

Prophet, Church Leaders Counsel Youth at Fireside

By Stephanie Long, Church Magazines

Thousands of youth, their parents, and their leaders gathered at the Conference Center or watched by satellite Sunday, December 31, 2006, for a special New Year's Eve youth devotional that Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles called "remarkable. . . . There is not anything like this anywhere else in the world."

President Gordon B. Hinckley, Elder Holland, and Young Women general president Susan W. Tanner spoke during the devotional. Ten musical numbers were provided by the Orchestra at Temple Square and a choir made up of members of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and selected seminary students from across the Salt Lake Valley, along with special soloists Peter Breinholt, William Joseph, and Ryan Tani.

President Hinckley

President Hinckley counseled young people not to spoil the future before them. "Don't make the kinds of mistakes that will bring regret. You can be wise and happy or stupid and miserable. The choice is yours."

President Hinckley emphasized several principles as guidance to the youth for the future.

Be grateful. "My first suggestion to you, my dear young friends, is that you

walk with gratitude in your hearts. Be thankful for the wonderful blessings that are yours. Be grateful for the tremendous opportunities that you have. Be thankful to your parents who care so very much about you and who have worked so very hard to provide for you."

Be smart. "You need all the education you can get.

You should sacrifice anything that is needed to be sacrificed to qualify yourselves to do the work of the world. . . . Train your mind and your hands to become an influence for good as you go forward with your life."

Be clean. "Be clean in every way. Someday you will meet the man or woman of your dreams. Be clean for the sake of your future companion. Be clean for the sake of your posterity. Be clean for the sake of your self-respect."

Be prayerful. "None of us can do it alone. . . . Prayer will

change your life. It will bring you peace. It will give you direction and guidance. It will help you feel that you are not alone in this big and sometimes brutal world. The Lord answers our prayers. I know that."

Encouraging the youth to follow counsel, President Hinckley assured them that with such obedience would come blessings and happiness.

Elder Holland

Acknowledging that the most common illness that those in their teens and 20s experience is feelings of low self-esteem, self-doubt, and the like, Elder Holland spoke about his personal struggles with such problems and how to overcome them.

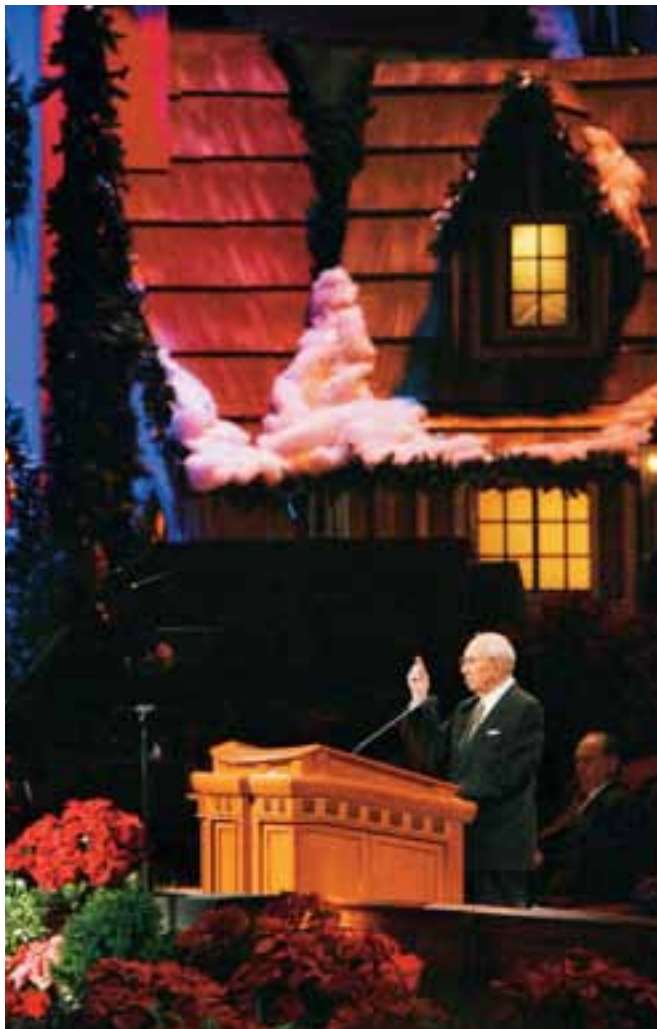
"Yes, I can remember all the things you remember—not being sure about how I looked or if I was accepted or what the future would hold for me."

Elder Holland said that with the new year one could gain a new confidence.

"I wish to speak pointedly tonight about how to have a very special kind of confidence in this new year, a confidence which when rightfully earned does wonders for every other aspect of our lives, especially our self-esteem and how we view the future."

Elder Holland said that positive feelings felt when one is personally worthy would bring such confidence.

Sharing a story of a young man who had borne his testimony about the importance of personal worthiness, Elder



President Gordon B. Hinckley speaks to Church teens during a special New Year's devotional.



Salt Lake Valley seminary students perform with members of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

Holland illustrated that in order to be personally worthy of the Holy Ghost we must garnish our thoughts unceasingly, as it states in Doctrine and Covenants 121:45–46: “Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven. The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth.”

Youth should not be so preoccupied with the troubles of the world that they become discouraged. If they think and act virtuously, then they will have confidence, Elder Holland said.

“Have a wonderful life. Think the best and hope the best and have faith in the future. You have a great life ahead of you. Your Heavenly Father loves you.”

Sister Tanner

Also speaking on the scripture in Doctrine and Covenants 121, Sister Tanner

pointed out: “Our thoughts are so important. Proverbs says that as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he (see Proverbs 23:7). The Book of Mormon says that we will be judged by our thoughts (see Alma 12:14). We are admonished in Doctrine and Covenants 121:45–46 to ‘let virtue garnish [our] thoughts unceasingly’ so that our confidence will ‘wax strong in the presence of God’ and ‘the Holy Ghost shall be [our] constant companion.’”

Sister Tanner said that virtuous thought would invite the companionship of the Holy Ghost, and one could find confidence and comfort in such a companionship.

Sharing a personal story, she spoke of a time when she was struggling with despair, yet found comfort in thinking positive thoughts.

“I concentrated on three things: Finals will be over in three weeks. I know my family loves me. And I know Heavenly Father loves me. . . . These thoughts elevated me enough to feel the comfort and guidance of the Holy Ghost through a difficult time.”

Everyone struggles with hard times, everyone needs to be rescued from time to time, but everyone has a loving Heavenly Father who is always there, Sister Tanner said.

Personally living by the motto “I can do hard things,” Sister Tanner encouraged all the youth to resolve to let virtue garnish their thoughts unceasingly, that their confidence may wax strong in the presence of God. ■

Temple Work Rolls On

Papeete Tahiti Temple

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles rededicated the Papeete Tahiti Temple in two sessions during November 2006. First dedicated in October 1983, the temple underwent a 15-month renovation to enlarge the baptismal font and sealing rooms and provide a youth center for children being sealed to their parents.

An estimated 10,000 Tahitians participated in the rededication, which was broadcast to local stake centers as well as to meeting places in Salt Lake City and New Caledonia and on the BYU–Hawaii campus.

Oquirrh Mountain Utah Temple

President Gordon B. Hinckley presided at a groundbreaking ceremony for the Oquirrh Mountain Utah Temple on December 16, 2006. In attendance were President Thomas S. Monson and President James E. Faust, counselors in the First Presidency; President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles; and other General Authorities. Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles conducted the service.

Plans for the Oquirrh Mountain Utah Temple include a 9-foot-tall statue of the angel Moroni that will sit atop a 193-foot, copper-clad



Oquirrh Mountain Utah Temple

spire. The temple will be located on an 11-acre site at the base of the Oquirrh Mountains on the west side of the Salt Lake Valley and will face the Wasatch Mountains to the east.

South Jordan, Utah, where the Jordan River and the Oquirrh Mountain temples are located, will be the first city in the world to have two temples. The new temple will be the 13th in Utah.

Quetzaltenango, Guatemala

During the groundbreaking ceremony for the Oquirrh Mountain Utah Temple, President Gordon B. Hinckley announced plans to build a temple in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala.

That temple, the second temple in Guatemala, will most likely serve stakes only in Guatemala. It will be one of the smaller temples



President Gordon B. Hinckley, right, the counselors in the First Presidency, members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and other Church leaders break ground for the Oquirrh Mountain Utah Temple.

introduced by President Hinckley during the October 1997 general conference.

Other Temples

Work continues on the Curitiba Brazil Temple, Draper Utah Temple, Panamá City Panamá Temple, Rexburg Idaho Temple, and

Twin Falls Idaho Temple.

Currently the Church has 135 temples announced, under construction, or operational.

For more information about temples across the globe, visit the Church's temples Web site (www.lds.org/temples). ■

Church Marks Anniversary of Wilford Woodruff's Birth

By Kate McNeil, Church Magazines

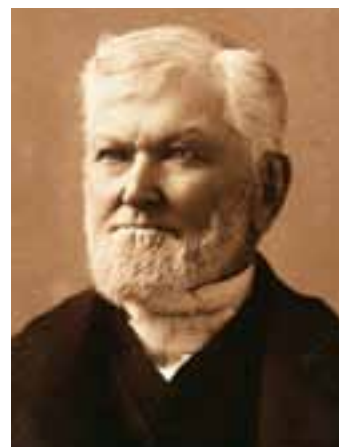
March 1, 2007, marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of Wilford Woodruff, the fourth President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Born on March 1, 1807, and raised in Farmington, Connecticut, Wilford Woodruff was a flour mill operator. He joined the Church in 1833 and served two missions before being ordained an Apostle in 1839.

As a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, he completed four additional missions; presided over the temple in St. George, Utah; and served six years as Church historian.

He was sustained as President of the Church on April 7, 1889. He dedicated the Manti Utah Temple and the long-awaited Salt Lake Temple, oversaw the organization of the Genealogical Society of Utah, and reemphasized the value of historical record keeping.

President Woodruff was a faithful pioneer, participating in Zion's Camp with the Prophet Joseph Smith. At age 40 he entered the Salt Lake



President Wilford Woodruff

Valley on July 24, 1847, and was present when Brigham Young proclaimed, "This is the right place."

"God Moves in a Mysterious Way" (*Hymns*, no. 285) was President Woodruff's favorite hymn. " 'He loved [that hymn],' remarked President Heber J. Grant [1856–1945], who served as an Apostle when Wilford Woodruff was President of the Church. 'We sang it, I am sure, sometimes twice a month in our weekly meetings in the Temple, and very seldom did a month pass by when that song was not called for by Brother Woodruff. He believed in this



President Woodruff dedicated the Salt Lake Temple in 1893 following its 40 years of construction.

work with all his heart and soul, and labored with all the power that God gave him for its advancement'” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff* [2004], xv).

President Woodruff is remembered for being an avid journal keeper. He kept a journal for most of his adult life, “making his final entry on August 31, 1898, two days before he died” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church*, 125).

In one meeting, he taught a principle that can be applied to journals as well as to official Church records: “While walking in a rapid stream we cannot tread twice in the same water. Neither can we spend twice the same time. When we pass out of that door, the work of this meeting will be closed to us forever. We shall never spend the time of this evening again. Then should we not keep a record

of our work, teachings, and counsel which we give in this meeting? We should” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church*, 127).

He encouraged children to start keeping journals early in their lives: “If my young friends will begin to do this and continue it, it will be of far more worth than gold to them in a future day,” he said (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church*, 132).

In 2006 members across the world learned of this prophet’s testimony from the manual *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff*. In the manual are many stories from President Woodruff’s life and ministry.

While searching for the truth as a young man, President Woodruff felt a need to see a modern-day prophet: “I prayed day and night that I might live to see a prophet. I would have gone a

thousand miles to have seen a prophet, or a man that could teach me the things that I read of in the Bible. I could not join any church, because I could not find any church at that time that advocated these principles” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church*, xix–xx).

President Woodruff taught the importance of modern revelation: “The Church of God could not live twenty-four hours without revelation” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church*, 47).

He also emphasized personal revelation through the Spirit: “You may have the administration of angels; you may see many miracles; . . . but I claim that the gift of the Holy Ghost is the greatest gift that can be bestowed

upon man” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church*, 49).

President Woodruff frequently exhorted his fellow Saints to partake of the blessings available in the temple. He said, “I consider that the building of temples is one of the important things required by the Lord of the Latter-day Saints in the dispensation of the fulness of times, that we may go into those temples and not only redeem the living but redeem our dead” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church*, xxix). With characteristic diligence, he set an example of temple work, ensuring that temple work be done for thousands of his ancestors.

President Woodruff died in San Francisco, California, on September 2, 1898, at age 91. ■



President Wilford Woodruff with his counselors in the 1893 First Presidency: George Q. Cannon, First Counselor, left, and Joseph F. Smith, Second Counselor.

Education Aids Gospel Understanding

By Kate McNeil, Church Magazines

When Stephen Abu Jr. went to high school in Abomosu, Ghana, he carried his books in a plastic shopping bag. As a college student in Utah, he enjoyed the benefits of a backpack. Whether he carried books in plastic or canvas, Stephen's goal remained the same—to get an education.

Stephen was the first of his 70 classmates at Abomosu Presbyterian Middle School to attend high school and the first to attend college. In 2004 he finished his business marketing degree at Utah State University in Logan, Utah.

After overcoming great odds to become a college graduate, Stephen is now giving back to his home country by rebuilding schoolhouses and improving education in Ghana.

“Education is key to understanding and accepting the gospel,” Stephen says.

A Father's Example

Influenced by his father, Stephen Abu Sr., Stephen was able to gain an education and accept the gospel. A principal of the Abomosu Presbyterian Middle School, Stephen's father always encouraged him to gain a full education. Stephen was the first of his five siblings to attend high school.

Stephen's father joined the Church after his brother introduced him to the gospel. He soon began spreading the

gospel in the Atiwa district of Ghana.

“Our white shirts and ties made us unique in the village, and many mothers encouraged their children to join the Church,” Stephen said. “The mothers liked our outward cleanliness and the standards that the members of the Church lived by.”

Neighbors would gather at the Abu home for family home evening. Brother Abu Sr. said many children did not fully understand what was being taught but loved to sing.

“Family home evening was new to us as a family and to our culture,” Stephen said. “Rarely do you find an African family sitting and eating together, let alone counseling together as a family. For my dad to organize a forum where each could share his or her feelings on the direction of the family was a sign of his humility.”

By the time the full-time missionaries arrived from Accra in 1984, Brother Abu Sr. had prepared 84 people for baptism. The Abu family has built a legacy of faith in Abomosu, Ghana.

True Liberty Found in the Temple

After serving a mission in Nigeria, Stephen began attending school at Utah State University in 2001.

“While I was flying into JFK [New York City's John F.



PHOTOGRAPH BY ADAM OLSON

Stephen Abu Jr., who overcame great odds to receive an education, is now helping others do the same.

Kennedy International Airport] on my way to Utah, the person I sat by tried to show me the Statue of Liberty,” he said. “Try as I did, I could not see it because the plane tilted whenever I stretched to peep through the window.

“When I arrived in Salt Lake City, my cousin drove me past the Salt Lake Temple, which I had seen only in Church magazines and videos. I felt so calm seeing the temple, and I thought, ‘This is the true statue of liberty,’ for if we enter the temple and keep the covenants we make with the Lord, we will have true liberty.”

While studying at Utah State University, Stephen attended the Logan LDS Institute. There he met his wife, Sonya. The two were sealed in the Logan Utah Temple on April 23, 2003, following Stephen's sealing to his parents.

Jesus, Others, You

Stephen now works as the director of humanitarian affairs for World Joy, Inc., a nonprofit organization in Utah dedicated to helping developing countries, specifically Ghana. Stephen believes improving literacy in villages will help his people accept the gospel, the greatest gift in his life.

“Many of our brothers and sisters who are illiterate find it difficult to fully grasp the mission of the Church,” he said. “Those who cannot read and write usually stay away from worship service when they are given a speaking or prayer assignment because they feel inadequate. This sometimes leads to their inactivity. Being educated will allow them to read and understand the scriptures and Church manuals. The gospel is the reason I have decided to go back and help my people.” ■

Scriptures in French, German, and Italian Now Available Online

By Stephanie Long, Church Magazines

An estimated 125,000 native French-, German-, and Italian-speaking members will now be able to study the scriptures in their native tongue by accessing the LDS scriptures online. On January 8, 2007, the official French, German, and Italian versions of the LDS scriptures were made available at <http://scriptures.lds.org>. Previously, the LDS scriptures have been available online only in English and Spanish.

The process to convert the traditional print edition of the scriptures into the Internet version takes about six months to complete, according to Ron Schwendiman, manager of the Internet Coordination Group for

the Church Curriculum Department. It depends upon the checks, reviews, and revisions that must be made to eliminate errors that may have occurred during the conversion process.

Several languages are in line to begin the process to be put in Internet form. “Portuguese will be coming soon, and others will follow,” said Kai Anderson, director of scriptures coordination.

Brother Schwendiman is hoping that in the near future more members will be able to access the LDS scriptures online in their native tongue. “Right now we are reviewing with the scriptures committee the order of the next languages and are hoping to release as

many as possible this year,” he said.

Just as with the Spanish Internet scriptures, the French, German, and Italian online scriptures include the triple combination (the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price), the Guide to the Scriptures (a listing of gospel topics with definitions and cross-references), and links to other study aids, such as

selections from the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible, a chronology of Church history, and photographs and maps related to biblical events and Church history.

To access the scriptures in English, French, German, Italian, or Spanish, go to <http://scriptures.lds.org>, and click on “English” in the top right corner. Then select the appropriate language from the menu. ■

New Era Publishes New Issue on Missionaries

In the October 2005 priesthood session of general conference, Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “The single most important thing you can do to prepare for a call to serve is to become a missionary long before you go on a mission.”

March’s 2007 issue of the *New Era* is focused on just that—helping youth prepare for missionary service.

Inside the magazine, readers will find features that focus specifically on missionary preparation, life, and work.

Featured articles include a message from President Gordon B. Hinckley that focuses on the blessings serving a mission can bring, a message from President Thomas S. Monson that examines “The Five Ms of Missionary Work,” advice from Elder M. Russell Ballard on how youth can prepare now to serve a mission, and a view into the life of missionaries at



the MTC and in the field.

Members may find many different uses for the magazine. It might be used in conjunction with *Preach My Gospel* to aid in the teaching of a missionary preparation class. A quiz game could be made using information found in the magazine to help youth learn more about missionary preparation. Or a role-playing game could be designed around the topic “A Day in the Life of a Missionary.” ■



The LDS edition of the scriptures is now online in French, German, Italian, and Spanish, as well as English.

Young Women in Africa Serve Prisoners

By Stephanie Long, Church Magazines

Gathered together in a bush camp in Africa without modern conveniences such as running water, 160 young women worked together to give more than 200 people they had never met something those people didn't have.

Inspired by their camp theme, "Let us all arise and shine forth that our light may be a standard to the nation" (see D&C 115:5), the young women of the Harare Zimbabwe Stake decided to share their light with the women of the Chikurubi Women's Prison by putting together hygiene kits for them.

"The theme for the camp . . . made the young women decide that they would like the light to be felt in the prison," said Margaret Ignatius, Harare Zimbabwe Stake Young Women president. "When people are locked up, they are isolated from the world. So the young women wanted them to know and feel their love."

Just as the young women had hoped, the residents of the prison were very happy and grateful. "They have never received such gifts," Sister Ignatius said, "and they wanted to know more about the Church and the Book of Mormon."

Although the young women could not go to the facility to personally deliver the kits, Sister Ignatius had

the opportunity to take the kits to the women, an experience she is grateful for.

"I felt the Spirit of the Lord, and I was humbled to see the women who were in prison singing and praising the Lord," Sister Ignatius said. "They had gratitude even in the difficult situation they were in, which made me reflect and be thankful for the blessings I have."

In addition to the service performed at the prison, the young women and their leaders hope to continue serving the community, as they often do in homes and hospitals.

"It was a very good and uplifting experience; we wish for more opportunities to do it," Sister Ignatius said. ■

Comment

An Inspiring Rescue

Thank you for the article in the December *Ensign* about the 1856 rescue of the handcart companies. The article was well researched, finely written, and highly inspiring. The authors clearly put a significant amount of time and effort into writing this captivating story. I am grateful to them for this wonderful article.

Jeff Ehlers, Utah

Getting Back on Track

Your article "Getting Back on Track" in the January issue

was of great interest to me. Wayne Sidwell, whose family returned to the Church because of loving Primary teachers, was my parents' home teacher. My parents had also been "derailed from the gospel by a series of choices," but because of Brother Sidwell's efforts in visiting them monthly over the course of many years, they too were eventually set "back on the strait and



narrow track." Since then, my parents have served as temple workers and have served a mission. Brother Sidwell magnified his calling and became an instrument in the Lord's hands. My brothers and I will be eternally grateful to him.

Debby Croshaw, Idaho

Feeling United

When I received the November *Ensign* with the general conference talks, I read it right through and am now rereading one talk each morning. I would like to say how much I enjoy the pictures in this issue—the families, the children, the priesthood session attendees. I was just looking at the picture on page 118 of the sisters in St. Petersburg

gathered for the Relief Society general meeting and had such a feeling of worldwide sisterhood. Thank you for the work you do in making us feel united wherever we live.

Carol Dunkley, Australia

Answers and Peace

The past few days I have been touched by the Spirit as I have read and pondered from the Church magazines. The words of "The Temple Is about Families" (Nov. 2006), given at the last general conference, and "What I Have Learned about Mighty Prayer" (Dec. 2006) spoke to my heart and gave me answers and peace I have been seeking. More important, they taught me once again that Heavenly Father and the Savior are aware of me, understand my struggles, and are prepared to help me if I will ask.

Sue Hirse, Utah

The Name Is Caspar

On page 44 of the December *Ensign* you show a map tracing the route of the handcart pioneers. (This same map is also found in the July 2006 issue on pages 42 and 44.) Each map spells Fort Caspar as "Fort Casper." This is incorrect, as the fort was named for Caspar Collins. His name was misspelled when the city in Wyoming was named for him. Additional information about how the spelling of the city and fort came to be different can be found on the official Fort Caspar Web site: www.fortcasparwyoming.com/Fortbuil.asp.

Beth Anderson, Wyoming