

United Kingdom and Ireland

Maintaining Balance in Our Lives

By Elder Hans T. Boom

Area Seventy from the Netherlands

In our busy lives we sometimes forget to pause and think about where we stand and where we want to go. Some find it increasingly difficult to maintain balance in their lives.

We live in a world where many feel burdened with great pressures and don't see the light at the end of the tunnel. But we also live in a glorious time, a time about which much has been prophesied.

The Lord has given the members of His Church all the advice they need to fulfil their earthly missions. There is protection in the covenants we have made with our Heavenly Father. Living up to our baptismal, priesthood, and temple covenants will give us the strength and safety we need.

At times the events of life can seem overwhelming, such as when we experience illness or the loss of a loved one. Rearing children can also create stress. Even not being able to have children can lead to anxiety or depression, as can unemployment or under-employment, or trying to juggle the responsibilities in our personal and family

life with those of a Church calling or duty. Our challenges sometimes cause us to forget who we are and why we came to this earth. We are sons and daughters of God, and we did not come here to fail.

We should not forget King Benjamin's advice. He counselled his people not to go to extremes, not even in doing good: "See that all these things are done in wisdom and order; for it is not requisite that a man should run faster than he has strength."¹ He also admonished us to be diligent.

The callings we get in the Church give us an opportunity to serve and make progress. They protect us. As we accept callings and are set apart, we receive this blessing:

"The setting apart may be taken literally; it is a setting apart from sin, apart from the carnal, apart from everything which is crude, low, vicious, cheap or vulgar; *set apart* from the world to a higher plane of thought and activity. The blessing is conditional upon faithful performance."²

In those moments when I have felt that life was becoming a bit too much, I have tried to follow the counsel of Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004): "When you're exhausted, there is also the inexhaustible gospel. You will never plumb its

depths or measure all of its metes and measures. So as you feast on the scriptures, you'll be renewed even when you're exhausted."³

The scriptures give us the strength and insights we need. In them we find wonderful promises for those who magnify their callings—they will be sanctified by the Spirit to the renewal of their bodies.⁴

Alma 37 teaches us to call on God in all that we do, to concentrate all of our thoughts and feelings on Him, and to make Him part of our lives. And then comes the marvellous promise in verse 37 that when we counsel with the Lord in all of our doings, we will be exalted in the end.⁵

I have a strong testimony of



Elder Hans T. Boom

this principle. When we call on the Lord every day, study the scriptures, magnify our callings, and live up to our covenants, we receive the strength to continue and we find balance in our lives, time and time again. We feel the joy and happiness of knowing that God lives, that He loves us, and that Christ is our personal

Saviour and Redeemer. Let us join together in leading our lives in such a way that we can lay claim to these great blessings. ■

NOTES

1. Mosiah 4:27.
2. Spencer W. Kimball, quoted in *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004), 4.
3. Priesthood Training Broadcast, 21 June 2003, p. 16.
4. See Doctrine and Covenants 84:33.
5. See Alma 37:36–37.

LOCAL NEWS

Manchester England Stake Presidency Reorganised

By Sandy Maclean

"Humble, grateful, choice years, an honour and a privilege to serve" were the words used by an emotional Sean Roberts, who was released

after nine and half years as president of the Manchester England Stake. President Roberts and his counsellors, James Holt, who had served for seven

years, and Stephen Walker, for two and a half years, made way for a new presidency on Sunday, 20 November 2011. Elder Erich W. Kopischke, Europe Area President, presided over the stake conference and was assisted by Elder Stephen C. Kerr, Area Seventy, in the reorganisation of the stake presidency.

Daniel Liptrott, from the Macclesfield Ward, who had been serving as the stake Young Men president, was called as the new stake president. Daniel, 39, is married to Stacey, and they have six sons. The first counsellor is Stephen Scott, 34, who was serving as bishop of the Manchester South Ward. He is married to Mandy; they have two children. The second counsellor is 32-year-old James Gregson, who had been serving on the Macclesfield Ward bishopric. He and his wife, Karen, have two children.

Elder Kopischke said that this presidency is of young men with young families, and their families must come first, so the members of the stake must help them. This comment was echoed by Paul Goggins, the local MP who attended the conference and afterward spoke with Elder Kopischke and Elder Kerr.

President Liptrott, a solicitor by profession, said, "I am excited—there is work to do. We need more experiences of being taught by the Spirit, which opens the mind and heart." ■

Left to right: President Stephen Scott, first counsellor; President Daniel Liptrott, stake president; and President James Gregson, second counsellor, were recently called to serve as the Manchester England Stake presidency.



PHOTOGRAPH BY SANDY MACLEAN



Left to right: President Michael Perkis, first counsellor; President Boyd McEwen, stake president; and President Michael Siswick, second counsellor, have been called as the Huddersfield England Stake presidency.

New Stake Presidency Called in Huddersfield Stake in 50th Anniversary Year

By John Barnsley

Elder Gerald Caussé, First Counsellor in the Europe Area Presidency, and Elder Stephen C. Kerr, Area Seventy, reorganised the Huddersfield England Stake presidency in its 50th year as a stake. Boyd McEwen has been called to serve as the stake president. President McEwen, the seventh stake president since the stake's creation in 1961 and a local businessman, served a mission in California and is a former bishop and member of the high council.

Referring to his new calling, President McEwen stated, "I feel totally overwhelmed and humbled to be asked to serve the Lord in this capacity. I was aware that the previous president, Ian Day's time in office was coming to a conclusion, and that I, along with nearly 30 other good men, had been asked to be interviewed as his replacement. This is not a calling that I could apply for, nor would I seek, as it will be very time-consuming and demanding

on me and my family. However, my wife and I received a very special witness the night prior to my interview, and we knew that I had been called of God to serve not only our own congregations but the whole of the community. I have seen what blessings come from living the gospel of Jesus Christ and invite all to know Him better."

His first counsellor is Michael Perkis, a chartered surveyor from Wakefield, who served a mission in Canada. He is a former bishop and stake Young Men president. He and his wife, Beckie, have five children. Michael Siswick, also from Huddersfield, who is a dentist, has been called to serve as second counsellor. He has served as ward and stake Young Men president, bishop's counsellor, stake high councillor, and most recently he and his wife, Debbie, have served as the stake institute advisory couple. They have five children. ■



New Stake Presidency in Sunderland Stake

By Irene Webb

A new stake presidency has been called to preside over the Sunderland England Stake. Elder Gerald Caussé, First Counsellor in the Europe Area Presidency, and Elder Patrick M. Boutoille, Area Seventy, released President Norman Johnson, who had served in that calling for nine years, and sustained President Scott Spencer. President Spencer's counsellors are Barry Webb, who had previously served with President Johnson, and John Deacon.

President Spencer is married to Emma Louise Spencer (nee Wilkinson). They have four sons and a baby due in February 2012. President Spencer works as a firefighter, as crew manager.

He served a full-time mission in the England Bristol Mission. His previous callings include elders quorum counsellor and bishop of the Gateshead Ward.

President Spencer's vision for the future, he said, is that "all members of the stake become fully converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ and receive all the essential ordinances and covenants necessary to return to their Heavenly Father. As all members of the stake become consecrated followers of Jesus Christ, we know that we can double the active membership of the stake by 2020. This will become possible as all members pattern their lives on the Saviour and reach out to individuals to invite people to come to, or return to their Saviour." ■

Left to right: President Barry Webb, first counsellor; President Scott Spencer, stake president; and President John Deacon, second counsellor, have been called to serve as the presidency of the Sunderland England Stake.

The Power of Youth Conventions

By Kate Fletcher

An anniversary celebration of 30 years of successful annual youth conventions was held at the Ashton England Stake Centre on Sunday, 25 September 2011. The conventions are usually held for five days, in campsites in Wales or a bit nearer in Linnet Clough Scout Camp in Marple, Cheshire.

All of the stake presidents from the formation of the stake attended and gave talks about their memories and highlights over the years. Many of the "young people" who had taken part in the conventions were in attendance, some of whom were now bishops or members of stake presidencies. Most of them were wives, husbands and parents. Tender testimonies were shared on the night about how the conventions were a turning point for good in the lives of many.

One of the most memorable conventions was when the youth pulled handcarts every day to celebrate the anniversary of the pioneers entering the Salt Lake Valley. They actually did encounter many difficulties, including an area called "desolation," where big black flies covered everyone from head to foot, but



Left to right: Former stake presidents Robert Preston, Martin Cook, Brian Ashworth and Warren Ferguson with President Kevin Fletcher (in the centre) at the celebration of 30 years of youth conventions held in the Ashton England Stake Centre.

nevertheless they just soldiered on. Handcarts had to be carried over rivers and streams, over fences and gates, so the youth got an idea of what it was like for the original pioneers.

Despite the many physical

activities and the fun and wonderful food, the real highlight of each convention was the temple trip and the testimony meeting, which changed lives and where many received their testimonies of the truthfulness of the gospel.

Many youngsters went on missions not long after the conventions started. There were many reunions, and old friends who had not met up for a long time enjoyed catching up and showing family photographs. ■

High Councillor Presents Books to Libraries

Bill Hall from the Sunderland England Stake has worked tirelessly over a two-month period to share the gospel. He has contacted libraries throughout the area asking if they would be interested in accepting Church literature. He has managed to have Church literature placed in the libraries in South Shields, Tynemouth, Whitley Bay, Gateshead Central and Durham University. Andy Raine, manager of the libraries section, was on hand to accept a donation on behalf of Durham County Council of 10 copies of the Book of Mormon and other Church literature, which will be accessible to all 39 libraries within County Durham. The books in the libraries were supplied by the Area Public Affairs department. ■



Bill Hall (left) presents books to Andy Raine of Durham County Council library service.

Building Fences, Building Bridges

By Ken Smith

On Saturday, 15 October 2011, the word went out from Bishop Grounsel. From the Newcastle-under-Lyme Ward we needed volunteers to help build a fence at Portland House, Burslem, for the benefit of adults who have learning difficulties. Barbara Chalkey from the ward works there, and she saw a need for the ward to help within the community. The fence was to be built around the sensory garden so that the people there could be in a safer environment while outside.

For most of us, it was not the kind of work we were used to. We needed to knock each of the supporting posts 18 inches into the ground with a sledgehammer. This was hard going! We remarked how the pioneers would have made mincemeat out of us today if they were given the task to build the same type of fence, because for most of us our workload each day does not

involve using heavy sledgehammers.

After five hours work we had not progressed enough to finish building the fence, as we were only a quarter of the way finished. We arranged to return the following Saturday; this time we had a tool to make placing the posts in the ground far more productive—a post driver! This tool made all the difference. Within an hour and a half we had matched what we had done the week before.

We all enjoyed the opportunity to work together for the benefit of others. We also learned new skills; some of us would not have had a clue how to start building a fence before.

Our Heavenly Father, through His wisdom, gives each of us opportunities to serve our fellow man. We all gave a little amount of our time to help, and from it we received that good feeling within of doing something worthwhile to benefit others. The more we do acts of service the less selfish we become, as this is how I felt working with these good Latter-day Saints.

I learned a valuable lesson, and that is to delight in the little things we do when we serve others. ■

Members of the Newcastle-under-Lyme Ward built a fence at Portland House, Burslem. (Some workers are missing from the photograph.)



PHOTOGRAPH BY KEN SMITH

Granny McKenzie: A Remarkable Legacy

By Frank Bowness

Lou Leece of the Dundee Bingham Ward, Dundee Scotland Stake, is a fourth generation Latter-day Saint. Nothing very unusual about that nowadays, you might think—until you learn that Sister Leece will be 87 years old this year.

The story began when Lou's great-grandfather, James Campbell, heard the missionaries preach on the streets of Stirling. He was baptised, along with his 12-year-old daughter, Margaret, in Glasgow in 1875 by Alexander Rankin, and confirmed by David McKenzie, missionaries from the USA. It was not an easy decision to become a member of the Church in Scotland at this time. Elder McKenzie subsequently wrote to Brigham Young outlining the difficulties of retaining converts, with fewer than 500 members of the Church in the country. The majority either became inactive or emigrated to "Zion".

James Campbell's wife never joined the Church and died in 1879. The following year James, with help from the Perpetual Emigration Fund, travelled to Utah. It is believed he wanted to have his wife's temple ordinances performed. While in Utah he received news that Margaret's husband was ill and set off home to be with her. Sadly, he never reached his native land, but died on the train and was buried at Omaha, Nebraska, still carrying his Book of Mormon and family records, according to newspaper reports of the death.

Margaret, meanwhile, suffered the death of both her husband and her baby son. She made her way to Dundee and there remarried. She went on to have six more children, two of whom died in infancy. Of the four remaining, two eventually went to Utah, and one to Canada. Her only son, Joseph Smith Wilson, was sent to Salt Lake City at age 19, in fulfillment of a promise Margaret had made to the Lord at his birth, having served as

the only priesthood holder in the Dundee Branch for a number of years. His mother never saw him again. He later married and settled in San Diego, California, and has a large posterity in the Church.

Joe later wrote, "My mother was a woman of faith like a little child. She believed with all her heart and soul that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God and that through the power of God he brought forth the Book of Mormon—no question in her mind about the truth of Mormonism".

This unwavering testimony was passed down to her youngest daughter, Lizzie. Baptised on 21 December 1907 at the age of eight, Lizzie remembers as a child being assigned to fetch a postal order for 1 shilling (5 pence of modern currency), representing her mother's tithing from a weekly wage of 10 shillings (50 pence). These postal orders were forwarded to the elders of the Church in Glasgow, but the testimony of the importance of tithing remained with Lizzie throughout her life.

Lizzie married James McKenzie and had five children. He never interfered with her religion, but Lizzie was shunned by his family on account of her faith. She was never invited to their home or family events. Such an attitude was typical for the times. There was much prejudice against the Church and the family learned to remain silent regarding their membership. Lou, Lizzie's daughter, recalls as a child in school, being asked who the first Apostle was and answering, "Joseph Smith". She was detained by the headmistress after school and told if she mentioned his name again her mouth would be washed out with carbolic soap.

When it became clear that war was imminent in 1938, the missionaries were recalled to America. The little band of members had to struggle on alone, Lizzie and her daughters, Margaret and Lou, among them. During this time the only contact with the Church was the *Relief Society Magazine*, which was sent to them from America by Lizzie's brother, Joe.

This changed in 1947. The war had ended and missionaries could once more be sent to preach the gospel. But where to begin, the branches of the Church having being disbanded during the war years? Clearly the Lord's intervention was necessary. One afternoon Lizzie (recently widowed) was attending a matinee performance at a cinema when she felt impressed to leave. Across the street from the cinema she saw two young men and



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE LEECE FAMILY ARCHIVES

**Granny
McKenzie
of Dundee,
Scotland**

recognised them as missionaries. She approached them and asked if they were looking for a Lizzie McKenzie. Surprised, they replied, "How did you know?"

Meetings of the Church were again held in her home in Dundee, beginning with a tiny handful of members, but gradually increasing in strength until they could rent a hall. Among those who came was a woman whom the missionaries had invited to attend Relief Society. As she came to the door her courage almost failed her. Then she remembered that her father's friend, Mrs. McKenzie, was a Mormon. She opened the door, saw Lizzie sitting with her daughter, Lou, and immediately felt

at home. Her family are now fourth generation members.

With her husband now deceased, Lizzie decided to go with her daughter, Margaret, to join her brother, Joe. She was subsequently sealed to her deceased husband in the Hawaii Temple.

After twenty years in America she returned to Scotland to be present at the sealing of her grandson, Joseph, and his wife. By now the fruits of her labour were plain to see. From tiny beginnings in Lizzie's home, Dundee now has two thriving wards and a beautiful stake centre. Lizzie became affectionately known to all as "Granny McKenzie" until her death at age 92.

By the time Lizzie went to America in 1947 her remaining daughter, Lou, had married Joseph Leece and had two children. It now fell to her to continue to support the fledgling Church in Scotland, although her husband was not a member. He resisted joining the Church until the last year of his life. He was, however, a great genealogist, and always wanted the temple ordinances to be done for those ancestors whom he had researched.

Lou's two children stayed strong in the Church. Her son, Joseph, resides in Lancashire with his wife, Lyn. He currently serves in the Preston Temple Presidency. Her daughter, Sandra, lives in Provo, Utah, with her husband, Larry Shumway.

Lou continues to attend Church meetings each week and is a great example to her posterity, now seventh-generation Latter-day Saints. All of them have great reason to be grateful to Lou, Lizzie, Margaret and James, whose legacy of testimony and faith continue to inspire and strengthen. ■

Editor's Note

To submit all stories to the editors, Paul & Beryl Oliver, as Word files and photographs as jpg files please use the email address ukiensign@ldschurch.org. ■