

UNITED KINGDOM & IRELAND LOCAL PAGES

AREA LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

The Messenger and the Message

By Elder Faustino López, Spain

Area Seventy

In *Preach My Gospel* we read: “Some chapters in *Preach My Gospel* focus on what you need to do as a missionary—how to study, how to teach. . . . Just as vital as what you do, however, is who you are.”¹ Both of these things are connected: “Beyond my words and teachings and spoken witness, my life must be part of that testimony of Jesus. My very being should reflect the divinity of this work.”²

Missionary work has two aspects: the *messenger* and the *message*, and both of these must be united. Jesus Christ is the perfect example. In Him, the *messenger* and the *message* are one and the same: “I am the way, the truth and the life.”³ Missionaries must strive to follow the example of Jesus Christ insofar as possible, and to incorporate the message He bears. It is as if missionaries were to say to a future convert, “If you accept the message we bring and live it, you will become a Latter-day Saint, of whom we are examples.” And it is the same thing that happens when the missionaries bring the people whom

they are teaching to church. The message they receive upon entering the chapel and meeting the members is, “This is what awaits you, if you get baptised: to become a part of this people, to be with these people and be one of them.”

For this reason, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “Surely there is no more powerful missionary message we can send to this world than the example of a loving and happy Latter-day Saint life. The manner and bearing, the smile and kindness of a faithful member of the Church brings a warmth and an outreach which no missionary tract or videotape can convey.”⁴ People’s conversion is not only to know if the missionaries’ message is true or not: it is also to be willing to live it in the company of other Church



**Elder
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members. For this reason Elder Holland also said, “No mission or missionaries can ultimately succeed without the loving participation and spiritual support of the local members working with them in a balanced effort.”⁵ Conversion requires that I be interested in the *message* and in the *messenger*.

I well remember the missionaries who

taught me. I was 19 years old, and they, who were as young as I was, seemed to be and to have what I had been seeking all of my life. I wanted to have what they had and to become what they were. And when they took me to church—to the only branch that then existed in Madrid—and I met that group of Mormons, I wanted to be one of them. They were the type of people I wanted to be. And I got baptised in order to be one of them, to be with them.

As President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) explained: “The gathering of Israel consists of [investigators] joining the true church and their coming to a knowledge of the true God.”⁶ When I got baptised, I then came to be a part of a people, a member of a new society, a fellowcitizen with the Saints.⁷ Those who fail to develop a new identity and become part of this new society end up returning to where they came from. For this reason, all of us who are in the Church have the duty to do everything possible to help those who enter the waters of baptism feel they belong, keeping in mind that in the Church there are “no more strangers”, but rather “fellowcitizens with the Saints, and members of the household of God.”⁸ As the missionaries share the message, we as members become the messengers of what it means to be a Latter-day Saint. ■

NOTES

1. *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service*, “Developing Christlike Attributes”, p. 115.
2. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Miracles of the Restoration”, *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 31; in *Missionary Preparation*, Religion 130, student manual, 5.
3. John 14:6.
4. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Witnesses unto Me”, *Ensign*, May 2001, 14.
5. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Witnesses unto Me”, 14.
6. *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball (1982), 439; in *Missionary Preparation*, Religion 130, student manual, 4.
7. See Ephesians 2:19.
8. Ephesians 2:19.

Lift-off for Leeds Stake Member

By Annette Stewart

Matt Midgley (24), a member of the Leeds England Stake, is proof that with hard work, a good deal of faith and a large dose of single-mindedness, a career can really take off.

As a member of the Wharfe Valley Branch, Matt grew up a stone’s throw away from Leeds Bradford Airport and would often watch the planes take off and land. A trip to the USA in 2002 confirmed his love of flying. “As soon as we started down the runway I was hooked,” says Matt. “From then on, I was fascinated with flying and couldn’t take my mind off it. I wanted to fly on a regular basis—and I knew where I wanted to be sitting!”

Matt’s energy and education, not to mention his faith and prayers, became focussed on becoming a commercial airline pilot. But not before he put the Lord first and served a mission in Ireland (now the Scotland/Ireland Mission) from 2007 to 2009. “In my first area, I remember hearing an aeroplane overhead,” recalls Matt. “My trainer, being quite the joker, asked, ‘How far away do you think that plane is? I’d guess about five thousand feet.’

“‘Two years!’ was my response”.

After two years of missionary service, Matt returned home to Yorkshire and began the gruelling process of applying to flight school. After an intense period of assessments, interviews, and exams, Matt was accepted into an independent flying school. While he would be a qualified pilot by the end of his training, there was still no guarantee of a job.

Thousands of hours of training and study later, including a five-month visual flying stint in Phoenix, Arizona, USA, Matt emerged as a qualified pilot and began the search for a job.

With just a day’s notice, an airline invited Matt to Stansted for an interview and assessment. “The first



Matt Midgley recently qualified as a pilot.

thing they wanted to know was what I had been doing in Ireland!” recalls Matt. “I was able to talk about my mission and about the Church. They felt my experience in handling people who could be confrontational would be an important quality in the airline environment.”

After a nerve-racking three-week wait, Matt was finally accepted into the airline’s training programme, and he began working as a fully qualified airline pilot in August 2012.

“To have been offered this job is an incredible blessing,” says Matt. “It is the culmination of so many years of hoping and working towards this goal. It is absolutely thrilling!”

Matt has recently finished his training in Loughborough and will be flying out of Stansted until he has completed about 80 flights. After this, he could be assigned to any location that the airline operates in, such as Germany, Italy or Spain.

“In my role as a missionary I met people of many different nationalities,” says Matt. “I knew I didn’t want this to stop after my mission. A flying career will provide similar opportunities as I’ll be sitting next to people from all over Europe and the rest of the world for years to come.”

Matt explains: “I have been the only member of the Church right the way through my flight training, and it’s been challenging at times. While I have felt alone at times I have never felt rejected for something I believe in. The Church has been an incredible support.”

For example, while he was in Phoenix, members of the Sarival Ward took good care of Matt, inviting him over for meals and spending time with him. “Never underestimate how nice it is to pray with other people,” Matt comments.

Back in England, while Matt was studying in Oxford, he met the Clarks, a wonderful senior couple who ran a centre for young adults that felt like the home Matt had left—a place where the

Spirit could be felt and there were always people with shared beliefs. Matt says, “Elder Clark was able to provide blessings at crucial stages in my training, and for this I am most grateful.”

Matt Midgley is a third-generation member of the Church. His parents, Mike and Liz Midgley, have five children. ■

Rule Britannia

By Carolyn Bray

The Plymouth England Stake held its annual Youth Convention on 27 October 2012 to the theme of “Rule Britannia”. The stake Young Women president, Victoria Dean, approached the Royal Navy to offer the services of the group. Vicky explained: “As our theme this year is ‘Rule Britannia’, I contacted the Royal Navy in the hope that we could bring the group along to the Devonport Naval Base and provide a service for them to fit in with this theme. I asked whether they might scrub down the deck of a ship or provide any other service essential within

the base. I knew they would work diligently and get so much from an experience they might never have again. We were so thrilled when the Navy came back and said, ‘Yes, would we like you to come in and help out on the submarine *Courageous*?’

The youth and youth leaders were given a tour of HMS *Courageous*, a cold war submarine, and then completed a survey to assist the Heritage Centre at the Naval Base.

The youth were, as always, impeccably behaved and a pleasure to be with, showing themselves as great examples of members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. ■



The youth of the Plymouth Stake visited the Royal Navy as part of their annual convention.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JASON TAYLOR

Compassionate Service Projects Assist Local Charities

By William G. Dunbar

PHOTOGRAPH BY WILLIAM GEORGE DUNBAR



Relief Society sisters of the Bridge of Don Ward donated gifts and needed supplies to local charities.

The Aberdeen Cyrenians Charity, named after Simon the Cyrenian who carried Jesus's cross on the way to Calvary (see Luke 23:26), has a philosophy of "sharing the burden". Since 1968 it has provided meals to homeless people and has opened emergency accommodation centres for the young and the elderly. It relies on the generosity of citizens and local stores to provide food, clothes and other basic necessities.

The 2012 Christmas Appeal by the Aberdeen Cyrenians prompted the Relief Society sisters in the Bridge of Don Ward of the Aberdeen Scotland Stake, over a three month period, to knit or donate scarves, gloves, and socks,

and provide toiletries, bars of chocolate and other sweets.

During an evening meeting in November, the sisters covered 30 empty shoe boxes with decorative paper and filled them with items to make individual gifts, which were taken to the charity's administration office and appreciatively received.

The Relief Society sisters also contributed tins and packets of food, enough to fill two deep supermarket trolleys. These were donated to the Instant Neighbour Charity, which since 1984 has provided practical help, advice and support to some of the poorest and most vulnerable people living in Aberdeen. ■

Missionaries from 15 Countries Help at Oldham Schools

By Kate Fletcher

Ammy Young of the Oldham Ward, whose children attend Knowsley Junior School, Springhead and Saddleworth High School, could see that the schools could do with a little extra help to make the garden areas pleasant to look at.

She recruited the help of 24 missionaries from 15 countries serving in the Manchester Mission and the Oldham Ward, and they worked hard for four hours to make the garden areas more presentable.

The countries included Ethiopia, Switzerland, Uruguay, Canada, Slovakia, Australia, Germany, Spain, France, South Africa and Russia. The young elder from Ethiopia has a missing foot and sat down to weed for ease of access.

Mrs. Goodwin, Head of Knowsley Primary, and Mr. Milburn, head of Saddleworth High School,



Getting Better with Age

Contributed by Erich Weidmann

After winning a bronze medal five years ago, and on completion of a two-year CES mission in Birmingham with his wife, Moira, Roger Head, from the Poole Ward, thought that his time for winning medals was over. But in the British Masters National Championships in Derby this summer he gained not just one medal but two, and this time both were silver.

He won the first silver competing in the 1500 metres in his age group and then repeated the feat in the 800 metres.

A lifelong runner for school, club and county in his youth, Brother Head has continued to train hard and compete throughout his life, and attributes much of his success to living the Word of Wisdom since his baptism at the age of 23 in Worcester.

His enthusiasm for all sports, especially athletics, was recognised and put to good use in his Church service when for many years he served as Regional Sports Director in London and the southeast area, where he organised many successful regional athletic meetings together with other regional sports events such as swimming galas, indoor sports and tennis tournaments.

Brother Head says that he will continue to run for as long as he is able, as he believes that it keeps one fit for day-to-day living, and that he is far better equipped to function in serving the Lord as a result.

He and his wife are hoping to serve a further mission in the near future after a highly satisfying CES mission in Birmingham from 2005 to 2007. This was such a wonderful highlight in their lives. They served under two mission presidents, met three Apostles and made enduring and eternal friendships in the Birmingham, Coventry and Lichfield stakes, where they taught institute and seminary lessons in addition to organising family home evenings, firesides



PHOTOGRAPHS BY SISTER DOCHERTY

were absolutely thrilled that these young men and women would volunteer their time to help in this way, and were delighted with the results. Many local residents were also delighted and offered their services if the activity was to be repeated. The local residents were pleased to chat with the missionaries, and as a lot of them had children attending the schools were very impressed with their attitude while doing the service. Service is one of the best ways of bringing the Church out of obscurity, and is a wonderful example to those around us. ■

Missionaries cleaned up two schools in Oldham.





Roger Head recently won silver medals in the 800 and 1500 metres during the British Masters National Championships.

and sporting events. The ongoing contact they still have with their erstwhile students continues the joy they felt when serving them in the mission field. Brother Head says that to meet, shake hands with and have three Apostles look them in the eyes were spiritually uplifting moments never to be forgotten.

They are currently serving as stake executive secretary and stake Relief Society president in the Poole stake and are currently being trained to work in the London Temple.

Brother Head comments that “the gospel of Jesus Christ is a wonderful way of life, full of spiritual and uplifting experiences, bringing wonderful people into one’s life and holding out the promise of eternal blessings and relationships, if one is true and faithful to one’s covenants”. He fully intends to keep as fit as he can in order to serve the Saviour to the best of his ability. ■

Cut Above the Rest

By Wendy Rand

Rebekah, age five, from Dunfermline, always dreamed of having “Rapunzel” hair. When her long locks started to be unmanageable, her mum, Gemma, suggested that it was time to get a few inches cut off, but she felt it would be a shame for the hair to go to waste. Rebekah suggested giving it to someone else. They decided to donate it to the Little Princess Trust, an organisation that provides real-hair wigs at no cost to children who suffer hair loss due to illnesses such as cancer. When Rebekah remembered their family discussions that Christmas is not just about receiving but about helping others, she then decided to donate as much hair as possible as a special gift for another child.

With her hair 15 inches shorter, Rebekah said, “I am



Rebekah before and after donating her hair to charity.



really happy to do something kind for another boy or girl and hope they like my hair. I know Jesus will be happy that I am thinking about making someone else happy.”

In addition to donating her hair, Rebekah has also managed to raise over £450 sponsor money for Cancer Research UK.

Gemma said, “To serve others is such an important aspect of our lives. The ability to lose all selfishness and to think of others’ needs is not always easy, but if I could teach my children one thing, this would be it. It brings so much joy and happiness to all involved and brings us closer to our Heavenly Father. Watching Rebekah acting in such a selfless manner at such a young age has not only been an amazing example to us, but also to the local community who have supported her. She has been able to share her testimony of Jesus Christ with her friends at school, telling them of how He will be happy that she is thinking of others. We are delighted that she is being a member missionary and hope that all our family will follow her example.” ■

Inspired Invitation Leads to Obedient Endurance

By Carole A. Ewart

Mary Barber first met the missionaries when they knocked on her door back in 1975. She invited them to come back, but when her husband, Stan, came home he didn’t want to hear them, and, sadly, she had to turn them away.

At the time they had been married less than two years. Stan’s social life was centred on his mates, alcohol and tobacco, and it meant that Mary felt like a single mum raising their three children, Donna, Vicky and Stan (Jr.). They moved in 1988 to a house just two doors away from Frank and Irene Cooper. Frank and Irene were members of the Church. Irene had stayed faithful attending every week and praying that one day her husband would return. Although Frank didn’t attend, he still had a testimony of the Church.

One day Stan decided, for the first time, to take a short cut to his house down a path that ran at the back of the houses. In one of the back gardens near his home he saw an old friend he used to work with, who turned out to be Frank’s nephew. Stan was introduced to Frank and was invited to join them at the barbeque they were preparing. The missionaries had also been invited. Apart from the missionaries telling Stan about the Church that day, Frank talked to Stan until late in the evening about the gospel, and even though Frank had not been to church for many years, he invited Stan to go with him the very next Sunday.

When Sunday arrived, Stan ended up calling for Frank who was still getting ready and running late. After his first Sunday at church, Stan agreed to have the missionary discussions and so did Mary and their family. They all decided for themselves that they wanted to be baptised. Stan was baptised on 17 July 1988, just six weeks after the barbeque, and Mary and the children were baptised a week later on



PHOTOGRAPHS BY CLAIRE E. CAUNCE

Mary and Donna Barber with “Stan the Man”, whose life changed after he responded to an invitation to attend church.

24 July 1988. This wonderful event also reactivated Frank, who started attending again with his wife, Irene, who had helped Stan so much with all his gospel questions and understanding the scriptures.

The excessive drinking and smoking habit disappeared with the choice to be baptised. Both Stan and Mary knew the Church was true; their faith in the Lord and love for the gospel made it easy for them both to live the Word of Wisdom.

Stan invited his mother, Sheila, to come to his baptism, and it was then he found out that his mother had been a member for two years! She had been baptised in 1986, but had never attended church after her baptism. From the time of Stan's baptism, she started attending church and became very active in the ward throughout the rest of her life. Stan and Mary were sealed in the London Temple on 5 August 1989.

No one was more surprised about Stan's transformation after joining the Church than Mary, who was delighted to have her husband at home with his family after work and serving in the Church. His mother thought it was a "miracle"! She couldn't believe the transformation in her son.

Unfortunately, Stan was diagnosed with fibrosis of the lungs in January 2010. He had a brother and a sister who had died from the same disease at only 52 and 55 years old. He was 62. Mary said, "Some days he couldn't even get out of bed". He could hardly breathe because of the disease, despite his medication, but it did not stop him serving. While serving as a counsellor in the Middleton Ward bishopric, just six weeks before his death he drove himself about 14 miles to a less-active member just to ask him to come back to church. Nothing was going to stop him doing whatever he felt prompted to do.

Donna was to be married to a returned missionary from Australia on 26 April 2012, and because of Stan's rapidly declining health, they wondered if he would still be around on her wedding day. The whole family put all their faith in the Lord and prayed that He would allow Stan to live long enough to be present. The prayers of many were answered, and although he had to use a wheelchair, Stan accompanied his daughter down the aisle. He was called "home" just over four weeks after that lovely day.

While he lay in hospital, Mary asked Stan to find her great-grandparents when he went beyond the veil to help her find their names and family here on earth during her family history research. Ten days after Stan's death, Mary was inspired to find the necessary information at the family history centre next to the Preston Temple. She felt that Stan had helped her.

His son, Stan (Jr.), has had experiences that have brought him comfort and reassurance that Stan is still happily engaged in the Lord's work.

Stan was given the nickname "Stan the Man" which came about because if anything needed doing and Stan was asked to do it, he did it no matter how difficult it may have been; nothing was inconvenient. His stake president at the time, Warren Ferguson, said: "If I'd have asked Stan to sit and watch the grass grow, he would have done so, cheerfully! He was that obedient. Obedience must have been his middle name in his premortal life."

Mary and Stan served in many callings. Mary has served as a teacher and leader in Primary, Young Women and Relief Society and as a stake missionary. Stan served as a teacher in Primary, as ward mission leader, elders quorum president, high councillor, stake Sunday School president, and twice as a counsellor in a bishopric, the second time for nearly seven years before he passed on. Bishop Power said: "Stan was so dedicated to the gospel. He served past not being able to serve."

Mary and her three children and 12 grandchildren are all active in the Church, obedient and enduring to the end. Stan, Mary, their children, his mother and those he worked with in his various callings are blessed, all thanks to one inspired invitation. ■

Editor's Note

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