

Small & Simple Things

“By small and simple things are great things brought to pass” (Alma 37:6).

GREAT LIVES REMEMBERED

Elder John A. Widtsoe

John Andreas Widtsoe was born on January 31, 1872, on the remote, windswept Norwegian island of Frøya. John was six when his father died, and John’s mother, Anna, took him and his younger brother to live in Trondheim.

There Anna was introduced to the restored gospel by a shoemaker who left Latter-day Saint pamphlets in the shoes he repaired for the young widow. It was a bold move by the craftsman, who was considered to be of a lower class than the widow of an educator. But Anna’s curiosity was piqued, and she responded to the gospel message.

In 1883 the Widtsoe family immigrated to Logan, Utah, where young John later enrolled in Brigham Young College. A hard worker and bright student, he graduated in 1891, studied chemistry at Harvard University, and graduated with highest honors in 1894. While at Harvard, he met Leah Eudora Dunford. They married in the Salt Lake Temple in 1898 and became the parents of seven children, only



Elder Widtsoe served as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles from 1921 until his death in 1952.



Elder Widtsoe was associate editor of the Improvement Era magazine from 1935 until 1952. Below: Elder Widtsoe studying the scriptures with members of his family.



three of whom lived to adulthood.

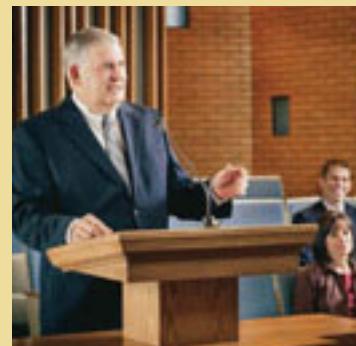
John began his professional career as professor of chemistry and as chemist at the experiment station at Utah Agricultural College (now Utah State University) in Logan. He later studied physiological chemistry (biochemistry) in Göttingen, Germany, received a Ph.D., and became an international authority on agricultural chemistry in harsh climates. He was also a recognized authority on irrigation and dry farming.

John A. Widtsoe served as president of the Utah Agricultural College from 1907 to 1916, when he was named president of the University of Utah. He served in that capacity until 1921, when he was called to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Widtsoe was associate editor of the *Improvement Era* (a predecessor to the *Ensign* magazine) from 1935 to 1952. He also wrote a number of books that were widely used in the Church, including *Priesthood and Church Government*. He was president of the European Mission from 1926 to 1932, during which time he dedicated Czechoslovakia for the preaching of the gospel.

Elder Widtsoe died in Salt Lake City, Utah, on November 29, 1952, at age 80.

See his *Gospel Classics* article, “Looking toward the Temple,” on page 16.



GIVING TALKS IN CHURCH

- Ask for help with your talk in your daily prayers.
- Think about your topic for a few days as you go about your usual tasks. Carry a pencil and paper, and write down any ideas that come to you.
- Brainstorm ways you can convey your topic. Some of them might be with scriptures, hymns, personal experiences, or quotations from General Authority messages.
- Practice giving your talk in front of a family member or a mirror. Become familiar enough with your message that you can look at the congregation as you speak.
- Be prepared to follow promptings from the Spirit as you give your talk.

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CHURCH HISTORY AROUND THE WORLD



A view of Santiago, Chile's capital city.

Chile

In May 1955 the Argentine Mission received First Presidency approval to send missionaries to Chile. The next year elders arrived in the capital, Santiago. Elder Henry D. Moyle (1889–1963) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles joined them in July 1956 to establish the first Chilean branch. Just a few months later, the first Chileans were baptized.

As membership grew, so did the

Church organization. In October 1961 the Chilean Mission was organized, and in 1983, Chileans were blessed with their own temple, dedicated in Santiago by President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008). Following extensive renovations to the temple, President Hinckley rededicated it in 2006.

Here are a few facts about the Church in Chile today:



In 1956 Elder Henry D. Moyle of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles organized the first branch in Chile.

Membership	548,628
Missions	9
Stakes	75
Districts	24
Wards and Branches	612
Temples in Operation	1

Peace in the Temple

I prepared spiritually to go to the temple, but even so, I didn't feel worthy. Then the bishop told me that because I was trying to keep the commandments, I was worthy. I didn't have to be perfect.

Since entering a holy temple, I realize that I am blessed for performing sacred ordinances. I feel safe and protected.

Luis Medina Chávez, Chile

The celestial room in the Santiago Chile Temple.



TEMPLE SPOTLIGHT

Bern Switzerland Temple

In 1906 only four temples were in operation, all of them in Utah. In that year President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) prophesied at Bern, Switzerland, that “the time will come . . . when temples of God . . . will be erected in the divers countries of the earth, for the gospel must spread over all the world.”¹ Nearly half a century later, on September 11, 1955, President David O. McKay (1873–1970) dedicated the first temple in Europe, just outside of Bern.

The temple is located in a beautiful alpine setting at Zollikofen. Its tower pierces the sky at a height of 140 feet (43 m), with an angel Moroni figure added in 2005.

President McKay had evidently seen the temple in vision and described it in such detail to Church architect Edward O. Anderson that he was able to reproduce it on paper. As the design process proceeded, the initial drawing was modified. Upon seeing the latest drawings, President McKay said, “Brother Anderson, that is not the temple that you and I saw together.” The final drawings, needless to say, reflected President McKay's original description.



President David O. McKay (center) and other Church leaders at the dedication of the Bern Switzerland Temple in 1955.

NOTE

1. In “Latter-day Temples,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1972, 30.



IN THE WORDS OF THE PROPHETS

Tithing

My widowed mother supported her three young children on a schoolteacher's salary that was meager. When I became conscious that we went without some desirable things . . . , I asked my mother why she paid so much of her salary as tithing. I have never forgotten her explanation: "Dallin, there might be some people who can get along without paying tithing, but we can't. The Lord has chosen to take your father and leave me to raise you children. I cannot do that without the blessings of the Lord, and I obtain those blessings by paying an honest tithing. When I pay my tithing, I have the Lord's promise that he will bless us, and we must have those blessings if we are to get along."

Years later I read President

Joseph F. Smith's memory of a similar testimony and teaching by his widowed mother. In the April 1900 conference, President Smith shared this memory from his childhood:

"My mother was a widow, with a large family to provide for. One spring when we opened our potato pits she had her boys get a load of the best potatoes, and she took them to the tithing office; potatoes were scarce that season. I was a little boy at the time, and drove the team. When we drove up to the steps of the tithing office, ready to unload the potatoes, one of the clerks came out and said to my mother, 'Widow Smith, it's a shame that you should have to pay tithing.' . . . He chided my mother for paying her tithing, called her anything but wise or prudent; and

said there were others who were strong and able to work that were supported from the tithing office.

My mother turned upon him and said: 'William, you ought to be ashamed of yourself. Would you deny me a blessing? If I did not pay my tithing, I should expect the Lord to withhold His blessings from me. I pay my tithing, not only because it is a law of God, but because I expect a blessing by doing it. By keeping this and other laws, I expect to prosper and to be able to provide for my family'" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1900, 48).

Some people say, "I can't afford to pay tithing." Those who place their faith in the Lord's promises say, "I can't afford not to pay tithing."

From "Tithing," Ensign, May 1994, 33–34.



By Elder Dallin H. Oaks
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH OF MONEY BY CHRISTINA SMITH; PHOTOGRAPH OF POTATOES © GETTY IMAGES; PHOTOGRAPH OF COSTA RICAN MEMBERS BY MYRNA NELSON ROBERTSON

THE CHURCH IN COSTA RICA

With the Caribbean Sea on the east and the Pacific Ocean hugging it on the west, Costa Rica is a country where the gospel flourishes from sea to sea. Test your knowledge of Costa Rica with the following quiz.



Members and missionaries in Costa Rica in 1956.

- About how many Church members live in Costa Rica?
 - 3,800
 - 7,100
 - 25,000
 - 35,000
- When was the first Latter-day Saint sacrament meeting held in Costa Rica?
 - 1908
 - 1944
 - 1950
 - 1969
- What was the first mission to include Costa Rica?
 - Brazil
 - Mexico
 - Chile
 - Jamaica
- What countries border Costa Rica?
 - Nicaragua and Panama
 - Guatemala and Dominican Republic
 - Colombia and Panama
 - Brazil and Nicaragua
- How many temples are in Costa Rica?
 - 0
 - 1
 - 2
 - 3

Answers: 1. d; 2. b; 3. b; 4. a; 5. b