard Coary, in Stoney Creek, NC. Meeting the elders of the church, James described their words as “**the indescribable something**,” which we’ve all felt at one point in our lives. That “the indescribable something” caused James to leave his family home for the great unknown, and life in the west with the saints.

His trip out west was different as it came years after the handcarts and hardship. Still, the journey was not easy. One of his descendants wrote that “The parting of James from his family, and especially his mother, was a sad one. She clung to him and wept and could not let him go until the company was far out of sight. Then they said goodbye forever. She seemed to know she would never see her boy again. Travel in those days was slow and distance long. I imagine he started out on foot, and then traveled two days by team. The journey was by way of Virginia, then up the Atlantic ocean by steamboat to New York, a 30 hour trip. The remainder of the way to Ogden was by rail, then by team again to Payson. It took three weeks to make the trip.”

Upon arriving in Utah, four members of the party died of measles, but it was the start of life in the company of the saints. But they made it, and began a life that would span the next twenty years, many harvests, the chance to testify about the truthfulness of the gospel to his family back home in North Carolina by mail. So enjoy your moments in TREK. Think about what it means to be a member of the church, our history, and what it means to be in the company of the saints. These are your friends, your leaders, and some of the best people you will ever meet. And they all share one thing in common, a love of Jesus Christ, and are people who know about the “the indescribable something” of the gospel.

Later in the talk, Elder Bednar mentions the words of President Howard W. Hunter, who was describing the powerful and valiant Captain Moroni. “If all men had been, and were, and ever would be, like unto Moroni, behold, the very powers of hell would have been shaken forever; yea, the devil would never have power over the hearts of the children of men’ (Alma 48:17). “Two verses later is a statement about Helaman and his brethren, who played a less conspicuous role than Moroni, that reads: “Now behold, Helaman and his brethren were no less serviceable unto the people than was Moroni’ (Alma 48:19).” President Hunter continued, “In other words, even though Helaman was not as noticeable or conspicuous as Moroni, he was as serviceable; that is, he was as helpful or useful as Moroni. President Hunter then counseled all of us to be no less serviceable. He said: “If you feel that much of what you do this year or in the years to come does not make you very famous, take heart. Most of the best people who ever lived weren’t very famous either. Serve and grow, faithfully and quietly” (Bednar).

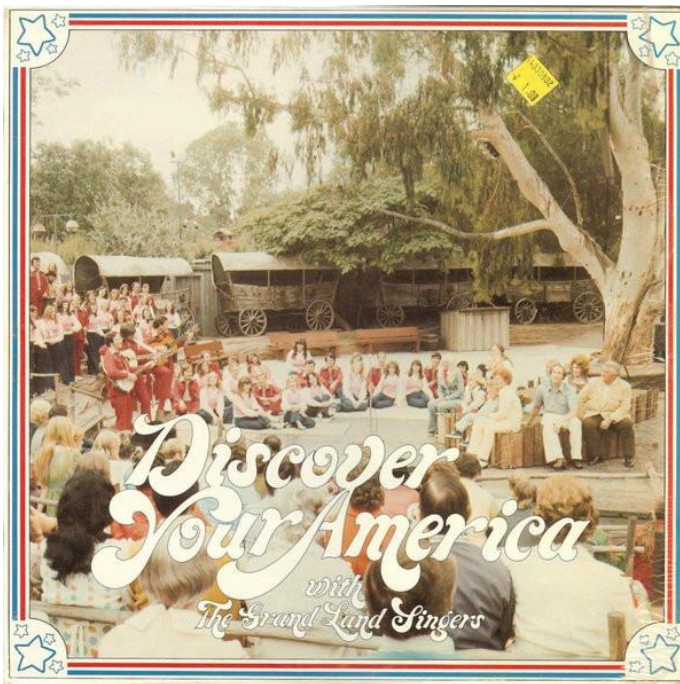
When I think about what it means to “serve and grow, faithfully and quietly,” I often think about the conversations I used to have with [my father in law, Jesse](#), in his living room or out in his shop, about the early days of the church in Frederick county. He would tell me about home teaching in the wilds of PA and WVA, as part of the Washington DC stake. He would tell me about what it meant to him to take care of things at the homes of those he ministered, as Jess was best when he was doing things. Though I did witness him giving an epic testimony once, where he called his wife Linda “sister Holy Ghost.” That was something. The last few years of his life, with limited mobility and hearing, Jesse could be depended upon to always have mini chocolates in his coat pocket at church, and kids in the ward were never shy about asking for some. There are many ways to serve.

I’ve also heard stories of Frederick County Saints, before the Stake Center and the Mt Airy building. In the early days, they would meet at the South End Civic Association in Frederick. Families would arrive early, Linda says, “to sweep up the cigarette butts and set up the chairs.” The Saints here eventually built a chapel on Yellow Springs road, but as their

	<p>numbers grew, they could not expand the building due to restrictions related to the septic system. So they built our current stake center (which used to have a baseball field where the back parking lot is now, courtesy of an Eagle Scout project by Jeff Sutton), and this building here in Mt. Airy. Starr remembers painting at the stake center as a young-in, as the building of a new chapel was always very much a community oriented project.</p> <p>When the time came to build in Mt. Airy, local churches were not happy about the Mormons coming to town, and they made their concerns public in a news article. But the larger community rallied around the saints and asked, “is this not a country where we practice religious freedom?” And so the pastors dropped their opposition.</p> <p>Initially, this plot of land was found by President Abernathy and Jesse Sutton who were part of the building committee for the stake. At first the farmer turned them down flat. But the two men thought and prayed about it and returned to the farmer weeks later, where the answer turned to “YES.”</p> <p>I also heard this story from Linda: while serving as Relief Society President in Frederick ward, stake leaders asked her to be the Relief Society President in the Mt Airy branch, with different counselors for each unit. Imagine that. “Of course,” she said.</p> <p>I also vividly remember the years that Jesse and Linda spent going to the temple on Fridays with Bill Lee (a member of this ward, now deceased), to serve as temple workers. Bill was a cool old dude (sort of gruff and rough around the edges), a welder who had a shop in a cornfield, and was a good friend to Jesse. He once fabricated a hitch for my old VW bus, because Jess asked him to, but this is another delightfully weird story, that came from their years of service together in the church.</p>
<p>When I think about these stories, I think about what Elder Bednar says: “I love you. I admire you. I thank you. And I commend you” (Bednar). By simply being here today, we are standing on the shoulders of our mothers and fathers, who sacrificed to build these walls and to serve each other.</p>	<p>It’s a high standard for sure (the service of the early saints in Frederick), but it rests on the idea of charity and being an example. From D&C 121, we know this “Let thy bowels also be full of charity towards all men, and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distill upon thy soul as the dews from heaven.”</p> <p>In short you have to work to put yourself into the right frame of mind, and then when the time comes, you can serve, thus living your “best gospel life.” Some days I fall short of this, as I was reminded recently by</p>

Starr. I've been replacing some cedar siding on our house of late, and occasionally blue words fall from my mouth in exasperation, words that apparently the whole neighborhood can hear when a hammer misfires on my finger or a piece of siding breaks. But I know this is the exception rather than the rule for me, and I try to put myself into a different frame of mind and get back on the path.

This business of "living your best gospel life" ALSO puts us in the best position to receive personal revelation from our Father in Heaven. I'd like to tell you about my parents, who used music and the gospel to bear public testimony for over a decade.



In the mid 1970s, my parents were in a patriotic singing group called the Grandland singers which formed in the LDS Institute of Religion in Cerritos, CA. The Singers were very much "a thing" back in the bicentennial days. They started out in Road Shows, then touring locally on the weekends, often meeting celebrities, cultural dignitaries, and eventually the president of the United States. They ended up cutting a few albums, touring the east coast (twice) and filming a local TV special at an amusement park called Knotts Berry Farm. Everytime I look at the cover of their album called "Discover your America," I can see my dad's copper top inside the "D."

I spent those years as a 4-12 year old roady, setting up sound gear and dreaming of being a drummer in a rock n roll band. I kid you not. Other times I was one of the "prop kids" who went on stage when the singers performed "I believe that children are the future...". I kid you not. What I most loved about the singers was that my mother had literal pop star chops...I mean she could belt those soprano parts. I loved seeing her magnify her talents.

They sang a song called "You stand tall when you kneel to pray" and it's always stayed with me (along with the lyrics and choreography to "Fifty Nifty United States"). I kid you not. When searching for the lyrics on the internet, I found a recording of the Singers performing this on one of their albums, which is crazy. (<https://vimeo.com/207947876>).

Here are some of those words: You stand tall when you kneel to pray / you'll see the light in the dark of day / Things look up when you bow your head / no need to feel weak but turn to prayer instead / Silent or spoken you're always heard / everlasting faith within each word.

A line further down in the song sums up the Singers deep love of country: "This land ours will remain strong, just as long as we know right from wrong." And those "fantastic, enthusiastic" singers were on point. Prayer is the key to it all. When we humble ourselves, we are moving toward opening a door to sustained spiritual and temporal enlightenment. I'm grateful to my parents for leaving me this legacy. They led by example, in prayer, and in serving others through their performances and the time they spent looking to be part of the solution in 1970s America.

	<p>In thinking of that time, I'm reminded of the poet Li-Young Lee in his work "My Favorite Kingdom" that his "favorite door opens two ways: / receiving and receiving. My heart / swings between the ways, / from thanksgiving to thanksgiving, a thousand times a day." Would that our hearts and minds were always this way, open to the promptings of the spirit and thankful for those who came before us.</p>
<p>Bednar continues: "A statement in the Book of Mormon by Samuel the Lamanite best summarizes my feelings for [those] who serve quietly."</p> <p>"Behold that the more part of them are in the path of their duty, and they do walk circumspectly before God, and they do observe to keep his commandments and his statutes. ...</p> <p>"Yea, I say unto you, that the more part of them are doing this, and they are striving with unwearied diligence that they may bring the remainder of their brethren to the knowledge of the truth."</p>	<p>What follows from Bednar are the MANY ways we can be pioneers everyday, or living "in the path of their duty," from the simple to the complex.</p> <p>But I love this next part, as it's more a less a road map on what it means to LDS, and a Christian in the wide world.</p> <p>"You love and serve, listen and learn, care and console, and teach and testify by the power of the Holy Ghost. You fast and pray often, wax stronger and stronger in humility, and grow firmer and firmer in the faith of Christ, "unto the filling [your] souls with joy and consolation, yea, even to the purifying and the sanctification of [your] hearts, which sanctification cometh because of ... yielding [your] hearts unto God." (Bednar).</p>
<p>But we can't do any of this alone. In another conference talk, M. Russell Ballard said the following in a recent talk: "Today I will share from my heart a few feelings and thoughts on what matters most. First, a relationship with our Heavenly Father and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, is most important. This relationship matters most now and in eternity. Second, family relationships are among those things that matter most."</p>	<p>What I love about Ballard's definition of family is that it is expansive. He writes: "I recognize some may not have the blessings of a close family, so I include extended family, friends, and even ward families as "family." These relationships are essential for emotional and physical health. These relationships can also offer love, joy, happiness, and a sense of belonging."</p>
<p>Elder GENE COOK said this: "How many of us, at times, try to resolve life's challenges ourselves, without seeking the intervention of the Lord in our lives? We try to carry the burden alone. Yet...to pass successfully through the trials we encounter, we must keep our eyes and our <i>hearts centered</i> on the Lord Jesus Christ." And I would add, focused on family groups, where we can serve each other.</p>	<p>Ballard argues that "Nurturing these important relationships is a choice. A choice to be part of a family requires commitment, love, patience, communication, and forgiveness. There may be times when we disagree with another person, <i>but we can do so without being disagreeable</i>. In courtship and marriage, we don't fall in love or fall out of love as though we are objects being moved on a chessboard. We choose to love and sustain one another. We do the same in other family relationships and with friends who are like family to us."</p> <p>The love we show to our family, the choice we make to nurture and testify, ultimately helps to align us with the spirit, as we seek revelation about our families, and our lives. Young people, this part is for you: the way you can serve right now is by being <i>agreeable</i> in your home. Do you feel like your parents are nagging you to constantly do things? If you do those things initially that your parents ask, then all the stress of NOT doing them goes away. Further, what are you</p>

	doing to help your hard working parents in the home WITHOUT being asked? This is key. If you want a peaceful home life, think about others first and you end up having more time to devote to what you want to do. It's crazy how that works. But it's true.
Finally, according to DAVID BEDNAR: “The gospel of Jesus Christ encompasses much more than avoiding, overcoming, and being cleansed from sin and the bad influences in our lives; it also essentially entails doing good, being good, and becoming better.” This is critical if we want to think about what matters most and receive revelations in our lives, and serving others, like any good pioneer.	So how do we endeavor to become better? This is a different process for us all, but there are a few constants, as we've discussed here today. The American writer Mark Twain said this: “Endeavor to so live that when you die, even the undertaker will be sorry.” That maybe someday our kids will tell stories about us, about our examples, service, and what it means to be a pioneer in the vineyard of God. This is my witness and testimony. AMEN.