



By President
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OUR HONORED PIONEER HERITAGE

We each can learn much from our early pioneer ancestors, whose struggles and heartaches were met with resolute courage and an abiding faith in a living God.

The Suffering of the Pioneers

“That first trek of 1847, organized and led by Brigham Young, is described by historians as one of the great epics of United States history. Mormon pioneers by the hundreds suffered and died from disease, exposure, or starvation. There were some who, lacking wagons and teams, literally walked the 1,300 miles [2,092 km] across the plains and through the mountains, pushing and pulling handcarts.”¹

Inspiring Faith

“We each can learn much from our early pioneer ancestors, whose struggles and heartaches were met with resolute courage and an abiding faith in a living God. . . . Youth and children were among the thousands who pulled and pushed handcarts or walked along that pioneer trail, just as they are among the Saints today who are pioneering in their own areas throughout the world. I think that there is not a member of this Church today who has not been touched by

the accounts of the early pioneers. Those who did so much for the good of all surely had as their objective to inspire faith. They met the goal in a magnificent manner.”²

Facing Hardships

“Time-marked pages of a dusty pioneer journal speak movingly: ‘We bowed ourselves down in humble prayer to Almighty God with hearts full of thanksgiving to Him, and dedicated this land unto Him for the dwelling place of His people.’

“The crude homes were described in these terms by one who was there as a small boy: ‘There was no window of any kind whatever in our house. Neither was there a door. My mother hung up an old quilt, which served as a door for the first winter. This was our bedroom, our parlor, our sitting room, our kitchen, our sleeping room, everything in this room of about 12 by 16 feet [3.6 by 4.9 m]. How in the world we all got along in it I do not know. I recollect that my dear old mother stated that

no queen who ever entered her palace was ever more happy or proud of shelter and the blessings of the Lord than was she when she entered that completed dugout.’

“Such were the trials, the hardships, struggles, and heartaches of a former day. They were met with resolute courage and an abiding faith in a living God.”³

Pioneers Today

“We honor those who endured incredible hardships. We praise their names and reflect on their sacrifices.

“What about our time? Are there pioneering experiences for us? Will future generations reflect with gratitude on our efforts, our examples? You young [people] can indeed be pioneers in courage, in faith, in charity, in determination.

“You can strengthen one another; you have the capacity to notice the unnoticed. When you have eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts to feel, you can reach out and rescue others of your age.”⁴

FROM TOP: PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY MATTHEW REIER, JOHN LUKE, AND COURTESY OF THE SANDY UTAH WILLOW CREEK STAKE; COVERED WAGONS, BY MINVERVA TEICHERI, COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM



The Ultimate Pioneer

“Turning the pages of scriptural history from beginning to end, we learn of the ultimate pioneer—even Jesus Christ. His birth was foretold by the prophets of old; His entry upon the stage of life was announced by an angel. His life and His ministry have transformed the world. . . .

“One sentence from the book of Acts speaks volumes: Jesus ‘went about doing good . . . for God was with him’ (Acts 10:38). . . .

“His mission, His ministry among men, His teachings of truth, His acts of mercy, His unwavering love for us prompts our gratitude and warms our hearts. Jesus Christ, Savior of the world—even the Son of God—was and is the ultimate pioneer, for He has gone before, showing all others the way to follow. May we ever follow Him.”⁵ ■

NOTES

1. “Come Follow Me,” *Ensign*, July 1988, 2; see also *Tambuli*, Nov. 1988, 2.
2. “Teaching Our Children,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Oct. 2004, 4.
3. *Ensign*, July 1988, 4; see also *Tambuli*, Nov. 1988, 3.
4. “Pioneers All,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 93.
5. “Led by Spiritual Pioneers,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Aug. 2006, 8.