

if we were present, for "behold, Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing" (Mormon 8:35).

Little wonder that Joseph Smith, in his last witnessing words from Carthage Jail the night before he was slain, bore "powerful testimony to the guards of the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon, the restoration of the Gospel, the administration of angels" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 383; see also Alma 9:21, 12:29, 19:34).

Without the prophets, the scriptures, how else would we really know about what "God had appointed . . . unto man . . . the plan of redemption"? (Alma 12:28, 30).

When searched, the scriptural truths of the unfolding plan of salvation are both electrifying and subduing. Gratefully pondered, they lead to lyrical expressions, such as in the 1842 litany by the Prophet Joseph Smith: "And again, what do we hear? Glad tidings from Cumorah! Moroni, an angel from heaven, declaring the fulfillment of the prophets — the book to be revealed. A voice of the Lord in the wilderness . . . declaring the three witnesses to bear record of the book! The voice of Michael on the banks of the Susquehanna! . . . The voice of Peter, James, and John in the wilderness . . . declaring themselves as possessing the keys of the kingdom, and of the dispensation of the fulness of times!" (D&C 128:20).

A crescendo of revelations to precede Christ's coming

Future revelations, brothers and sisters, will include astounding events as well as great and important truths. So much so, that Moses' and Israel's exulting song after safely crossing the

Red Sea (see Exodus 15) and the Prophet Joseph's 1842 litany will gladly give way to the crescendo of glorious events associated with Christ's coming in majesty and power.

The valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman will ring again — this time with the sounds of dispensational reunion, as it glows with gathering! (See Daniel 7:13–14; D&C 107:53–57, 116:1.) Those of Enoch's utterly unique city of "one heart" will greet those of the New Zion with holy embraces and holy kisses amid the sounds of sweet sobbing! (See Moses 7:62–63.) The "hills shall tremble" at the presence of the lost tribes, and hearts, as well as ice, will melt, as they come "filled with songs of everlasting joy" (see D&C 133:26–33).

And it will all occur at the direction of the "Redeemer of Israel, our only delight." Hence, "as children of Zion, good tidings for us, . . . the hour of redemption is near" (*Hymns*, 1985, no. 6).

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

We have just heard from Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Council of Twelve Apostles.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Redeemer of Israel," following which we shall hear from Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, who was sustained yesterday as a new member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The choir and congregation sang "Redeemer of Israel."

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin spoke without further announcement.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin

Pledge of commitment

My beloved brethren and sisters, in all humility and gratitude I ask for

your prayers and your faith in this great and humbling and sacred assignment that has been given me. To our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and to Presi-

dent Ezra Taft Benson, our prophet, seer, and revelator, I pledge that I will do my best, that I will do all I can to build up the kingdom of God here upon the earth.

As I left President Benson's office Friday, I was in deep shock — and I still am. I suppose that will linger for many years, but I will put forth my best effort in whatever assignment is given me.

Tributes to family and associates

I pay tribute to my beloved earthly father, who taught me humility, diligence, honesty, trustworthiness, a love of the Constitution of our beloved country, and reverence and honor for God's chosen servants, especially our prophet.

To my mother, who saw a glimpse of eternity several nights prior to her passing, I pay tribute also — first for life itself, and then for the great lessons she taught me. She would never permit a shoddy performance, and she made sure that we children didn't take too long accomplishing our tasks.

I also pay tribute to my beloved wife, Elisa. She is similar, I'm sure, to Rebecca of old. If she had been one of our pioneers, perhaps even coming from New York with a handcart, she probably would have been one of the first to arrive. She has never put as much as a feather in the way of my Church service, and she has reared our children in truth and righteousness.

To our eight children, seven wonderful daughters and one noble son — and he got along very well with his sisters — I pay tribute to them. Each has had his or her marriage sealed in the temple.

To my associates through the years, I pay tribute. They have all lifted me up and made me a better servant. Their names are too numerous to mention, but I honor them and pray that the Lord will always bless them.

I've loved every assignment I've ever had in the kingdom. And in that service, every day seemed like Sunday,

because it was in the service of the Lord.

Progress of the Church in Europe

I would like to report briefly on our experience in Europe. I thank the First Presidency that Sister Wirthlin and I have had the opportunity to preside in the Europe Area of the Church. These past two years have been thrilling and have been filled with tremendous experiences that we will never forget. The following expression from a devoted Church member living in Eastern Europe vividly demonstrates what I mean:

"If you could only see the faith and enthusiasm of our members here. Believe me, our religion is the only thing left for us, and we dearly love it."

Whether we live in Eastern Europe or not, this truth, like a towering mountain, stands out. Our religion is really the only thing we will have left ultimately, and we must love it dearly.

This eternal truth was demonstrated many times during our two-year sojourn in the Europe Area. This area stretches from the far north of Finland, Sweden, and Norway to the southernmost tip of Africa and includes about 230,000 members of the Church. I would like to share a few of the experiences that have kept our faith burning brightly.

Conversion of Asencão Frango

In Portugal, in the city of Funchal, on the Madeira Island, lived a lady named Asencão Frango who had been a nun for twenty years. As a matter of fact, she was a Mother Superior at a home for poor children and orphans. Toward the end of a four-year teaching assignment early in her life as a nun, doctors discovered a cancer in her throat. Her mother had died of this same disease. Although she knew that her deteriorating health might lead to certain death, she had a strong feeling that she had not finished her work on earth. She prayed with great faith for the restoration of her health and was

healed, with no further problems or need for medical care.

When her church decided to close the children's home where she was assigned, she maintained it herself for four years, using an inheritance she had received from her deceased parents, until the children living there were raised and on their own or were adopted.

Hearing of a new religion, she attended her first meeting of our church with a friend, out of curiosity. It was held on the dirt floor of a member's garage, but the spirit of the meeting impressed her. The elders began teaching her the discussions and challenged her to be baptized. She declined, saying that she already had been baptized. The elders persisted by inviting her to read the Book of Mormon. The elders told her, "If this book is the true word of God, then Joseph Smith is a true prophet and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is true. If so, you need to be baptized into God's true church."

She read the Book of Mormon and gained a strong testimony of its divinity. Later, she stopped the missionaries after a discussion of the Godhead and requested baptism. Just one year afterward, she stood on the doorstep of President Reuben P. Ficklin's mission home in Lisbon. She obtained her temple recommend and could hardly wait to enter the Swiss Temple to pledge sacred covenants with her Heavenly Father.

Stockholm Temple inspires Lutheran bishop

In Sweden, Bishop Krister Stendahl of the Lutheran church visited the Stockholm Temple a few days prior to its dedication. He had this inspiring description of his experience, as published in a prominent Swedish newspaper:

"Imagine that a new, gleaming white temple with slender pinnacles and towers has been erected to the glory of God. Not a church, not a chapel, but

a temple for sacred ordinances, performed quietly and in solemn dignity.

"A temple where the innermost room is named 'the celestial.' A temple where the faithful perform vicarious work according to Paul's statement on baptism for the dead (1 Corinthians 15:29).

"All in consequence of the wisdom and calling of Joseph Smith. . . .

"What shall we think and say about this? To pretend that it does not concern us that the Mormons — The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints — have built a temple in our midst would be conceited or condescending.

"Therefore I will rejoice with them over this temple that they have erected with much sacrifice to the glory of God. To experience their joy and pride over the beauty of the temple warms one's heart in a special way" (*Svenska Kyrkans Tidning*, 11 July 1985, p. 1).

Freiberg DDR Temple is fulfillment of a prophetic prayer

President Thomas S. Monson has given me permission to share with you his impressions when he rededicated the German Democratic Republic for the advancement of the work of the Church:

"At 7:30 A.M. [April 27, 1975, we traveled to] the location which had been selected for the special prayer which I felt prompted to offer in this land. . . . We walked through the woods . . . into a clearing overlooking the Elbe River, with Meissen on the right and Dresden on the left, Meissen being the birthplace of Karl G. Maeser, the founder of Brigham Young University. . . . During the prayer, I said, 'Today marks the dawning of a new beginning for this beautiful land.' As I used these words, we heard the unmistakable sound of a rooster crowing, followed by the pealing of a cathedral bell in the distance. The day had been overcast, but during the prayer the sun shone brilliantly upon us, warming our bodies and giv-

ing us the assurance that our Heavenly Father was pleased with the prayer which was being offered. . . . As we returned to our automobiles, the sun disappeared from the sky and the overcast condition which previously existed once again prevailed" (personal journal of Thomas S. Monson).

In his prayer of rededication, President Monson said, "Heavenly Father, wilt Thou open up the way that the faithful may be accorded the privilege of going to Thy holy temple, there to receive their holy endowments and to be sealed as families for time and all eternity" (journal of Thomas S. Monson).

This prayer was offered on Sunday, April 27, 1975, at a time when any thought of a temple was beyond the realm of possibility. It was fulfilled on June 29, 1985, with the dedication of the beautiful temple in Freiberg, GDR.

Temple-building in Europe Area is a modern miracle

As you know, temples are now or soon will be within the reach of many members in the Europe Area, from the Stockholm Sweden Temple in the north to the Johannesburg South Africa Temple to the south, with the London and Swiss temples in between. Many lands in the Europe Area are becoming the lands of temples. The Frankfurt Temple, located in a suburb named Friedrichsdorf, which was an early settlement of the Huguenots, is nearing completion. The building of these temples in the Europe Area is a modern-day miracle. Temple work is proceeding at an accelerating pace.

Church growing rapidly in Ghana

We traveled to Ghana in West Africa. There the Church is growing rapidly and is on very solid footing. We traveled along the beautiful coast to a chapel that recently had been completed. After holding a meeting there, we traveled through the village of Cape Coast with President and Sister Ernest J. Miller.

As the sun was setting, we saw a large crowd of villagers. Young, old, and middle-aged all were pulling on a huge net and drawing it out of the water. We stopped and inquired about what they were doing. They were pulling in the fish caught that day. In the net were large and small fish of many kinds. Each villager put his hands to the net to help bring in the catch. The thought ran through my mind of the gathering of Israel in the last days as referred to in Jeremiah. The Lord said, "I will send for many fishers, . . . and they shall fish them" (Jeremiah 16:16).

Pull in the gospel net

That, brethren and sisters, is the mission of all of us as members of the Church: to put our hands on the net and pull in thousands of fine men and women who are searching for the truth. With this kind of effort, the Europe Area has pulled in these nets of converts, with a thirty-three percent increase in the number of convert baptisms in two years.

Understand and live the gospel

As I reflected upon our experiences in Europe, these thoughts impressed me. The gospel of Jesus Christ is more enduring than fame, more precious than riches, more to be desired than happiness. Understanding and living the gospel leads to the possession of a Christlike character. The aim of each of us is to live a great and exemplary life. A noble character is needed especially in this age when evil is rampant. I should like to caution our youth to live the gospel, develop strong character, and not indulge in those things that deviate from righteousness.

Our Heavenly Father has endowed us with hearts of courage and faith, with strong wills, and with the ability to understand and to see clearly the difference between right and wrong. He has mercifully clothed us, each member, with the gift of the Holy Ghost, which gives us insight and personal power.

And so, even though the tasks of life become heavy, and although sorrow thrusts a drooping burden upon us, the light that emanates from our Savior beckons us on, undismayed. A righteous self-discipline can and will rule our lives.

In closing, brothers and sisters, I want to say that this is the way we tried to represent the Church in Europe. I testify that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, that President Ezra Taft Benson is our prophet, seer, and revelator, and that he bears the keys of the kingdom. I love this church with all my heart and

will do my best to serve, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

I was so overcome by Brother Wirthlin's testimony that I forgot that I was conducting.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, a new member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now address us.

Elder L. Tom Perry

Elder Wirthlin, I too add my welcome to a most unique body of men. You'll find men with dark hair and grey hair, some even with wider parts than others. And their personalities are just as varied as their hairstyles. That's the great blessing of belonging to the Council of the Twelve. For out of these divergent personalities comes a sweet unity under the inspiration of the Lord. It's most unique. Welcome, welcome, Brother Joseph.

Teach children the joy of honest labor

In Proverbs we read, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (22:6).

One of the great challenges of life for parents from the very beginning has been succeeding in the very important task of rearing children. This great responsibility seems destined to bring the greatest joys and some of the greatest sorrows life has in store for us here in mortality.

Every child, of course, is different, and what works for one may not elicit the correct response from another. However, I believe that second only to ensuring that every child receives an understanding of the gospel

of our Lord and Savior is teaching them the joy of honest labor.

I was taught this by goodly parents. How grateful I am for a father who had the patience to teach me how to work. I remember as a lad, when I was only seven years old, we were remodeling our house and tearing out some of the walls. In those days two-by-sixes were used as studding. To the studs was nailed the lath, and over the lath came the plaster. When tearing out walls, the slats and the plaster were easy to knock off, but, of course, that left the nails in the two-by-sixes.

Lessons learned while stacking wood and straightening nails

Each night after the workers had finished, I had the responsibility of gathering up the two-by-sixes and taking them out to the back lawn, where there stood two sawhorses. There I was to make a pile of the two-by-sixes and then, one at a time, put them on the sawhorses, and with a crowbar remove the nails. After the nails had been pulled out of the studs, I was told to straighten them. Finally, I threw the straightened nails into a large green bucket and stacked the two-by-sixes in a neat pile.