

If you have even a small desire for a greater witness, please do the works of righteousness, trust in the Lord, pray and anxiously explore the Book of Mormon. I testify that it is the word of God. This iron rod marks the path that will guide your soul to your hour of conver-

sion. I rejoice with you in that glorious event. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "God Is Love."

Elder Harold G. Hillam

A shoeshine man in Lisbon

Some years ago, while I was serving as the mission president in Portugal, several of our missionaries introduced me to their shoeshine man. Their shoes looked so good that I was anxious to meet the man that could put such a shine on missionaries' shoes. Even though he had not chosen to listen to the missionaries' message, I considered the shoeshine man my friend, and we visited while he was busy shining my shoes. He indicated that his wife had died, that he had no family, and that about the only pleasure he had in life was seeing people walk away happy with the shoes he had just shined.

His place of business was on the curbside of a small square on a busy street in downtown Lisbon. His stand seemed to have all that was necessary. It consisted of a short, rusty, three-legged stool, upon which my frail friend would sit as he shined the shoes that were placed on a stained and well-used shoeshine box that was full of his polishes and brushes, and there was an ornate lamppost (which was kindly furnished by the city of Lisbon), upon which the customer would lean while he was having his shoes shined.

He would carefully apply two coats of polish, using a brush to polish between each coat. Last, he applied a special product that would give the shoes that extra special shine. With a final snap of the cloth, he would stand up, take off his little Portuguese cap, make a deep bow, and say, "*Pronto. Seus sapatos foram engrashados pelo o melhor engraxate do mundo.*" "There. Your

shoes were shined by the very best shoeshine man in the world." I was convinced that I had had my shoes shined by the very best.

A few months after our mission, I was called to serve as the Regional Representative to Portugal and had the opportunity to return to Lisbon a number of times. As occasion permitted, I would have my shoes shined by the "best shoeshine man in the world."

The last few times that I went, I was unable to find him at his usual place of business. I finally inquired at the prestigious stores that surrounded the square. The response was the same, "We don't know what happened to him. It seems that we had heard that he had died." I remember thinking, Could it be that the best shoeshine man in the world had died, and no one really knew or even seemed to care? I wondered: Had there been someone there with him, or did he slip away unnoticed?

Brother and Sister Joaquim Aires

May we contrast that for a moment with Brother and Sister Joaquim Aires, a marvelous man and his wife who came to Portugal following the 1974 revolution of Portugal's colonies in Angola and Mozambique. They had returned to Portugal unknown and with very few possessions. A great blessing occurred in their lives. They opened their door to two young missionaries, who taught them of the restoration of Christ's church. They received the missionaries, accepted their message, and were baptized.

As is the opportunity for all worthy men in the Church, he received the priesthood—authority to act in the name of our Father in Heaven—and to become a leader in the Church. Brother Aires became President Aires, president of one of the mission districts.

One day I received a telephone call. President Aires was in the hospital in Coimbra, several hours' travel away. He had suffered a very serious cerebral hemorrhage and was in very critical condition. Another priesthood holder and I made the trip as quickly as possible. As we walked quietly into the hospital room, we found him asleep. My first inclination was not to awaken him. And then I thought he would want to know that we had come. So I reached over and carefully touched his hand. He slowly opened his eyes and then looked at me for a moment, and then the tears came to both of our eyes. He then said in a very weak and soft voice, "I knew you would come. I knew you would come. Would you please give me a blessing." In his dear, sweet faith, he was asking for a priesthood blessing, the same that is taught of and recorded in the Bible. We read in James 5:14-15:

"Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

"And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up."

As men of the priesthood, it was our privilege to pronounce a blessing on him with power and authority of our Father in Heaven.

As I would meet with the members of the Church from one end of Portugal to the other, the brothers and sisters would ask, "How is Brother Aires? Will you please tell him we love him and we're praying for him?"

This good man and his wife, who had returned to Portugal almost unknown, now, because of their membership in the Church, had literally thousands who loved them and were

concerned about them and remembered him in their prayers.

The prayers of faith were answered. He recovered completely, and he and Sister Aires went on to fulfill a full-time mission together.

I have thought often of the contrast between the two—my little shoeshine man on one hand, who, like so many of life's unknown wanderers, had slipped away without any understanding of life's purpose; and Brother Aires on the other, who was not only taught of life's real purpose, but had now become a part of a great body of people who showed their love and appreciation for him.

No more strangers and foreigners

As the Apostle Paul wrote to the members of the Church, or Saints as they were called and are called today, he reminded the newly baptized members of the Church of the blessings of belonging when he told them, "Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19). What a blessing it is to belong and to be wanted and needed! It becomes even more apparent during life's tender moments.

To all who find yourselves outside the household of faith and away from the Saints, would you please accept this invitation to come unto Christ that we might all, as Alma said, "bear one another's burdens" (Mosiah 18:8). Join with the Saints, that you might not be any longer strangers alone in this world, but truly cared for, loved, and appreciated.

And to all of us—those of us who are members of the Church, could I just counsel with you for a moment? Do you have anyone that you know who might be as our little shoeshine man, who is alone—alone in this great crowd of people—that could use your special love and caring and concern? Could you take a moment and let such people know how much you love them?

And may we also, as members of the Church, truly do our part to make His church a welcome refuge for all of our Father in Heaven's children, I pray humbly in the name of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

We have just listened to Elders Robert K. Dellenbach and Harold G. Hillam of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Now Let Us Rejoice." Elders Helvécio Martins and Lynn A. Mickelsen, who were also sustained as members of the Seventy at April conference, will then speak to us.

The choir and congregation sang "Now Let Us Rejoice."

Elder Helvécio Martins

Testimonies influenced conversion

Brothers and sisters, it all began one beautiful night during April of 1972 when Elders Thomas McIntire and Steve Richards knocked on my door. At that time, I was searching for answers to many questions that confused and troubled my spirit. The principles taught that night contained the answers my wife and I had searched for so anxiously.

Our hearts rejoiced upon hearing the message of the restored gospel. But one special thing deeply affected our souls: the power of the testimonies of two representatives of the Lord. A marvelous feeling that we never before had experienced filled our hearts, certifying the truthfulness of the message. Our first visit to church was an edifying experience because of the Spirit there and the love those people showed us. The spirit of the messages and testimonies was confirmatory evidence that we had found the true church. The support of the missionaries, the successful fellowshiping efforts by the members, and our combined prayers and fasting gradually changed our worldly habits.

With respect and reverence, we attended the meetings and activities, but we postponed baptism because of the fear of negative reactions from our extended families.

The events following showed us our complete lack of wisdom, and of this we repented. The district of Rio de

Janeiro met in the Tijuca chapel for its quarterly conference. A strong spirit filled the hall from the first chords of the organ prelude.

The inspired messages from the pulpit prepared our hearts for an unforgettable moment. President George A. Oakes of the Brazil North Mission, who presided at the conference, introduced Brother Val Carter, his mission counselor.

After quoting selected scriptures, President Carter invited the men to stand and sing "I Need Thee Every Hour." After sharing his testimony of the mission of our Lord, Jesus Christ, President Carter declared his complete dependence on Christ for salvation and exaltation.

That experience deeply touched my heart and all my being. It was not possible to control my emotions. I could not imagine myself in tears, but the tears were indeed real. In that moment, the Holy Ghost reconfirmed the truthfulness of the things we already knew: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was the Lord's kingdom on earth, the road back to the celestial mansion of our Eternal Father.

A miracle occurred in that moment, and our fears about baptism vanished. On July 2, 1972, my wife and I and our eldest son, Marcus, entered the fold through the gates of baptism.

Through our obedience to the laws of the gospel, fasting, and service, our