

## AREA LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

# How to Improve Spiritual Self-Reliance

By Elder Robert A. Dryden, Great Britain  
Area Seventy



Elder  
Robert A. Dryden

How do we assess the importance of spiritual and temporal self-reliance? President Marion G. Romney said: “Let us be self-reliant and independent. Salvation can be obtained on no other principle.”<sup>1</sup>

How, then, might we improve our spiritual self-reliance? The Apostle Paul defined that condition man must reach to be truly spiritually self-reliant. It is the condition in which a man has earned the right to have the living of the gospel “written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in the fleshy tables of the heart.”<sup>2</sup>

### A Remarkable Story

Occasionally a member displays a truly remarkable progression towards spiritual self-reliance. Paul is one of those.

He was the youngest of five children, raised in a home and district where drink, drugs, abuse, violence, and imprisonment were normal parts of life, resulting in family poverty and hardship. That poverty often resulted in Paul being asked to steal food for the family. He was taken in to care in his youth and was violently abused.

Below are his steps of progression and accomplishments in a little more than a year:

The Book of Mormon became the love of his life. The Holy Spirit amazed him by becoming his constant companion. He was called to be a ward missionary, and success followed in baptisms and activations. He identified (with help) and baptised vicariously 65 direct-line members of his family. He was given a car by a brother who recognised his great zeal for the Lord’s work. Paul is now really self-reliant. He received the Melchizedek Priesthood and was called to serve as a facilitator within the stake addiction recovery programme. He worked in caring for the homeless in the city. He organised and held cottage evenings for new members, investigators and returning less-active members. He was assigned to speak in stake conference and was endowed in the temple. He fulfilled his dream of going to general conference with the missionary who found and baptised him. Tears filled their eyes as President Monson entered the auditorium.

The First Presidency introduction to the Self-Reliance Services *My Foundation* course encourages us to diligently study and apply the principles of self-reliance and promises that “as you do so, your life will be blessed.”<sup>3</sup>

We reach spiritual self-reliance as we follow the guidance of the First Presidency and diligently practice simple devotions in our personal and family daily lives:

1. Keep the commandments of God.<sup>4</sup>
2. Search the scriptures (particularly the Book of Mormon) and learn to “press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ.”<sup>5</sup>
3. Pray from our hearts: “When [we] do not cry unto the Lord, let [our] hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him continually.”<sup>6</sup>

The teachings of Brigham Young harmonise powerfully with those of the First Presidency in the essential path of obtaining spiritual self-reliance. Brigham Young said:

“We . . . take all the laws, rules, ordinances and regulations contained in the Scriptures and practice them as far as possible, and then keep learning and improving until we can live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.”<sup>7</sup>

“The people [cannot receive the laws] in their perfect fulness; but they can receive a little here and a little there, a little today and a little tomorrow, and a little more next week. . . . If we wish to act upon the fulness of

the knowledge that the Lord designs to reveal, little by little, to the inhabitants of the earth, we must improve upon every little as it is revealed.”<sup>8</sup>

His message confirms that “our personal growth in the gospel comes little by little and line upon line as we live the principles we learn.”<sup>9</sup> In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

#### NOTES

1. Marion G. Romney, quoted in Thomas S. Monson, “Guiding Principles of Personal and Family Welfare,” *Ensign*, Sept. 1986, 3.
2. 2 Corinthians 3:3.
3. *My Foundation: Principles, Skills, Habits* (self-reliance booklet, 2015), 2.
4. See Matthew 22:35–40.
5. 2 Nephi 31:20.
6. Alma 34:27.
7. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* (1997), 21.
8. *Teachings: Brigham Young*, 21–22.
9. Heading in *Teachings: Brigham Young*, 21.

#### LOCAL NEWS

## British Pageant Presidency and Director in Place for 2017 Event

By Malcom Adcock, Europe Public Affairs

The presidency and director for the Church’s 2017 British pageant have been announced. Peter Trebilcock from Chorley, Lancashire, will serve as pageant president, working with first counsellor Malcolm Beverley, also from the Chorley district, and second counsellor Andrew Fagg from the Maidstone area. Alexandra Mackenzie Johns, based in the Channel Islands, has been called as pageant director for a second time following the successful 2013 pageant.

Responding to his new Church assignment, President Trebilcock said: “It is a huge privilege to be involved in this exciting endeavour. While the pageant recalls the work performed by the first missionaries of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to Great Britain and those who embraced their message in the midst

of poverty and persecution, this is just as much our own story.

“It resonates with each Latter-day Saint who has heard the truth, felt the impressions of the Holy Spirit and made the determination to follow it, with many having to make great personal sacrifices as a consequence.”

Peter Trebilcock flagged up the need for pageant performers and backstage support: “It’s a wonderful opportunity for hundreds of the British Church members to participate. We are not asking for professionals. We are asking for members, including our youth, with a growing conviction of the gospel and a willingness to serve—to share their time and talents, to help our fellow Latter-day Saints and our friends who are not of our faith to discover or renew their faith and rejoice in the



COURTESY OF PRESIDENT TREBILCOCK

**British pageant president Peter Trebilcock with his wife, Beth**

**The cast of the British pageant from 2013**



SIMON JONES

gospel of Jesus Christ and to build on the legacy of those early converts.”

Peter Trebilcock is an experienced architect—formerly vice president of the Royal Institute of British Architects—who was previously design team leader for the Church’s Preston England Temple complex in Chorley.

The British pageant was co-written by director Alexandra Mackenzie Johns, and Alex is now looking to organise a larger cast than most Broadway shows. She said: “Telling

these sacred stories next summer fills us with joy as Church members in the British Isles, and I can only but feel that it is a joy reflected in the heavens above. I think in honouring and remembering them, we come to know ourselves more fully, and that their faith, and our faith, are more intimately connected than we perhaps realise.”

Alex is raising her two children, aged three and one, in Jersey, where her husband is a chiropractor. She is a full-time mother while also studying part-time for a PhD in theatre, which Alex describes as “a fun combination, to say the least!”

There will be ten performances of the British Pageant: Truth Will Prevail

in August 2017 (1–5 and 8–12) near the grounds of the Church’s Preston England Temple in Lancashire, North West England. The pageant tells the personal stories of the migration of early 19th-century Mormons from the British Isles to the United States, using journals, sermons and historic documents from the time. ■

## Speaker’s Chaplain and MP from Northern Ireland Receive UK Family Values Awards

By Malcolm Adcock

Jim Shannon, MP for Strangford in Northern Ireland, and Revd Prebendary Rose Hudson-Wilkin, Chaplain to the Speaker of the House of Commons and a Chaplain to Her Majesty, the Queen, received the 2016 UK Family Values Awards from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at an event held at Parliament in London (6th December).

The Church in the UK presents Family Values Awards annually to individuals in the public eye whose work and influence have a significant impact on family life within society in the UK.

Elder Patrick Kearon, Europe Area President—who was accompanied by his wife, Sister Jennifer Kearon—praised the vision and influence of the 2016 awards recipients:

“Jim Shannon reflects family values in his approach to his own life and to the leadership he shows on topics

of vital importance to the national and international community. You demonstrate firsthand that ‘family’ is indeed the basis of strong and stable societies—nationally and globally. Your

Parliamentary efforts and engagement demonstrate strong support for families and individuals.”

Particular emphasis was also placed on the outstanding work Jim Shannon



*Left to right: Elder Patrick Kearon, Sister Jennifer Kearon, Revd Prebendary Rose Hudson-Wilkin, Jim Shannon MP, Sister Julie Herbertson and Elder Clifford T. Herbertson at the presentation of the Family Values Awards in London*

PETER BLANCHFLOWER

undertakes with respect to supporting religious freedom and belief.

“Rose Hudson-Wilkin has championed family values and Christian ethics in her personal life and in her public roles. As the 79th Chaplain to the Speaker of the House of Commons, she has displayed a steady spiritual influence amidst the often turbulent life in the House of Commons. Thank you, Rose, for your firm commitment to the highest values of integrity, for your public service, and for your championing of faith.”

“I do believe that within our society, within our community, that family is the central building block”, remarked Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin. She continued: “I will use all my time, all my energy, for praying not just for our family and our children but for all our families, all our children.”

Elder Clifford Herbertson, Area Seventy, concluded the awards ceremony by addressing the challenges to family life and potential solutions: “As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we want to join with like-minded individuals in strengthening the family—within the walls of the home itself and in broader society. We *believe* in family.”

David Rutley MP (for Macclesfield) hosted this year’s luncheon at the House of Commons. The 2016 awards event was attended by 13 Parliamentarians from across the political spectrum. ■

## Bags of Service

By Marietta Sagal

Women and girls from the Birmingham England Stake gathered for a day of service for the local community. They assembled 130 ‘buddy bags’ for children placed in emergency care.

The Buddy Bag Foundation was organised by Karen Williams to help the 48,000 children requiring emergency care each year in the UK, as children are often taken from a harmful environment at very short notice. The bags contain items such as pyjamas, toiletries, colours and a cuddly toy.

Siân Davies, Relief Society president, commented, “Each bag

was filled with love as the women carefully selected what to put in each one.” Karen expressed her gratitude for the support shown, as “the buddy bags will make a real difference to the children not just today but in their future.” The bags were delivered to local women’s refuges across Birmingham the following week.

The women also spent the morning finishing off 109 ‘twiddle muffs,’ ready to be distributed across Birmingham. Twiddle muffs are knitted sleeves with beads and objects attached to them to help stimulate people suffering with Alzheimer’s disease and dementia.

Throughout the year, various books had also been collected and donated to help refugees learn English. ■



*Sisters from the Birmingham stake with the buddy bags*

JENNIFER MARINHO

## Help for Women in Need

By Peter Knight

Relief Society sisters from the Lichfield England Stake met together to provide help for a local women's refuge. Quite often, when women arrive at the refuge, they have no possessions apart from the clothes that they are wearing. These women, who are generally fleeing abusive relationships, often have children with them, and these youngsters can be upset and distressed.

In order to help these needy women and children, it was decided that the group would create and donate some 'welcome packs' for the refuge. For the women, these packs contained essential items such as soap, deodorant, shampoo, conditioner, shower gel, a toothbrush, toothpaste, flannels, wash bags and tissues, as well as sanitary items, socks and hair accessories.

These items were put into decorated shoe boxes. For the children, their 'welcome packs' contained colouring books and crayons, sweets and toys. The women's group from the Church also made blankets, either knitted or sewn, to add to the boxes in the hope that they would bring some comfort to the children who find themselves in such difficult circumstances.

A total of 133 boxes were decorated and filled. When there were no boxes left, the remaining items were



*Left to right: Jancis Poole, Gill Garner, Mandy Chaproniere and Min Evans-Southall holding some of the boxes that were donated to the women's refuge*

placed in four large carrier bags and distributed to other worthy causes.

Providing compassionate service in this way proved to be uplifting and inspiring for all those who were

involved. The lives of the women and children in the women's refuge will be just a little easier due to the kindness and generosity of the women who volunteered to help. ■

## LEGO® Model of the Preston Temple

By Ashley Green

In late 2014, Bishop Beharrell set the Shrewsbury Ward a challenge to 'Look to the Temple'. In 2015, I and some of my students at Cruckton Hall School (a private school for boys with autism spectrum disorders), near Shrewsbury, built a 1/40th-scale LEGO® model of Cruckton Hall. In the autumn, the model was included in a 'Brick City' exhibition in Shrewsbury Museum, where it was seen by thousands of visitors.

In 2016, my setting apart as a worker in the Preston England Temple and subsequent trips with a 12-year-old friend for her first visit to the temple and then her first youth baptism session inspired me to apply the skills and experience I'd gained in 2015 to the construction of a 1/100th-scale LEGO model of the Preston temple. The model was on display in the foyer of the Shrewsbury chapel, where it was of great interest to visitors

and ward Primary children, inspiring them to ‘Look to the Temple’.

The only non-LEGO part in the model is the angel Moroni, which I obtained from the Latter-day Bookstore in Chorley. A few of the LEGO elements aren’t available in white, so my stepson Richard Tong spray-painted them for me. ■



COURTESY OF ASHLEY GREEN

*Brother Ashley Green with the LEGO model of the Preston England Temple*

## NEWS FROM WALES

# 50 Years of Faith

By Jonathan McColgan

A powerful monument to the faith and dedication of its members, the Cardiff Wales Stake chapel recently reached its 50th year of existence earlier this month. The event was celebrated with a special commemoration day that was attended not only by members of the Church but also by Welsh Assembly Member Julie Morgan. It was a coming together of both the Church and the wider community, which is befitting for a building that has been a part of Cardiff since 1966.

When plans first came together for its construction, it must have seemed a highly ambitious project. Although the new building could fit a couple of hundred people when full, the branch that attended it in its early days only comprised around 30 members. Nevertheless, Latter-day Saints exercised their faith that they would one

day be able to fill the chapel if they constructed it, and work on the building commenced. This exercise of faith was particularly powerful as it was members of the stake who did the actual building—giving of their time and energy to lay the foundations, place brick upon brick, stone upon stone, until the chapel was done.

Leonora Russ of the Cardiff Ward, who was a child at the time of the construction and who spoke at the recent chapel commemoration day, recalled, “All the members got involved. Children did whatever they could to help and not hinder. They just came up and donated their time whenever they could. And I can remember it being cold and damp and muddy, but it was a really lovely feeling to know that we were going to have a nice building at the end of it.” Leonora helped by carrying water in a bucket around to where it was needed on the construction site.

Since then, the numbers attending the chapel have grown and grown, and the stake has increased in strength. Current stake president Jared Somerville

said, “There’s a famous quote, ‘Standing on the shoulders of giants,’ and I think some of the people we’ve heard about today are giants, with their wonderful contributions. I’m also mindful of the hard work that has been done by the previous stake presidents”.

All previous stake presidents were able to attend the commemoration day, as did many who had been baptised in the chapel building over the years. It was a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the great things that came from those who exercised faith all those years ago. ■



*Cardiff members at the 50th anniversary celebrations*

JONATHAN MCCOLGAN

# Alexander Mackenzie

By Yvonne Aston

Alexander David William Mackenzie, 93 years old, is the father of six children and has twelve grandchildren, seventeen great-grandchildren and four great-great-grandchildren. In 1961 the elders came knocking on a cold, wet, blustery day in Denton, near Manchester. The missionaries were bedraggled, wet and weary. Frankie Mackenzie saw their plight and rushed them indoors and listened to their message. 'I'm Elder John Pitcher,' said one. 'And I'm Elder Sam Gentry,' added his companion. 'We want to tell you about Jesus Christ'.

'You'll have to come tomorrow morning when my husband, Alex, will be here'.

Alex Mackenzie arrived home that evening to be told by his six-year-old son, Malcolm, 'God and Jesus are coming to see you in the morning'.

The following morning Alex didn't really fancy seeing God and Jesus, but Frankie said that he couldn't be so rude as to go out when the boys were coming, 'and after all, you only have to listen to them—what harm can that do?'

Although he believed that the gospel was true as soon as he heard the message, Alex was uncertain about baptism. He felt unworthy to join the Church because he couldn't be sure that he could live the commandments. Grant Thorne, then mission president of the North West British Mission,

visited him. He astounded Alex by actually telling him that no one was perfect in the Church! If Alex was baptised and received the gift of the Holy Ghost, he would overcome his challenges.

The whole family, apart from Alex's eldest son, were baptised in the Wythenshawe chapel, the first family to be baptised there. It is now the Manchester England Stake Centre.

In 1964 they moved from Denton to Jersey in the Channel Islands, a delightful island closer to France than England. At first there was no church on the island, but when the branch opened, Alex was simultaneously branch president in Jersey and first counsellor in Hyde in Cheshire!

Frankie, Alex's wife, died in 1969 at the age of forty-five. He says, "If I hadn't been a member of the Church and had the gospel in my life, I don't know how I could have got through that terrible time. My testimony of the doctrine of eternal families was my light in the darkness of my loss." This same faith has supported him and his family through the deaths of four of his children and two of his grandchildren.

Having held almost every position in the ward since the Church's reestablishment, Alex is known to everyone as 'Pop' and is looked on as the father of the Jersey Ward.



COURTESY OF ALEX MACKENZIE

**Brother Alex Mackenzie**

His grandson Joseph Mahy is serving a mission in Texas. His granddaughter Alexandra Mackenzie Johns served in the North of England, has directed the Nauvoo Pageant and created and directed the British pageant, in which another grandson, Matthew Mackenzie, played Arthur Ashton. She will be directing the British pageant this year in 2017 at the Preston England Temple site.

Without those two young missionaries, knocking on doors in a storm, none of these things would ever have happened. Alex Mackenzie, John Pitcher and their families have remained friends for over 55 years—that's missionary follow-up! ■

## Tender Mercies

By Elder Lee Burke

Fifty-five years ago I was a young travelling elder with six weeks' service in the British Mission, when I received a call from the mission president to supervise the opening of a new district. President Woodbury named it the Royal Windsor District and gave me the task of assigning elders to help establish it. It included the towns of Windsor, Slough, Staines and Maidenhead and we chose Slough as our headquarters.

We moved to Slough in a rented van that cost £10 for three days' hire, and we spent our first two nights in the top room of a pub at a cost of £1 each per night until we found somewhere more permanent to stay. There were no members at all in the area, so when I dropped the elders off in their respective towns to find lodgings, they were very much on their own.

Four days after we arrived in our new district in May 1961 we had our first baptism—a lady from Windsor—and so our little branch began to grow. For many months, the Royal Windsor District led the mission in baptisms, and after just three months the membership had risen to around fifty. On 13th August, the Slough Independent Branch was organised, with Brother Wettsein as branch president and Brother Singleton—a member of just two weeks—as his second counsellor. The Slough Branch soon became the largest in the Reading District.

But the work was not without its trials. Staines looked very promising at first. Two weeks after we arrived on May 17th we held a very successful meeting with fifty people in attendance. A family

COURTESY OF ELDER BURKE



*Elder Burke outside the Staines chapel*

and several others subsequently accepted the challenge to be baptised but changed their minds at the last minute. We couldn't understand why until we discovered that a lady was circulating anti-Mormon literature. But on 17th August we finally had our first baptism in Staines—a lady named Sister Lewis.

These early converts showed great faith. One lady was very nervous the night before her baptism and explained that the day following her baptism she would need to visit her former vicar to explain why she could no longer serve as his secretary.

One of the great blessings of being a missionary is seeing people's lives change as they accept the gospel. Later in my mission I was able to witness in the London temple the sealing of two families from the Slough Branch—the Singletons and the Wilkeys.

One of our strongest converts was Sister Jean Hearne. She was our best missionary, who talked about the gospel to everyone. Recently, I had the blessing of visiting with her. It was hard to conceive that the 60-year-old man who picked us up at Reading railway station was the five-year-old boy who attended his family's baptism. His son Paul now serves in the Staines England Stake presidency.

Sometimes when we serve in the Church we don't always see the results of our service. I consider it a tender mercy from the Lord that I have been able to visit the Staines Ward and learn that

the Staines England Stake now has over 2,500 members covering the area that I helped open up in 1961.

We never know what will happen when we do the work of the Lord. Sometimes the smallest act or kind word can act as a seed that will grow into something very significant. "Wherefore, be not weary in well-doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that which is great" (D&C 64:33). ■

## Editors' Note

The editors, Jason Watling and Debbie Twigger, invite all news stories, articles and photographs to be sent to [ukiensign@ldschurch.org](mailto:ukiensign@ldschurch.org). Stories should be submitted in Microsoft Word, 300–500 words, with photographs in jpg format, around 3–4mb in size. Please submit stories for the News section as close to the event as possible.

The signed written permission of all participants in the photograph, as well as the photographer and author, is required for the Church to use the article.

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