

TRUTH WILL

*Should I serve a mission?
The answer I received was
rock solid.*

By Oliver Mayall

I grew up in an active Latter-day Saint family in England, the eighth of 10 children. Our faithful parents taught us the gospel and set good examples. But at about age 14, I began to find it difficult to attend early-morning seminary, go to various classes and firesides, and attend youth activities. Most of my friends were not members of the Church and had very different standards from the ones I was raised with.

I began to make bad decisions because I wanted so much to be like my friends and have the so-called fun they were having. By the time I was 15, I was completely inactive in the Church. As I became older, my

life grew even more worldly.

At the same time, however, I began to feel something deep down in my soul. Questions about the purpose of life and the destiny of man started to fill my mind. The world I once knew and thought I loved had become a very dark, cold, and lonely place. My soul was not fully satisfied with what the world had to offer. I had a feeling that I should be somewhere other than my hometown, a feeling that I was meant to do something else with my life.

After many weeks of these feelings and thoughts, I decided to pray and ask for help, the first time I had prayed in a long while. I decided to wait until night, when everyone was asleep. After my prayer, I thought and listened, but there was nothing. I continued in this way for weeks until it hit me: perhaps God would not answer me straight away simply

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because I had been raised in the gospel and unfortunately I had never seriously appreciated it.

One evening I changed my method. Instead of demanding an answer and expecting the Lord to give it straight away, I promised the Lord that if He would answer, I would serve Him as a missionary. For the first time, I prayed to know if the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith, and the Church teachings were true. I felt something so powerful yet so peaceful that it caused me to weep.

I went to my bishop, who happened to be my eldest brother, and

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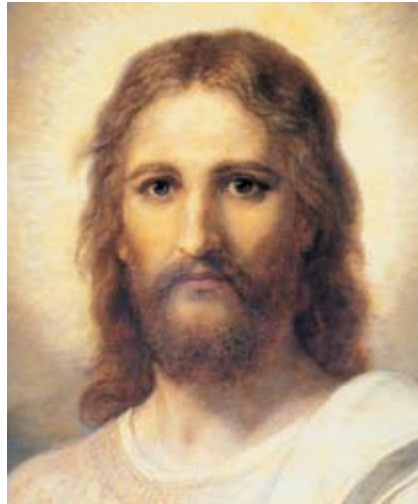
ILLUSTRATION BY BRIAN CALL

asked to serve a mission. I was nervous, but I knew that because the Lord had kept His end of the deal, I had to keep mine. Tears streamed down my bishop's face as I related my experience.

Then I began dating Kelly, a friend who was not a member of the Church. I related to her my plans to serve a mission. Kelly saw that I had changed and wondered why. This led to Kelly's having the missionary lessons and joining the Church, and I had the opportunity to baptize and confirm her. At this point I wondered if that missionary effort had fulfilled my service to the Lord. I wrestled with having to go, and I was determined to pray to find out if leaving Kelly and serving a mission was the right thing to do.

I chose a place in the hills on the moors called Saddleworth Dovestones, where I would not be disturbed. I took my lunch, scriptures, and my journal and headed out, climbing to the top to offer the desires of my heart to my Father in Heaven. As I prayed, I listened very carefully for an answer, maybe a peaceful feeling or a burning in my bosom, but I felt nothing.

As I walked back, I noticed a series of rocks on the ground carefully placed to spell out the words "Truth Will Prevail." "Curious," I thought, but nothing more. However, when I told my mother, she said simply, "That's your answer."



Only later would I understand what that early missionary understood: the Lord may choose the weak things of this world to preach His gospel, but truth will prevail and will prosper.

You see, when the Latter-day Saint missionaries first came to England in 1837, they began their labors in Preston. At that time the city was in the midst of a grand celebration of Queen Victoria's reign. As the missionaries alighted from their coach, they saw a banner overhead proclaiming in bold gilt letters "Truth Will Prevail."

It became a widely-used phrase in the Church and appeared in various publications. One elder, reporting on his mission to Indiana, wrote in a letter published in Nauvoo's *Times and Seasons* in 1841: "Although the Lord has chosen the weak things of

this world to preach his gospel, truth will prevail, and will prosper."¹

Trusting the Lord, I turned in my mission papers. On my 21st birthday, along with my birthday post, came my call to serve in the England London South Mission. Due to my years of inactivity, I still felt weak and inadequate. Only later would I understand what that early missionary understood: the Lord may choose the weak things of this world to preach His gospel, but truth *will* prevail and *will* prosper.

I went in faith to the temple to be endowed. When I came out of the temple, I met two missionaries who had served in my home ward. As we talked, I described my experience out on the moors. One of the elders smiled broadly and explained that on a particular preparation day, he and his companion had hiked up on the moors and at a certain point felt impressed to place some rocks across the hillside spelling out the familiar phrase "Truth Will Prevail."

Tears streamed down our faces as we realized what had happened. Those familiar with the area know there are miles and miles of trails amongst the moors. Yet I happened to choose the very spot where the missionaries had placed those rocks. I knew there and then that the Lord had answered my prayer in the hills that day. **NE**

NOTE

1. Jacob Gates, *Times and Seasons*, Dec. 1, 1841, 621.