

# United Kingdom and Ireland

## That They May Always Have His Spirit to Be with Them

By Elder Manfred Schütze

**D**uring the week before the Easter holidays two gentlemen rang our doorbell and offered the following invitation: “We would like to celebrate the Lord’s Supper with you on Easter Sunday.” This triggered a short discussion, in the course of which I explained that in our church we hold a sacrament service each Sunday, and it is our most important religious service in any given week. We partake of the sacrament for at least two vital reasons, i.e., to remember our covenants and to receive with every sacrament prayer the renewed promise to “always have his Spirit to be with them”.<sup>1</sup>

I invited the gentlemen to our church, but they were of a very different opinion and soon departed. However, their visit left me pondering for quite some time about the importance of sacrament meeting and the sacrament.

Instantaneously I recalled Doctrine and Covenants 59:9, including the striking injunction that on Sunday we are to offer up our sacraments in the house

of prayer in order to more fully keep ourselves unspotted from the world. I wondered if the latter was ever more needed than in our day. Considering this importance, we cannot carelessly miss a sacrament meeting just because:

- We may be on vacation and don’t attend, although a unit is close by.
- We travelled long distances on Saturday, or had a major celebration, and therefore believe we are unable to go.
- We feel the need to sleep in on Sunday and think there are more Sundays to come in the future.

In Hebrews we read: “[Let us not forsake] the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but [exhort] one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”<sup>2</sup> Additionally, we should arrive on time for sacrament meeting to avoid missing the sacrament ordinance.

Could it be the challenges we have with our children, or our

own doubts, which may stem from not feeling His Spirit with us in sufficient measure, which results from not attending sacrament meeting regularly and on time?

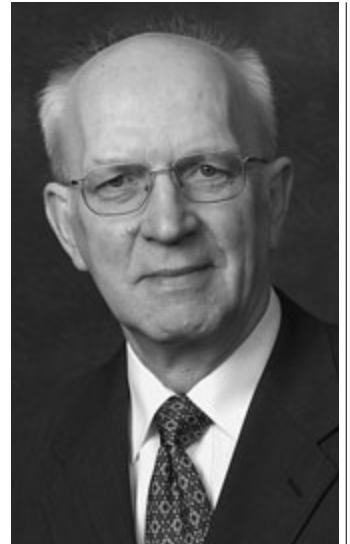
Remember, among all our Church services, sacrament meeting is the only one we can

enjoy together as an entire family. What an opportunity!

I personally need the assurance received through the sacrament to “have his Spirit to be with them” so that I can cope with the challenges of the coming week. We need this assurance, otherwise we would grow weak in our callings. We can be led in our decisions and protected from physical dangers, but most importantly, from bad influences around us.

I also need the subsequent instruction given by inspired speakers. It is not a light responsibility to help the audience feel the Spirit. By attending and focusing attention on the proceedings I sustain the speakers and feel the Spirit.

We are instructed to be a



**Elder Manfred Schütze**

light unto the world and to be saviours of men.<sup>3</sup> To this end we need fully charged spiritual batteries. Sacrament meeting is a charging station readily available to us. By partaking of the sacrament we receive the indispensable promise to be spiritually led.

A few months ago the young women of our branch, within their Personal Progress program, offered the members a great service project: “Bring your dirty bike in the morning, and pick it up clean at night!” How could I resist? The Aaronic Priesthood holders supported the young women by making small repairs. The light on my bike did not work, and I had not taken the time to fix it. That evening I learned the repair had taken only a few minutes, and it had simply needed proper adjustment. Now I was well prepared for darkness.

How often is it only a matter of adjustment!

If we need to change something let us do so in order to receive more light and to be prepared.<sup>4</sup>

I love the Lord’s promise: “Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”<sup>5</sup>

In this I trust, and you can do likewise! ■

#### NOTES

1. Doctrine and Covenants 20:77.
2. Hebrews 10:25.
3. See Doctrine and Covenants 103:9.
4. See Doctrine and Covenants 50:24.
5. John 6:54.

## Callings Come and Callings Go —The Covenants Hold the Key!

By **Melanie Holmes**

**E**lder Kenneth Johnson was sustained as a member of the Second Quorum of the Seventy in 1990, and three years later was called to the First Quorum of the Seventy. He received emeritus status in October general conference of 2010. His wife, Pamela, served devotedly alongside him over his 20 years of service as a General Authority.

The closeness and unity of Elder and Sister Kenneth Johnson is so apparent. I felt the conversation I was having with them was with one heart and one mind. It was something truly special! They spoke with gentle humour and reverence for each other as they recalled some of their history and experiences.

During our initial conversation, I asked Elder Johnson if there were any topics he would like me to cover in the interview. He immediately spoke of the support and love of his wife, Pamela, and the sacrifices she made over the years. He said that “the sisters make the biggest sacrifice . . . you couldn’t serve in the way you are required to without a wonderful woman beside you!”

Sister Johnson overcame fears of travel, particularly flying, in order to accompany her

husband overseas. She describes herself as a “bit of a homing bird”. Sister Johnson was sometimes given specific assignments to fulfil, which often required total dependence on the Spirit of the Lord.

One such occasion arose in Finland when Sister Johnson was asked by President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) to lead a meeting with a large number of sisters in his wife’s stead, as Sister Hinckley was unable to travel with her husband due to health challenges which meant she could not fly. With only minutes to prepare and the aid of an interpreter and the Holy Spirit, Sister Johnson, with the support of the regional representative’s and mission president’s wives, successfully addressed the sisters for over 90 minutes. She recalls, “We all communicated by heart . . . and felt that wonderful loving sisterhood. They were all praying that they could hear me, and I was praying that they could understand me. The Spirit did it!” She described feeling a great sense of unity despite the language barrier and their differences. “The room was full to overflowing, and regardless of their circumstances—whether married, single, divorced or

widowed—we were all sisters!”

While recalling the humbling day of his call, Elder Johnson shared that he and Sister Johnson had thought they were invited to meet with President Hinckley at general conference to report on the progress following activities in the UK celebrating the 150th anniversary of the first LDS missionaries arriving in the British Isles. It wasn't until the call came from President Hinckley that Elder Johnson realized that the reason for the meeting was of far greater significance to them.

“The thought that went through my mind was that when I was baptised I made a covenant to serve the Lord,” he said. “There was no way I was going to say no, because I had already said yes!”

Sister Johnson said of her reaction to Elder Johnson's call, “He had always served in priesthood leadership, so I knew that he loved the Lord and the Lord would use him as He wanted to. I was more concerned about my family at home (in Norwich, UK). Kevin was single, and it would be hard leaving my parents, but anyhow it all worked out!”

Elder Johnson spoke with a profound reverence and respect for the Brethren and all that he learned through his experiences with them. “When you hear the Brethren talk at conference you may think that is their level of

understanding, but they know much, much more that is unspoken,” he explained. “When you are with the Brethren you just learn so much. The penny doesn't drop immediately—it's line upon line and precept upon precept.”

He spoke fondly of conversations with President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. He met him walking across the ground floor of the Church Office Building shortly after his call to the Seventy.

“[President Packer] asked me if I had been interviewed. I said, ‘Yes. Where do I go, what do I do . . .?’ and I incoherently started to say things, but President Packer stopped me and said, ‘Remember this. This much (holding up his thumb and forefinger with a small gap between) comes from down here (pointing downward) and the rest will come from up there’ (pointing to the heavens), and he walked away. President Packer has had a really big influence on my life.”

Those wise words, coupled with the love and support of his dear wife, Pamela, kept Elder Johnson steady in those moments and from then on in his duties. That afternoon while walking down the corridor of the hotel, Elder Johnson started to come back down to earth and “suddenly it dawned on



*Elder and Sister Johnson*

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF ELDER JOHNSON

me!” he said, out of concern for the impact the call would have on his business and family. His concerns were short-lived, as Sister Johnson took his hand and lovingly said, “Darling, as long as we're together, that's all that matters!” He was comforted and worried no more.

One of Elder Johnson's assignments was as Vice-Chairman of the Nauvoo Restoration, which was rich with extraordinary experiences and blessings.

As Assistant Executive Director of the Curriculum Department, Elder Johnson was responsible for watching over the development of future priesthood and Relief Society manuals. This included five years working with Elder Condie, Elder Kikuchi and others. As the gospel spreads across the world, these manuals are being prepared for more and more culturally diverse nations and people who have

never heard of family home evening or other basic Latter-day Saint practices that we in the UK often take for granted. It was clearly an exciting assignment.

Elder Johnson sets a great example and shares some wise counsel on how to best learn and serve as instruments in the Lord's hands. He shares that "you learn from the Brethren that it takes a special attitude to learn spiritual things! We need to allow the Spirit to be the real teacher and not be a distraction. For this to happen we need to pray, listen and feel for the prompting of the Spirit and have a prayer in our hearts that the Spirit will open the eyes of our understanding when we receive the words of the prophet and apostles." He then went on to say, "Callings come and callings go, and these are wonderful experiences, but the covenants hold the key. Every calling is under the covenant. Our discipleship is not defined by the callings we receive or the positions in which we serve. Our discipleship is confirmed by our allegiance to the covenants."

Elder and Sister Johnson are now living in Cambridge near their son Kevin, who is bishop of the Cambridge Ward, and his family. They are happy to be home serving the Lord back in the UK once more. ■

## You Can If You Really Want To

By Mark Leighton

**R**aymond Leighton has been member of the Church for over 50 years. He joined in 1959 while living in Stourbridge, West Midlands, which is in the Birmingham England Stake now.

When he joined he didn't realise that Stourbridge had just been opened to the missionaries and that he was the only member there. He attended the branch in Kidderminster, where his future wife attended.

Within two years he was the branch president of Kidderminster Branch. When he was released eight years later he was called the same day as president of the Stourbridge Branch. The first meetings were held in a large flat that Ray and his wife, Betty, rented in Stourbridge. Now there

***Ray Leighton, still serving and growing more than 50 years after joining the Church.***

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK LEIGHTON



were enough members there to form a branch.

Since that time he has worked ceaselessly in the Church, holding many callings.

Ray is 74 years old now. All his life he has wanted to write, but every time he tried to enrol in a writers' club it interfered with Church calls. That has changed.

Just before he retired he was given an old computer, something he knew nothing about. This opened up a new world and rekindled his desire to write.

He wrote several feature stories for a local newspaper. He entered a short story writing competition and won it three years running. He produced a monthly ward magazine, 16 pages long, covering much more than ward news. Countless general interest stories appeared, and a regular "this and that" section that covered ward activity and day-to-day goings on. He did it for almost nine years and produced 100 copies. His next project was to produce a booklet entitled *Common Computer Problems and How to Fix It*. A book of poetry followed.

Finally, his greatest challenge—to write a novel!

Despite continuous illness and disability and many hospital admissions, he has recently completed two novels, both requiring significant research, much of it online.

*Desperate Mothers* is an historical fiction novel based on fact and set in Victorian times. *The Afterlife Debriefing* is a fantasy novel. His 52 years of Church activity influenced the story line, but it is a heart-warming story more than a religious piece.

Ray recently spoke at the Sunday morning session of stake conference, giving a talk entitled "Reflections of an Old Codger."

Ray considers himself to be just a plain ordinary man, but he is convinced that the gospel has changed the course of his life and his life has been "a life less ordinary." ■

## One Mature Missionary Making a Difference

By Franz Sidney

Christmas is a time of celebration and joy for most of us. Even in the present uncertain economic situation, people spent money on gifts and a nice meal and enjoyed their holidays. However, Ntombizonke Letuma, a South African woman in her sixties, spent a completely different Christmas in a different continent. Instead of having a lovely meal in her comfortable home in England, she had started serving a mission in Africa to help the street children there.

Sister Letuma grew up in poverty in Newcastle, South Africa, and lost her father very early. Her mother worked as a domestic servant in town in order to provide a decent education for her children. As she studied and then worked as a community nurse, the situation around her was dramatic—but things have gotten even worse now. A third of South Africans don't have enough food to eat, and South Africa has the largest HIV-positive population in the world.

Some 2.5 million children are orphans, and half of them lost their parents to AIDS. Many are infected from birth and won't reach the age of 30.

These children are on the streets with no food or shelter, and in such conditions are often the victims of abuse and exploitation. Many websites show the heart-breaking situation of these little ones. Thankfully, many charities are working to help them, but more help is needed.

When Sister Letuma left her country to come to England, she was longing to return soon and do her part to help these children. In 1993, she joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and through it she learned good principles of provident living, how to live a healthy lifestyle, be fit, keep a garden and help others.

On 4 December 2011, Sister Letuma flew to South Africa to start a humanitarian mission among the children in need. But she won't be arriving empty-handed. Members of the Norwich England Stake heard her talking about the hardships of South Africans, and as a result, many of these generous people have already donated 66 boxes of necessary items. Sister Letuma spent several weeks sending those boxes to her home address and she is now going to be working from the other side, starting up a home for the children and helping as much as she can. She will not only

give items to the needy, but also teach basic skills that will help children lift themselves out of the poverty cycle.

We know that for some of these little ones, Christmas was a little bit happier this year because of Sister Letuma's efforts. Perhaps some readers would like to help these children; in this case please do so by asking Sister Letuma directly in an email through [zonkletuma@gmail.com](mailto:zonkletuma@gmail.com). It would be a wonderful way to "lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven" by giving to those who desperately need a helping hand. ■

## WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY

# Helston Ward Helps with Disaster Aid

By Eric Bray

Members of the Helston Ward in the Plymouth England Stake are called upon by ShelterBox at various times—sometimes at very short notice—to pack boxes ready for dispatching to countries where there have been floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, etc. The latest one was for the earthquake in Turkey, where Church volunteers packed 200 boxes in one evening.

ShelterBox provides emergency shelter and lifesaving supplies for families around the world who are affected by disasters, at the time when they need it the most. It was founded in 2000 by Tom Henderson OBE, a Rotarian and former Royal Navy search and rescue diver. He observed that aid response to most

disasters was in the form of food and medicine to help people survive the immediate aftermath, but little or no assistance was given in terms of proper shelter to help them through the first few months as they tried to rebuild their lives. ShelterBox was launched to fill that need. The contents of each box vary depending on the location and nature of the disaster, but each box typically contains a tent and lifesaving supplies offering families shelter, warmth and dignity. Since it started, ShelterBox has helped over 110,000 families in need in more than 75 countries.

Members of the ward are also involved in helping with the training of the ShelterBox response teams who go with the boxes to aid those in need.



The training involves members acting as refugees on an old air field on the Lizard peninsular, in Cornwall, creating situations that the team would encounter in real-life situations.

The members are always happy and willing to get involved and drop other commitments at short notice to help their brothers and sisters throughout the world. ■

**Members of Helston Ward after another response to packing boxes of emergency supplies.**

PHOTOGRAPH BY EIDER EVANS

# Cardiff Helping Hands Join Hands with Steiner Group

By Avril Verrall

**D**uring September 2011, members of the Cardiff Central Ward of the Cardiff Wales Stake provided voluntary Helping Hands service to the Cardiff Steiner Early Years Centre.

The project involved cleaning, redecorating and preparing the St Anne's former primary school building in Roath, Cardiff, to serve as a new home for the Steiner Kindergarten.

The Cardiff Steiner Early Years Centre is a local independent charitable organisation, and part of the worldwide Steiner educational movement, which believes in the importance of children firstly learning to play, socialise and listen. The movement is founded on the work of the Austrian philosopher and educationalist Rudolf Steiner, who wished to create a form of education which would help pupils achieve "clarity of thought, sensitivity of feeling and strength of will". The Steiner philosophy is not religious, but recognises that children have spiritual as well as educational needs that should be respected and nurtured. Children from all faiths and backgrounds are equally welcome and valued.

Under the direction of Ruth Bates, who is a member of the

Cardiff Stake public affairs team (and whose daughter Millie attends the kindergarten part time), a total of 18 ward members and missionaries joined with Steiner parents, Trustees, and other friends of the organisation in the ongoing voluntary efforts to transform the building. The Helping Hands team participated in four weekly 2- to 3-hour volunteer work sessions, which included cleaning, removing thousands of staple gun staples from classroom walls and noticeboards, sanding and preparing walls and woodwork, painting, and cleaning up again afterward.

The Steiner Trustees were consistently very impressed with the group's willingness to help,

and their standard and speed of work. They also got to know the Church better as they worked together on the project; including learning the proper name of the Church, about the Word of Wisdom (after offering to make the Helping Hands volunteers tea or coffee!), the missionary programme, and that "Mormons" can be lots of other things. In particular it was quite a surprise to them, during one evening work session, to discover that the young woman who had been cleaning out the kitchen sink was an astrophysicist!

At the end of the Helping Hands team's last session, the Steiner's administrator Miranda Knight thanked the Helping Hands team and said, "We would not have made it without your help." (They were to have their first "open day" in the new building the following day.)

*Members of the Cardiff Central Ward helped prepare a community nursery for an open day.*



PHOTOGRAPH BY KATY HOUMAN

All of the members and missionaries who got involved in the project had fun and found the experience very rewarding.

It was a real pleasure for them to give service and to work alongside members of other faiths and worthy organisations

who make a difference for good in the world, to share common ground and promote mutual support and understanding. ■

## LOCAL NEWS

# New Chapel to Be the First Church Building in Historic Village

By William George Dunbar

**T**he stirring strains of “The Spirit of God Like a Fire is Burning” from the voices of more than 150 members and friends filled the air in the village of Mintlaw, Aberdeenshire, Scotland, on the evening of Friday, 9 September 2011, at the ground-breaking of their new building. Some thought this day would never come, since the land was purchased in 1984. Following many disappointing false starts, at last in 2010 First Presidency approval was given and final planning permission was obtained. Then, after prolonged consultation with the local authority and the building agent, the date was set for the work to begin.

The 27-year wait for the construction of the building was finally over.

Many had fasted and prayed for a beautiful evening, and the day dawned damp and overcast and remained so until, as if by a miracle, 25 minutes before the scheduled time of 7:00 p.m. for the ground-breaking service, the skies rapidly cleared and the sun shone from horizon to horizon. It remained bright and sunny until sunset.

The stake president, Adam Hull, presided, with the Buchan Ward bishop, Alistair Smith, conducting. Also in attendance was President Kenneth Coull, first counsellor in the stake presidency; Brian Adam, a member of the Church who serves as one of the local Members of the Scottish

Parliament; and several local council members.

The first speaker was Susan Gall, ward Relief Society president, who recounted the work of the sisters in the ward since it was organised in 1980. Next to speak was David Bruce, a member of the contracting company which was to build the chapel. He suggested we pray for an open winter to allow them to reach their projected finishing date in May 2012.

Bishop Smith declared, “This is a unique situation in the northeast, where the first church in the town of Mintlaw will be The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. There can be few places in the UK where this is the case. What an opportunity for missionary work we have among the population of over 3,000 people in this historic village established in pre-Victorian times!”

The final speaker was President Hull, who added words of encouragement to the local members and friends to extend the hand of friendship and love to all within the town and surrounding countryside.

Following the end of the service more than 100 members and friends assembled for refreshments in nearby Mintlaw Academy, the present meeting place of the ward. ■



PHOTOGRAPH BY HENRY J. TOBIN

**Former Bishops Peden and Skene with Bishop Smith.**

## EDITOR'S NOTE

To submit stories as Word files and photographs as jpg files for all sections, please use the email address [ukiensign@ldschurch.org](mailto:ukiensign@ldschurch.org). ■