

Great Stories From Church History: IV

I. Earlier Events

A. Persecutions of Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon. Luke Johnson wrote this account of an incident at the home of his father, John Johnson, in Kirtland. “In the fall of 1831, while Joseph was yet at my father’s, a mob of forty or fifty came to his house, a few entered his room in the middle of the night, and Carnot Mason dragged Joseph out of bed by the hair of his head; he was then seized by as many as could get hold of him, and taken about forty rods from the house, stretched on a board, and tantalized in the most insulting and brutal manner; they tore off the few night clothes that he had on, for the purpose of emasculating him, and had Dr. Dennison there to perform the operation; but when the Dr. saw the Prophet stripped and stretched on the plank, his heart failed him, and he refused to operate. The mob then scratched his body all over, saying, ‘Damn you, this is the way the Holy Ghost falls upon you.’ And in attempting to force open his jaws, they broke one of his front teeth to pour a vial of some obnoxious drug into his mouth. The mob became divided, and did not succeed, but poured tar over him, and then stuck feathers in it and left him, and went to an old brickyard to wash themselves and bury their filthy clothes. At this place a vial was dropped, the contents of which ran out and killed the grass. About the same time part of the mob went to the house that Sidney Rigdon occupied, and dragged him out, and besmeared him with tar and feathers. . . . A few minutes after this accident, we heard the voice of Joseph calling for a blanket; some person handed him one, and he came in, the tar trickling down his face; his wife was very much alarmed, supposing it to be blood, until he came near enough to see that it was tar. My mother got some lard, and rubbed it upon him to get the tar off, which they succeeded in removing.” (“The History of Luke Johnson, by Himself,” *Millennial Star*, vol. 26 no. 12 [December 31, 1864], pp. 834–5.)

B. Brigham Young Handles Criticisms of Joseph Smith. “Brigham Young told a congregation in the Tabernacle on Nov. 9, 1856: ‘I recollect a conversation I had with a priest who was an old friend of ours, before I was personally acquainted with the Prophet Joseph. I clipped every argument he advanced, until at last he came out and began to rail against ‘Joe Smith,’ saying ‘that he was a mean man, a liar, money-digger, gambler and a whore-master;’ and he charged him with everything bad, that he could find language to utter. I said, hold on brother Gillmore, here is the doctrine, here is the Bible the Book of Mormon, and the revelations that have come through Joseph Smith the Prophet. I have never seen him and do not know his private character. The doctrine he teaches is all I know about the matter, bring anything against that if you can. As to anything else I do not care. If he acts like a devil, he has brought forth a doctrine that will save us, if we will abide it. He may get drunk every day of his life, sleep with his neighbor’s wife every night, run horses and gamble, I do not care anything about that, for I never embrace any man in my faith. But the doctrine he has produced will save you and me and the whole world; and if you can find fault with that, find it. He said, ‘I have done.’” (Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses* 4, 77-78.)

C. This Work Will Grow. April 19, 1894. “President Woodruff said that in 1834 he was in a meeting to which the prophet invited him, held in Kirtland. Joseph [Smith] said, after several of the brethren had borne 5 minute testimonies, that they did not have any idea of the magnitude of the work in which they are engaged. It will go to the Rocky Mountains, and will eventually fill all of North and South America. When this prediction was made we were all in a little log cabin.” (*Candid Insights of a Mormon Apostle: The Diaries of Abraham H. Cannon, 1889-1895*, edited by Edward Leo Lyman, 2010, 502.)

D. Joseph Deals with an Opponent. “A Baptist Clergyman from the state of New York, who had been acquainted with the Prophet Joseph in his early life, called upon him and staid all night. Joseph made the minister welcome, and treated him hospitably and respectfully; but, when breakfast was over next morning, he called Joseph a hypocrite, a liar, an imposter and a false prophet, and called upon him to repent. Joseph boxed his ears with both hands, and, turning his face towards the door, kicked him into the street. [The man] immediately went before a magistrate, and swore out a writ against Joseph for assault and battery. I saw the operation, and followed the minister into the squire’s office, and demanded a writ for his apprehension, for provoking an assault; the clerk filling up the writ I called for first—the minister, fearing trouble, paid for his

writ and withdrew without it, and made his way post haste for Cuyahoga County . . .” (“The History of Luke Johnson, by Himself,” *Millennial Star*, vol. 26 no. 12 [December 31, 1864], pp. 835–6.)

E. Remembering Joseph. In 1903 Benjamin F. Johnson, then an old man, was asked to write his memories of the early days of the Church. He remembered receiving a call to join the Twelve on a mission to Britain, at a time when most of the saints, including himself, had been seriously ill: “I had but one \$10 bill left, and I thought on it at least I would pay a tithing. So going to the Prophet I told him I was ready to leave, and reaching to him the Bill I said: ‘As this is all I have left I want to pay a tithe of it.’ He saw I was weak in body, and that my heart was sad in leaving him, so thinking to cheer and arouse me when putting the Nine Dollars silver in my hand, he playfully knocked my hand upward, scattering the money all over the room. My heart was full of tears, and my emotion must have vent, so forgetting all but the feeling that we were Boy Companions, playing together, I sprang at and grappled him as tho to teach him a lesson; but the lesson was all to me, for on making the one grand effort to throw him I found myself in strength no more than a Bull Rush as compared with him. And as my strength was fictitious, and my real recovery but an illusion, I collapsed and fainted in his arms. He placed me in repose and did all necessary for my restoration and comfort, then gathered up the scattered money, and after a period of delay, weak, trembling and desolate, yet determined to start, I led my horse to the outer gate and as I was passing through with Bridle on my arm, his hand detained me and placing his hands upon my head he seemed to pour out his soul in blessing me. He told the Lord I had been faithful to care for others, that I was now worn and sick, and that on my journey I would need his care, and he asked that a special guardian might go with me from that day and stay with me through all my life. And Oh, my dear Brother, how often have I seen through life the foot prints of that Angel, and knew that His hand had drawn me back from Death.” (Benjamin F. Johnson, *An Interesting Letter: From Patriarch Benjamin F. Johnson to Elder George S. Gibbs*, 1903, p. 7.)

F. John E. Page’s Mission Call. “We demonstrate our love by how well we serve our God. Remember when the Prophet Joseph Smith went to John E. Page and said to him, ‘Brother Page, you have been called on a mission to Canada.’ Brother Page, struggling for an excuse, said, ‘Brother Joseph, I can’t go to Canada. I don’t have a coat to wear.’ The Prophet took off his own coat, handed it to John Page, and said, ‘Wear this, and the Lord will bless you.’ John Page went on his mission to Canada. In two years he walked something like 5,000 miles and baptized 600 converts. He was successful because he responded to an opportunity to serve his God. . . . we need to extend ourselves in service to our Heavenly Father if we are to demonstrate our love for Him.” (Thomas S. Monson, “How Do We Show Our Love?,” *Ensign*, January 1998, p. 2.)

G. Following Brother Brigham. “Brigham Young wanted to build a society worthy to receive the Savior, and he expected settlers to get out of their log homes and build more permanent structures as soon as possible. Brigham also wanted them to make improvements in streets and public buildings. On a visit to the town of Goshen one year, Brigham delivered his message on community improvement. Returning the next year and seeing that the members had made no progress (they believed the Second Coming of Christ was at hand and they should not bother with such efforts), President Young proposed that the town be renamed ‘We Won’t’ because the residents had made it clear that ‘we won’t build brick homes, we won’t plant trees, we won’t improve the irrigation systems, etc.’ At 3 A.M. the next day, several residents hitched up their wagons, drove to the nearby mountains, dug up two live pine trees, hauled them into town, and replanted them on either side of the road that President Young would take out of town that day. Then they strung a banner between the trees proclaiming, ‘We Will, Brother Brigham!’” (T. Edgar Lyon, Jr., *T. Edgar Lyon: A Teacher in Zion*, 2002, pp. 230-31.)

H. Open Our Pulpits to Everyone. “When Henry Kendall, general secretary of the New School Presby- terian Church Board of Domestic Missions, visited Salt Lake City on his way to San Francisco in 1864, he found Brigham Young to be an affable conversationalist. Kendall inquired if he had any objections to the establishment of Protestant churches in Utah. Young replied, ‘No objection whatever on our part, or to sending missionaries to the Mormons either, if you like.’ Young invited Kendall to speak at the Tabernacle where he preached to ‘a large, respectful, and attentive audience.’ Young advised his people, ‘Accord to every

reputable person who may visit you, and who may wish to occupy the stands of your meeting houses to preach to you, the privilege of doing so, no matter whether he is a Catholic, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Baptist, Free-will Baptist, Methodist, or whatever he may be; and if he wishes to speak to your children, let him do so.' This generously open policy was followed throughout the Territory, and there are a number of accounts of speakers from other religions speaking to LDS congregations. (R. Douglas Brackenridge, "Hostile Mormons and Persecuted Presbyterians in Utah, 1870-1900: A Reappraisal," *Journal of Mormon History*, Vol. 37, No. 3, Summer 2011, 169.)

I. The Pull of Zion. "Elizabeth Sims buried a child on the beach while waiting to depart from Port Elizabeth, South Africa, in 1865. Her former minister urged her not to go. Apparently conflating in his mind the Utah War and the Civil War, he assured her that 'the United States is sending an Army to Utah for the purpose of exterminating all Mormons. They will kill and hang them all.' Undaunted, the plucky Elizabeth replied, 'Alright I will go and be hanged with the rest of them.'" (Dean May, "Rites of Passage: The Gathering as Cultural Credo." *Journal of Mormon History* 29, no. 1 (2003): 1-41.)

J. A Bishop's Stewardship. Heber J. Grant's father, Jedediah Grant, died just nine days after Heber was born, so the boy was raised by his widowed mother. They lived in the Salt Lake Thirteenth Ward, which was presided over by bishop Edwin D. Woolley, a hard-working but crusty man with a reputation for being blunt and firm. Heber apparently thought he was a bit hard-headed and uncompromising, but he later said the Thirteenth Ward was his salvation, as the bishop guided and corrected him as needed. At the age of 23, Heber was chosen by Church leaders to move to Tooele and become president of the Tooele Stake. Bringing in such a young "outsider" was not popular with the people in Tooele. But at the stake conference where Heber was sustained, Bishop Woolley made a point of being at the conference. He wanted to assure the people that they were "getting a man and not a boy." Later the bishop met apostle John Henry Smith on a Salt Lake City street. Reaching up and placing his arms around the large Apostle's neck, Bishop Woolley became emotional. "John Henry . . . [Heber J. Grant] is worthy to be one of the Apostles, don't you forget him. . . . I can't remain here much longer, but when I am gone don't you forget Heber J. Grant." (Ronald W. Walker, *Qualities That Count: Heber J. Grant as Businessman, Missionary, and Apostle*. Special issue of *BYU Studies*, 43:1 [2001], p. 55.)

K. More Than Playing Marbles. In July 1887 Patriarch John Smith gave a patriarchal blessing to thirteen-year-old David O. McKay, a boy growing up in Huntsville, Utah. He promised the young boy, "'For the eye of the Lord is upon thee. He has a work for thee to do, in which thou shalt see much of the world. . . . It shall be thy lot to sit in counsel with thy brethren and to preside among the people and exhort the saints to faithfulness.' After the blessing the patriarch told him: 'My boy, you have something to do besides playing marbles.'" (Editors' introduction, in preface to *What-E'er-Thou-Art-Act-Well-Thy Part: The Missionary Diaries of David O. McKay*, edited by Stan Larson and Patricia Larson, 1999, p. xxxii.)

L. Attempt by Apostate to Kill Wilford Woodruff. At a meeting of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve in the Salt Lake Temple on January 17, 1894, "Pres. [Wilford] Woodruff related how a man in the Southern States, who came up behind him with the intention of killing him, was stricken with death. He was an apostate, who had been visited by Bro. W. and his companion, but Bro. W. was told by the spirit subsequently to go and warn him again. He did so, and the man was very much enraged. He followed Pres. W. from the house, but the elder did not look around, even though he heard him fall to the ground. A short time thereafter one of the sons came to the place where the missionaries were stopping, and requested them to attend the funeral, which they did the next day, and preached." (*Candid Insights of a Mormon Apostle: The Diaries of Abraham H. Cannon, 1889-1895*, edited by Edward Leo Lyman, 2010, 461.)

M. Richard L. Evans and John A. Widtsoe. The father of Richard L. Evans died in a streetcar accident just ten weeks after Richard was born. Richard's widowed mother was left behind with nine children under eighteen years of age. When Richard reached missionary age, he was called to the British Mission. While there, he was called to be the associate editor of the *Millennial Star*, first under Elder James E. Talmage

and later under Elder John A. Widtsoe, both members of the Council of the Twelve Apostles. “Richard continued a close association with Elder and Sister Widtsoe until their deaths. He became as a son to them, the Widtsos having lost their last surviving son only a few months before arriving in England. When he said goodbye to the Widtsos at the conclusion of his mission, he wrote in his journal: ‘This morning I parted company with the best man I have ever known. . . . Before we parted, he gave me the most wonderful blessing I have ever had and promised long, full service, health and achievement and told me in certain terms that the Lord was pleased with my labors. We put our arms around each other and parted as father and son.’ The Widtsos gave Richard a key to their home, which he carried in his pocket until the day he died—as a symbol of what they had meant to him.” (Lloyd D. Newell, *Out of Obscurity: The LDS Church in the Twentieth Century*, 2000, p. 263.)

N. Seeking for Solace. “At the beginning of the Great Depression, Elder Wilburn West was serving in Brooklyn as secretary of the Eastern States Mission. Since the mission cook had Thursdays off, Elder West and his companion were at the mission home, also in Brooklyn, on August 9, 1929, preparing their ‘usual Thursday evening supper of bread and milk’ when the doorbell rang. As the mission president and his wife were out to dinner, the young elders answered the door. They were shocked to find the prophet of the LDS church on their doorstep. President Heber J. Grant explained that he had just failed to negotiate an important loan for a church subsidiary and was ‘discouraged and lonely and could not bring myself to go to a hotel and spend the night all by myself.’ When the missionaries tried to explain they had little to eat, President Grant replied, ‘I am especially fond of bread and milk.’ Still, the young men managed to find some peanut butter and grape jelly, ‘something special for the Prophet!’” (*City Saints: Mormons in the New York Metropolis*, New York New York Stake LDS History Committee, edited by Scott Tiffany, 2004, p. 34.)

O. Maori Faith. Matthew Cowley told this story of the faith of the Maori people: “I was called to a home in a little village in New Zealand one day. There the Relief Society sisters were preparing the body of one of our Saints. They had placed his body in front of the . . . house where the people came to wail and weep and mourn over the dead, when in rushed the dead man's brother. He said, ‘Administer to him.’ And the young natives said, ‘Why, you shouldn't do that; he's dead.’ ‘You do it!’ the brother said. The younger native got down on his knees, and he anointed the dead man. Then this great old sage got down and blessed him and commanded him to rise. You should have seen the Relief Society sisters scatter. And he sat up, and he said, ‘Send for the elders; I don't feel very well.’ . . . Well, we told him he had just been administered to, and he said: ‘Oh, that was it. I was dead. I could feel life coming back into me just like a blanket unrolling.’ Now, he outlived the brother that came in and told us to administer to him.” (*Matthew Cowley Speaks*, Deseret Book Co., 1954, p. 247.)

P. Matthew Cowley and the Blind Baby. A father brought a nine-month-old baby forward to Brother Cowley, requesting that he give him a name and a blessing. “I said, ‘All right, what's the name?’ So he told me the name, and I was just going to start when he said, ‘By the way; give him his vision when you give him a name. He was born blind.’ It shocked me, but then I said to myself, why not? Christ said to his disciples when he left them, ‘Greater things than I have done shall you do.’ (John 14:12.) I had faith in that father's faith. After I gave that child its name, I finally got around to giving it its vision. That boy is about twelve years old now. The last time I was back there I was afraid to inquire about him. I was sure he had gone blind again. That's the way my faith works sometimes. So I asked the branch president about him. And he said, ‘Brother Cowley, the worst thing you ever did was to bless that child to receive his vision. He's the meanest kid in the neighborhood; always getting into mischief.’ Boy, I was thrilled about that kid getting into mischief!” (*Miracles*, BYU Speeches of the Year, 5 April 1966, p. 9.)

1. Follow-Up Story. The Church celebrated the sesquicentennial of its existence in New Zealand with an impressive pageant in 2004. “One of the visitors at the pageant was Te Rapahara Wineera Jr., from Wellington. He is the ‘young boy’ who received his vision from Matthew Cowley, made famous in a story Elder Cowley frequently told. The young father brought his son to Elder Cowley for a name and a blessing. As Matthew Cowley proceeded to give the boy his name and blessing, the father also asked Elder Cowley to give the boy his vision because he was born blind. So he blessed the boy with his vision. Brother Wineera attended and

enjoyed several of the performances of the pageant.” (*Church News*, Oct. 2, 2004, p. 14.)

Q. Einstein and Henry Eyring. Henry Eyring [1901-1982], a chemist whose understanding of molecules and mathematics influenced more than a dozen branches of chemistry, was long recognized as one of the greatest minds in chemistry. A favorite speaker at firesides, Dr. Eyring loved to tell this anecdote: Once, during his 15 years at Princeton, Eyring walked with professor Albert Einstein through a garden. Eyring plucked a plant and asked Einstein if he knew what it was. Einstein didn't. The plant was a soybean, and Eyring later enjoyed telling people that Einstein 'didn't know beans.'" (*Church News*, June 1982; Paul Skousen, *The Skousen Book of Mormon World Records and Other Amazing Firsts, Facts & Feats*, 2004, p. 300.)

R. A German Soldier. At the end of World War II, by agreement of the Allied Powers, German soldiers were to be returned to the area of Germany where they were born. Paul Guildner was a German soldier who had lost his right arm fighting on the Russian front. Shortly after VE Day, he, his wife, and little baby attended an LDS church meeting in Salzburg, where he met an American soldier by the name of Ferrel Bybee. Bybee was assigned to a discharge unit, and ended up at the discharge camp where Guildner was being processed. Bybee related: "The most unhappy German troops in our camp were those who were being sent to East Germany into the hands of the Russians. They knew many of them would not stop in East Germany, for Siberia was their final destination, particularly those who had fought on the Russian front. . . . It is difficult to understand how I was able to recognize Paul Guildner in the large fenced compound of unprocessed soldiers. The compound contained several hundred men, and I didn't know he would be there. I am sure now that I was led by the Spirit. I knew that Brother Guildner was from East Germany, that he would likely never see his wife and baby again if he was sent to the Russians. We were forbidden any contact with the German soldiers, but I felt I must do something. I was able to get Bro. Guildner to come over to the fence I was standing by, and obtained his soldier's record book and other personal papers from him. That was a difficult task with the language barrier. All of these papers I burned, destroying the evidence that would require the American soldiers to return him to the Russians. I then told the Sergeant in charge that I had recognized a German soldier in the compound who needed to get home to his wife and baby. It wasn't long until Paul Guildner was discharged and sent home to Salzburg." There was no chance for him to thank Bybee, who returned to America shortly thereafter.

Many years later, Bybee visited Europe with his family, and attended a session in the Swiss Temple. To his amazement, there was Paul Guildner, who was then the patriarch in the Munich Germany Stake, in attendance at the same session. They held a glad reunion through a chance meeting at the temple in 1983. (Robert C. Freeman, *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: Europe*, 2003, pp. 102-4.)

S. An American Officer. Julian Lowe, an American officer in Germany just as the war was ending in 1945, looked up the address of the local German branch. "I pulled up to a little gray church and heard coming from it the joyous strains of *The Spirit of God Like a Fire is Burning*. I was ever so thrilled and hurried to get inside. The door through which I entered was on the side of the building and opened up near the front of the audience. Before I realized what I had done, I was inside in full view of everyone. It was a tense moment indeed, having an American officer suddenly arrive. The singing stopped and one of the leaders who spoke English, came to where I was standing to see what I wanted. When he heard that I was a member of the Church from Utah, he joyously announced it to the group, and a love feast such as I had never known began. In a flash, political animosities between peoples were forgotten, and the pure love of Christ prevailed." (Robert C. Freeman, *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: Europe*, 2003, p. 104.)

T. First Non-English Temple Session. It was not until November 6, 1945 that the first endowments were given that were not in English. Even though the Hawaiian Temple and the Arizona Temple had endowed hundreds of people who did not speak English, the ceremony was nonetheless always in English. Starting on that date, the First Presidency had authorized endowments in Spanish for members from the Southwest and Mexico. In preparation for this great event, several hundred Mexican saints waited

the previous night in makeshift facilities in Mesa. “About 4:30 a.m. ‘strange noises’ were heard from the direction of the ladies’ room. Thinking they might be teenagers, Ivie Jones went to ask them to quiet down. ‘What a surprise to find about twelve grey-haired widows getting ready for the temple! . . . ‘We came in here early to get us ready because this is our wedding day,’ said one sister in broken English, ‘and our husbands are waiting in heaven for this day. We must look pretty for them.’” (Richard O. Cowan, “The Historic Arizona Temple,” *Journal of Mormon History*, Spring 2005, p. 108.)

U. Swiss Temple Dedication. President McKay’s son Edward reported that the Swiss Temple’s dedication was marked by “one of the most spiritual experiences I’ve ever had. Prior to the prayer that was given, Father gave a talk. The Tabernacle Choir of course, sang. The music was just heavenly. Father talked, and he said, ‘There are many here in the audience who have passed on, those who were instrumental in the preparation for the building of this Temple. The veil is very thin. They are here.’ That night we were talking about this at the hotel, and I said, ‘Father, when you mentioned that there were spiritual beings there who had passed on, no one doubted it.’ He said, ‘Yes, and my father was there, too.’” (Gregory A. Prince and Wm. Robert Wright, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism*, 2005, pp. 263-4.)

V. Howard W. Hunter’s Parents. “Howard W. Hunter, president of the Pasadena Stake and future Church president, had a memorable experience on his birthday during an excursion to the Arizona Temple in 1953. While Howard was growing up, his father was not a member of the Church, but subsequently was baptized. In the Arizona Temple, while he was ‘speaking to the congregation,’ he recalled, ‘my father and mother came into the chapel dressed in white. I had no idea my father was prepared for his temple blessings, although Mother had been anxious about it for some time. I was so overcome with emotion that I was unable to continue to speak.’ The temple president stepped to his side to explain to the group what was happening. ‘When my father and mother came to the temple that morning they asked the president not to mention to me that they were there because they wanted it to be a birthday surprise. This was a birthday I have never forgotten because on that day they were endowed and I had the privilege of witnessing their sealing, following which I was sealed to them.’” (Richard O. Cowan, “The Historic Arizona Temple,” *Journal of Mormon History*, Spring 2005, pp. 105-6.)

W. President McKay on the Word of Wisdom. “A good friend related an experience with President David O. McKay at a reception. In a moment of courage, the hostess served rum cake. All the guests hesitated, watching to see what McKay would do. He smacked his lips and began to eat. One guest gushed, ‘But President McKay, don’t you know that is rum cake?’ McKay smiled and reminded the guest that the Word of Wisdom forbade *drinking* alcohol, not eating it.” (Leonard J. Arrington, *Adventures of a Church Historian*, 1998, p. 42.)

X. Abuse of Power? Gregory A. Prince wrote this account that appeared in 2018: “A few weeks after my biography of David O. McKay was published, I received a phone call from Senator Robert Bennett of Utah. He told me how much he appreciated the candor of the book and then related an experience he’d had three decades earlier with Harold B. Lee, who became Church president two years after McKay’s death. As Bennett and Lee sat together in the Hotel Utah lobby, Lee said, ‘Bob, how is your brother?’ Bob said that his brother had withdrawn from church activity. ‘Why?’ asked Lee. Because, in working on the Correlation Committee, he was close enough to power that he saw some of its abuses. ‘Oh,’ said Lee, ‘I can think of much better reasons for leaving the Church. Doesn’t he realize that we are just human beings, trying to do our best?’ Too often, and with the best of intentions, we try to reverse-engineer the Church. We adopt the biblical imagery of the Body of Christ as a metaphor for the Church and decide that because Christ was perfect, his church and its leaders must also be perfect. That sets us up for disappointment and disillusionment, because, inevitably, those leaders will turn out to have feet of clay. As, indeed, we all do.” (Gregory A. Prince, “Own Your Religion,” *Sunstone*, Issue 187, Fall 2018, 8.)

1. Power Corrupts. “At the same time, my secretary was volunteering her spare time to help transcribe

7,000 pages of pertinent passages from the diaries into the computer. A Catholic from Minnesota, Sonja had not known a Mormon until she began to work for me. When she finished the transcription, I asked her what she thought. ‘David O. McKay is my hero,’ she said. Good call, but what else? Her two-word assessment nearly knocked me off my feet: ‘Power corrupts.’” (Gregory A. Prince, “Own Your Religion,” *Sunstone*, Issue 187, Fall 2018, 9.)

2. Cecil B. DeMille, Arnold Friberg and J. Reuben Clark. “[Arnold Friberg] began his story by talking about Cecil B. DeMille, one of the greatest filmmakers of all time, and Arnold’s boss during the making of *The Ten Commandments*: ‘To show you what an understanding DeMille had, he had a homing instinct for truth. You didn’t have to prove it. He just knew. He didn’t use our terminology, but he said to me, “The thing itself is given to the world through prophets. For a while it’s the real thing, but after a while the priesthood becomes priestcraft. Then they become more interested in their buildings and their powers, and then they’ve lost it, and it has to be given again. It’s given over and over again. It hasn’t happened yet to the Mormon Church because they’re too young, but it will.” I said that to Reuben Clark [then a counselor in the First Presidency] and he shot back and said, ‘Don’t think it can’t happen, Brother! If it were not for the promise that we will not completely lose it before the Lord comes, I would be very worried about this church.’” (Gregory A. Prince, “Own Your Religion,” *Sunstone*, Issue 187, Fall 2018, 9.)

Y. Donation to Trinity Presbyterian Church. In June of 1961, the minister of Trinity Presbyterian Church of Ogden responded to an LDS financial contribution that allowed the completion of a church remodeling project. He wrote to President David O. McKay: “I search for new ways to express my deep, abiding and heartfelt gratitude for your letter, which touched my heartstrings as few letters have done in my 22 years in the ministry; . . . Your letter with the generous check enclosed came last Saturday. I announced it from my pulpit to the congregation. You could have cut with a knife the hushed awe. After the service of worship every person present had something to say each to the other and to me about the magnanimous gift and the spirit in which it was given. . . . This I shall never forget even if I live as long as some of the patriarchs of the Old Testament days!” (Gregory A. Prince and Wm. Robert Wright, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism*, 2005, p. 109.)

Z. President Monson in East Germany. Some years ago, Werner Adler of the German Democratic Republic [Communist East Germany] said: “‘You have an expression in America about someone being so kind that he will give you the shirt off his back. President Monson is more kind than that. He gave me the suit he was wearing.’ He explained that he was present at a district conference in the Annaberg-Buchholz District of the Dresden Mission when President Monson, then of the Quorum of the Twelve, made an unannounced visit to the conference in the 1960s and spoke to the congregation. ‘I am a big man, just about the same size as President Monson, so I guess that’s how I attracted his attention,’ Brother Adler said. ‘He noticed that I was wearing a very old, nearly worn-out suit. In our country at that time, it was hard for just about anybody to buy new clothes; for a man my size, it was nearly impossible. After the conference, President Monson asked me to wait a few minutes. He stepped into a little room, took off his suit and came out dressed in an extra pair of trousers he had in his bag and a shirt. He said, “Here, I think this will fit you.” Brother Adler said President Monson offered to give him his shoes, also. ‘But I looked down at his feet and said, “I think your shoes are too big for me.” Another member standing nearby said he thought the apostle’s shoes would fit his son. So he sat down and took off his shoes and gave them to the other man. ‘I’ll never forget that day,’ Brother Adler said, ‘Apostle Thomas S. Monson had come to our conference dressed in a fine suit and was wearing practically new shoes. He left wearing a pair of old trousers, a shirt and old shoes.’” (*Church News*, Aug. 27, 2005, p. 6.)

AA. Elvis Presley and Seminary. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, world renowned karate expert Ed Parker, of the Pasadena Ward, Pasadena California Stake, became close friends with Elvis Presley. Parker was hired by Elvis to provide security at concerts and road trips. After one of his many concerts in Las Vegas, Elvis surprised Parker with a brand new Cadillac to show his appreciation. With Elvis’ group members in his limo, and Elvis and Parker in the new Cadillac, the two vehicles drove in tandem through

the night to reach Los Angeles. As morning broke, they arrived in Pasadena. Parker directed them to the seminary building where his two daughters were in attendance. Elvis asked if it would be all right if he visited the class. “Standing in front of a packed classroom, Elvis thanked the students for taking the time to learn about Jesus, and congratulated them for making good choices. He then bore his personal witness of Jesus, and gave them a warm goodbye.” Word of the visit spread quickly, and according to some, attendance was incredibly high for a couple of years thereafter as students thought he just might visit the girls again. (Paul Skousen, *The Skousen Book of Mormon World Records and Other Amazing Firsts, Facts & Feats*, 2004, p. 243.)

BB. Determined Village. In June 1976, a letter was sent from Huacuyo, Bolivia to the Bolivia La Paz Mission. The letter was “signed” by the thumb prints of 100 villagers. They wanted the missionaries to come and baptize them. Skeptical at first, the mission was slow to send elders on the six-hour four-wheel-drive trip into this obscure village. But a second letter arrived repeating the plea that the missionaries be sent. As it turned out, the villagers had somehow obtained a copy of the Book of Mormon, had gained a testimony of it, and had built a chapel of adobe walls with a tin roof in which to worship. The missionaries finally arrived and spent their first two weeks teaching the standard missionary lessons. Then they baptized the first group of 36 in the icy waters of a nearby river. Two weeks later, 23 more were baptized, and by May of 1977, 96 had been baptized— every person who was eight or older. With only two baptismal outfits, members had to slide into the wet, cold clothing of the previous person, while the elders took turns thawing out during the three-hour baptismal sessions. [As of October 2004, the Huacuyo Branch of the Titicaca District in the Bolivia La Paz Mission was still listed as an active branch.] (Paul Skousen, *The Skousen Book of Mormon World Records and Other Amazing Firsts, Facts & Feats*, 2004, p. 229; see also *Church News*, July 30, 1977.)

CC. A Special Visitor. At the dedication of the Mexico City Temple, Dec. 2, 1983, President Gordon B. Hinckley spoke “with a quivering voice as he testified that souls ‘from the other side of the veil’ were present. ‘All rooms (of the temple) are filled with faithful Latter-day Saints,’ he said, ‘but I am convinced there is a larger, unseen congregation participating with us.’ President Hinckley then named specifically individuals who had key roles in establishing the Church in Mexico . . . He paused and explained that there was another person from the other side of the veil he had not mentioned. In a strong voice filled with emotion and joy, President Hinckley exclaimed, ‘Welcome, Father Lehi! Oh, how your heart must rejoice!’” (Gerry Avant, *Church News*, June 24, 2018, 18.)

DD. President Kimball and His Heart Surgeon. While addressing 1,600 members at the Accra Ghana Christiansborg stake conference in November 2004, Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Twelve “recounted his association with the twelfth president of the Church, which centered on a critical heart operation. He told how President Kimball, then Elder Kimball of the Quorum of the Twelve, was meeting with the First Presidency to whom he explained his serious heart problems and how he was not expected to live long. Surgery could be performed, he said, but was not recommended by the doctors. President Harold B. Lee said that Elder Kimball should do all he could to stay alive because the Lord had more work for him to do. Elder Nelson, then Dr. Nelson, received a blessing from the First Presidency, saying that he had been prepared by the Lord to perform this special operation. Elder Nelson successfully performed the operation. President Kimball lived another thirteen years, during which time he received heavenly direction allowing all worthy males to receive the priesthood which opened the door for the gospel to bless the lives of the people of Africa.” (*Church News*, Dec. 4, 2004, p. 3.)

II. **More Recent Events**

A. Searching for Answers in Mongolia. “An engineering student in Ulaanbaatar [the capital of Mongolia], Oyunchimeg Dugarsuren challenged the missionaries. ‘You must pray to know if God is there,’ they

taught her. ‘How can I pray if I don’t know?’ she responded. She later wrote that she finally ‘prayed and asked for the answer even though I didn’t expect an answer for I didn’t think I had the faith. . . . However, the next day, during our appointment, one of the brand new missionaries . . . asked me if we all could kneel down and pray to ask if He [God] loves us and wants us to know the truth. I agreed, thinking that if he prays I wouldn’t understand what he is saying and most likely would not receive any earth-shattering revelation. . . . [H]e voiced the most wonderful prayer I have ever heard, with more than simple Mongolian; I was totally in awe . . . [because] he could not have said the prayer without help—help from something beyond human capability. At that time, the feeling I am still not sure how to describe, overwhelmed me and I knew this is where I needed to belong and this is where I belonged a long time ago. I knew who I was then. I was a daughter of Heavenly Father and I had a purpose in this life.’” She was baptized on Aug. 11, 1995.

B. Remembering. “Millie was a three-year-old girl, an only child, until one day her mom and dad brought home a new little brother. About three days later, she asked to go into the nursery where baby brother was sleeping. ‘I want to go in alone,’ she insisted. Not only alone, but she also wanted the door shut. Now mom and dad had no reason to be worried about their little girl, she was gentle and charming and lovable. But, they were still a tad uneasy. ‘We’ll just leave the door ajar,’ Mom said. That didn’t fly with Millie. Millie wanted the door shut. Remembering the new baby intercom system, her parents stealthily turned it on, and the little girl went into the nursery and shut the door. The parents hovered, listening by the intercom. They heard her footsteps as she walked over to the bassinet and then silence. Then, Millie said softly, ‘I need you to tell me about God. I can’t remember so good anymore.’” (Frances Lee Menlove, “Devotional: Memory is Our Teacher.” *Sunstone*, Issue 129 (October 2003): 11-12.)

C. Learning How to Work. “As a boy, Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a late member of the Quorum of the Twelve, learned from his father that the job done right yields sweet rewards. ‘My father was loving but exacting’ he said. ‘He noted that while I worked hard, my work was often not carefully done. I was a stranger to excellence. One summer day I determined to please Dad by putting in a number of needed fence posts, firmly implanted and fully aligned. I worked hard all that day and then scanned the lane expectantly down which my father would walk home. When he arrived, I watched anxiously as he carefully inspected the fence posts, even checking them with a level bar before pronouncing them to be fully satisfactory. Then came his praise. My sweat of the brow had earned Dad’s commendation which, in turn, melted my heart.’ Learning how to work, he added, ‘will give you an edge in life, and experience with excellence—a special edge.’” (“Put Your Shoulder to the Wheel,” April 1998 general conference.)

D. Elder Busche in Russia. A mission president in the Russia St. Petersburg Mission from 1996 to 1998 related this incident: “Several missionaries from former Soviet-bloc countries told me that their family members were not thrilled that their son or daughter was going to Russia to serve a mission. After all, the animosity against Russia since the fall of the Iron Curtain is quite strong. But the love that transcends boundaries was never more apparent than the first visit to Russia by Elder F. Enzo Busche [of the Area Presidency of the Eastern European Area]. He is, of course, a German who grew up during the Second World War. The attitude of Russians toward Nazis in St. Petersburg, which lost fully half of its population during the 900-day siege, is very bitter. Given that backdrop, Elder Busche was understandably apprehensive as he attended a district conference on that first visit to Russia. However, as the meeting progressed, he shared his own personal struggles during the war and talked about the fact that he had been reading Tolstoy’s book entitled *Resurrection* when the missionaries contacted him. Tolstoy’s writing had sensitized him to their message. At that juncture in his address, it became apparent that a bond had formed between him and the Russian congregation. The Russian members could relate to his suffering on a human level, and they responded to his knowledge of one of their beloved authors. Afterward, there was an outpouring of genuine love that removed Elder Busche’s concerns and left him deeply moved, and he clearly reciprocated that love.” (Gary Anderson, in Thomas F. Rogers, *A Call to Russia: Glimpses of Missionary Life*, 1999, p. 184.)

E. A Temple in Boston. “On Saturday, April 22, 1995, at a luncheon with stake presidents in the

Boston area, President Hinckley frankly admitted: ‘Brethren, I am frustrated. We have looked high and low around the Hartford, Connecticut, area for property, and nothing has developed. Do any of you have any suggestions?’ In response, Kenneth G. Hutchins, president of the Boston stake, indicated that ‘the Church owned a prime piece of property on a hill overlooking Boston that had never been developed.’ President Hinckley promptly turned the meeting over to Elder Neal A. Maxwell and left to visit the site. ‘As I stood there,’ he recorded later that evening, ‘I had an electric feeling that this is the place, that the Lord inspired its acquisition and its retention. Very few seemed to know anything about it. . . . I think I know why I have had such a very difficult time determining the situation concerning Hartford. I have prayed about it. I have come here [Hartford] three or four times. I have studied maps and tables of membership. With all of this I have not had a strong confirmation. I felt a confirmation as I stood in Belmont on this property this afternoon.’ The property had been acquired in 1978 when the Belmont Ward was seeking a place to build its new meetinghouse. ‘One afternoon, a member of the Church became lost on Belmont Hill while looking for property. . . . Noticing a sign on a tree in a field, she stopped and recorded the telephone number, even though there was no mention of selling the land. The owner was willing to sell.’ Mitt Romney, who was bishop of the Belmont Ward during the chapel’s construction, pointed out in an interview that the meetinghouse was built in a lower corner of the property rather than on the crest of the hill, which would have been more typical. ‘The upper level seemed hallowed and an ideal spot for something loftier.’” (*Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: The New England States*, edited by Cannon, Garr and Van Orden, 2004, pp. 2-3.)

F. Kirby and the Prophet. Robert Kirby has a humor column in the *Salt Lake Tribune* in which he often pokes mild fun at the ways of Mormons and their leaders. In 2003 he passed on this incident to a group of members: “My stake president said, ‘You need to come and see me.’ So I went down to his office, and he was very formal and official. I sat on one side of the desk and he on another. He said, ‘You wrote a column several months ago in which you said you could beat up President Gordon B. Hinckley.’ And I said, ‘Yea, I know—I can.’ He said, ‘Be that as it may, don’t you think that’s a little irreverent?’ And I said, ‘Well, maybe a little.’ He . . . told me he had a letter from one of the General Authorities asking him to talk with me to see if they could get me to tone it down a little bit. I said, ‘Well, it’s entirely possible that I went over the edge, and I’ll try to be a little more careful in the future.’ So I went home, and I wrote President Hinckley a letter of apology. I said, ‘Dear President Hinckley. I’m sorry I said I could beat you up. In my defense, I did not say that I *wanted* to, I was simply trying to be funny, and I hope you understand it’s the nature of my job to do this sort of thing. How-ever, if you were upset or offended, I do apologize, and I’ll try and do a little better in the future. P. S: I still think I can beat up the Pope.’

‘I sent that letter off and figured that would be the end of it, because the magic involved in making fun of religious leaders is that when you apologize, they have to forgive you. But a couple of weeks later, I went out to my mailbox, and there was a letter from the Office of the First Presidency. I didn’t even have to open it to believe that I was in serious trouble. I just stood there by the mailbox, and I looked at it for an hour, and I couldn’t shake the thought that, ‘Crap, I’m going to Africa.’ It had happened just like that before. I finally opened the letter, and it was actually a note from one of President Hinckley’s secretaries He said, ‘I’ve discussed the matter with the President. He wishes me to assure you that he is not offended. Good luck, have fun.’ So now when I get called in, I take this letter with me.’” (Robert Kirby, “Symposium Excerpts,” *Sunstone*, October 2003, p. 70.)

G. Japanese Missionary. At an area conference transmitted by satellite all over Japan, Elder David E. Sorensen said that once while he was in the Tokyo Japan Temple he noticed a Japanese missionary, who had just completed service at the baptistry during his preparation day. The missionary was crying. “At the appropriate time, I inquired, ‘Elder, is everything all right?’ He replied, ‘Oh, yes, Kodi Sorensen. I am not weeping with sadness, but with joy. I have just been baptized for my grandfather who passed away a few years ago. After completing this sacred ordinance in his behalf—I know now that I am not the only member of the Church in my family.’” (*Church News*, Nov. 13, 2004, p. 4.)

H. Help From the Other Side. David E. Rencher, director of the Records and Information Division of the Family and Church History Department, told a story at a BYU Family History fireside in November 2004.

“Once, he said, he had a ‘haunting feeling that one daughter was missing’ in a family. He happened to visit friends in the East who were aware of his interest in family history research. ‘I do have an unusual surname, and she remembered it,’ he said. A few months after the visit he received a note from one of the friends whose job was to receive donations to the Annandale Public Library in Virginia. A family Bible had been donated, and ‘the surname is Rencher, and I thought you might be interested,’ she wrote in a note. ‘I immediately recognized the family Bible of Abraham Rencher,’ he said. ‘It contained the entry I had been looking for.’ Abraham Rencher was a five-term Congressman, and it turned out that one of his daughters had been taken with scarlet fever, died in Washington, D. C., and was not buried with the rest of the family. . . . ‘How many public libraries are there in Virginia or the United States? Is it a coincidence that the person who goes through gift boxes in Annandale, Virginia is the one person who knows me? . . . I would submit that councils are held on the other side of the veil in this important work,’ he said.”

I. What Does God Expect of Us? At the October 2004 general conference, President Boyd K. Packer talked about doing the best we can, and rising to try again when we fall. He illustrated his talk with these two brief examples: (1) “Some years ago in the Philippines we arrived early for a conference. Sitting on the curb were a father and mother and four small children dressed in their Sunday best. They had come several hours on a bus and were having the first meal of the day. Each of them was eating a cob of cold, boiled corn. The cost of the bus to Manila probably came out of their food budget. As I watched that family, my heart overflowed with emotion. *There is the Church. There is the power. There is the future.* As with families in many lands, they pay their tithing, sustain their leaders, and do their best to serve.” (Boyd K. Packer, *Ensign*, November 2004.)

(1) “Some years ago, as president of the New England Mission, I left Fredericton, New Brunswick. It was 40 degrees below zero. As the plane taxied away from that small terminal, I saw two young elders standing outside, waving good-bye. I thought, ‘Foolish boys. Why do they not go inside where it’s warm?’ Suddenly there came over me a powerful prompting, a revelation: There in these two ordinary young missionaries stands the priesthood of Almighty God. I leaned back, content to leave the missionary work for that entire province of Canada in their hands. It was a lesson I have never forgotten.” (*Ensign*, November 2004.)

J. Anthony Obinna. “Anthony Obinna, the first Nigerian baptized in his homeland after the arrival of the first missionaries in 1978, faced an entire village. The first branch president in this West African country and the man who had for years written Salt Lake City pleading for missionaries, called his community together. Hundreds had been flocking each week to attend Church services in the home and on the grounds of President Obinna, causing a stir and even hostility among those opposed. His youngest brother, Vincent Obinna, who was also baptized, remembers the moment clearly: ‘My brother Anthony called the whole village together and said to them—I don’t forget this—he made the statement that if this work is of the devil that the work will collapse. But if it is of God that all of them will be witness that this work will grow beyond their reach and they will not have hands to stop it.’ Those words ring with clarity today. Not only did the work grow in Nigeria, but there are also now nearly 70,000 members here [about 160,000 in 2018]. . . President Gordon B. Hinckley dedicated the Aba Nigeria Temple, the 121st operating temple in the Church and the second temple in West Africa. Anthony Obinna died in 1995, but his legacy continues. His memory is honored by not only dozens and even hundreds of extended family members—all Church members—but also by many in Nigeria who trace their membership back to the original 19 baptized at Ekonumiri Stream in Owerri, Imo Stake, in November 1978. . . . All surviving Obinna brothers are active in the Church and have been to a temple. . . . Some 20 Obinnas have served missions.” (*Church News*, Aug. 27, 2005, p. 3.)

K. Goodness in Many Cultures. The following story appeared in *BYU Studies* in 2006, in an article on expatriate Mormons: “While driving through a remote desert region, I ran over a large rock and the rear trailer wheel blew out immediately. I stepped out of the jeep to look at the damage. A Muslim boy of about twelve wearing ragged clothes and no shoes came right over and said he was sorry for my trouble but could help. As I tried to get the spare out from storage, the boy was already removing the flat. I was reluctant to let him help, but I could see he knew how to handle the tools and was quick about his work. I was impressed and let him continue. He took the spare and put it on with skill. I just watched in amazement and handed him tools. He then said he

knew a place to get the flat fixed. Again I was reluctant but took a leap of faith because he seemed to have a good spirit about him. We drove the jeep and canoes through the narrow back streets of the nearby village, which is not a good place for an American to be, but he reassured me everything would be fine. We stopped at a small dirty tire shop no bigger than a bedroom. He took the flat and told me to wait by the jeep. In about 15 minutes he returned with the tire repaired and said it would cost about \$1.50 (a fair deal by local standards). I was expecting to get gouged (as foreigners usually are) for about ten times that amount, but again the boy radiated honesty. We then drove back to the parking lot and dropped him off. I offered him \$5.00 for his help, but he smiled and said, 'No. You were a stranger in trouble, and it's my duty to help you. It's what Allah would want me to do.' I was so struck with the goodness of this young man, I did not know what to say and just gave him a tear-filled pat on the shoulder to express my gratitude. I thought about him the entire drive home. It made a profound impression on me to be reminded that there are so many individuals not of our faith who are Christlike and charitable." (James Toronto, "Strangers in a Strange Land: Assessing the Experience of Latter-day Saint Expatriate Families." *BYU Studies*, 45:4 [2006], pp. 38-9.)

L. "Conspiring Men." Elder Marlin K. Jensen made this observation in 2000: "In 1997 Elder W. Eugene Hansen and I were asked to host the Honorable Michael Moore, attorney general of Mississippi, during a brief visit he made to Utah and Church headquarters. . . . Elder Hansen and I raised questions about the lawsuit he had filed against the large American tobacco companies on behalf of the state of Mississippi. . . . We asked him specifically upon what legal theory the state of Mississippi's claim had been based. Much to our surprise, Mr. Moore informed us that the state's cause of action had been based on a theory of 'conspiracy,' which the evidence eventually conclusively showed existed among the tobacco companies and even among their lawyers." [Surprised, the two Seventies asked Moore to read Section 89, verse 4.] "The scriptural reference to 'conspiring men' was not lost on Mr. Moore. As he finished reading verse 4, a broad smile came across his face, and with a twinkle in his eyes he said, 'I never dreamed in visiting Utah I might find 10 million people who would agree with my conspiracy theories.'" (Marlin K. Jensen, "May the Kingdom of God Go Forth," *Out of Obscurity: The LDS Church in the Twentieth Century*, papers given at the 29th Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium, BYU, 2000, p. 9.)

M. Community Service by Missionaries. Since May 1989, all LDS missionaries are asked to donate at least four hours a week to service in their assigned communities. The guidelines stress that the service should come from a sincere desire to help others rather than as a means of gaining publicity for the Church—even though much favorable publicity has arisen from the program. (*Ensign*, October 1997, p. 11.) Most activities involve two missionaries who make their own arrangements for service opportunities.

1. South Africa. "A prominent Zulu woman in South Africa reported she first became interested in the Church when she found two young white missionaries quietly cleaning up a boys' club in the dreadful black slums of Soweto. Her initial anger that whites rather than blacks were being given scarce jobs turned to amazement when she learned they just showed up and asked if they could help out. She was so touched, she invited them to her home, and was ultimately baptized."

2. Australia. The entire missionary force of the Australia Sydney North and South Missions turned out unannounced to help in one of Australia's worst natural disasters. Approximately 20,000 homes in Sydney had their roofs damaged from a freak hail storm, and were in need of covering with plastic tarps secured by sandbags during a driving rain. They volunteered to help fill the sandbags. Their pace was so fast that the council trucks struggled to keep up with delivering the sand. As for the missionaries, they were overwhelmed at the feeling that they were making a difference in the lives of people. The next day, this notice appeared at the end of a front page story in Sydney's largest paper, the *Sydney Morning Herald*: "WHEN they call at your door, remember this—250 young missionaries from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, i.e. the Mormons, spent last Friday in the wind and rain, filling 70,000 sandbags in the Randwick area. Today, they'll be helping to fill 130,000 more . . ." It would be hard to know which group was better rewarded by this experience. (www.lds-gems.com/archive/news/articles/australia, 28 Apr 1999.)

N. Incident of Free Milk During the Depression. “In 1932, when I was a senior in high school, our Pioneer Stake presidency in Salt Lake City was thinking of ways to help the people of our stake who were in dire need. Our stake president assigned the Relief Society presidency to contact the local dairies in the city about donating milk for destitute people. The stake Relief Society presidency approached a small family-owned dairy nearby with their plan. The owner of the dairy agreed to give the stake milk on condition that anyone could have it and not just members of our Church. They agreed to give four five-gallon cans of skim milk twice a week, Wednesday afternoons and Saturday mornings. Our home was chosen as the milk depot. It was announced that people could come for milk starting at 4 p.m. on Wednesdays and 9 a.m. on Saturdays. I was appointed to ladle out the milk. The people came bringing their containers—pitchers, fruit jars, lard buckets, anything to hold the milk

“One Saturday a little boy about eight or nine years old came to the door for milk. He was late, and the milk was gone. When I told him, he just stood there with big tears in his eyes. I think I was as hurt as he was that the milk was gone. As he started to walk away, I called to him and told him to wait a minute. I went into the house, and told my dad about it. He came out and took a quart of milk out of the old ice box and poured it into the little boy’s bucket. He told him the times the milk was available and to be early. That little boy came every Wednesday and Saturday; and if he wasn’t the first in line, he was the second. One day, the boy’s father came with him, wanting to talk to the person who was responsible for giving the milk. I went in and got dad, who invited the man into the house. Several months later at the Sunday dinner table, Dad said, ‘Remember the man who came with the little boy for milk?’ Yes, we remembered him. ‘Well,’ said Dad, ‘he and his whole family have joined the Church.’” (“Church News” supplement to the *Deseret News*, Sept. 15, 2013, 16.)

O. Unemployed Stake President in Peru. “In closing, I thought I would share a story from Lima, Peru. That I received from our manager down there. He was sitting in his office one evening after closing when a stake president knocked at the door and asked if he could visit with him. He said, ‘[the stake president] is a wonderful, humble man who has been out of work for eight months. He and his wife have been able to support their family during this time doing odd jobs. His wife also sells beauty products. This has provided about 100 U.S. dollars a month. It is sufficient to make ends meet but not sufficient or stable enough to provide the peace of mind needed by one in such a responsible leadership position. During the interview, various alternatives were discussed. The Spirit was very strong. It was apparent that this good man was determined not to let himself be overcome by adversity. The desire to serve and succeed in taking care of his family was very strong. We had been meeting together for over an hour. In the course of the interview, his countenance began to change from near tears to hope. He confided that he had wanted to come to the employment resource center since it had opened in February (it was June), but he could not afford the cost of transportation. That night he had borrowed the money needed for bus fare, because he felt it was important for him to come. As we were almost ready to end the interview, after having sketched out a preliminary plan, the telephone rang. It was the general manager of the American-English Language Institute, who had called a few days earlier, asking us to send him several people to interview for sales positions and a manager of marketing position. He told us that all the people we had sent were hired and had turned out to be very effective. He then indicated a need for a manager of sales to help train and supervise. Without a moment of doubt, I told him that sitting across the desk from me was a man with just the characteristics he was seeking. I told him he was a leader in the Church. I then described the leadership experience and functions of a stake president in business terms. I told him that I felt this was just the man who could help him achieve his business goals. He responded, ‘Please send him to my office tomorrow morning for an interview at 9:00.’” The stake president went the next morning and was hired. He had to hire thirty other salesmen, who were returned missionaries. For most people it would be inexplicable why the employer would have called at that hour of the evening knowing that the employment resource center was closed. But something happened to prompt him to do so. We know the Lord works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform. This incident is one more testimony to us here that He is directing this work and that He is personally concerned about each of His children.” (“Economic Salvation for Our Brothers and Sisters,” A. Terry Oakes, *Global Mormonism in the 21st Century*, edited by Reid L. Neilson, 2008, 167-8, Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University.)

P. A Simple Parable About the Atonement. The following story is from President Gordon B. Hinckley, who used it as a “Message from the First Presidency” in December, 2000: “I have a simple story I would like to recount. It is something of a parable. I do not have the name of the author. Perhaps it will have special interest for our children. I hope it will be a reminder for all. Years ago there was a little one-room schoolhouse in the mountains of Virginia where the boys were so rough that no teacher had been able to handle them. A young, inexperienced teacher applied, and the old director scanned him and asked: ‘Young fellow, do you know that you are asking for an awful beating? Every teacher that we have had here for years has had to take one’ ‘I will risk it,’ he replied.

“The first day of school came, and the teacher appeared for duty. One big fellow named Tom whispered: ‘I won’t need any help with this one. I can lick him myself.’ The teacher said, ‘Good morning, boys, we have come to conduct school.’ They yelled and made fun at the top of their voices. ‘Now, I want a good school, but I confess that I do not know how unless you help me. Suppose we have a few rules. You tell me, and I will write them on the blackboard.’ One fellow yelled, ‘No stealing!’ Another yelled, ‘On time.’ Finally, ten rules appeared on the blackboard. ‘Now,’ said the teacher, ‘a law is not good unless there is a penalty attached. What shall we do with one who breaks the rules?’ ‘Beat him across the back ten times without his coat on,’ came the response from the class. ‘That is pretty severe, boys. Are you sure that you are ready to stand by it?’ Another yelled, ‘I second the motion,’ and the teacher said, ‘All right, we will live by them! Class, come to order!’ In a day or so, ‘Big Tom’ found that his lunch had been stolen. The thief was located—a little hungry fellow, about ten years old. ‘We have found the thief and he must be punished according to your rule—ten stripes across the back. Jim, come up here!’ the teacher said.

“The little fellow, trembling, came up slowly with a big coat fastened up to his neck and pleaded, ‘Teacher, you can lick me as hard as you like, but please, don’t take my coat off!’ ‘Take your coat off,’ the teacher said. ‘You helped make the rules!’ ‘Oh, teacher, don’t make me!’ He began to unbutton, and what did the teacher see? The boy had no shirt on, and revealed a bony little crippled body. ‘How can I whip this child?’ he thought. ‘But I must, I must do something if I am to keep this school’ Everything was quiet as death. ‘How come you aren’t wearing a shirt, Jim?’ He replied, ‘My father died and my mother is very poor. I have only one shirt and she is washing it today, and I wore my brother’s big coat to keep me warm.’ The teacher, with rod in hand, hesitated. Just then ‘Big Tom’ jumped to his feet and said, ‘Teacher, if you don’t object, I will take Jim’s licking for him.’ ‘Very well, there is a certain law that one can become a substitute for another. Are you all agreed?’ Off came Tom’s coat, and after five strokes the rod broke! The teacher bowed his head in his hands and thought, ‘How can I finish this awful task?’ Then he heard the class sobbing, and what did he see? Little Jim had reached up and caught Tom with both arms around his neck. ‘Tom, I’m sorry that I stole your lunch, but I was awful hungry. Tom, I will love you till I die for taking my licking for me! Yes, I will love you forever!’

“To lift a phrase from this simple story, Jesus, my Redeemer, has taken ‘my licking for me and yours for you.’” (President Gordon B. Hinckley, “Message from the First Presidency” December, 2000.)

Q. Elder Monson Finds a Missionary Mother. “He whom we call our Heavenly Father will not leave our sincere petition unanswered. This lesson I learned anew some years ago as I received a rather unique and fright-ening assignment. Folkman D. Brown, then the Director of Mormon Relationships for the Boy Scouts of America, came to my office, having learned that I was about to depart for a lengthy assignment to New Zealand. He told me of his widowed sister, Belva Jones, who had been stricken with terminal cancer, who knew not how to tell her only son—a missionary in that far away country. Her wish, even her plea, was that he remain in the mission field and serve faithfully. She worried about his reaction; for the missionary, Elder Ryan Jones, had lost his father just a year earlier to the same dread disease. I accepted the responsibility. Following a missionary meeting held adjacent to the majestically beautiful New Zealand Temple, I met privately with Elder Jones and, as gently as I could, explained the situation of his mother. Naturally there were tears—not all his—but then the handclasp of assurance and the pledge: ‘Tell my mother I will serve, I will pray, and I will see her again.’ I returned to Salt Lake City just in time to attend a conference of the Lost River Stake at Moore, Idaho. As I sat on

the stand with the stake president, my attention was drawn almost instinctively to the east side of the chapel, where the morning sunlight bathed the lone occupant of a front bench. I said to the stake president, ‘Who is the sister upon whom the sunlight is resting? I feel I must speak to her today.’ He replied, ‘Her name is Belva Jones. She has a missionary son in New Zealand. She is very ill and has requested a blessing.’ Prior to that moment, I had not known where Belva Jones lived. My assignment that weekend could have been to any one of fifty stakes. Yet the Lord, in His own way, had answered the prayer of faith of a concerned mother. We had a wonderful visit together. I reported word-for-word the reaction and the resolve of her son, Ryan. A blessing was provided, a prayer offered, a witness received. Belva Jones would live to see her son complete his mission. This privilege she enjoyed. Just one month prior to her passing, his mission completed, Ryan returned home.” (Thomas S. Monson, *Consider the Blessings: True Accounts of God’s Hand in Our Lives*, 2013, 90-1.)

R. Gospel to Be Preached By the Weak and Simple of the Earth. Elder Bruce D. Porter, after discussing the rapid and totally unexpected fall of Communism in the Soviet Union, told this incident: “In September 1996, I traveled to Siberia and toured the Yekaterinburg mission of the Church. This was the first mission in Russia to be headed up by a native Russian mission president. One of the cities we went to was an industrial city called Cheliabinsk. We had a little branch there of about fifty members. Incidentally, they had all been baptized within the last six months, all fifty members. We had six full-time missionaries serving there. We held a zone conference with those missionaries, just the six of them, myself, and the mission president. One of those missionaries was from Mexico. He was a humble, sweet, pure-hearted young man. Like so many people from his country, he grew up humble. You could read it in his face. As the zone conference proceeded and I spoke, the young man was touched and tears began to roll down his cheeks. As I looked at him, I thought of this scripture, ‘That the fulness of my gospel might be proclaimed by the weak and the simple unto the ends of the world’ (D&C 1:23). There we were, literally at the end of the world, and here were the weak and simple proclaiming the Lord’s gospel.” (Elder Bruce D. Porter, *Global Mormonism in the 21st Century*, edited by Reid L. Neilson, 2008, 250-53; Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University.)

S. Church Welfare Program: Nothing Like it on Earth. “A few years ago, a Harvard University professor contacted Wade Sperry, an agricultural specialist in the Church’s welfare department. The professor explained that he was working on a case study about the welfare department’s vast and varied agricultural projects. He asked if he could spend a few days visiting Church-owned farms, orchards and beef ranches. Bro. Sperry accompanied the professor and a team of graduate students on their agricultural tour. At each locale, the Harvard contingent witnessed crews of happy volunteers picking fruit, harvesting crops and wrangling cattle. They returned to Boston both humbled and inspired by the charitable spirit of cooperation and compassion they found in each volunteer who donated time and muscle to produce food that would feed families in need. A short time later, the professor sent Bro. Sperry a copy of his case study on the Church welfare agricultural projects. ‘He wrote that there is nothing like this anywhere on earth—it’s unique.’” (*Church News*, Dec. 22, 2013.)

1. A report of highlights of the 2013 harvest at Church properties shows the scope of the welfare program: (1) Fifty farms and orchards located across the U. S. and Canada produced some 83 million pounds of wheat and dry beans; 6 million pounds of fruit (apples, peaches and pears); 250,000 pounds of fresh vegetables; and 20 million pounds of row crops such as sugar beets. (2) An LDS-owned turkey farm in Moroni, Utah yielded 5 million pounds of turkey. (3) The Church-owned vineyard in Madera, Calif., produced several tons of raisins; (4) The Church’s peanut farm in Texas supplied the essential ingredient for the Church to produce its own pro-tei-n-rich peanut butter [—over one million jars in 2017 alone.] (5) The Church’s five working cattle ranches— staffed largely by ‘cowboy’ missionaries —yielded all the meat needed for all the bishops’ storehouses. (6) Some 350,000 hours of labor were donated by volunteers to make all this happen. (*Ibid.*,)

T. Being Grateful. At the April 2014 general conference, President Dieter F. Uchtdorf related this story of how we sometimes lose focus when considering gratitude: “Could I suggest that we see gratitude as a disposition, a way of life that stands independent of our current situation? In other words, I’m suggesting that instead of being thankful *for* things, we focus on being thankful *in* our circumstances—whatever they may be.

There is an old story of a waiter who asked a customer whether he had enjoyed the meal. The guest replied that everything was fine, but it would have been better if they had served more bread. The next day, when the man returned, the waiter doubled the amount of bread, giving him four slices instead of two, but still the man was not happy. The next day, the waiter doubled the bread again, without success. On the fourth day, the waiter was really determined to make the man happy. And so he took a nine-foot-long loaf of bread, cut it in half, and with a smile, served that to the customer. The waiter could scarcely wait for the man's reaction. After the meal, the man looked up and said, 'Good as always. But I see you're back to giving only two slices of bread.'" (*Ensign*, May 2014, 73.)

U. Guerillas Threaten to Kill Mission President and Missionaries. At the 2014 Seminar for New Mission Presidents, Presiding Bishopric first counselor Gerald Causse, "told of a friend who served as a mission president in Africa some 20 years ago, having been assigned to rebuild the mission after a period of evacuation [probably Ivory Coast or Sierra Leone]. One day, he and his wife found themselves trapped in the middle of a military coup. They and eight of their missionaries took refuge in a villa located in the city center. Leaving to seek food and water, they were captured and taken to the headquarters of rebel forces, where they were questioned in a threatening manner. 'In spite of the brutality of the situation, I felt a power grow inside me that enabled me to speak with a firm voice, without being aggressive,' related the mission president. Told by someone that the captors said they were going to kill the president and all of the missionaries, the mission president felt the Holy Ghost come over him with overwhelming power. Even [the rebel leader] must have felt it, because his physical appearance suddenly changed, and completely unexpectedly, he asked me, 'Do you have a Bible?' the mission president related. 'I replied, "Yes, of course." Then he asked me to read Psalm 91 from the Book of Psalms.' That psalm speaks about the protection the righteous receive from the Lord, Bishop Causse noted. 'At that point, the rebel leader excused himself for his bad behavior. He set down his machine gun and ordered food to be brought to the missionaries. About 45 minutes later, French soldiers arrived with two armored vehicles to evacuate the president, his wife and the other missionaries.' Bishop Causse commented that the story demonstrates a principle that applies to all missions: 'Total consecration to the Lord will enable you and your missionaries to call down the powers of heaven. Therefore, one of your priorities as a mission president will be to work unceasingly to help your missionaries elevate their level of personal consecration.'" (*Church News*, July 13, 2014.)

1. Psalm 91 reads, in part: "Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." (Psalm 91: 9-11.)

V. Missionary Gave Up on Learning Spanish. President Monson told this story: "I recall when I served as chairman of the Church Missionary Committee that I received a telephone call from a member of the presidency of the Missionary Training Center in Provo, Utah. He advised me that a particular young man called to a Spanish-speaking mission was having difficulty applying himself to his language study and had declared, 'I never can learn Spanish!' The leader asked, 'What do you recommend we do?' I thought for a moment, then suggested, 'Place him tomorrow as an observer in a class of missionaries struggling to learn Japanese, and then advise me his reaction.' My caller responded within 24 hours with the report, 'The missionary was only in the Japanese language class one-half day when he called me and excitedly said, 'Place me back in the Spanish class! I know I can learn *that* language.' And he did.'" (Quoted in *Church News* editorial, Feb. 25, 2018, 12.)

W. Matthew Cowley and the Blind Baby. A father brought a nine-month-old baby forward to Brother Cowley, requesting that he give him a name and a blessing. "I said, 'All right, what's the name?' So he told me the name, and I was just going to start when he said, 'By the way; give him his vision when you give him a name. He was born blind.' It shocked me, but then I said to myself, why not? Christ said to his disciples when he left them, 'Greater things than I have done shall you do.' (John 14:12.) I had faith in that father's faith. After I gave that child its name, I finally got around to giving it its vision. That boy is about twelve years old now. The last time I was back there I was afraid to inquire about him. I was sure he had gone blind again. That's the way my faith works sometimes. So I asked the branch president about him. And he said, 'Brother Cowley, the worst

thing you ever did was to bless that child to receive his vision. He's the meanest kid in the neighborhood; always getting into mischief.' Boy, I was thrilled about that kid getting into mischief!" (*Miracles*, BYU Speeches of the Year, 5 April 1966, p. 9.)

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