

UNITED KINGDOM AND IRELAND LOCAL PAGES

AREA LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

A Wonderful Plan

Elder José A. Teixeira, Portugal

President Europe Area

Recently I received an email message from my daughter-in-law Lisa expressing the joy she feels with her newborn daughter. Her words were filled with gratitude for a wonderful plan of a Father in Heaven who loves us.

I began to think how her experience of giving birth has helped her better understand the importance of the covenant of baptism and deepened her testimony of Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Redeemer.

John 3:5 states: “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” Christ is teaching us more than just the fact that baptism is essential to salvation. What does He want us to learn by comparing baptism to birth? Having just given birth, my daughter-in-law shared some insights of what our Church membership means to Him and what it means to us. Here are eight lessons she has learned from her baby daughter, Jane.

1. We are absolutely pure and innocent after baptism. Could the Lord explain to us any more clearly that our sins truly are washed away and we are absolutely clean, than to compare us to a newborn baby?

2. It is a not a small, casual thing to be baptised. The cost of our purity is the Lord’s Atonement. He described His experience in Doctrine and Covenants 19:18: “Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup.” Those are some of the same

feelings experienced during labour and birth. Just as giving physical birth requires great sacrifice and pain, giving spiritual birth requires the ultimate sacrifice and the pain of the Atonement. But why are mothers willing to bear children? Because they love their children—because they are so worth it. The Lord loves us, and we are so worth it.

3. A long period of nourishing and strengthening and building a relationship occurs before birth, and there is much anticipation. Even though a mother is creating this bond with her child for nine months, the first time she sees and holds her infant she has feelings of reverence and joy that are impossible to describe. Likewise, the Lord nourishes and strengthens His children as they prepare for baptism. He looks forward to that day. The bond created when His children enter the waters of baptism is so strong, and He overflows with joy as does the new mother. What a powerful image to describe His happiness.

4. Jane took our name and is a part of our family. We take Christ’s name upon us when we are baptised, and we become part of His family. With this comes great responsibility, but it also makes us heirs to all that He has.

5. A mother is excited about everything a newborn does. Jane does not have to be perfect for her mother to be proud of her. New converts may feel like they do not measure up



Elder José A. Teixeira

when compared with seasoned members of the Church, but the Lord is so proud of their every new development.

6. Lisa mentioned that she always knows where Jane is and what she is doing, even when the baby cannot see her or doesn't know that she is watching her. Lisa would never, ever leave her alone. The Lord is even more aware of us: "I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up" (D&C 84:88).

7. Jane is absolutely dependent on her mother, and her mother gives her everything she needs. If the baby were to tell her mother, "I don't need you," she wouldn't survive. Telling the Lord that we don't need Him is the path to die spiritually. We need His nourishment every day. He gives Himself to us as a mother gives herself to her child.

8. Lisa says: "I don't want Jane to stay like this forever. I want her to grow and develop and experience a fullness of life. Because I love her, I want her to experience all the joy that I have had. That is what loving parents want for their children." We have a loving Heavenly Father, and even though it may seem impossible now that we could ever be like Him, He sees our future. He knows our potential. And that is exactly what He is training us to be—to be like Him. That is what loving parents do for their children, and we are His children.

May we recognise that we can return to live with our Heavenly Father only by relying on His Son's grace and mercy.¹ May we rejoice in being members of the Church and always be grateful for the wonderful plan our Heavenly Father has provided for us. ■

NOTE

1. See *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service*, 61.

Church Leaders Meet New President of Ireland

by Debbie Twigger

Church leaders in Ireland and Great Britain were invited by the new President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, to a Garden Party on Monday, July 9th at the President's official residence, Áras an Uachtaráin.

On 11 November 2011, Michael D. Higgins was inaugurated as the ninth President of Ireland. In his inaugural address he stated, "I will champion creative communities who are bringing about positive change at the local level by giving recognition to their achievements on the national stage. I believe that when we encourage the seedbed of creativity in our communities and ensure that each child and

adult has the opportunity for creative expression, we also lay the groundwork for sustainable employment in creative industries and enrich our social, cultural and economic development."

The Garden Party was attended by several community groups from around Ireland. The Church was represented by Elder Clifford T. Herbertson, Area Seventy, and his wife, Julie; Dublin Stake president Bernard O'Farrell with his wife, Mary O'Farrell; Limerick District president Tom Murphy and his wife, Satu; and Eamonn Sheridan, National Director of Public Affairs for Ireland, with his wife, Linda. A wonderful afternoon followed with food and great entertainment,

From left to right:
Eamonn Sheridan;
Linda Sheridan;
Tom Murphy,
Limerick District
President; his
wife, Satu; Sabina
Higgins; President
Michael Higgins;
Elder Clifford T.
Herbertson; Julie
Herbertson; Mary
O'Farrell; Bernard
O'Farrell; Dublin
Stake president.



which included a tour of the residence, which was formerly the Viceregal Lodge during the British Occupation, now known as Áras an Uachtaráin (Presidents Residence).

The office of President of Ireland was established by the Constitution (Bunreacht na h Éireann) with the president being elected directly by the people. The term of office is seven years, and a president may not serve more than two terms. The president represents all the people when undertaking official engagements at home and abroad and is also Supreme Commander of the Defence Forces.

Brother Sheridan commented, “President Higgins is a unique, highly intelligent individual. It was an honour to shake his hand. Doubly so, as he is Commander in Chief of the armed forces

where I served as an officer for over 30 years.”

President Higgins has a passionate political voice and is a poet and writer, an academic and statesman, a human rights advocate, a promoter of inclusive citizenship and champion of creativity within Irish society. Michael D. Higgins has previously served at almost every level of public life in Ireland, including as Ireland’s first Minister for Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht.

Elder Herbertson sent a framed copy of “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” and some copies of *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlets in response to the interest and emphasis President Higgins has made on families and young people. The gifts were recognised and appreciated in a letter from the President. ■

Mission Reunion with a Difference

By Jean Forman

48 years after serving in the England Leeds Mission, Elder Edward Dale Peterson from Utah, USA, returned with his wife, Barbara, to the places he had served. After visiting with others they came to Yorkshire and met with the Perkis clan—who now reside in the Huddersfield England Stake in the Ossett, Horbury and Halifax areas.

At this reunion the family and Ed and Barbara were able to share memories and gospel testimonies and reminisce about Church service given by the Perkis family, both in callings and in missions, since Jean and Jack were baptised all those years ago.

In 1962 Elder Peterson taught and baptised Jack and Jean Perkis, who at that time had two small children: Christopher, aged four, and Alison, aged two. The family was completed later by two more boys, Michael and Andrew.

The family stayed in Leeds and faithfully attended the Leeds First Ward in the Leeds Stake. In 1974 Jack was called as bishop and served until his untimely death in 1980. Jean eventually married Ken Bolton and made the move across to the Dewsbury area, in the Huddersfield Stake. Chris was by this time married to Jill Glaister, and Alison was away at university, so that left Michael and Andrew to move with her, and fortunately they made good friends with many youth in that area.

Jean and Ken were blessed to be able to serve a mission to Adelaide, Australia, but sadly after their mission Ken passed away. In due time Jean married again to Richard Forman, and together they served three missions, two in this country and one in Malta, part of the Italy Catania Mission.



COURTESY OF EAMONN SHERIDAN

In 1982 Alison was married in the London Temple to a returned missionary, Martin Boome, who later served as bishop of the Reading Ward, Reading England Stake, for eight years. In 1996 they moved back to Alison's roots in Yorkshire. Two months after their move to Yorkshire Martin was called to the Huddersfield Stake presidency, where he served for six years. Alison and Martin have now been married for 30 years and have five children, Daniel, Matthew, Thomas, Samuel and Eleanor. The three eldest boys have served missions in England and France, and each has returned and married in the Preston Temple. Their fourth son, Sam, is now preparing for his mission—becoming the fifth missionary in that family.

Michael meanwhile was the first of his group of friends to serve a mission, serving in the Canada Calgary mission between 1986 and 1988. On his return he married Rebecca Wainwright in the London Temple and they now also have five children—Jack, Joseph, Benjamin, Joshua and Grace. Michael has served as bishop of the Horbury Ward and is now serving in the Huddersfield Stake presidency. Jack, their eldest son, is also preparing to serve a mission.

Andrew was called to serve in the London England mission, serving there whilst Jean and Ken served in Australia. Andrew later married Aishia Burnett and they have two children, Ethan and Eve. Andrew served as bishop of the Crewe Ward, Newcastle-under-Lyme Stake, and is now serving as a bishopric counsellor in the Halifax Ward, Huddersfield Stake.

So in case you haven't counted, out of Elder Peterson's baptism of Jack and Jean Perkis, 48 years ago, a total of 10 missions have been served, with two more young men preparing to go shortly. There are four more Perkis boys to hopefully serve missions in time.

Ed Peterson, now a father of three and grandfather of 11, was excited to meet with the Perkis clan. The mission reunion with a difference will be remembered by all of the Perkis family and especially by Ed and Barbara. Ed wrote in an email to Jean, "I could not have imagined the joy it has brought me to have a small part in the Perkis dynasty. I find it hard to express the things of my heart of that opportunity that I had with Elder Beams and others to teach the gospel. And what a treasured blessing it has been in my life."

We, the Perkis family, know what a great blessing it was to be taught the gospel—indeed it was a treasured blessing which changed all our lives.

Thank you Ed! ■

Ed and Barbara Peterson with some of the Perkis family.



PHOTOGRAPH BY ALISON BOOME

Volunteer of the Year

By Dorothy Braganza

Sunder Vasanth raj Braganza was born in Hyderabad, India. As a young man of 15 in 1982, his life was changed when he was introduced to the Church. The missionary couple who taught him the gospel were John and Margaret Marshall from the Plymouth Ward.

The Braganza family already followed the Christian faith, but Vasanth raj recognised that the restored Church offered something extra. The Marshalls were delighted when he proved to be a golden contact and was baptised. Some months later other members of his family were also baptised.

The Church in Hyderabad at that time was quite small with just four active families. Brother Braganza was called to many positions after serving a full-time mission in India, including branch president and counsellor in the district presidency. The growth of the Church in India has been steady since 1982, and just recently Hyderabad has become the first stake in India.

It was in 1995 that Brother Braganza married his wife, Dorothy. Although not a member of the Church at that time, Dorothy was a Christian and soon became a convert to the



Vasanth raj Braganza is presented with his award by Michael Wright, Lord Mayor of Plymouth, in the presence of Ossie Glover, chief executive of Fata-he.

new faith. "My husband is a great example to me and I learned a lot about the Church through him," says Sister Braganza. They have two sons, Jared and Sam.

In the years following their mission (they later served a mission in the Philippines) Brother and Sister Marshall kept in touch with their convert. In 2004 Brother and Sister Braganza made a decision to

come to England to try and make a new life for themselves and their boys. They chose Plymouth as their new home, to be near to Brother and Sister Marshall.

It took time and a few heartaches after their arrival for them all to get used to their new lives and settle into employment and schools, but eventually these obstacles were overcome and

PHOTOGRAPH BY DOROTHY BRAGANZA

although still loving and missing their homeland they, in time, settled into the community and also became part of the Church in Plymouth. The Braganza family are now fully active members of the Plymouth Ward and have served in a variety of callings.

However, Brother Braganza does not limit his voluntary service to the Church; he also offers help in the community. While still in Hyderabad, India, Brother Braganza helped in projects concerning health, hygiene and education, which he explained were the priority needs in the area at that time. His desire to assist in the community continued when he came to England. He has helped with many projects where he has seen a need. His latest efforts have been in assisting with work for the Fata-he, a Black and Asian ethnic minority group and various other community organisations.

Brother Braganza's efforts and his community development activities have not gone unnoticed, and he was awarded the Volunteer of the Year 2012 by Lord Mayor of Plymouth, Councillor Michael Wright. The conference was attended by various dignitaries and community leaders and leaders from the local council including Alison Seabeck, MP for Plymouth Moor View. ■

Liverpool Youth Lend a Helping Hand at the MSPCA Animal Sanctuary

By Rosie Scott

A group of about 70 young members and leaders from the Liverpool Stake visited the Isle of Man for a five-day youth camp in August. They joined local LDS youth for a camp hosted by Andrew Clague at his Fun Farm and were blessed to enjoy good weather for their time there.

While there, they undertook a Helping Hands service project, and 25 of them with leaders offered help to the Manx Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Some continued clearance of the nature trail which had become overgrown until work on it was started at the end of June by some members

of the Church on the island for their own Helping Hands project. Others helped clean out pens and wash floors and feeding trays.

As the MSPCA could only accommodate a certain number of helpers, other youth helped Brother Clague set up his summer attraction, the Maize Maze.

After their short stay on the island, the youth all agreed they had enjoyed a fantastic and uplifting time on the Fun Farm. They loved the island, its beauty and its peace. They are now an enthusiastic group of ambassadors for the island spreading the word among their friends in the Liverpool area. ■

Liverpool Stake youth and their leaders gather for a camp with their stake presidency in the Isle of Man.



PHOTOGRAPH BY ANTONY LOWRY

Josephine Black

By Peter Cameron

In the summer of 1986 excitement mounted when it was announced that the Paisley Scotland Stake was to have a family history centre which would be located in the Johnstone building.

The members in the Johnstone Ward were not sure what a family history centre was all about, but when the large microfilm readers arrived and were installed in the room which also housed the baptismal font, they realised things were beginning to happen.

Early in September 1986, under the direction of then-stake president Alexander Cumming (who recently passed away), a meeting was held at the Johnstone building to formally open the centre at which then-leader of Renfrewshire Council Walter McCready attended and spoke.

When volunteers were needed to staff the centre, one of the first to volunteer was Josephine Black who was a member of the Beith Branch. Josephine is an avid genealogist and brought her enthusiasm and love for family history to the centre.

The centre subsequently moved to a purpose-built facility in the Paisley Stake Centre.

On 25 April 2012 Josephine, accompanied by her husband, Ian, who is now retired, served their last shift at the centre prior to leaving for a mission to serve in one of the four branches in the North of Scotland. For the time being they left the centre behind. Josephine had given tremendous service.

Over the past 26 years she has helped many members of the stake capture the Spirit of Elijah, providing much-needed assistance in helping them find their ancestors and becoming saviours on Mount Zion. Besides helping



PHOTOGRAPH BY CATHERINE CAMERON

Josephine and Ian Black have given a quarter of a century of dedicated service to the Paisley Family History Centre.

members of the Church, Josephine has helped countless nonmembers with their family history research also.

Josephine has many Irish ancestors and has worked to become very knowledgeable in researching Irish family history. This has resulted in many invitations to speak to family history societies in the West of Scotland. Many families in the West of Scotland have Irish ancestries, as Irish families moved to Scotland when the economy was much better.

The Paisley Stake has valued the service Josephine has given to the FamilySearch centre and appreciated the support of Ian, her husband, in helping her in this work. No doubt Josephine will continue to teach family history on her mission and bring the Spirit of Elijah to the branch in which she and Ian serve. ■

Developing Our Talents

By Peter Lee

The Olympic and Paralympic Games were an inspiration to the world. For many of us it was a special joy to witness disabled athletes, having overcome much in the way of adversity, compete and sometimes triumph in their chosen sport. They are doing much to change public perceptions of disability and proving to be an inspiration to many of their peers who will be inspired to develop their own talents and contribute to others in their own way.

Heavenly Father has given talents to each of us to righteously develop and use to bless ourselves, our families and others. Some have personal talents such as courage, kindness, a sense of humour, cheerfulness and spirituality, while others have artistic and creative talents which include singing, dancing, public speaking, playing a musical instrument, baking and cooking. Still others are blessed with talents across the board including those of a personal, artistic, or creative nature. Many people do develop their talents, and an excellent example of this is Susan Kureczko who is a member of Lancaster Ward, Preston England Stake. Born during the war, she was raised in Altrincham and went to a secondary modern

school where expectations were not high and from which few left with any meaningful qualifications. Susan joined the Church in 1958 together with all her family members. Later she served a “building mission” working as an office administrator. In due course she also served a successful full-time proselyting mission in the north of England.

Susan began to recognise that she had far more abilities than the school system had identified and later continued her education to obtain a bachelor’s degree in Social Studies at Salford University, followed later by a master’s degree at Manchester University. Subsequently she has forged a career in school teaching and further education. Susan has a lovely singing voice with a natural gift for harmonisation. She enjoys singing in small groups and choirs and has engaged in this all her Church life. Within recent years Susan attended a fireside concert at Chorley stake centre given by an American sister—Sally DeFord—who presented songs she had written. This was a most enjoyable experience for the audience and Susan felt inspired to start writing songs herself!

During the last two or three years she has written in excess of

70 gospel-oriented songs including hymns, carols, male chorus items, choir pieces and Primary songs.

Her inspiration is sparked by scriptures and everyday incidents and experiences, prompted by the Spirit. Her music has been sung in concerts and firesides at Chorley, Preston and Lancaster chapels with enthusiastic reception.

In conclusion, I am reminded of the 13th article of faith, part of which states: “If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.” Surely, Susan’s musical efforts meet the expectation of the 13th article of faith and are pleasing to the Lord as well as His children.

Susan has found much personal happiness in developing her academic and artistic abilities and her talents continue to be a blessing to herself, family and others.

In the parable as the Saviour taught it a talent was a sum of money, and the master expected an effort on the part of his three servants to increase what they were given. Perhaps we ought to think literally of the talents we have and realise the importance of improving the gifts we have been given. ■

Please submit stories and photographs to ukiensign@ldschurch.org. Stories should be in Microsoft Word format. Photographs should be in jpg format. It would assist the editors in processing photos if the pictures did not require a large amount of memory.