

PUT ON A PIONEER PLAY? WAY OUT *HERE*?

Hitch up the ox and wagon. Bermuda is waiting!

By David Dickson

Church Magazines

The stunningly beautiful island of Bermuda is only about 21 square miles (54 km) in total area. It's also one of the most isolated inhabited islands you can find—the nearest land mass is over 600 miles (966 km) away. I was one of six full-time missionaries in Bermuda, four elders and one senior missionary couple, serving in the single branch on the island when we decided to try something a bit unusual.

We were going to put on a play! And not just any play.

I can't remember exactly how the idea first came up to produce a play about Mormon pioneers for the general community, but once the idea was out there in the open, we all felt a spiritual confirmation that it was worth pursuing.

The other missionaries and I had never written a play before. But why let that stop us? With the help of the branch, we came up with a simple storyline based on Church history. The play included early Church hymns, such as "Come, Come, Ye Saints" (*Hymns*, no. 30).

We built simple sets and cobbled together costumes from various sources. The branch members and missionaries made up the small cast.

All along I kept wondering how many people would actually attend a play about Mormon pioneers who had lived half a world away from this scenic island.

Still, we pressed on, both with our regular missionary work and in our free time by memorizing lines and practicing hymns.

In time, we were ready. Our branch president placed an advertisement for the date of the free-to-attend production in the newspaper.

Showtime! As you might have guessed, the room was not exactly packed to standing-room-only status (there might've been 60 people). Still, we were happy with the turnout and enjoyed spending an evening honoring and celebrating the faith and courage of the early Saints.

And then the following Sunday rolled around. A woman we didn't recognize sat down with the congregation.

We hurried over to introduce ourselves.

This sister turned out to be a member of the Church who hadn't attended in years. She was new to the area, so her records were not with the branch. After seeing the newspaper ad, she decided to watch the performance. From that Sunday on she attended regularly and became a big blessing to the branch.

I'm sure plenty of other good came out of this pioneer play effort, but for me it's also a reminder of how important is the "one" (see Luke 15:4). Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught, "Brothers and sisters, never, never underestimate how precious is the *one*."¹

It well may be that the entire reason we were inspired to put on this play was to reach this one sister. On an island already so full of beauty, isn't that a beautiful thought? **NE**

NOTE

1. M. Russell Ballard, "The Atonement and the Value of One Soul," *Ensign*, May 2004, 87.

