

washed everything, cleaned their little dugout as thoroughly as she could, and quietly waited to die.

Not long thereafter the sound of a wagon brought Drusilla to her feet. It was their neighbor Reuben Allred. He said he had a feeling they were out of food, so on his way into town he'd had a sack of grain ground into meal for them.

Shortly thereafter Alexander Williams arrived with two bushels of meal on his shoulder. He told Drusilla that he'd been extremely busy but the Spirit had whispered to him that "Brother Hendricks' family is suffering, so I dropped everything and came [running]."17

May God, who has blessed all of us so mercifully and many of us so abundantly, bless us with one thing more. May He bless us to hear the often silent cries of the sorrowing and the afflicted, the downtrodden, the disadvantaged, the poor. Indeed may He bless us to hear the whispering of the Holy Spirit when any neighbor anywhere "is suffering," and to "drop everything and come running." I pray in the name of the captain of the poor, even the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. See 1 Kings 17:1-24.
2. See Mark 12:41-44.
3. 1 Timothy 1:5.

4. See Doctrine and Covenants 58:11.
5. Alma 32:3-4; italics added.
6. See Alma 34:14, 17-27.
7. Alma 34:28.
8. Mosiah 4:2.
9. Mosiah 4:21, 16, 19, 26.
10. 4 Nephi 1:2-3.
11. Moses 7:18.
12. Doctrine and Covenants 82:19.
13. Jacob 2:19.
14. See Mosiah 4:27.
15. Alma 1:30.
16. *Times and Seasons*, 15 Mar. 1842, 732.
17. Drusilla Dorris Hendricks, "Historical Sketch of James Hendricks and Drusilla Dorris Hendricks," Historical Department, Archives Division, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, typescript, 19-23.

President Monson

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has just addressed us.

The choir will now sing "Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee," after which Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles will be our concluding speaker at this session.

The choir sang "Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee."

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin

Faith of the pioneers

My beloved brothers and sisters and friends, it's a great privilege for me to stand at this pulpit and welcome into the ranks of the General Authorities these new Brethren. We've come together in this historic Tabernacle and across the world "to speak one with another con-

cerning the welfare of [our] souls"¹ and to "feast upon the words of Christ."²

I speak to you today of the faith of our pioneer forefathers. We can attribute much of the remarkable progress of the Church and of this state of Utah to their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We stand in awe of their resolve and tenacity in holding fast to their convic-

tions despite the obstacles they had to overcome.

Faith in the Savior

The first principle of the gospel is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the foundation principle of the gospel and the basis of all righteousness. The Prophet Joseph Smith said that "faith is the assurance . . . of the existence of things . . . not seen."³ The scriptures define faith as "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."⁴

We delight in our faith in our Savior today. We testify to the world that "the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do."⁵ As members of the Lord's Church and as faithful advocates of His restored gospel, we declare soberly that God lives, that Jesus is indeed the Christ, the Savior and Redeemer of the world. Tomorrow is Easter, a day to ponder the mission of Jesus Christ, the First-born Son of our Heavenly Father. The Atonement, including the Resurrection of the Savior, provides immortality and the possibility of eternal life for all of our Father's children. How grateful we should be for these blessings.

Faith in the prophets

We declare gladly to all who have "ears to hear"⁶ that the Lord, "knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth, called upon [His] servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and spake unto him from heaven, and gave him commandments"⁷ to restore the fullness of the gospel that the Saints of earlier days had.

We testify "from the top of the mountains"⁸ that President Gordon B. Hinckley is God's prophet on earth today. Because of our faith in our prophet, Latter-day Saints echo the words of the Apostle Peter: "We have therefore a

more sure knowledge of the word of prophecy, to which word of prophecy ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light which shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts."⁹ The light of divine revelation shines forth from a living prophet to brighten a darkened world.

Restoration and growth of the Church

From the beginning of the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ in America, religious freedom has allowed the Church to flourish. Roots sunk deep into the rich soil of obedience and sacrifice have borne good fruit. Generations of faithful members have forged a firm foundation. From this base of strength "shall the gospel roll forth unto the ends of the earth, as the stone which is cut out of the mountain without hands shall roll forth, until it has filled the whole earth."¹⁰ President Joseph F. Smith, who came across the plains as a boy and who knew much of adversity in his life, declared his testimony as follows:

"The kingdom of God is here to grow, to spread abroad, to take root in the earth, and to abide where the Lord has planted it by His own power and by His own word, in the earth, never more to be destroyed or to cease, but to continue until the purposes of the Almighty shall be accomplished, every whit that has been spoken of by the mouths of the holy prophets since the world began."¹¹

President Hinckley noted that "the church is growing in a marvelous and wonderful way. It is spreading over the Earth in a miraculous manner." He explained that one of the reasons for this growth is that "we have a demanding religion. We have great expectations concerning our people. We have standards that we expect them to live by, and that is one of the things that attracts people to this church: It stands as an anchor in a world of shifting values."¹²

Pioneers' faith built the foundation

The exciting global growth of the Church has focused our attention on the prophesied glorious future of the kingdom. At the same time that we look ahead with optimism, we should pause and look back on the faith of our humble pioneer forefathers. Their faith built the foundation on which the Church continues to flourish.

During February of this year, citizens in Nauvoo and communities across Iowa commemorated the 150th anniversary of the exodus of the Saints. In 1846 more than 10,000 left the thriving city that had been built on the banks of the Mississippi River. With faith in prophetic leaders, those early Church members left their "City Beautiful" and struck off into the wilderness of the American frontier. They did not know exactly where they were going, precisely how many miles lay ahead, how long the journey would take, or what the future held in store for them. But they *did know* they were led by the Lord and His servants. Their faith sustained them. They hoped "for things which [were] not seen, which are true."¹³ Like Nephi of old, they were "led by the Spirit, not knowing beforehand the things which [they] should do."¹⁴

Fearing more of the mob violence that had claimed the lives of the Prophet Joseph and his brother Hyrum on June 27, 1844, Brigham Young, leading the Church as President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, announced in September 1845 that the Saints would leave Nauvoo in the spring of 1846. Most of those in Nauvoo believed fully that when Brigham Young announced that they must leave, they were hearing what the Lord wanted them to do. They responded in faith to the direction of the Lord. Throughout the fall and winter months of 1845-46, Church members set about vigorously making preparations for the journey.

Faith of Lydia Knight

When Newel Knight informed his wife, Lydia, that the Saints would have to leave Nauvoo and move yet again, she responded with tenacious faith, saying, "Well, there's nothing to discuss. Our place is with the Kingdom of God. Let us at once set about making preparations to leave."¹⁵ Brother Knight had moved his family several times already as many of the Saints had moved from New York to Ohio to Missouri and to Illinois. Lydia Knight's devoted submission to what she knew was God's will typifies powerfully the faith of those heroic early Saints. With their faith in mind, the words of a familiar hymn take on added meaning:

Faith of our fathers, living still,
In spite of dungeon, fire, and sword;
Oh, how our hearts beat high with
joy
Whene'er we hear that glorious word.
Faith of our fathers, holy faith,
We will be true to thee till death!¹⁶

Faith amid trials

Though winter's chill was not yet past, heightened fears of mob attacks and swirling rumors of government intervention compelled President Young to set things in motion to get the Saints under way. He directed the first company of pioneer families to leave Nauvoo on February 4, 1846, a cold winter day. They drove their laden wagons and their livestock down Parley Street—a street that became known as the "Street of Tears"—to a landing where they were ferried across the river to Iowa. Chunks of ice floating in the river crunched against the sides of the flatboats and barges that carried the wagons across the Mississippi. A few weeks later, temperatures dropped even further and wagons could cross the river more easily over a bridge of ice.

Sister Wirthlin and I visited Nauvoo in early March this year. The weather was

bitterly cold. As we stood in the chilling wind, looking out across the broad expanse of the Mississippi, we felt a deeper sense of appreciation and gratitude for those Saints as they left their beloved city. We wondered how they ever survived. What a sacrifice to leave behind so much for the uncertain future that lay ahead! No wonder so many tears were shed as the fleeing pioneers drove their wagons rumbling down Parley Street to cross the river with no hope of ever returning to their "City Beautiful."

Once across the river, they camped temporarily at Sugar Creek before starting their trek west toward the Rocky Mountains. The journey, which historian H. H. Bancroft described as a migration without "parallel in the world's history,"¹⁷ had begun.

When President Brigham Young joined the departing pioneers at their campsite in Iowa on February 15, 1846, the Lord revealed to him to begin organizing a modern "Camp of Israel." On the first of March the advance company began its push westward across Iowa. Hardships caused by cold, snow, rain, mud, sickness, hunger, and death challenged the faith of these hardy pioneers. But they were determined to follow their leaders and to do, no matter the cost, what they believed fervently to be the will of God. Their faith was challenged, and for some it faltered in especially difficult times. But it did not fail them. Many were sustained by the assurances they had received in temple ordinances performed in the Nauvoo Temple.

Pioneer mothers' selfless sacrifice

One of the more difficult hardships endured by many of the sisters was delivering their babies under harsh, extreme conditions along the trail. Eliza R. Snow wrote that as the pioneers "journeyed onward, mothers gave birth to offspring under almost every variety of

circumstances imaginable, except those to which they had been accustomed; some in tents, others in wagons—in rainstorms and in snowstorms." Sister Snow went on to record in her journal that she "heard of one birth which occurred under the rude shelter of a hut, the sides of which were formed of blankets fastened to poles stuck in the ground, with a bark roof through which the rain was dripping. Kind sisters stood holding dishes to catch the water . . . , thus protecting the [little one] and its mother from a showerbath [on its entrance to] the stage of human life."¹⁸

What a sacrifice these good sisters made! Some mothers lost their own lives in childbirth. Many babies did not survive. My wife's grandmother, Elizabeth Riter, was born at Winter Quarters in the back of a covered wagon during a rainstorm. Fortunately both the mother and the newborn infant survived. With great love for the woman who gave life to her, Elizabeth often lovingly recounted how an umbrella was held over her mother throughout the ordeal to shield her from the water leaking through the wagon's cover.

Let us never forget the faith of our fathers and the selfless sacrifice of our mothers, those pioneering Saints who set such an inspiring example of obedience. Let us remember them as we strive to be valiant servants in our work to "invite all to come unto Christ"¹⁹ and "be perfected in him."²⁰

Service repays debt of gratitude

Some 44 years ago my father spoke from this pulpit and explained how an appreciation of our heritage can strengthen and enliven our service in the kingdom. Referring to his own pioneer grandparents, he said:

"Because of the faith of these forefathers of mine, I am here, living in [these] peaceful valleys, in the shadows of great

mountains, and above all, within hearing of the voice of latter-day prophets.

"So, I owe to them . . . a debt of gratitude, . . . a debt that can best be paid in service to this great cause."²¹

Now as we see the kingdom expand throughout the world, an ever smaller percentage of Church members live in the valleys of Utah, in the shadows of our beautiful mountains. But today modern communication technology allows Saints throughout the world to be "within hearing of the voice of latter-day prophets."

As it was with my father, so it is for all of us. We who have been blessed to know the fulness of the restored gospel owe a debt of gratitude to those who have gone before us, who have given so much to build the kingdom into the worldwide miracle that it is today. Our debt of gratitude to our forebears is a "debt that can best be paid in service to this great cause."

Serve courageously and faithfully

No matter who we are—no matter our talents, abilities, financial resources, education, or experience—we all can serve in the kingdom. He who calls us will qualify us for the work if we will serve with humility, prayer, diligence, and faith. Perhaps we feel inadequate. Maybe we doubt ourselves, thinking that what we have to offer the Lord personally is too slight to even be noticed. The Lord is well aware of our mortality. He knows our weaknesses. He understands the challenges of our everyday lives. He has great empathy for the temptations of earthly appetites and passions. The Apostle Paul wrote in his epistle to the Hebrews that the Savior is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" because He "was in all points tempted like as we are."²²

President Thomas S. Monson taught the importance of being willing to serve in this great cause when he asked:

"Are we sufficiently in tune with the Spirit that when the Lord calls, we can hear, as did Samuel, and declare, 'Here am I'? Do we have the fortitude and the faith, whatever our callings, to serve with unflinching courage and unshakable resolve? When we do, the Lord can work His mighty miracles through us."²³

President James E. Faust has reassured us that whatever our abilities, faithful service not only is acceptable to the Lord, but also qualifies us for great blessings bestowed by Him, blessings that enrich and expand our lives. President Faust explained that "this church does not necessarily attract great people but more often makes ordinary people great. . . . A major reason this church has grown from its humble beginnings to its current strength is the faithfulness and devotion of millions of humble and devoted [members] who have only five loaves and two small fishes to offer in the service of the Master. They have largely surrendered their own interests and in so doing have found 'the peace of God, which passeth all understanding.'"²⁴

Be dedicated to the Lord's work

With the Lord to strengthen us, "we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things."²⁵ He encourages us to "be not weary in well-doing, for [we] are laying the foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that which is great."²⁶ May we be faithful in fulfilling the duties of whatever calling we have in the kingdom. Let us pay heed to the "small things" that make all the difference. Let us be faithful in keeping the commandments as we have made sacred covenants to do. As our heritage and our growth clearly show, we are indeed "laying the foundation of a great work."

Let us dedicate ourselves to doing the Lord's work to the best of our abilities. May we honor the faith of our fathers by giving our own faithful service

to this great cause. May we "follow the prophet"²⁷ and by so doing "come unto Christ, and partake of the goodness of God,"²⁸ I pray humbly in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. Moroni 6:5.
2. 2 Nephi 32:3.
3. *Lectures on Faith* (1985), 1.
4. Hebrews 11:1.
5. 2 Nephi 32:3.
6. Matthew 11:15.
7. Doctrine and Covenants 1:17.
8. Isaiah 42:11.
9. Joseph Smith Translation, 2 Peter 1:19; cf. King James Version, 2 Peter 1:19.
10. Doctrine and Covenants 65:2.
11. In Conference Report, Apr. 1902, 2.
12. Quoted in *Deseret News*, 26 Feb. 1996, A2.
13. Alma 32:21.
14. 1 Nephi 4:6.
15. Quoted in *Church News*, 10 Feb. 1996, 3.
16. "Faith of Our Fathers," *Hymns*, no. 84.
17. Herbert Howe Bancroft, *History of Utah* (1889), 217.
18. Quoted in B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church*, 3:45.
19. Doctrine and Covenants 20:59.
20. Moroni 10:32.
21. Joseph L. Wirthlin, *A Heritage of Faith*, comp. Richard Bitner Wirthlin (1964), 47.
22. Hebrews 4:15-16.
23. In Conference Report, Oct. 1992; 66-67; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 48; see 1 Samuel 3:4.
24. In Conference Report, Apr. 1994, 4-5; or *Ensign*, May 1994, 5-6.
25. Articles of Faith 1:13.

26. Doctrine and Covenants 64:33.

27. "Follow the Prophet," *Children's Songbook*, 110-11.

28. Jacob 1:7.

President Monson

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has been our concluding speaker.

We remind the brethren of the general priesthood meeting which will convene in the Tabernacle this evening at 6:00 P.M. mountain standard time.

We call your attention to the need to move your clocks ahead one hour before retiring tonight because of the change to daylight saving time. The nationwide CBS Tabernacle Choir broadcast tomorrow morning will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. mountain daylight time. Those desiring to attend the broadcast and the Sunday morning session which immediately follows must be in their seats no later than 9:15 A.M.

We express gratitude to the splendid Ricks College combined choir. My, how we have been blessed by their beautiful music as we have listened to them this afternoon.

The choir will now sing in closing "Our Father, by Whose Name," and following the singing the benediction will be offered by Elder Marlin K. Jensen of the Seventy.

The choir sang "Our Father, by Whose Name."

The benediction was offered by Elder Marlin K. Jensen.
