



My Personal History

Steve Dunn Hanson

CONTENTS

Title	Page
PREFACE	1
1960-1962—AUSTRALIA MISSION	3
1962-1966—BYU	38
1966-1971—ARIZONA	61
1971-2007—ORANGE COUNTY	70
2007-2009—ROMANIA MISSION	101
2009-2024—SPOKANE VALLEY	138
..	
APPENDAGE—MY CREATIVE EFFORTS ..	160

PREFACE

SOME YEARS AGO, I wrote an account of my adult life up until 1989. I have kept a daily journal since 1976, and *My Personal History* here covers my adult life since when I turned 20-years-of-age in 1960 and is compiled from that earlier personal history and my journals. A detailed account of my life prior to 1960 can be found in my book, *My Early Years*.

By definition, a personal history, or autobiography, is a massive abridgement of what has taken place in someone's life. It includes highlights of their lives as they remember them, and ones they want to make available for others to read. Many significant experiences, however, are not included because of their sensitive nature. In my case, many thousands of pages of daily journals will be available at some future time that contain accountings of such instances and will give greater detail of my life for those who are interested.

The word that for me describes my life is *grateful*. It has been everything I could have hoped for. It has been my tutor, my avenue to eternal opportunities, and my immersion in reality. From sorrow to joy and from darkness to Light. And in the process, I have discovered who I am, and who I want to be.



1960-1962

AUSTRALIA MISSION

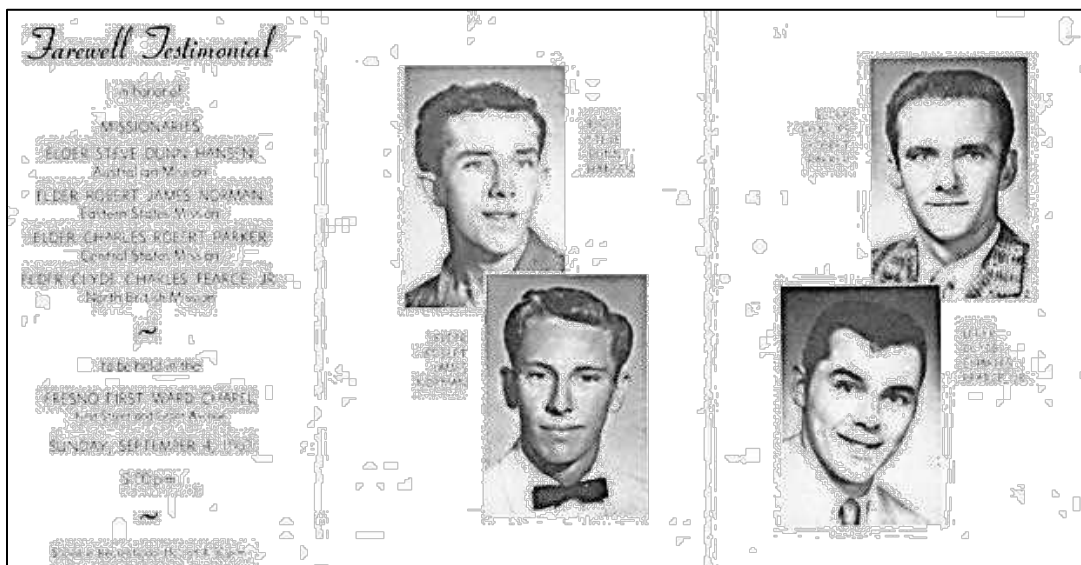
DECIDING TO GO ON a mission for me was not a slam dunk. I had a real struggle deciding to go. Looking back on it, I was less than diligent in spending time on spiritual matters prior to my mission. I was active in Church and served where I was called to serve, but my focus was not where it should have been. Subsequently, when the time came for the mission, trying to figure out what I *really* wanted to do was significantly unsettling for me. By grace, literally, I made the decision to go. As I have detailed in *My Early Years*, after prayer, and what might be classified as a personal revelation—it certainly felt like it.—I chose to go on a mission.

Previous to the year of my mission call, a young man had to be 20 years of age to serve. The age was reduced to 19 just before I turned 20. While waiting to find out where we would serve on our missions, my friends and I talked about where we hoped we would be sent. I wanted to go somewhere in the United States. Bob Norman wanted to be as far away from Fresno as he could go, and Clyde Pearce said wherever was fine with him. We received our mission calls in August of 1960. Bob ended up in the United States, Clyde in England, and I received my call to Australia.

I was living with Bob Norman in Fresno at the time, and Mom and Dad had moved to Pacific Grove. When I received my mission call, I phoned them long

distance to tell them. They didn't know I had been interviewed by a general authority or even that I had decided to go on a mission, so this phone call telling them I was going to Australia was a complete surprise. It was an emotional conversation.

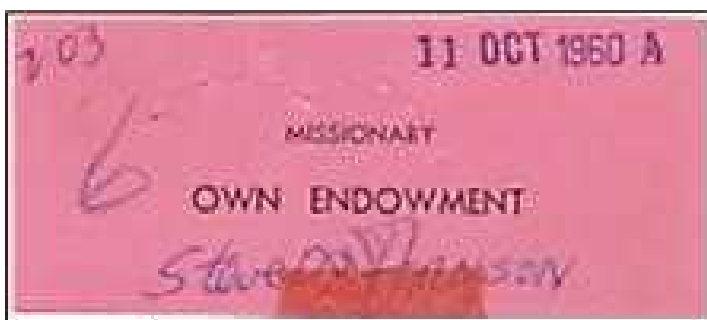
They had rightly been worried about me, but they had handled my struggles here just right. Their counsel to me was to do the right thing, and they let me make the choice. I will be eternally grateful to them for their wisdom, their example, and their support at this critical time of my life.



Although Bob, Clyde and I were going into the mission home at different times, we had our mission farewells with one other young man from our ward at the same sacrament meeting. A long meeting. Bob was the first to leave and had to be in the mission home by the end of August. Since I was living with him, when he left I moved over to the Monterey Peninsula to live with my folks in Pacific Grove until I left.

The next month or so as I waited to go on my mission was among one of the most difficult times of my life. Sara went up to BYU, and I left for the mission home a week or so early so I could spend time with her. I stayed at the home of the Miner's in Provo. He had been a missionary companion to Dad in the mid-1930s. Here I came to know on a firsthand basis what Joseph Smith's experience with Satan was like. As I lay on my bed at the Miner's home, I was overcome by an indescribable power of darkness. I was awake, but I could not move. It was as though I was being pushed through my bed and into oblivion. I struggled desperately but could not throw off that power. I prayed and pleaded with all my heart for the Lord to spare me, and

finally, at the point I felt I could not withstand it any longer, it left. I lay there exhausted, covered with perspiration, and too weak to move.



I then had an experience with Light that in a way was similar to what Joseph had. I did not have a vision, but as I entered into the mission home a few days later, my

life changed. I was literally filled with His Light. I drank in every word the general authorities said to us, whereas before I had a hard time sitting through a whole talk at stake conference. When I attended the Salt Lake temple to receive my own endowment, even though it was strange to me because I had no preparation to know what it would be about, I knew it was right. I felt my sins fall off me, and it was literally as though I had walked into the presence of the Lord. I found a corner in the celestial room and wept. Someone came up to me and asked me if I was alright. I could truthfully say, "Yes, I *was* alright."

I was set apart by Elder Legrand Richards of the Council of the Twelve Apostles. He gave me a beautiful blessing. After one week in the mission home, we had a testimony meeting, and I bore my testimony. It was the first time that I could honestly say, "I know." Before, I could only say, "I think it is true", but now I really did know, and I was anxious to be about missionary work.

At the conclusion of my mission home week, we were taken to the airport in Salt Lake and boarded a plane for San Francisco. Sara was at the airport to see me off, as was my good friend, Emily Hernandez. My Uncle Jack Dunn was there as well. It was traumatic to say goodbye, and I was quite emotional about it. I looked out the plane window at my girlfriend and instead of crying, she was laughing. I later found out that Uncle Jack had just said to her, referring to my airplane flight, "That's the closest he'll ever get to heaven." This was also my first plane ride.

I flew to San Francisco and there was met by my family. We spent several hours together before I took off on a brand new Boeing 707 jet for Australia. We left October 17, 1960, and arrived in Sydney, October 19, 1960. Total flying time was 19 hours, and we lost a day as we crossed the International Date Line. We had a brief stopover in Honolulu and also in Nandi, Fiji. That was a fascinating place with men

running around in "skirts" and the runway bordered by grass huts.

My nineteen hour flight to Australia didn't dampen my anxiety to be about missionary work. We disembarked at the Sydney airport and were met by two of the elders from the mission home, including Elder Johnson, a full time missionary who was serving as second counselor to the mission president. It took no more than five minutes talking to him to be made painfully aware of my inadequacies and failures. There wasn't just a small age difference between us, there was a life time. He was a man. A mature, dignified man. And I was a boy.

The reality of just how spiritually slothful I had been up to then came crashing down on me. Over and over the thought flashed in my mind like some huge neon sign: "Steve, what have you been doing with your life?"

I was not yet thirty minutes into my mission, and I had learned one of the most important lessons of my life. Change does not occur without first recognizing the need to change. And that recognition only comes when we are sufficiently humble. Humility, I discovered, was the key to perfection. And the stark recognition of my past spiritual slothfulness served as the motivation for me to begin to prepare myself spiritually, intellectually, and emotionally to be a fit instrument in the hands of my Heavenly Father to help bear up His kingdom.

I had an extraordinary mission. Some years ago, I felt I would like to share those experiences with others in book form, but who would buy a book, *The Mission of Steve Hanson*? Instead, I decided to write a novel based on my missionary experiences, and my book, *The Mission*, was born. It is a novel, but many of the experiences in there were mine, with a little embellishment sometimes.



Before deciding to write the novel, I had written about many of my mission experiences and have included them below. These are only some highlights. I had the kind of mission that I dreamed I would have, with trials, humorous times, challenges, friends, spiritual involvements, and manifestations of love that made it all I could have hoped that it would be. I saw many people accept the gospel and some who fell away.

My mission led me to Jesus Christ and was a great learning experience in every

way. Like a time-release capsule, my experiences pop up in my mind at the right moment to give me direction or give me a deeper/broader understanding of life. My mission blessing was not just for two years. It has been foundational to becoming who I have chosen to be now.

WELCOME TO THE MISSION

As I waited for the train that would take me the 600 miles from Sydney to my first area, a small suburb of Brisbane called Manly, my senses were bombarded with the strangeness of it all. The accents, smells, currency, mannerisms, and sights. Everything seemed like a whirling, swirling hodgepodge of confusion and excitement. I had spent only a few hours at the mission home in Sydney after being picked up at the airport. And then I was driven with several other new elders to the train station.

After an hour's wait, I found myself peering out of the train window into the dark night trying to assimilate everything. Soon the clickety clack of the steel on steel became a metronome forcing my thoughts through my mind at a rapid, consistent pace. Everything was so different. The train was taken right out of a foreign intrigue movie. I sat in a compartment called a "dog box" with high-back, black leather seats surrounded by rich, polished hardwood. The "box" sat six, three on a side with a sliding door to shut us off from the aisle that served as the thoroughfare through our car.

I had picked up a beef and kidney pie at the station to eat and sat nibbling at it trying to decide whether I liked the thick heavy pastry. After a few bites, I didn't feel hungry. It was to be a long twelve hour ride and the exhaustion I felt after nearly two full days of travel began to overwhelm and depress me. My thoughts turned to my family and my friends, so far away and so long away. Then to my own inadequacies and lack of preparation. "But I'm going to do it," I told myself. "I'm going to do it. I'm going to do it." The thought became a soft lullaby in my mind accompanied by the steady rhythm of the train wheels rolling on the track, and I fell asleep.

I awoke as the morning sun began to pour into my window. We were nearing the Brisbane station which was my destination, and I was absorbed in the many unusual things I saw. The houses setting on stilts, the men in their shorts (including businessmen with shirts and ties), and the young women riding to work on motor scooters with dress and hair blowing in the breeze. It was a beautiful, warm spring day

in this subtropical city of Australia, and my spirits were lifted by the clean beauty of this large country town.

My senior companion met me at the station and informed me we had to take yet another train ride to our area, some 45 minutes from Brisbane. Soon we were on a train that could have been transplanted from the "old west."



It's narrow gauge tracks permitted maximum sway, while its seeming springless construction emphasized every track connection in the line. The engine was a coal-burning, black smoke and cinder belching monster that pulled with a herky-jerky motion while blessing us with a covering of soot and ash. The hard seats did not have



pads and were covered with a layer of fine, grey-black dust. My companion pulled out his handkerchief which was already black from his trip into the city and wiped off the seats. I discovered you always carried two handkerchiefs when you

rode the trains. One for seat wiping and one for traditional use. As we made the eye-burning, coughing ride to my first home in Australia, he filled me in on our area and missionary life in general.

Our flat was on the second floor of an older wood frame home that had been converted to apartments. It overlooked the gully where the Brisbane suburban train passed four or five times a day. I soon learned the train schedule, because our washed clothes had to be hung up to coincide with when the train would not be there. Otherwise our white shirts took on a grey cast from the cloud of grime spewing from the engine.

Our furniture was simple and included an old double bed with a thin and scratchy horsehair mattress, a small free-standing wardrobe, a couple of hardwood chairs with a small table in the kitchen, and a sagging wicker sofa on the sun porch.

There was no heating system, nor hot running water. There was a small wall gas water



heater in the bathroom above the tub. It would heat the water literally by the drop. But it was enough to give us a lukewarm bath. However, its vrooomph, vrooomph, made us feel like it was on the verge of an explosion. So as soon as we got our minimum two inches of water in the tub, the contraption was quickly turned off.

To add to the amenities of the place, there were the biggest cockroaches I had ever seen. Two and three inches long, and they could fly. As we turned on the lights at night, after coming home from a meeting, the bugs would scurry by the score into the cracks and crevices of our flat. It is amazing how adaptable we are, and this place soon became home to me.

THE HOLY GHOST

Coming to know the reality of the Holy Ghost was one of the great blessings of my mission. One evening just a few weeks after arriving at my first area in Manly, I finished writing a letter to home. I didn't want to miss the first postal pick up in the morning, so I asked my companion if it was all right to run the letter to the mailbox just a short distance from our flat. With his approval, I walked down the wooden stairs from our second story apartment to the front yard.

It was a dark night and a lack of adequate street lighting made it difficult to see very far ahead. In order to get to the mailbox I had to cross an old, narrow bridge that spanned the gully where the Brisbane suburban train ran. The pedestrian lane was on the south side of the bridge and was not quite wide enough for walking two abreast. At the far end of the bridge, just before the mailbox, a bridge pillar extended ten to fifteen feet in the air and doubled



The new missionary

as a telephone or power line pole.

My mind was on home as I began to walk across our front yard. But suddenly my thoughts were interrupted by a clear, distinct voice that said, "Don't go over there." I stopped immediately, instinctively looking around to see who uttered those words, yet knowing all the while that it was no earthly voice. Finding myself alone, I peered across the bridge to the mailbox.

As my eyes searched for a reason why I shouldn't deliver my letter, I caught a glimpse of a slight movement by the large bridge pillar. As I stared at the pillar, I made out the form of a man, almost imperceptible in his movement, his dark clothes nearly one with the shadows. I hesitated for a moment then quickly walked back across the front lawn and up the stairs to the flat. From time to time I would look out our porch window to see if the stranger was still there. It was at least an hour before he finally left.

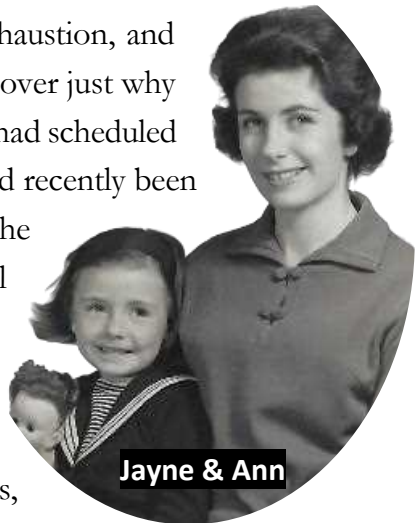
I never learned who he was or what his intent was. But I did know that he posed a potential danger to me, and I had been kept from that danger by my first experience with a spiritual voice of warning.

THE MIRACLE OF CONVERSION

It wasn't long before the strangeness, the exhaustion, and the uncertainties of a mission left, and I came to discover just why I was there. One of the first meetings my companion had scheduled for us was with Ann Cante, a young mother who had recently been divorced. She had a four year old daughter, Jayne. She was living with her parents and worked at a local chemist shop (drug store).

My companion had only met with her once or twice and indicated she was responding favorably to the gospel message. As I met her, the sadness, depression and bitterness that she felt became very evident.

Her idealistic view of marriage and family life had been horribly marred by an unfaithful husband. Her depression had been so great that more than once she had contemplated suicide. Her's was a day-to-day existence with no hope to sustain her. Only her devotion to her daughter kept her going.



As we met with her during the next few weeks, I could see a visible change take place in her countenance. I could hear a ring to her voice that wasn't there when I first met her. And the smiles became much more frequent. Each new gospel concept was absorbed and added a tiny new light to her eyes. She accepted the baptismal challenge and the day of her baptism was set.

My thoughtful senior companion gave me the opportunity to perform that sacred ordinance that cleanses, commits, and brings a oneness with our Divine Parent. As I lifted her out of the water, that woman literally glowed. She radiated. She cried and she smiled. She hugged me and kissed my cheek. And the joy I felt I cannot describe. I had played a part in changing her life for the better. But it was much more than that.

It was as though her happiness expanded and amplified my own. As though the brightening of her light made mine glow even more intensely. The transformation that took place in this woman's life transformed me as well. I was no longer a runner bearing some pre-recorded message of hope. I was involved. I was affected. I was experiencing the unspeakable taste of the fruit of Christ-like love. I was participating in the process that the Godhood is all about: To bring to pass the eternal life of man.

The great miracle of conversion, I discovered, brought the bearer of The Message a step closer to their Heavenly Father as well. And I discovered that my desire was to be a bearer of that message throughout my life.

THE ACCIDENT

In Manly, Queensland, my companion and I were riding on our bikes to an investigator's home. We were going down a steep hill when my bike brakes gave out on me. I quickly looked to the bottom of the hill and saw I had two choices. I could just keep going straight into the pasture the road dead-ended into. Or, I could turn on the road we were going to take when we got to the bottom. That road was perpendicular to the hill road we were on, and it was gravel. If I tried to turn onto it, I would likely end up a scraped-up mess because I was going 25 to 30 miles an hour and couldn't slow down.

I chose the pasture.

What I didn't see was the foot high embankment the road ran into. I hit it

straight on, and that was the last thing I remembered. When I came to, my companion was standing over me. One prong of the front frame of my bike was bent at a 90 degree angle to the other one. That's how hard I hit that embankment.

I not only had a bad headache, but my memory was gone. I could remember my companion, that my name was Steve Hanson, and I was a missionary. And I could remember my family, my girlfriend, and the people we lived with. That was about it.



My companion told me what day it was, when I asked him, and it was as though the previous months since I first arrived in Australia simply never existed. I had a letter in my pocket that I had written to my girlfriend that I was going to mail. I pulled it out and looked at the date

and couldn't believe it. I opened the letter and read it. It was all news to me.

And I was really scared. But probably not as much as my companion. He took me home, and then to a doctor. I had a severe concussion, and with some significant rest, I was told I would probably be alright. And I was. Slowly my memory came back and after a few days, except for my scrapes and bruises, I was okay.

TESTIMONY

It was a hot summer day in Wynum. My companion and I had been dodging mosquitoes all day as we tracted in this small suburban town next to Manly where we lived. For the most part, the people we met were cordial, but seemed more interested in our American accents than the message we bore. We took turns seeking entrance to the homes, and it was my door. I knocked, and after a minute or so, the door opened. We were greeted by a man not too many years older than us. But judging from the numerous, deeply etched lines on his somber face, he was one who had more than his share of problems.

As I look back upon that experience, I don't recall introducing ourselves or explaining who we were. It seems that he just simply said, "Come in." He led us

through a dimly lit living room and dining room to his own bedroom. The small room we found ourselves in also lacked light and apparently served as his study as well. Literally hundreds of books, mostly paperback, lined the walls, manifesting his apparent thirst for knowledge.

He brought in two chairs from the dining room and invited us to sit down while he sat on a small bed which was pushed against the wall in the corner of the room. Once situated, he said, "You have a message for me." It was a statement rather than a question, and we could feel we were about to have an exceptional experience. We introduced ourselves and without hesitation proceeded to give him the first discussion. His responses and his look told us he recognized the truth in what we were saying. As we concluded the discussion we handed him a Book of Mormon with a brief explanation of its origin and bore our testimonies to its truthfulness.

He held the book in his hands without opening any pages. His eyes then closed, and there was silence. He opened his eyes a moment or so later, and he said, "Whenever I pick up a holy book I say a prayer that I will first open to a passage which will contain a message from the Lord to me." Then he randomly opened the book and without looking, placed his finger on the page facing him. For a moment, he read to himself, then smiled and looked up at us. "Let me read to you what I just read," he said.

"And now my beloved brethren, ...hearken unto these words and believe in Christ; ...and if ye shall believe in Christ ye will believe in these words, for they are the words of Christ, and He has given them unto me; and they teach all men that they should do good. And if they are not the words of Christ, judge ye--for Christ will show unto you, with power and great glory, that they are His words at the last day; and you and I shall stand face to face before His bar; and ye shall know that I have been commanded of Him to write these things, notwithstanding my weakness." (2 Nephi 33:10-11)

He stopped reading and slowly closed the book. "When can you come back and tell me more?" he said. We set up the appointment and again bore our testimonies as we left.

Each meeting we had with this man was a spiritual experience. I'll never forget when we presented, in conclusion, the Plan of Salvation lesson outlining our premortal existence, our purpose for coming to earth, and what awaits us after leaving this life. We explained the three degrees of glory and the choices they represented. He

didn't say a word throughout the entire discussion. And when it was concluded, tears welled up in his eyes, and he said, "Oh, to God that all mankind could hear this."

His baptismal date was set, and we bore fervent testimony again to the divinity of Jesus Christ and the truthfulness of the message we had given. He was going out of town and would be gone almost until the day of the baptism. We urged him to continue his study and prayer and set a time to meet with him when he returned home in a few weeks.

But we never met with him again. We received a letter the day before our appointment which read in part:

"Dear Elders, While realizing that this will be a disappointment to you, I must tell you that I cannot go through with the baptism. In doing this I am not rejecting all that I've heard from you, (but)...my position at the present time is one which will not allow me to be committed to any great extent. Please don't call as I desire more than anything else to withdraw into the silence avoiding any controversy or talking."

I was shaken. I could not understand how anyone who had the spiritual experiences that this man had, and who knew that what we were saying was true, could refuse baptism. As I began to explore my own feelings, I could see that my testimony constituted more than a recognition rationally or spiritually that the church was true. I was a member of this church and a missionary because I *wanted* to be. My desire was to conform my life to that of Christ's and to commit myself totally to the Lord's work here upon the earth. *Desire* was the difference between this man who knew, and me. To know the truth, I learned, was one thing. To allow the truth to "make us free", was quite another.

WHERE TWO OR THREE ARE GATHERED

I was transferred to Goulburn, several hundred miles south of Sydney. Goulburn was a typical New South Wales town an hours ride from Canberra. Everything, except the accents and the currency, reminded me of what I envisioned the western United States to be like in the 1920's. The sidewalks along the main street were really connected porches shaded in some places by permanent wood awnings extending from the buildings. The pace was moderate to slow and the people friendly.

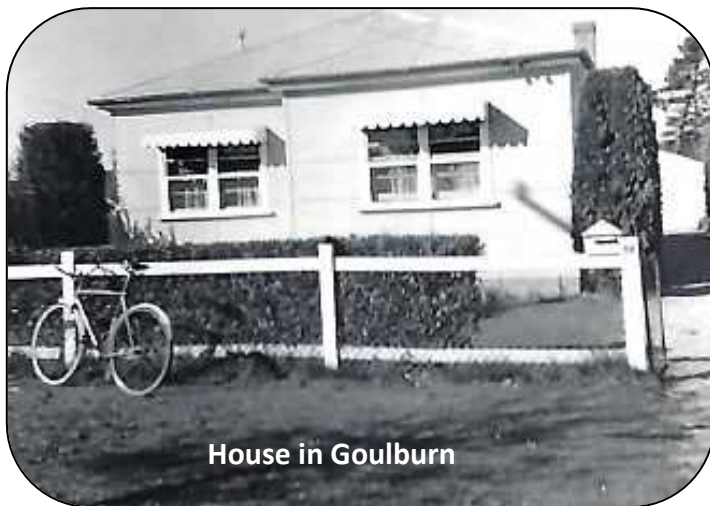
I arrived in March of 1961. It was fall in Australia, and the leaves were going

through their chameleon changes to oranges, reds, yellows and browns. Soon winter would set in, and although Australia enjoys a moderate to tropical climate over all, there are some spots that get down right cold. And Goulburn, nestled near the foot of Australia's only real mountains, the Snowy Mountains, gets about as cold as you get in the land down under.

I spent my first summer in hot, mosquito-infested Brisbane, and now I was given a chance to experience winter at its most severe on this island continent. As far as temperature and snowfall go, it certainly didn't compare to the 30 degrees below zero and ten foot high snow drifts I experienced as a boy in southeastern Idaho. For that matter, temperatures rarely dropped below 20 degrees Fahrenheit and seldom would there be more than a few inches of snow on the ground. However, all in all it was one of the coldest winters I have experienced.

The constantly blowing wind and the high humidity slid the cold through your clothing and wrapped it around your bones no matter how many layers you put on. And there was really no place you could go to get warm, because central heating was non-existent in the town of Goulburn.

We lived with a fun-loving, very arthritic Seventh Day Adventist widow who, with a twinkle in her eye would tell us that she had never been turned down yet when she invited one of her Seventh-day friends over to her meat and potatoes Sunday dinner. But in spite of her personal warmth, her house was cold. The only source of heat was a fireplace in a small living room off the kitchen. Our bedroom was exactly on the opposite side of the house and did not share the warmth of that fire.



House in Goulburn

To keep from freezing at night, I wore four sets of bedclothes including garments, long johns, pajamas and a robe. In addition, I would put on two pairs of socks. The bed itself sagged under the weight of the blankets, seven or eight in all. And to make sure I'd covered my bases, I put a hot water bottle at the bottom by my

feet. Actually this was more psychological than practical. Within an hour it was a cold water bottle, and by morning it was in danger of freezing solid.

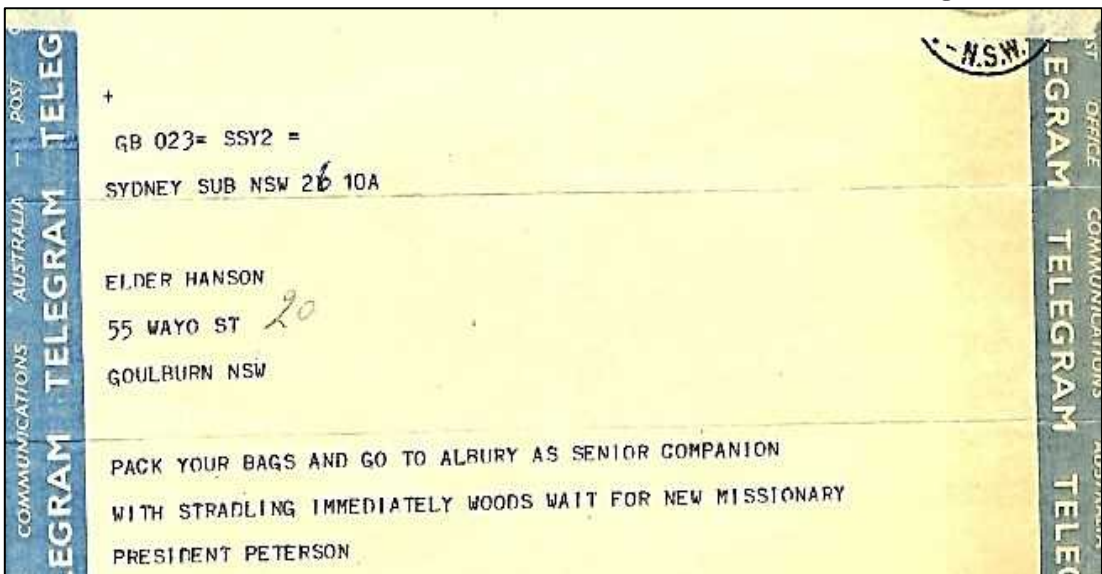
All prayers, reading and study classes were held in bed under all of the layers. And sleeping was difficult. I finally figured a way to get my entire head wrapped in the covers with just a small opening for my nose to find fresh air. And that was the position I held all night.

Getting a bath in the morning was another challenge. The water was slowly heated as it dripped through the small water heater attached to the wall in the bathroom. By the time there was enough water in the tub to take a bath, it was lukewarm at best. I could bathe very fast.

As short as my bath was, I was in there long enough to have one memorable experience. As I was finishing up my 45 second scrub down, the water began to slosh back and forth violently. It was an earthquake. I have never felt so insecure before or since. I could see the house split in two with me sitting there in my all-together. Fortunately, the house stayed intact, and my modesty was preserved.

Goulburn was a very difficult place for proselyting. In the four months I was there, I don't remember having a serious investigator. But this was to be the setting for one of my most memorable spiritual experiences. A month or so after I arrived, my companion received notification he was being transferred immediately. The mission home delighted in sending cryptic transfer telegrams.

Below is a telegram example using my own transfer from Goulburn to Albury a few months later. One of the missionaries was told where he was being transferred



to, the other instructed to wait for his new companion. That was it. If you were being transferred, you figured out for yourself how to get to where you were assigned. On the other hand, all the missionary knew who was left was that his new companion would be coming on the train. He didn't know which train or the day he would get there. He had to go to the train station whenever a train was scheduled to arrive to see if his new companion was on it.

In this instance, my new companion was coming from over 1,200 miles away. I checked the train station once or twice a day but ended up being by myself for almost a week. My companion and I were the Church leaders in Goulburn, and the closest other missionaries to me were 50 miles away. There were just two member families in our town, and neither they nor I had a telephone.

It was at this time my feet chose to break down on me. I had purchased a pair of Australian shoes, and apparently my feet were not compatible with them. When my companion left, I could ride my bike, but I had significant pain when I walked. So, as I waited for my new companion, I spent most of the time by the fireplace in our home reading with my feet propped up so no pressure was on them.

Fast Sunday came, and I still had no companion. I had the keys to the building where we met and my companion and I always opened the building and got everything ready for the meeting and conducted it. I couldn't contact the members if I cancelled it now, and even though I didn't have a companion, I felt I had to take care of the services so the members wouldn't be disappointed.

My feet were very painful as I dressed, straddled my bike, and rode to the hall where we held our meetings. I arrived ten minutes early to clean the room up a bit, remove the cigarette butts and dust the benches and the old table we used for the sacrament. I then prepared the sacrament and sat down to read the scriptures and rest my feet while I waited for the members.

The member families seemed total opposites. The one, young with children, the other retired and no family nearby. The young couple were recent converts, and their dedication to certain church principles, particularly the word of wisdom, ebbed and flowed. The older couple were rock solid, and both had been members all their lives. He was a United States citizen, and she his Aussie bride. They lived for a number of years in the states and had come back to the slower paced life of Australia to spend their closing years.

She was our pianist. There was an old, yellow-keyed piano in our meeting room, and it was badly out of tune. She had lived without a piano for years and was a little rusty to say the least. But she had an ingratiating smile, and her timid enthusiasm always encouraged us to sing.

Our meeting room was always cold. Our budget didn't allow for an electric heater, and the lessor did not run the building's gas heater on weekends. Even bundled up as I was in my overcoat, suit and sweater, I was starting to feel the cold. My concentration on the scriptures began to wane as I got colder, and the time we were to start our meeting came and went.

Although both families were sometimes late, they had never been this late before. I began to feel sorry for myself. I had made a special effort, pained feet, no companion and all, to provide a meeting for the members, and no members. The longer I sat, the more frustrated I felt until at last I decided no one was coming. I started to refold the sacrament cloth when in panted the dear elderly sister. Her face was flushed and pink, both from the cold as well as her own physical exertion. Her husband was sick, she explained, and since she couldn't drive their car, she rode her bike the five miles into town from their home so she wouldn't miss church.

I didn't want to disappoint her, but it seemed to be a little foolish to hold a fast and testimony meeting with just the two of us. But as I saw her anxiousness to participate in a church service, and I felt my own thirst for a meeting with a member after days by myself, I said, "Well, it looks like with a pianist and a priesthood holder, we have all we need."

And we commenced to participate in probably the most meaningful fast and testimony service of my life.

Back then, a Melchizedek priesthood holder always gave the prayers in sacrament meeting. So, I said the opening and closing prayers, blessed and passed the sacrament, and conducted the meeting. And this dear sister played the hymns as sweetly as I have ever heard them played. The tears began almost immediately, and the Spirit filled this dirty makeshift chapel. As the two of us sang, it was as though we were joined by a host of angels. I have never uttered the sacrament prayers with more humility and desire. And as we partook of the emblems of the Savior's sacrifice, the reality of what He had done for us bore upon our souls with unspeakable understanding.

We bore testimony of our feelings and our love and knowledge of Jesus Christ and our gratitude for what He had done for us. Then with tears streaming, we sang our closing hymn, I offered the prayer, and we fell into each other's arms. A young, inexperienced missionary and a beautiful daughter of God in the winter of her mortal life, had for a brief moment shared a glimpse of the eternities.

HOW TO GAIN WEIGHT

As mentioned above, from Goulburn, I was transferred to Albury, on the New South Wales and Victoria border, the most southern part of our mission. Here we lived in Mrs. Plas' detached garage that was made over into an apartment of sorts. Our toilet was an outhouse by the garage with a honey bucket. The honey bucket man came by every few days to leave an empty bucket and remove the full one. What a job.



Our land lady, Mrs. Plas, loved us and we loved her. She fed us five meals a day. A pre-breakfast, breakfast, lunch, dinner(tea) and a supper when we were ready to go to bed at night. I gained weight fast. I reached 175 pounds which is by far the heaviest I have ever weighed in my life.

ENDURING TO THE END

My mission was hard. And the multitude of spiritual experiences I was blessed with were interspersed through difficult and trying times like oasis's scattered in a desert. Seldom close together, they seemed to come along at just the right time to quench my spiritual thirst, to rejuvenate my tired soul, to prepare me for the next period of treading through seemingly barren, unproductive time. At no time was this test, and subsequent growth, more poignant than my experience as a new senior companion in Albury.

Albury was a beautiful town on the southeastern border of New South Wales.

It sprawled over gently sloping hills and was surrounded by a lush carpet of deep green wild grass dotted with gum trees. My companion and I were the only missionaries within 100 miles and were the only priesthood in town. Our small Sunday school consisted of two women (mother and daughter), four children, and Brother Ashley who was inactive.

The town had been nearly tracted out when I first arrived. That means that within the past year or so, virtually every home had been approached by the missionaries. But we were making good progress. Brother Ashley agreed to come to church and live the Word of Wisdom. We received permission, after a short trial period, to give him the Aaronic priesthood and ordain him a priest. In addition, we had two excellent investigator families, the Metz's and the Walkerdon's, complete with husband, wife, and children, who were near baptism. We would have the nucleus to form an official branch of the Church. We were excited.

But soon our/my desert came. Brother Ashley slipped back into inactivity. It became increasingly difficult to get meaningful appointments in our tracting efforts. We discovered that the local Church of England minister had written a letter to all his parishioners warning them not to talk to us. With the more rebellious members of his congregation, however, this had exactly the opposite desired effect. Unfortunately, their motive was rebelling rather than sincerely seeking truth.

We even had a man try to run us down in his car, he was so angry with us and our message. Then I was hit with some problems of a personal nature. I received a "Dear John" from my girlfriend, Sara, simultaneous with a re-occurrence of a serious eye problem, iritis and an eye ulcer. That left me temporarily without the use of one eye and generated unpleasant, energy-sapping side effects.

But that wasn't all.

Our "golden" contacts began to tarnish. First, Brother Metz decided to stop discussions for a time because of the belligerent attitude of his wife. Then, the final straw. We had been working with Brother Walkerdon, the head of the other fine family, to help him overcome his tobacco habit. He had nearly stopped smoking when we re-challenged him and his family to baptism. There were five children in the family, and his wife and older children wanted to be baptized. But Brother Walkerdon was stalling because of social pressures and his reluctance to totally give up tobacco. He finally told us to come to his home on a following evening, and he would give us his decision. We asked him to fast and pray about that decision, and we did the same.

The day came, and we expectantly and somewhat nervously rode our bikes to the Walkerdon home. His wife greeted us at the door and led us into their small living room. There sat Brother Walkerdon. His face was flushed, his eyes moist, bloodshot, and gazing listlessly. He was stone drunk.

"I have decided not to go ahead with the baptism at this time," he slurred through a guilty grin.

His wife sadly shook her head. I was angry at what this man was doing to his family and I, not so gently, told him so as we left.

A few days later, my companion and I were standing on top of one of the beautiful hills outside Albury and were looking down on the town. As if a dam had burst, a flood of homesickness enveloped me, nearly drowning me in self-pity and discouragement. I wanted to quit. I had been out nearly a year now, and I wanted to go home. It was just too tough.

And then I thought about the shame of coming home early when I didn't have to. I thought about the expense of the return flight. I thought about the faith my parents had in me. And I examined my own feelings about the Savior, about the church, and about what I was doing. Gradually, I began to sense the invigorating spring breeze as it brushed my cheek and ruffled my hair. The yellows, pinks, greens, and whites of the hillside splashed with wild flowers cheered me, and I smiled as I thought, "The Lord certainly knew what He was doing sending me all the way to Australia. Because if I were in the states, I might have been on the next bus home."

However, I was still ready for my next oasis. And it came. I was soon transferred to Sydney and called as a supervising elder. I received excellent medical care for my eye, and it was healed. And then, not long after I left Albury, I received a letter from my former companion. The Walkerdon's and Brother Metz had been baptized. And our landlady, Mrs. Plas, was investigating the Church.

As I pondered this experience, I came to understand that endurance and faith are not just inseparable, but, in cycle-like fashion, they perfect each other. Experiences which require faith in order to endure, in turn develop faith through the enduring. It is this constantly re-occurring process that lifts us from one level of faith to another. And if we will, it continues until we reach the pinnacle. A point of total spiritual self-control where, like the Savior, we become emitters of Light, enduring all things, and overcoming all things.



Our home in Turramurra

WHAT EVERY MISSIONARY APARTMENT SHOULD BE LIKE

From Albury I was transferred to a suburb on Sydney's north bay called Turramurra. Here we lived in a mansion that had been converted

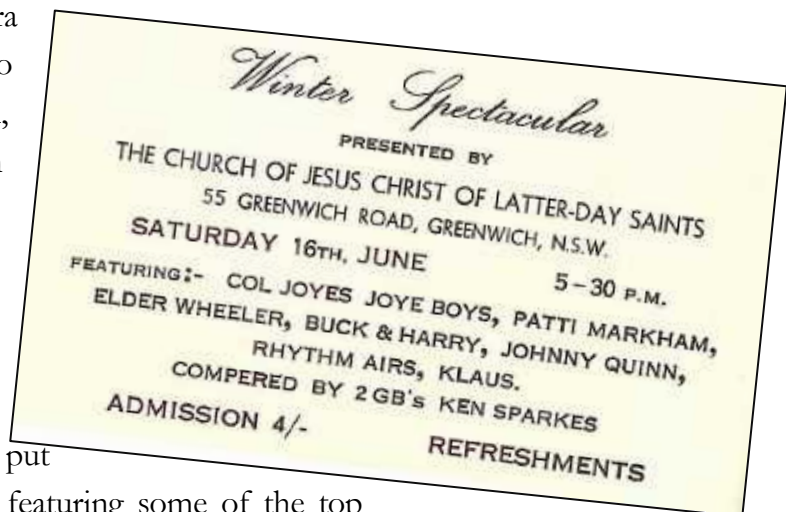
to a boarding house for rich people. The owner of the house really liked the missionaries and let us stay there for a fraction of the rent everyone else paid. We had five opportunities a day to eat and had genuine silverware and chinaware, and a four to five course meal at every feed.

It was here that we got a car to use, and I would spend the rest of my mission in leadership positions with opportunities to learn and endure and serve.

THE YOUTH SPECTACULAR

From Turramurra I was transferred to Parramatta, a clean, middle-class suburban town west of Sydney, where I was called to set up and run the youth missionary efforts in Sydney. We had much success. We put

on a youth spectacular featuring some of the top singing stars in Australia and a full meal with most of the food donated and all of the entertainment donated. There were hundreds of young people there who were not members of the Church, and the door was opened for them to hear the gospel.



THE CONVERSION OF A PARAKEET

We lived in a house where we had to do our own cooking. What a change in living conditions. We liked our landlady who owned the house, but she was often drunk. Another boarder was an old man with an artificial leg, Mr. Kraft. He had a parakeet that he could never get to talk. We saw that as a challenge, and taught it to say, "Jock's a Mormon." That upset Mr. Kraft, and he tried to teach it to say, "Jock's a Baptist." But Jock's response was always that he was a "Mormon."

Finally, we "grew up," and decided that it was better to be kind than clever. We taught the bird to say, "I love you Mr. Kraft." When he heard his bird say that, he was ecstatic. And that made us happy too.

It was here that three of us missionaries formed a singing group called the Mormon Trio. We ultimately sang in many locations of our mission and were on a prime time TV show in Brisbane.

JUDGE NOT, THAT YE BE NOT JUDGED

We had coming to our mission a general authority, an assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve. Because of my media contacts, I was given the responsibility of handling the press and publicity to obtain as widespread coverage of his arrival and purpose for coming as I could. Since this authority was not an apostle, it was doubly hard to convince the news media that this was a worthwhile news event. But we succeeded to the extent that a few reporters from radio stations agreed to meet with him at his hotel. The time for the press conference was set and all seemed to be going according to schedule. Until he arrived at his first class hotel in downtown Sydney.

At the front desk he was given his room key and asked if he wouldn't like to freshen up after his long 19 hour flight. But instead, apparently struck by the opulence of the beautifully decorated lobby, he turned to the desk clerk and asked: "Just how much is my room a night?" The answer ignited an explosion. "I just wanted to stay here two nights, not buy the place." he boomed. And with that he turned to the elders escorting him and said, "Let's get out of here and find a motel close to the mission home that has a reasonable charge."

Off he went, seemingly oblivious to the fact that his press conference was to be held at that hotel in just one hour. When I heard what had happened, I was

mortified. How could he do this to me. We notified the participating reporters and tried to talk them into meeting our guest at the motel he was going to stay at. But only one or two even indicated they might try. Disappointed and angry, I drove with my companion to the motel to inform the general authority what was happening.

Shortly after I arrived, I was told by one of the elders that our visitor got upset with the motel management because they had put him in a room right by a staircase.

"I'm not going to be kept up all night by people running up and down the stairs." he curtly told the manager. "I want to be put in a quiet room."

"Why that blustery old man." I thought. "General authority or not, he needs to learn some manners and to be compassionate with people." The more I thought about the situation, the more upset I got, and the more animosity I felt toward him.

Then came the conference. But as he spoke, there was a sweet serenity about him. And his words were carried by the Spirit to my heart and testified to my soul that here indeed was a man of God. My ill feelings melted away as I listened to this good man instruct and bear witness. I had been judging him, and I was very sorry for that.

Then, just prior to him being taken to the airport to go back to the United States, the mission president told him I was going in the hospital the next day for an appendix operation.

"Would you like a blessing?" he asked me.

I did and was so very grateful for his consideration. When he laid his hands on my head, a great warmth seeped through my body and made me weep. The comfort and assurance and peace and power of his blessing was an unforgettable experience. I knew I would be healed. He promised to get in touch with my parents when he returned back to the states and let them know I was going to be all right. He had nothing but love and compassion for me.

I learned an important lesson about others and about myself. All of us are imperfect. Our bodies do imperfect things while we are in the process of learning to master them. We need to look past the actions of others and remember they are children of God.

THE GIFT OF HEALING

In terms of convert baptisms, Parramatta was my most productive area. For our part, my companion and I were enthusiastic, hardworking, and desired to be responsive to the Spirit. But the area itself was ready for the gospel. The Parramatta chapel was a beautiful, recently built building occupying the same ground on which Captain Bligh of Mutiny on the Bounty fame built his home. The Bligh gardens and fountains remained and now surrounded this unusual LDS chapel.

The bishop of the ward was missionary oriented, and the members were kind and friendly. But the real key to our conversion success was the teenagers and young adults of the ward. To the youth, every get-together was a missionary meeting, whether a dance, a party, MIA, or sacrament meeting. And many of these young members would bring non-member friends.

Each baptism I witnessed here had its own unique story. And all of them had young members directly involved. They included:

- The conversion of a young lay Baptist minister.
- The night baptism of a number of youth converts in a beautiful river with a heavenly mist rising from it. A mother, who was not a member, came "just to see her son baptized," but was so filled with the Spirit she requested to be baptized herself that night.
- The baptism of a young woman who had been attending church for years, but because of parental restriction had to wait until she was 18 to be baptized.
- The conversion of a teenage boy who was so lazy he laid on the sofa while we presented the discussions, but upon accepting baptism turned his life around and became productive. His mother was so impressed she took the missionary lessons and was baptized.
- The baptism of this boy's next door neighbor who was one of the most socially backward young men I have known. He was assimilated into the church and was changed to the point that his mother was converted as well. He later served a full time mission.

But one of my most memorable experiences in Parramatta was associated with the conversion of John Merrill. There was nothing particularly unusual about this 15 year old's acceptance of the gospel. He was fellowshipped by member friends and was

baptized. His parents were very happy about him joining because of the positive influence of his LDS friends. But they were not interested themselves because they were "too old to change."

John, an only child, had come late in their lives, and now both parents were in their early 60's. In addition, Mrs. Merrill had serious health problems. She was an asthmatic whose attacks were so severe that she had to guard constantly against a recurrence. Over the last 20 years she had been in the hospital almost as much as out and now was weak and emaciated. Her doctor would not even permit her to wash her hair. So sensitive was her health problem, that this simple act could throw her into a life-threatening attack. So she had to go to the beauty parlor where her hair could be dried immediately after it was washed.

While we were teaching John, the inevitable occurred. His mother suffered another attack and was hospitalized. This time, however, the doctors offered no hope. "She will never make it out of the hospital alive," was their brief, pessimistic prognostication. Shortly after his mother had entered the hospital, we offered to drive John to visit her. On the way we were impressed to talk to John about the healing power of the priesthood and told him we would be happy to give his mother a blessing if she would like. His mother was in a large ward with perhaps as many as a dozen beds. Each bed could be isolated from the others by drawing closed a sheet curtain attached to a circular ceiling track. She was being fed intravenously and had an oxygen mask.

After we spoke with her for a minute, John suddenly said, "Mother, the elders have the power to heal you. Would you like them to?"

Without hesitating or questioning, she looked at us and said, "Yes, I would."

With that statement and reply, I began to be quite nervous. I had never given a healing blessing before, and my companion hadn't either. We glanced at each other as if to say, "What do we do now?" As we closed the curtain around us, I said a silent prayer that the Lord would heal this fine woman through us. My companion anointed her, and I sealed the anointing and blessed her. There was certainly nothing eloquent about that blessing. In fact, the only thing I can remember I said was, "We bless your body that it will be healed completely." We chatted for a few minutes after the blessing and then left.

As we walked out of the hospital, I had a warm, peaceful feeling about the

blessing. I turned to my companion and said, "I feel that the Lord really is going to heal Mrs. Merrill." He had the same feeling.

Within one week of the blessing, Mrs. Merrill was released from the hospital. Her doctor, of course, could not understand what had happened. The recovery had been so rapid, so complete, so totally unexpected, and so impossible. For the first time in twenty years she began to put on weight and her skin became firm and healthy pink.

Two months later, she and her husband were baptized. I had discovered that the gift of healing was real and that as a possessor of the priesthood, I had the right, the power, and the responsibility to use it.

BEING COMMITTED TO KEEPING COMMITMENTS

I was transferred from Parramatta to the mission home where I was called as an assistant to the mission president. Here I was able to travel all over the mission, including all the way up the coast to Cairns and inland as far as Broken Hill.



President and Sister Coombs were in their mid-sixties. Yet they had two young sons who they brought with them on their missions. Doug was the youngest and at sixteen was as mature and

dedicated to missionary work as most of the missionaries themselves.

Scott was about twenty, but there were problems at his birth and some brain damage resulted. Scott would never in this life exceed the mental age of about ten. He had severe physical handicaps as well. His muscles lacked coordination, he was hard of hearing, and he had difficulty speaking clearly. But Scott was a spiritual giant. He had a testimony of the gospel and was committed to do all that he could do to magnify his calling and to serve his Heavenly Father.

Scott loved the Book of Mormon, but he could not read well so his folks bought him the complete set of Book of Mormon records. Every day Scott would spend time reading with his ears and would go through the entire book several times each year.

There was a park across the street from the mission home. Scott would watch out the window until he saw someone in the park and then would rush out to talk to them and ask the Golden Questions. Unfortunately, most of the time they couldn't understand what he was trying to say. If we were around, we would act as interpreter for him. You could be assured if you were out in public with Scott, you were going to be asking a lot of people the golden questions. He always took the lead. He was not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I remember going to a restaurant with Scott and his family and the other members of the mission presidency. I don't think it even occurred to any of us, except Scott, to ask our waitress those special questions. Nearly incoherently he began. The rest of us looked at each other sheepishly. We were all embarrassed. Here we were the leaders of the mission and it took Scott, with all of his handicaps, to show us what it meant to be 100% committed to doing what we had been called to do.

My companion and I had taught a young man who was now ready for baptism. We asked President Coombs if Scott, who was an ordained elder, could baptize him. He talked it over with his wife and because of Scott's speech problem, his small size and lack of coordination, Sister Coombs was reluctant to give permission. She was afraid something embarrassing might happen to hurt his feelings. However, President Coombs decided to talk to Scott directly. The prospect of actually participating in a baptism thrilled him. He wanted to do that more than anything and after seeing his enthusiasm and desire, his parents apprehensively agreed to let him.

The day of the baptism arrived. Sister Coombs was concerned and wished she hadn't given permission for Scott to participate. The young man who was to be baptized stepped into the water, followed by Scott. Scott positioned himself properly, raised his right hand to the square, uttered the baptismal prayer and somewhat awkwardly, but effectively, immersed the young man to complete the baptismal ordinance. The purity and dedication that emanated from Scott at that moment affected all of us, bringing tears to our eyes and gratitude to our hearts for Scott and his example.

Scott was committed. In every way he was committed. No physical

restrictions, no mental restrictions, no spiritual restrictions, and no outside influence could stop him from doing what he promised the Lord he would do.

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
AUSTRALIAN MISSION
PHONE JF 5476

Morgan Coombs
President, Australian Mission

"PAXTON" RUSSELL ST. WOLLSTONECRAFT
SYDNEY NEW SOUTH WALES AUSTRALIA

8/14/62

Dear Dr + Mrs Hansen:

It has been my great pleasure, since soon after my arrival to assume responsibility of Australian mission, to have your son very close to me as a counsellor in the mission presidency. We have travelled together ate & slept together & counselled together. I that you would like to know that he has accepted these responsibilities like a man much older.

Sister Coombs, I have enjoyed his association very much. He is a real leader & inspiration to all those who come in contact with him & especially those who he presides over. The elders all respect him. It would do your heart good to hear him speak & give counsel to the missionaries.

We wish to thank you for loaning this very fine young man to us for the short space of 2 yrs. If I had 150 like him we would get a great many more converts out of this country than we do.

We have enjoyed his singing, his testimony & the warmth of his devotion to the hard work.

We hope some day to meet you & get better acquainted

Your brother
Morgan Coombs

A TESTIFIER

Elder Harold B. Lee of the Council of the Twelve visited our mission, and as was customary, all of us were called into a conference to hear him speak. After he had spoken for some time, he seemed to hesitate and then proceeded to relate the

following as I can best remember it.

"I feel impressed to relate to you an experience I have not often related in public. Sometime ago while touring another mission, two elders approached me to ask me a question. It seems that they had conversed with a minister who challenged them as to the possibility of present day apostles. The minister said an apostle was one who saw Christ prior to his crucifixion and then saw him after his resurrection so he could witness to the world of Christ's divinity and resurrection. Therefore, there could be no apostles today.

"I replied to those young elders that they should go back to their minister friend and ask him two questions. First, what about Paul. Paul was an apostle and a special witness of Christ. Yet he did not know nor see Christ prior to his crucifixion. He was an apostle for Christ, however, because Paul saw and was spoken to by Christ on Paul's way to Damascus. And then you ask your minister this question. How does he know I haven't had the same experience as Paul?"

At that moment my whole being seemed to be on fire as the Spirit witnessed to me in undeniable fashion that the man who stood before me was indeed an apostle of the Lord. I now understood that there was a knowledge transcending that obtained through seeing or hearing or touching or even reasoning. A sure knowledge that was obtained only as a gift. A gift from the Holy Ghost.

ASK AND YE SHALL RECEIVE

As a mission presidency we toured the mission to introduce a new proselyting tool, the street survey. As we learned to use it and modified it to our circumstances, it proved to be an effective means of obtaining contacts for the missionaries. It was simple to administer and involved stopping individuals in a downtown area and asking them several questions regarding their knowledge of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The missionary's concluding statement would be something like this: "We have come over from America to tell people more about this church. We have some time available Thursday at 7:00 p.m. Would that be convenient for you?"

With this direct approach, we could often help the local elders book up with meetings as much as two weeks in advance in about one hour of surveying. We soon learned, however, to be selective in who we stopped. We eliminated young women for obvious reasons. And we had little success among the older people. Our target

group therefore became young to middle-age men. Of course, we always began our surveying with prayer, asking to be guided to the Lord's elect.

We first introduced this to the missionaries in Sydney. Then we flew to Brisbane to introduce the program to the missionaries there. We took several elders into downtown Brisbane, and we all surveyed for an afternoon. My mission home companion took a position on the corner opposite me while a local elder or two stood near each one of us to observe how we did it and to be observed as they tried it.

After about an hour of surveying, an elderly gentleman tapped my companion on the shoulder. "Pardon me," he said, "I'm wondering if you could help me find a street. I am new in the city." The elder assisted him and started to turn away because the gentleman was "old." Then he thought, "I may as well interview him since he stopped me."

"Excuse me," he said to the older man. "We're taking a survey to find out how much people here know about the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Have you ever heard of that church before?"

The man was silent for a moment and then spoke. "You're an elder aren't you?" Missionaries did not wear name tags back then that identified them as missionaries. My companion responded back quickly, surprised and pleased that he was recognized as a church representative. The old gentleman continued. "I studied the Church some years back in New Zealand. I had the discussions and read the Book of Mormon. But I never joined."

He stopped and turned his head away. After a few seconds he turned back. His eyes were now glistening from the tears they bore. "I haven't been very happy lately," he continued. "My life up to now has had no direction or purpose. This morning I was so depressed that I fell on my knees and pleaded to God that He would give me direction. And I promised Him that if He would, I would follow it. You are the answer to that prayer. Would you baptize me?"

Three hours later, this good man was a member of the church. This was not a coincidence. Both my companion and this brother were being directed by the Spirit. They had sought spiritual direction, and they received it.

A CONSTANT COMPANION

As important as any single mission experience I had was my learning how to seek, to feel, to recognize, and to respond to the Spirit. I learned to pray by the Spirit. My hollow sounding word prayers developed into sincere two-way communications with my Heavenly Father. I frequently felt a warm flush of confirming Spirit as I received answers. Sometimes simultaneous with my pleadings and sometimes later.

I learned what it meant to speak by the Spirit. It was as though I stepped away from my own mouth and mind so the Spirit could use them. I received and recognized various manifestations of the Spirit that I had not experienced before. The burning in the bosom when my body seemed to be on spiritual fire. A feeling of calm, peace, and rightness that came as confirmation of a decision I made, or simply as comfort at a time of stress and difficulty. And sometimes it felt like I received a flow of pure intelligence as the deeper meaning of a scripture unfolded, or as an answer to a puzzling question asked by an investigator suddenly came into my mind.

I learned that the Holy Ghost was not only a warning voice to keep me from danger but could be a constant Light to help me become a true follower of Jesus Christ if I sought it and followed it.

COMING HOME

It was October of 1962. My four and one-half months in the mission home had come to an end. And so had my mission.

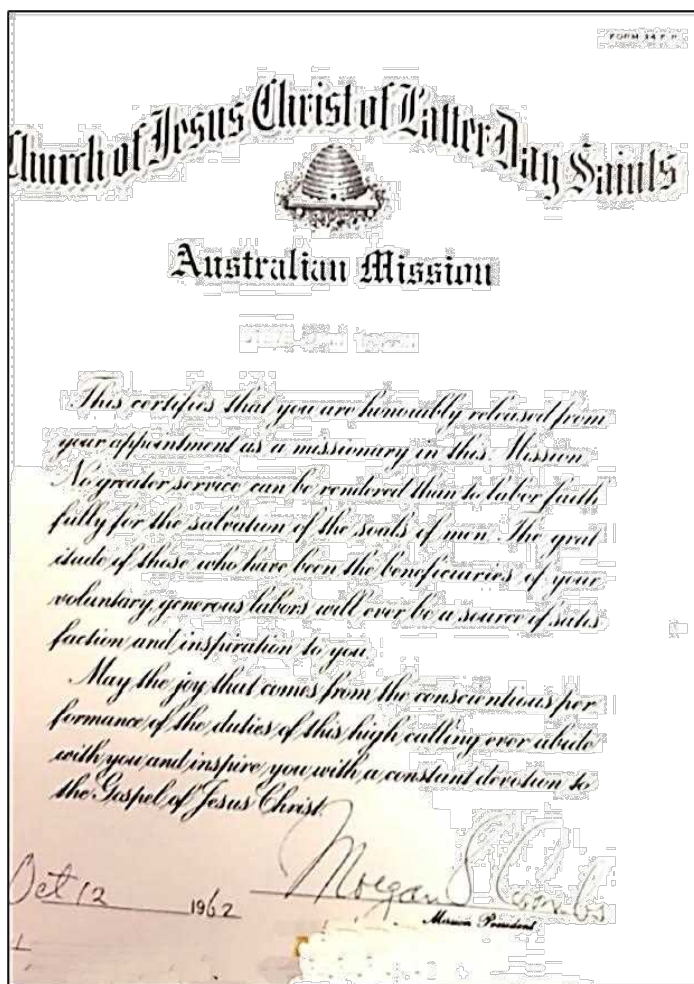
The anxiety to go home, to see my family, to go to school, and get on with life didn't quite fill the void that was being created as a result of my leaving and ending this great experience. Here are a few of my thoughts and details as I left my mission and came home.

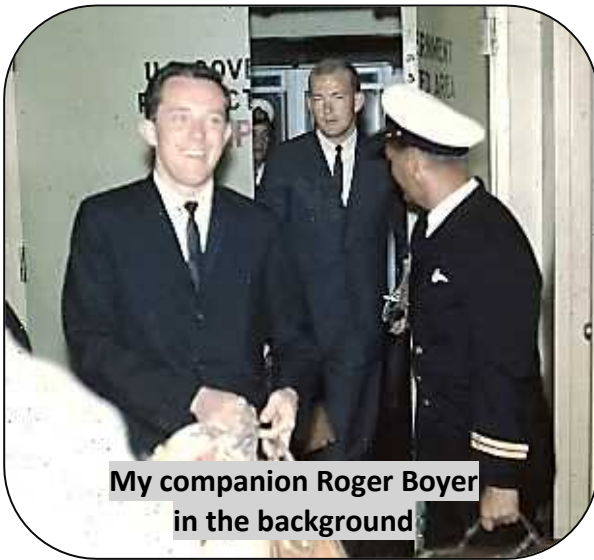
On the way to the Sydney airport, I remembered my feelings of inadequacy when I met President Johnson who greeted our plane when I first arrived. I hoped that I had grown and matured. I reflected on the beautiful people I had come to know, particularly those I saw come into the church. I was grateful for the change in most of their lives, and that I was able to be a part of that change. I thought about my companions, the towns I served in, the spiritual experiences I had, and the fun. Lots of fun. I was smiling and tearing up as I gazed out the window on what I thought would be my last ride through the great Sydney metropolis.

My companion, Roger Boyer, and I got to the airport and our luggage

checked in. Young friends from Parramatta had come to see us off. As we waited to board, our conversation became a little forced. We all knew that this farewell was permanent, and no one wanted to say anything that would prematurely bring the handkerchiefs out. Finally, the flight was ready for boarding. There were no words left. My hugs and tears said my goodbye and without turning back I hurried to the plane.

The jet took us high above the red roofs, the palm trees, the stately gums. Above the harbor with its picturesque bridge and the lush green Sydney heads that ended in glittering white sand of perfect beaches. Then ocean. Thousands of miles and hours and hours of ocean. I was on my way home.





**My companion Roger Boyer
in the background**

My side trips to New Zealand and Hawaii did little to reduce the anxiety that was growing within me to get home. The six hour flight from Hawaii to San Francisco was spent in nervous conversation with my traveling companion. I was a missionary. That was my life. I could not conceive of thinking or feeling different than I did now. I was not the same person that left the states two years ago, yet I could only think of

home as it was when I left. How would I fit into that situation again?

The plane landed. I got through customs, and there were Mom and Dad and all my siblings and my Aunt Lucille. I thanked my parents with my tears for their love, support, and example as I embraced them. My companion was nearly forgotten in the excitement of my homecoming. He was going on to Salt Lake City. I introduced him to my family and then we left.



He was my last tie with my mission, and I was pretty sober as we walked away from him to get my luggage.

As I lay in my bed that night, I felt alone. For the first time in two years I was without a companion. It seemed so different and almost wrong. I woke up the next morning at quarter to six. I was the only one up, and I read my scriptures like I did virtually every morning for the last two years. At breakfast, I made the first of several suggestions that the rest of the family didn't exactly jump up and down about. "How would you like to get up in the morning with me at 6:00 and read scriptures?" My youngest brother, Reed, nearly choked on his food. Other less than popular

recommendations I made included not watching TV on Sunday and spending a couple of hours each evening just reading and talking. It was clear. I was no longer on my mission, and the missionary routine I had followed for the last two years was going to be modified.

I reported my mission in the Pacific Grove ward sacrament meeting. The bishop had received a letter from President Coombs which he read.

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
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PHONE JP 5478

"PAXTON" RUSSELL ST. WOLLSTONECRAFT
SYDNEY NEW SOUTH WALES AUSTRALIA

October 13, 1962

Bishop Ariel Merrill
P.O. Box 3155
Carmel, California
U.S.A.

Dear Bishop Merrill:

I am very pleased to inform you that Elder Steve Dunn Hanson was honorably released from his work as a missionary in the Australian Mission on October 12, 1962, and left for home via the Pacific.

Elder Hanson has been a choice and humble missionary, proving successful, faithful and diligent in all his responsibilities. Throughout his mission he has displayed outstanding leadership ability. He was called to serve as a supervising elder, youth supervisor in the stake, and assistant to the President. He was in good measure responsible for the excellent youth program we now have in the Australian Mission. He was blessed in his labors and I feel sure that he will serve well in any callings he may receive at home.

We are all grateful for his service and to those who faithfully supported and encouraged him and we pray for the blessings of the Lord to be manifest to them.

Sincerely yours,

THE AUSTRALIAN MISSION

BY: *Morgan S. Coombs*

Morgan S. Coombs, President

MSC:dbo

cc: President James N. Wallace

I also went to Fresno and reported to my ward there and was invited to speak at the Fresno Stake conference. My girlfriend, who had sent me a "Dear John," was still in Fresno, and we started to date again. Although I really liked her, I wanted to go to BYU and have some dating experience with other young women. A wise move. I worked at Leed's shoe store in Salinas for the two or three months before going to the Y. This was a difficult time for me trying to adjust to the "non-mission world". There really wasn't anybody my age in Monterey, but I found opportunities for service.



1962 home in Pacific Grove

That Christmas, Jay White walked into our chapel in Pacific Grove. He was home for vacation from the Y. Jay was one of my high school friends who I played basketball and talked about "intellectual" things and the Church with then. He had been tracted out by missionaries, and our experiences together made him want to know more. He joined the Church and seeing him and the choices he made was a real bright spot.

But my "coming home" adjustment was long and painful. It felt like I was slipping out of the Celestial kingdom and back to the Telestial. It would be sometime before I understood that one could live celestially in a telestial environment and that was, in fact, the "proving herewith."



1962-1966

BYU

I BOUGHT A NO frills 1958 Plymouth that had no radio and, of course, no air conditioning. It had low miles and was in pretty good shape. It had huge fins that looked like the tail of a World War II bomber, but I was excited to go to the Y and glad I had any kind of car.

Clyde Pearce was in the bishopric of the BYU 12th ward and found me a place in his ward. It was a basement apartment with only 60 watt light bulbs, but my roommates were good. Ron Bitter was also in this ward. He used to date my cousin, Janet Handly, before his mission, and we had double dated then. We became great friends. The fall semester of 1963 I moved in with Ron. He and his roommates had formed a tongue-in-cheek house fraternity called the Nu Omega Mu. More will be said about them.

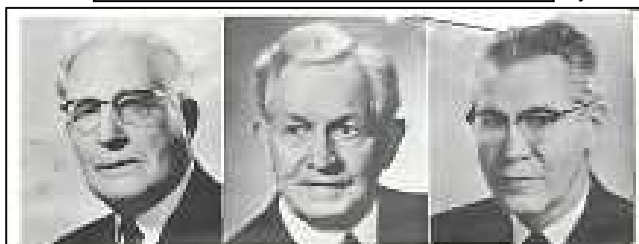
My apartments at BYU were for the room only, and I had to buy my food at campus cafeterias and/or eat at girls' apartments when I was invited. I had allocated a dollar a day for my food. I would generally not eat breakfast. For lunch I would have a hamburger, root beer, and a brownie. That cost 40 cents and for supper I could really splurge with 60 cents. Fortunately, up until the time Joyce and I started to date seriously, I had a dinner appointment virtually every Sunday. My total budget was

\$100/month: \$30 for rent, \$30 for food, \$10+ for gas, and the rest for incidentals.

I was called to be the Aaronic Priesthood General Secretary in the BYU 12th

**BYU 12th Ward Sunday
Program** First Presidency, Stake
Presidency, Bishopric

ward for my first Church assignment there. I had responsibility for the young men who were not yet ordained



B.Y.U. TWELFTH WARD



elders. As I recall, we had 60 or 70 of them in the ward. We had fun, and I felt I had an opportunity to influence them to go on missions. One thing we did was to rent a bus and take them to the Manti temple to do baptisms for the dead. As they were coming on the bus, I had each young man show me his recommend to make sure he had it. They all did. We got to the temple, and I helped usher them in. I was the last one into the temple and went up to the desk to enter.

I had forgotten my own recommend. Fortunately the bishop, Bishop Thorn, was

there, and I got in.

I dated a lot that first semester and met many fine young women. My good friend from Fresno, Emily Hernandez, was there, and we had this standing thing that if either one of us had a place we wanted to go and didn't have a date, we would ask the other. We had a lot of fun and a great brother-sister relationship.

I worked hard in school and got top grades. I was planning on going to dental school and loaded up on science classes. But I found that dentistry was not for me. I decided to major in economics and minor in political science with the intent of ultimately going to law school.

I was a bit sad when summer rolled around, and I had to leave my friends. I

worked at Leeds during the summer and earned most of the money I would need for school the next year. It was also really good being with my family.

As I was driving to school for the fall semester, and Jay White was riding with me, we were taking the car too fast (I had just had a piston and valve job done on it) and the motor froze on me near Lovelock Nevada. They had to put a new motor in it, so Jay and I took a bus into Provo so we would be there when school started. Ron Bitter drove me back out to pick my car up the next week. The people really soaked me and were extremely dishonest. They kept raising the price and when they told me the "final" price, Dad sent me a check for it. However, when I went to pick up my



car, they raised the price again. Needless to say, Lovelock does not occupy a fond place in my heart.

While school in the fall of 1963 didn't start off too well for me, it ended up being extremely eventful. I was called by Bishop Thorn to be second counselor in his bishopric and was ordained a high priest by Clyde Sandgren, our stake president. I didn't know it at the time, but President Sandgren was a first cousin to Joyce's father. He also wrote the BYU Cougar fight song that is still being used.

I was involved in student government and service activities. I was in charge of a "Hootenanny" (a folk song festival) that the school was putting on for the students. Several days before the performance, I was down in the Cougar Eat which in those days was in the basement of the old Joseph Smith building. I had my usual hamburger, mug of root beer, and brownie, and then went outside. There were a bunch of students gathered around a transistor radio, listening intently and very somber.

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"President Kennedy's been shot."

I was in disbelief. That couldn't happen in our day. We were civilized now. I didn't know whether to cry or scream. I gathered with the rest of them as we listened to find out whether he was alive or dead. I can't describe the feeling of tragedy and oppression that all of us felt, whether we liked him as the president or not.

For several days, it seemed to be sacrilegious to even joke about anything. Everything was being cancelled. There was a strong suggestion to cancel our folk song festival that was to be held in a week or so. But there had been so much time and effort put into it, and the performers, amateurs and professionals, were counting on it. I decided to go ahead with it, thinking this may be the kind of relief the students would need. It was.

We had several thousand students attend, and it was a great show. I believe it was just what was needed to help release pent up emotions. Several weeks later I was at my Grandma Dunn's in Logan watching the live news coverage of Lee Harvey Oswald, President Kennedy's alleged assassin, as he was being brought by the police to a court room. All of a sudden there were shots fired and pandemonium broke loose. Oswald lay dying on the floor. He had been shot by Jack Ruby.

What was becoming of our country?.

I was now rooming with Ron Bitter, and during this semester, those in our apartment, the Nu Omega Mu, had a lot of activities, pulled some pranks, and generally had a lot of good, clean fun. Besides Ron Bitter, there was Bob Parchman, Dave Smart, and Swen and Laird Swenson, whose parent's house we lived in. Their father was a professor of history and their mother taught at the nurse's college at BYU.

To say our group had an influence in our ward would probably be an understatement. Ron was our YM President. Dave was our Sunday School President, and I was in the bishopric. I won't talk about our group's "exploits", but they were "unique". One thing I will mention that immortalized our group.

Bob Parchman was a graphics artist working on the 1964 Banyon, the school yearbook. The theme was BYU being a campus of the world. The graphic design was a border of flags from many different countries that framed most of the pages. What no one other than the Nu Omega Mu knew, or knows even now, is that the Nu Omega Mu flag is included in that border as well.

My roommate and dear friend Bob Parchman had several interesting peculiarities. It was important to him to be immaculately groomed and as far as his bed was concerned, it could not be polluted nor defiled by any "unclean" thing. Which meant that neither anyone nor anything other than he could get in it or on it or touch it. Before I knew about this "quirk," I was sitting on Bob's bed talking to Ron. Bob walked in and in no uncertain terms told me to remove myself. He did not allow his bed cover to be wrinkled.

When he got into bed at night, he carefully turned down the covers and the sheets as though he might bruise them if he didn't do it gently. And his sheets were lavender. We called his bed the "ark", referring to the Ark of the Covenant. When he went home to Michigan at Christmas, we put a cat in his bed and took a picture. Then we all crawled in and took pictures of us there. They were developed and were laying on his bed when he came back from vacation.

He was very close to crying.

At this time there was not a Wilkinson Center. The J. Reuben Clark library (later renamed the Harold B. Lee library) was only a few years old and was the social center of campus. The bottom floor was where you went if you wanted to socialize. If you wanted to study, you found yourself a carrel in the nether reaches of the library where no one could find you. I would use both. Generally, I would get my homework done first, then go down to the first floor and socialize.

It was here that I met Joyce. She was a friend of other members of the Nu Omega Mu and had dated Swen. She and some of her friends would come down to the table that we were at and "flirt". We became good friends. She was waiting for a missionary who had been out about a year and wasn't dating, and I was still feeling strongly about Sara. So we would talk about those feelings and other things of interest. I would often drive her and her roommates back to their apartment as well. She worked in the record library, and I would look for the chance to go up there and listen to music.

When I went home for Christmas, I dated Sara (who was still in Fresno) and felt quite strongly about her, but I knew inside that her feelings about life and about the church were not the same as mine. Within a couple of weeks after returning to school, I asked Joyce if she would like to go with me to a BYU basketball game. She accepted. We double dated with my roommate Bob, and his date was an interesting story.

He had seen a girl in the library he wanted to take out, but he did not know her. She was blonde and slender in shape which he insisted be the criteria met by every girl that he dated. He was too bashful to go up to her and ask her out, but a friend of his told him her name. He looked up the name in the student directory and made the call. I listened as he talked.



"Hello, this is Bob Parchman. You don't know me, but...

You do?" He looked over at those of us who were listening and mouthed, "She knows who I am." He then proceeded to talk about how difficult it was in our complex society to meet people when you didn't know a mutual acquaintance and how he had noticed her on campus and would like to get to know her and wondered if she would go with him to the basketball game. She said yes. He was so excited he could hardly stand it, because "she was a real knockout."

The day came for our dates. I picked up Joyce, and with Bob we rode over to this girl's apartment. Bob went to the door, and a girl who was brunette, perhaps two inches taller than Bob, and significantly heavier, answered the door. Bob asked if her roommate, he said her name, was there.

This girl replied, "That's me." She picked up her coat, walked out onto the porch, and shut the door. Bob was not a happy camper. We got to the old Smith Fieldhouse and went in. Bob was decked out in his Cougar Club blazer and was his usual immaculate self. We came into the fieldhouse at the level of the basketball floor and walked up the steps many rows to where our seats were. On the way up, I think every member of the Cougar Club waved at Bob and his date. After the game, we went over to our apartment to dance. While the rest of us were dancing, Bob found his guitar and played it while his date sat and listened. I have to say, that night I felt really sorry for his date who seemed to be a neat girl.

Joyce and I had a great time and from that point on, we started to date

regularly. I knew almost from the beginning that I was going to marry her, and that was a source of frustration for her because she didn't know she was going to marry me. For a time she decided she wanted to date some other men just to know for sure. That wreaked havoc with my school work, but I survived.

Finally she agreed to get married. We went over to her house to announce it to her folks. Her father wasn't there, and I didn't have or take the opportunity to ask for her hand as I have insisted that those who marry my daughters do. Instead, we walked into the house and Joyce in her bouncy way announced to her mother that we were getting married. Mother Swenson looked startled for a second and then gave her little laugh as she looked at me and said, "You're kidding."

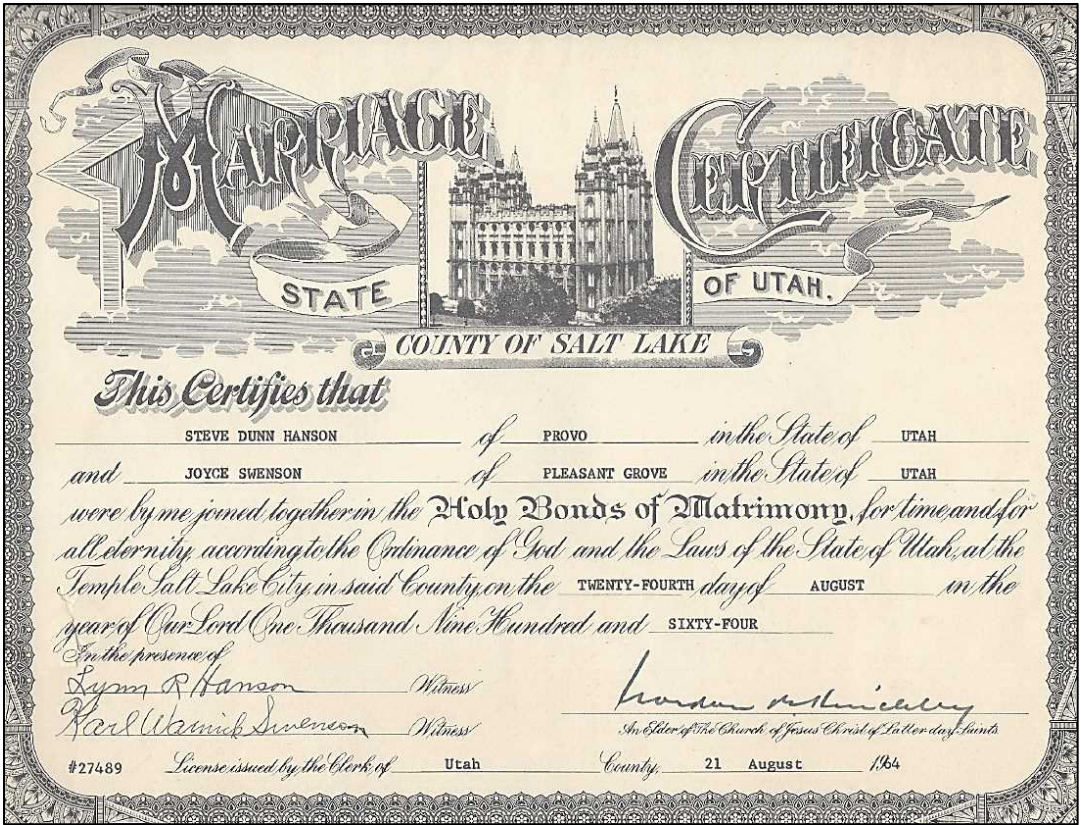
Joyce wasn't.

Our wedding was to be the coming August. I got a job that summer driving an asphalt truck for my bishop's company so would stay the summer in Utah. However, I took Joyce to Monterey with me to meet the family. That gave me some cold feet. My folks had just moved into a beautiful new home in Pacific Grove complete with a two-thirds acre lot and deer grazing in the back yard. I looked at my brothers and sister and parents and knew that everything would change again and change drastically with this marriage business. I'm afraid as I was going through these struggles, I wasn't as considerate of Joyce as I should have been. I seemed to want to spend most of my time with my family because of these feelings. In any case, we both survived my struggles here and August 24, 1964, became a sure date for the wedding.

I worked for Thorn Construction company that summer driving an asphalt truck. We found a place to live with Ted and Doris Warner. He was a professor at BYU, and she was a teacher. Our home was in their converted one car garage, and we would tend their children to pay for most of our rent. Our kitchen and bathroom were about the same size: 5'X5'. There was a "living room" where our kitchen table was, and a small bedroom.

I lived there for a few weeks before our wedding. The day of our marriage, I wanted to get an extra close shave. I usually shaved with an electric razor but decided to use a safety razor that morning with a real blade. It was a mistake. By the time I was through, I was bleeding from nicks all over my face, and the one on my chin was so deep that I could have passed for Kirk Douglas. To make matters worse, I didn't have a styptic stick to stop the bleeding, so my only recourse was to use dabs of toilet paper over each of the cuts.

Joyce and I rode up to the Salt Lake Temple together, and I think Joyce was having second thoughts as she looked at my toilet paper covered face. We were married in the Salt Lake Temple by then Elder Gordon B. Hinckley. He had interviewed me for my mission and had visited a number of times in the Monterey Stake when Dad was in the stake presidency.



We had our reception in the Manilla Ward building in Pleasant Grove. Clyde Pearce was my best man.

That night we began our honeymoon. It started off with a fully decorated car. It was the usual job with streamers and cans and "Just Married" written on the car. The only problem was the "Just Married" was written with Bon Ami cleaner, and the words became permanently etched into the paint on the hood of the car.

We would take a week driving to Pacific Grove to have an open house there and then back to Provo



to begin tending the Warner kids and going to school. The night of the wedding we stayed at a motel, I think in Springville. Then we were on our way. Our old Plymouth did not have air conditioning, and it was, as usual, unbearably hot going across Nevada. It was in Nevada somewhere where we began a series of experiences that made our honeymoon even more memorable than it would have ordinarily been.

First, I heard this slapping noise like something was hitting the pavement. I pulled the car over and looked at one of the rear tires. The tread had peeled off of the tire like it was a banana. I changed the tire and off we went. We were in Baker or Barstow (I think) when we had our next "experience". We stopped at a stop sign. I put the gear into first and started off, but I couldn't get the gear out of first. We drove into a service station to see what the matter was. There was a pin in the steering column under the hood that had worked its way part way out. The mechanic pushed it back in, and we were on our way. Periodically throughout our trip, the pin would work its way part way out, and we would be stuck in either first and reverse, or second and third gear. That was livable. I just got out and pushed the pin back in.

We drove to Anaheim and went to Disneyland. Then went up the coast to Pacific Grove. Joyce was the official map holder and direction giver. She was quite pleased when she found a short cut near Pacific Grove that we took. It saved us fifteen or twenty minutes. We had our open house in the little chapel in Pacific Grove. Besides the people in the Monterey stake there who knew my folks, we also had friends come from Fresno and some BYU friends came from the bay area.

Just before we were ready to leave to head back home, Reed and I were teasing our Chihuahua, Oscar. Reed would hold him down on the floor while I made a face at him as I lowered my face toward him. He would growl and would try to get me but couldn't because Reed had hold of him. However, as I was doing my little tease the last time, Reed raised Oscar just as I lowered my face. Oscar's fangs got me on both sides of my nose and gave me two nice puncture marks. I still had a nice scab on my chin from my shaving episode and the three holes in my face made me look a bit like the face of a bowling ball.

We decided to leave for Provo at night for two reasons. We had to be back for school two mornings later, and this would give us plenty of time to get there. The second was by driving at night, we would miss much of the Nevada heat. Remember, we had no air conditioning in the car. As we drove away, our car's engine started to get hot. We pulled into a local gas station and discovered our water pump had gone

out. So, we left the car there and went back to Mom and Dad's for the evening. We picked the car up with a new water pump as early as we could the next morning and were finally on our way.

The trip was uneventful until we were coming over Donner Pass about twenty or thirty miles out of Reno. The gear shift fell onto my knee. It just sat there. The transmission was stuck in third gear, and there was nothing I could do about it. Fortunately, we were going downhill, and third gear was what I wanted to be in. However, when we got into Reno, we had to stop at a stoplight. I had to rev the engine way up to get enough torque to get the car moving from a stop while in third gear. The car that had pulled up alongside me thought I wanted to drag race him, and he took off. We barely moved though and putted along until we found a service station. The pin had fallen out completely, and the man at the station fashioned a bolt to put in its place. That worked, and we were off again.

By the time we got to Wendover, Nevada, it was getting dark, and Joyce got sick and threw up all over. We got that taken care of and were on our way again. We had to be in Provo the next morning and didn't have any time to spare. I had driven since Pacific Grove and was getting really tired. Joyce felt like she was okay to drive, so I let her and went to sleep. I probably slept for a good hour when I was woken up by the bump-bump of the car going over rough road.

I looked out my window, and instead of on the highway, we were on a deserted dirt road with big ruts in it. I had made this trip to BYU several times and had never been on a rutted dirt road before. I asked Joyce where we were. She said she had seen a short cut on the map, and we were headed for Mercur. I had never heard of Mercur. I asked her to pull over to the side of the road. That wasn't really necessary. She could have stopped in the middle of the road because we were the only ones on it.

Joyce showed me her short cut on the map and the little dot that represented Mercur. I asked her how long she had been driving on this road. She said about 15 minutes. Going 30 miles an hour, I figured we were into the road about six or seven miles. Since it looked to be only six or seven miles more to Mercur, we decided we would keep going and then drive the 15 miles or so out the other side to the highway. Besides, we thought the road would have to get better the closer we got to the town.

Wrong.

The road got worse. Soon, it was only suitable for a jeep. We were creeping

along at 5 to 10 miles an hour now. Finally, about 1:00 a.m., we reached Mercur. It was an eerie ghost town. A perfect place for an escaped convict or a ghost. We decided we would follow the road out of Mercur down to the highway, rather than turn and go back the way we came in. After all, the road going out of Mercur couldn't be any worse than the road coming in.

Wrong.

A jeep would have trouble on that road, and we were in a boat with wheels. There were forks in the road all over the place without any indication as to which one would take us out of there. With grace, we finally made it to the main road. It took us two hours to go 15 miles. We didn't go more than a few miles when we ran out of gas. It was 3:00 a.m. and there wasn't a gas station closer than Lehi which was at least 20 miles away. And we had to be into Provo in five hours.

About every few minutes or so a car would drive by. I would try to flag it down, but no one would stop. We had been on the road now for about 18 hours, and I'm sorry to admit I was getting frustrated. We had our permanent "Just Married" sign on our car, and we were obviously in trouble and no one would stop to help us.

For the first time, I spoke in less than a kindly tone to Joyce: "Don't ever take me on one of your short cuts again."

I apologized shortly thereafter. Finally, a forest ranger coming from Lehi saw our plight and kindly pushed us the 20 miles to a service station in Lehi. We got to the Swenson's in Pleasant grove about 5:00 a.m., slept for two hours, and made it to Provo by our must be there by 8:00a.m. time.

Before school began, our BYU 12th ward bishopric was released. We were meeting on the mezzanine of the Wilkinson Center. The mezzanine was divided in two temporary "chapels" by a folding door with us on the north and another ward on the south. A portable "stand" was moved in for our Sunday services. The stand was about 8" high and probably 8' wide and 20' long. It was placed about a foot to 18" from the back wall. A portable podium was placed on the stand. The chairs in the congregation and the chairs on the "stand" were fiberglass and were interlocked to keep them from sliding.

My bishop, Bishop Thorn, was a very articulate man. He also savored momentous occasions, and this was one of those. Two members of the stake presidency were on the stand along with Bishop Thorn and his counselors, Clyde

Pearce and me. After sacrament, a member of the stake presidency stood and extended an honorable release to us. He then announced the new bishop, and he was sustained. The president invited the new bishop and his wife to come to the stand.

Clyde and I were sitting next to Bishop Thorn in the middle of the row of chairs on the stand. We both stood up to move to the end of the row to make room for the new bishop and his wife to sit next to our bishop. But Bishop Thorn motioned for us to come back and sit by him. Before I had a chance to sit down, Clyde did. We hadn't noticed that the back legs of his chair were right on the edge of the stand as we stood up, and when he sat down (he was fairly heavy) the back legs of his chair slid off the edge of the stand, and he tipped over backwards. He wasn't the only one.

Because all of the chairs were interlocked, all of the other chairs on the stand also slid off the edge and tipped back, wedging those who were sitting on them at a 30 degree angle between the wall and the stand. All you could see were the legs and the back-ends of Bishop Thorn, the two members of the stake presidency, and Clyde. All but Clyde scrambled right up with nothing hurt but their dignity.

But Clyde was stuck. He couldn't get himself out of his chair because of the angle and because of his weight. I tried to pull him up, but with leather heels and soles on my shoes, all I did was slide on the slick surface of the stand. Finally, the bishop helped me, and we got him up. The whole congregation was in pandemonium. For maybe five minutes nobody could say anything, the laughing was so loud.

I was the next speaker, and Clyde and I had the giggles about the whole thing. Finally I got my composure, and my first words were, "What a way to go."

That started the laughter again. Everyone was laughing, except Bishop Thorn. He was nonplussed. This was to be one of the sacred, solemn moments in his life, and it turned into one of the most uproarious funny sacrament meetings that was ever held in the church. Because of our delay and the nature of the meeting, we went ten or fifteen minutes overtime. When we dismissed, the hallway was filled with students from the other ward meeting on the south of the petition who hung around to see what had happened in our sacrament meeting that caused such an uproar. And when they were told, they laughed just as hard as our congregation had.

Bishop Thorn introduced me to Robert Taylor, the bishop of the BYU 32nd ward, the ward in which Joyce and I were now living in. Within a few weeks I was called as his second counselor and served with him and his first counselor, Jerry

Elison, for a year. Bishop Taylor was head of BYU travel studies, and Jerry was a teacher in one of the junior high schools in Orem. They were both singers and actors, and Jerry was a director and producer of musicals -both with his junior high students as well as for local adult productions. Ultimately, he produced and directed several musicals at Robert Redford's Sundance outdoor theater.

This was an entirely different bishopric. Bishop Taylor didn't take things quite as seriously as Bishop Thorn, and we had some fun times. For example at Christmas, all three of us dressed up in excellent Santa Claus costumes and went to each of the dorms in our ward and gave small Christmas gifts to the students. Then we came to the Warner's house with their little children. One of their daughters, who was probably 7 or 8, opened the door and there stood three Santa Clauses. Her eyes got big, and her mouth dropped open as she whispered, "Three Santa Clauses." In talking to her mother afterwards, I guess we did a lot to blow her belief in Santa Claus with that one. At least it took some real talking on the part of her mother to explain why there were three of us.

Another thing with respect to Church that happened that was kind of amusing was the mix-up in Joyce's name. Somehow the ward clerk had us as Steve and Joyce Hanson living at our address and then had another name, "Hoyce" Hanson also living with us. The priesthood leaders assigned home teachers to Hoyce, and one day they came asking to see Hoyce. It took a while to get that one sorted out.

Our first year of marriage was great. Joyce and I both were going to school. She was also working at the music library, and I had been fortunate enough to get a teaching assistantship in economics, even though I was only a junior. We coordinated our schedules so one of us was always home to baby sit. We would see each other early in the morning before one of us went off to class and then at night when Joyce got off of work at the record library. We didn't have a TV and entertained ourselves with games like Jeopardy. We didn't have much money but had all that we needed and were very happy. And there was no need for any subsidization from either of our folks, although the Swenson's living so close were always bringing us food, bottled fruit, etc.

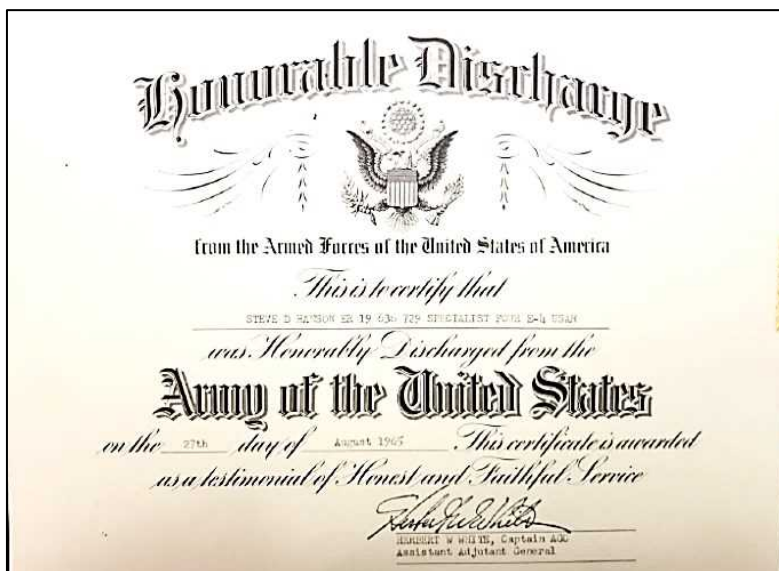
Since my six years of army reserve was going to be completed in the summer of 1965, I decided to try again to get into an active reserve unit so my discharge from the army would go smoothly. I had previously tried several times but was always told the unit I would be in was full up so not to worry about it. But this time, I was

accepted, and I began to attend weekly army reserve meetings. That was a good experience, and I appreciated that there was no swearing or telling of off-colored jokes there. Needless to say, we were busy with the Church, school, teaching, and I also became involved in a few scholastic fraternities as well.

The summer of 1965 found Joyce pregnant with Laura and still working at the library. I was working at Thorn construction and attending Army Reserves. In July, I traveled with my Reserve Unit to summer camp at Camp Irwin in Death Valley, California. We rode in an army truck all the way down and back. Generally, it was miserable sleeping in a tent in 120 degree weather, but we survived.

I was promoted to the rank of Specialist 4th Class and was to be discharged the latter part of August. But there was a potential last minute hitch. The United States was now heavily involved in Vietnam, and President Johnson was making a decision as to whether he should call up the reserves to serve over there or whether to use the draft to provide the soldiers. I was in a top priority infantry division, and there was every probability that our unit would be called on full time status if his decision was to use the reserves.

I was going to begin my senior year, was married, and our baby was due in a month. I could see the very real possibility of me ending up in a war half way around the world. I'll never forget that day President Johnson announced his decision. We had been pouring asphalt, and all of us stopped and gathered around a transistor radio. Most of us were potentially eligible to go to Vietnam, either because we were in the



reserves or draftable. He announced that the draft would be used, and the reserves would be left alone at this time. I would almost vote for him for that. Two weeks later I was discharged from the army with an honorable release and with considerable

feelings of relief.

Joyce and I had applied to be dorm parents, and we were accepted. We were assigned to Wymount Terrace and had 30+ girls under our care.



I was chosen to be head teaching assistant to Richard Wirthlin who was chairman of the economics department and son of Joseph Wirthlin, former presiding bishop of the church. In addition, I was called to be president of the local chapter of a national economics fraternity, Omicron Delta Epsilon.

I was fortunate to receive the Hinckley Scholarship as well, which was a substantial cash award given to several non-freshman BYU students. In addition, I began to work with Richard Wirthlin and Bruce Merrill who had formed a political survey research company, and during the year, I was often flying to surrounding states to conduct door



to door interviews. I traveled to Idaho, Utah, Wyoming, and Colorado that year.

Church-wise, we were in the BYU 52nd ward, with Bishop Humphries the bishop. I was called to serve as Sunday School President. I was also named BYU Senior of the Month for one of the months during this year. Needless to say, we were busy. Financially we were also doing well and actually were able to save quite a bit.

Our lives were changed in September 1965 when Laura was born. Looking back on it, and knowing what we know now, I think the doctor was derelict in his responsibilities and should have been reprimanded. But what happened makes a good story now.

First, Joyce's water broke, but the doctor did not have her go to the hospital. Instead he told her to drive over rough roads and railroad tracks to start labor. He was jesting, sort of, but it was two or three days before labor started, and that was not good for the baby.

He told Joyce to call him when her labor pains were five minutes apart and had been going that way for an hour. Sunday morning, September 12th, her labor began. Within a very short time her pains were five minutes apart. After an hour, Joyce called the doctor. He told her to come to his office in about two hours. I'm sure he meant the hospital, but he did say office. What did we know? I sat there with a little piece of paper timing the pains. After about an hour they were down to about 45 seconds apart.

Finally, Joyce said, "We've got to go."

But I said, "Well, the doctor said to wait for two hours."

Joyce said, "The baby's coming."



I believed her, and we left for the doctor's office. Of course, no one was there because it was Sunday, and I sped off to the hospital. Joyce kept saying the baby's coming. We got to the parking lot, and I half carried her into the hospital. The



1965—And there was one. Laura

receptionist saw what was going on and pointed to the elevator to the maternity ward. What they should have done was brought out a bed and wheeled her in. We got upstairs, and they took her behind a petition... and the nurse swore.

They sent me downstairs to admit her, and by the time I got upstairs just 10 or 15 minutes later, Laura was born. We were grateful that she seemed to be healthy.

I was overcome with emotion and thanksgiving as they wheeled Joyce and Laura out of the delivery room. Laura's eyes were wide open and appeared to be looking at me as if to say, "So, this is my Dad." While they were in the hospital for those few days, I would literally spend hours looking at Laura in the nursery trying to comprehend the wonder of this bone of our bones and flesh of our flesh miracle.

During the fall of the year I took the LSAT test which was the law aptitude exam. We were planning on going to law school after we graduated in the spring of 1966, and it was imperative that I do well on this exam. Getting something other than

LAW SCHOOL ADMISSION TEST
OFFICIAL REPORT OF SCORES CANDIDATE'S COPY

The test scores may best be interpreted by referring to the reverse side of this report. The letters W and B preceding the afternoon test scores are code letters, relating the scores to the tests to which they apply. The registration number is different for each person tested. Both the registration number and the test date should be given in any correspondence with Educational Testing Service.

REGISTRATION NUMBER	UNDERGRADUATE MAJOR	TEST DATE MONTH	TEST DATE YEAR	MORNING	AFTERNOON	
				SCORE	WRITING ABILITY	GENERAL BACKGROUND
006304	02	NOV	65	70.7	68	B63

A separate copy of this report is sent to the person tested, to each law school which he names, and to his undergraduate college.

EDUCATIONAL TESTING SERVICE
PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

STEVE D HANSON
404-7A WYMCUNT TR
PRCVO UT

an excellent score precluded one from attending a "name" school. I did what studying I could and finally took the test.

It was over three hours long. I didn't feel particularly good about it. The test scores came back a month or two later. I read what I thought was 70.7. I thought it meant that I was in the 71st percentile. Although that was significantly better than

average, it wasn't anywhere near good enough to get me into a top notch school. I would have needed at least a 90th percentile score. I felt horrible, and Joyce was consoling me and trying to build me up, but to no avail. I was devastated.

Then I looked at the score a little more closely. That wasn't the percentile score, it was my raw score, and there wasn't a decimal point in it. It was 707. I still didn't know what that meant and turned the paper over. There it gave the percentile ranges that correlated with the raw scores. A score of 700 was in the 99th percentile so my score was above the 99th percentile. I have never felt such a swing in emotions in such a short time before or since. I was elated.

That score combined with my high grades and good letters of reference would assure me getting into a good law school. I applied to three. Duke, Stanford, and University of Chicago. I was accepted at all three and received scholarships from all three. With the University of Chicago I was a Mecham Scholarship finalist which would have pretty well paid everything. I didn't get the Mecham scholarship, but they awarded me a special one that included tuition and a substantial amount more. I also received a personal letter from Justice Thomas Clark, Justice of the U.S Supreme Court, urging me to come to University of Chicago. That law school was ranked by many as the top law school in the United States, and we decided that we would go. I accepted, and the school assured me that they would have library work for Joyce so we would have the financial means of getting through. We were thrilled and felt extremely blessed to be able to do this.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
THE LAW SCHOOL
1111 EAST 60TH STREET
CHICAGO • ILLINOIS 60637

Office of the Dean

March 22, 1966

Mr. Steve D. Hanson
404-7A Wymount Terrace
Provo, Utah

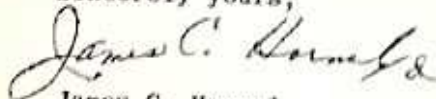
Dear Mr. Hanson:

The Mechem Selection Committee met last Sunday to choose the winners of the 1966 Floyd Russell Mechem Prize Scholarships. Although you were not selected for one of the awards, I am pleased to say that your name was among the group of finalists from which the recipients were chosen.

I am pleased to announce that you have been awarded a scholarship in the amount of \$2,400 for three quarters in the Law School, beginning with the Autumn Quarter, 1966. May I extend our congratulations to you on this award.

The enclosed deposit slip should be returned to our Bursar with a \$50.00 acceptance deposit within thirty days, so that we may retain a place for you in the 1966-67 entering Law School class.

Sincerely yours,



James C. Hornel
Dean of Students

/d
enc.

c.c. 1114 Pico Avenue
Pacific Grove, California

Supreme Court of the United States
Washington, D. C. 20543

CHIEF OF
JUSTICE TOM C. CLARK

March 23, 1966

Dear Mr. Hanson:

On behalf of the entire Mechem Selection Committee I should like to extend our congratulations to you on being a finalist for the Floyd Russell Mechem Prize Scholarships to the University of Chicago Law School.

In its deliberations the Committee reviewed the records of many truly outstanding students from every part of the United States. Its members were greatly impressed by the exceptionally high caliber of these applicants. Because of the large number of eminently qualified applicants, the Committee made its selections with much difficulty. We are grateful for the opportunity to offer these awards to students of such distinction, and we regret only that there could be a limited number of recipients.

The Committee wishes to express its confidence in your ability to complete your legal studies with distinction and, in the future, to contribute significantly to the advancement of the law in our society.

Sincerely,



Mr. Steve Dunn Hanson
404-7A Wymount Terrace
Provo, Utah

I also had an interesting experience at a devotional assembly with President Joseph Fielding Smith. He was the speaker, and his wife, Jessie Evans Smith, accompanied him. I had been asked to give one of the prayers and sat on the stand with them. President Smith spoke for 45 minutes or so and during much of that time, railed on the BYU coeds for their short skirts, makeup, and flirtatious ways. When he was through, Sister Smith was asked if she would like to bear her testimony. She stood up and said, "You bet I would. I would just like to remind my husband about the telephone number in the Garden of Eden: Adam 812." And then with a few short words of testimony, she sat down. The place was in bedlam with laughter from the students, and any hope of spiritual uplift that President Smith hoped to obtain was gone. He was smiling too, though.

In the spring of 1966, both Joyce and I graduated.



During the summer I worked with Merrill and Wirthlin, a new state of the art political polling firm. Merrill had just completed his doctoral work at the University of Michigan and was going to teach at Arizona State University in Tempe. Their little company seemed to be picking up a real head of steam and was generating more and more business.

Dick and Bruce suggested that I consider getting a graduate degree in political science and working with them. About one month before we were scheduled to be in Chicago, I was talking to Kirk Hart, a political science professor at the Y. There were things he said that served as a catalyst for me to take my decision to go to law school to the Lord. I felt complete confirmation not to go to law school, but to explore the opportunities with Dick and Bruce.

I told them of my decision. Bruce got on the phone to Arizona State and enrolled me in their graduate program, had my out of state tuition fees waived, and had them award me a graduate teaching assistantship at Arizona State. Instead of going to the cold winters of Chicago, we were going to the heat of Arizona. I felt like I had let down those who had supported me in getting the scholarship to University of Chicago, and I wrote them a letter thanking them and apologizing for this late notice. But it was the right thing to do.

I have often thought since how much our lives would have been changed had we gone back there and established a career in law. But I have never had any regrets. I know we followed the whisperings of the Spirit, and that is all that counts. As I look at our lives since, I don't think we would have had the length, breadth, and depth of the experiences we've had if we had gone into law. I would have made a lot of money, and maybe I would have even ended up as a judge somewhere. But I can't imagine we would have matched the power and impact of the experiences we have had taking the course we did.



1966-1971

ARIZONA

IN AUGUST OF 1966 we moved to Mesa, Arizona where we lived in a two bedroom apartment. The Arizona heat was something we had to get used to. Literally a third of the year saw temperatures in excess of 100 degrees. The people were friendly, and we enjoyed it there. I attended and taught at Arizona State University, completing all of my course work for my master's degree in political science in the fall of 1966 and the spring and summer of 1967.

I worked with Merrill-Wirthlin traveling around the country conducting political surveys. In May of 1967 we had an opportunity to buy a new home in Tempe for \$16,500, and we did. Total down payment, as I recall, was about \$600. There were no monthly payments for three months and then, since the property taxes had already been paid for the year, the payments were only about \$100 a month. Then in January, including principal, interest, taxes and insurance, the payments were about \$135/month. Just about what we had been paying for rent.

Our home was a three bedroom home with living room, family room, and two bathrooms. Relatively small by house size standards but huge by apartment size standards. The good sized back yard had a cinder block fence, and we even had a washing machine on the mortgage. The only drawback was there was no air conditioning—just a "swamp cooler" that made you feel like you were in St. Louis when the temperature was in the low 80's. For the most part, that was sufficient, but

there were a few miserable days.

The summer of 1967 I received a fellowship to attend the University of Michigan Survey Research Center in Ann Arbor, Michigan. I was gone from Joyce and Laura for two months. I studied survey sampling under Leslie Kish, perhaps the foremost sampling statistician in the world. I also saw a baseball game in Detroit between the Tigers and the Yankees in old Detroit stadium. I saw vintage Hall of Fame baseball players Al Kaline and Mickey Mantle play. Mickey was nearly done as a player and, as I recall, he struck out every time he was up that day. It was while I was in Ann Arbor that the infamous burning of downtown Detroit took place with the blacks rebelling against their years of oppression. It was a great adventure to be at the University of Michigan, but being two months away from Joyce and Laura was very difficult for me. I decided that I wouldn't do that again.

Since I had finished all of my course work for my master's degree and "only" had my thesis to write, I could work full time for Merrill-Wirthlin and became their first full time employee. They paid me \$600 a month, as I remember, and by contract I would receive something close to 20% of their gross profits for 1967 and 1968.

At the time we had high hopes for the campaign year, but not a whole lot of contracts. As it turned out, we did a land office business out of our couple of office rooms in an industrial park. In a little more than a year's time, I traveled to 46 states and knew governors, congressmen, and U.S. senators on a first name basis.

I was a dinner guest a few times in Barry Goldwater's home. He, of course, was the Republican nominee for president in 1964 against Lyndon Johnson. I was both impressed by his naturalness and friendliness and "shocked" that he wasn't a genius. I thought you had to be one to run for president of the United States. He had some ideas that didn't make a whole lot of sense to me.

Interestingly, my last trip in a small plane was with him and several members of his campaign staff, including Dean Burch who I admired and respected. Dean was the chairman of the National Republican Committee in 1964 and later became chairman of the FCC (Federal Communications Commission). The purpose of this trip was to open up Goldwater's campaign for U.S. Senate in a small town in northwest Arizona, where he opened all of his campaigns. Goldwater was the pilot of the plane, and he had a little 70 year old woman as his co-pilot.

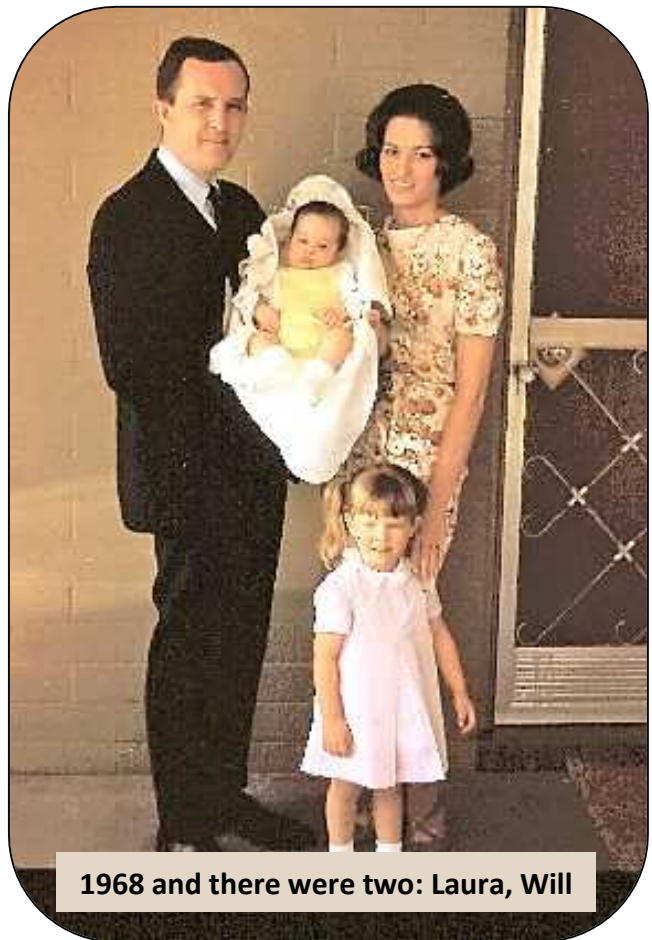
It was a two engine plane, and we were circling Phoenix to get the altitude

necessary to go over the mountains, when a shrill ear-splitting sound hit us. The oil pressure in one of the engines was zero. Goldwater swore, and swarthy Dean Burch turned ashen. We had a problem. They shut the engine off, and we limped back to Sky Harbor airport. There to meet us were fire engines, foam trucks, policemen, and reporters. We made the landing safely, and it made frontpage news. The newspaper account told of the dangerous incident and then listed the names of all the passengers—except mine. I was an “unidentified” passenger.

My experiences over these years taught me that our political leaders are, in most respects, not extraordinary. What appeared to set them apart, and the common thread that ran through many of them, was an apparent insatiable ego. I previously had a desire to be involved in the political process and perhaps even run for office. My experiences here cured me of any desire to run for office. The sacrifices asked were just too great. Not the time or dedication required, but the compromise of values and the publicity seeking aspects of the whole process that were part of it. There were people I met, both office holders and support people, who were really fine people. But many simply were not.

Joyce was pregnant with Will, and I was having a personal struggle about his upcoming birth. Somehow I didn't quite understand the expansive aspect of love. In my mind, love was finite and to have to share it meant to decrease the portion that each would receive. I had such great

love for Laura, and I just couldn't cope with the idea that I had to reduce that love in order to love a new child equally. The moment Will was born in January 1968, I



1968 and there were two: Laura, Will

learned an important thing about love. It is not finite, but expansive. Infinitely expansive. To love more than one child is to actually increase your love for the first. I was grateful and relieved to learn that lesson, and we were thrilled to have Will join us.

A few months later I was to learn another lesson that was to ultimately change all of our lives. I was constantly flying from one place to another, often being gone two weeks at a time. I was away from home most of the time. This was pretty heady stuff, hob-knobbing with the movers and shakers of the country. I thought about my family, and I felt bad when I would come home and find Laura had done some new thing or Will had smiled for the first time. But, I reasoned, I was doing all of this for them. After all, if I worked hard now, even though it meant all of this time away from my family, I would be in a position early in my life to be set financially and to be of greater service to them and to the church.

That was rationalization.

I was either in Oregon or Washington, and I was meeting with a candidate for congress or senator or...? I don't remember which. It was early in the morning, and I was at his home when a phone call came for me. It was Joyce. She was her normal, calm self. She said that Will was in the hospital with pneumonia. She said that he nearly passed away in the night, and she got him to the hospital in time to save his life, and he would be in there for a few days. He was only three months old.

I hung the phone up and said to myself, "This has to change." When I got back home, I went to the partners and told them that I would no longer be available to be out of town for such prolonged periods. I would be willing to be gone for two or three days at a time, but that was it. I was determined that my family was going to come first in my life. I wanted to be with them now, not wait for 10 years. I would never be able to bring back this opportunity to be involved in the growth of my children and provide my love and protection in their formative years.

This was the beginning of my ultimately getting out of the political business altogether.

Will lost a third of his body weight and was sick for most of his first year of life. For months we had a humidifier in his room and provided him extra care to help him through. He was sick and feeble but was so good about it. It seemed that he would only cry when his discomfort was to the extreme, and then his cries were not

demanding, but almost of a requesting nature.

My contract with Merrill-Wirthlin through the 1968 election was very lucrative. As a graduate student, I made more than most university presidents. But there were clouds too. The partners decided to go their separate ways. Merrill went to Texas and Wirthlin to Los Angeles. I received an offer to go with Wirthlin to Los Angeles, but it wasn't what I thought it should be. In all fairness, I insisted that Clyde Pearce, who we had brought down to work on Goldwater's campaign, be part of the package. Wirthlin agreed, but the result was his offer to us as individuals was unacceptable. So Clyde and I formed our own company.

I took the money I received from Merrill-Wirthlin and Clyde borrowed from his father-in-law and we set up The Institute for Computer, Marketing and Political Research. CMP Research for short. We figured we needed as long and as impressive a name as we could get given that we were so small and insignificant. We rented a small office in Tempe, actually an old three room house, with Clyde and I sharing the same office. We had enough money to pay the bills and a modest income for three months as well as to do some promoting of ourselves. But we started out with no contracts.



1969—and then there were three: Laura, Will, Jayne

That was the financial situation that we found ourselves in when Jayne was born in March of 1969. She exuded sweetness but was she ever loud. This beautiful baby did not cry politely like Will did when she wanted something. She bellowed at the top of her lungs. In fact, I think it was this kind of pressure on her body that gave her an inguinal hernia when she was only a few weeks old. We were concerned that this might harm her childbearing ability. It didn't.

In the meantime, our business struggled along. We seemed to pick up

something just at the moment it didn't look like we could go any further. Grace? Then we would be taken to the limits again. Many days, Clyde and I would look at each other and laugh. We'd go home and get our golf clubs and go out on the cheap nine-hole golf course by our home and play.

In the late summer of 1969, we were contacted by Resalab, a company out of Dallas that had just purchased the computer company who did all of our processing. The principals at the computer company told them about us, and Resalab wanted to talk to us. They flew Clyde and me to Dallas and offered to buy us out. We came to an agreement. On the flight back Clyde looked at me and said, "Do you know what we just did?"

We both knew that something akin to a miracle had taken place. These men were high flyers in the business world. In fact the Chairman of the Board, James Lawson, had been a close business associate with Jimmy Ling, the founder of LTV, which at that time was the forerunner of the huge conglomerates that began popping up in the United States. We came out of there with an unbelievable deal. We sold our little company to them for the \$1000's of worth of Resalab Stock and \$1000's of cash, plus a substantial salary for both of us, and all the money we needed to get our company really going.

We had some finalizing to do though, and Resalab said they would send their attorney and financial people out to Tempe to do that. We called our good friend and attorney, Rex Lee, to see if he would be willing to help us out. We told him what the deal was, and he said with almost disbelief, "How did you guys do that?." We told him it wasn't us. It wasn't.

Resalab sent their team out, and they sat down with Rex. In about 30 minutes, the deal was hammered out and everything signed. After Rex left, the Resalab guys looked at each other and then at us and said, "Where did you get that guy?" By this time in his illustrious career, Rex had already argued before the U.S. Supreme Court more than anyone else in Arizona. He, of course, went on to become the first dean of



the BYU Law School, Solicitor General of the United States, and President of BYU. For him to take his time to help us out was indicative of his humble and kindly way.

With the financial security we now had, we formed an ad agency to go along with our survey research services and brought on three more full time employees. Ron Norton, Cal Sumsion, and Bob Parchman. Joyce and I felt we could also buy a larger home, and we did. It had air conditioning and five bedrooms. We needed them because Joyce was pregnant with our fourth child.

We kept busy in church. For our first few years in Arizona, I served as a teacher in the Sunday School, both for adults and children. Joyce was in the Young Women's program. In 1970, I was called as the Young Men's President in our ward. It was in the winter of that year that I had a singular spiritual experience. Although I was, by just about any measure, active in the church, I was not operating at the same commitment level that I had been while I was on my mission or in bishoprics. It wasn't exactly a vision, but an extraordinary transformation took place in me that completely changed my life.

I woke up that morning, and I was literally a different person. It was that dramatic. It was like Alma's spiritual rebirth where I knew who I was and what I wanted to be. Every part of my being was alive in the Spirit, and I would spend the rest of my life striving to become one with the Savior. Things that I had become lax in, like daily scripture reading, I repented of, and my focus was on Jesus Christ.

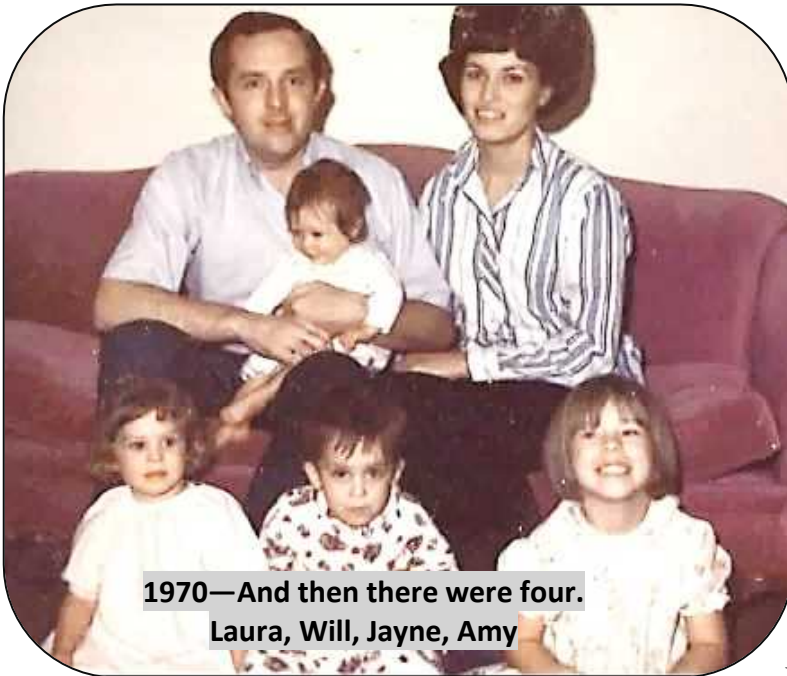
In my patriarchal blessing I was given the specific responsibility to do family history work. I had not only neglected that charge but avoided it like the plague. Now, I wanted to do it. I contacted my Aunt Hortense, an avid genealogist, and asked her if there was anything I could do. There was. My great-great Grandmother Hanson's line only went back to her father in Sweden. All of the other Hanson lines were completed back to the time when apparently fires burned the records there. I volunteered to be the family genealogist in the Alfred Raymond Hanson family and went to work. I put together a family history book and with Mother Swenson leading the way, I was able to do the work for much of that line. In addition, I submitted a number of Dunn names for temple work to be done. I have literally spent the rest of my life involved in family history and temple work.

Every part of my spiritual life was affected by the change that occurred that night. I sought the Spirit in all of our important decisions, and my understanding was increased many fold. Most important, I now started to make a conscious effort to be

more Christ-like in every aspect of my life. To be more patient, more compassionate, more involved in the temple, to magnify my callings, and be more righteous. I wanted to avoid the very appearance of evil. I wanted to be a Light.

In the summer of 1970 Paul Ashton was called to be the bishop in our ward,

and I was called to be his first counselor, with Harold Scholes as his second counselor. I learned much about receiving revelation in making calls and in working with members of all ages. That summer we were blessed with our third daughter. Amy was born in July with hair going every-which-way. She would hardly



make a noise, but almost right from the beginning was squirmy and in to everything. She was a delight.

That fall, Laura started kindergarten. We found out she was practically blind and needed glasses desperately. When she finally got them, she pointed to a picture on our wall of a tree and said, "Daddy, these glasses are magic. When I put them on, there are leaves on that tree." I about cried to think that through her young life she thought the real world was a blur.

It was also in the fall of that year I began to talk to Richard Wirthlin about merging with his company (DMI) in Los Angeles. We weren't satisfied with our arrangement with Resalab and the way they ran their business. The promised funding for promotion wasn't there either. We had developed the business so that we were basically paying our way, but we weren't a good fit with Resalab and bought our company back from them. We negotiated with Dick and came to an agreement, although it did not end up being what we understood was agreed upon. In any case, the decision was made to merge with DMI and move over to southern California.

And in the spring of 1971, that is what we did.



1971-2007

ORANGE COUNTY

WE BOUGHT A HOME in North Tustin that was owned by John Schmitz, a U.S. congressman. We fell in love with it immediately. As a youngster, I had never even been in a home like this one. Although it was not pretentious, it was big and very traditional.



There was a large entry way with a spiral staircase and a chandelier. There was a large separate dining room, large living room, kitchen, family room, and guest bedroom downstairs. There was a laundry room and hall and a bathroom downstairs

as well. Upstairs there were three bedrooms for the kids and a bathroom, plus the master bedroom and bathroom. There was a balcony off of our master bedroom as well. The back yard was large and had a play house that was constructed out of the same kind of materials as was the house. There was also a basketball court with a concrete surface that occupied one-fourth of the yard

Over the years we did much to the house and the yard. We ultimately took the basketball court out and planted a vegetable garden and then a lawn. We also added over 1000 square feet onto the house. We extended the kitchen out, added a recreation room, a study, a library, and a workroom off our bedroom. Ultimately, the house ended up being about 4200 square feet of usable space and became the only home that most of our children ever knew as they grew up.

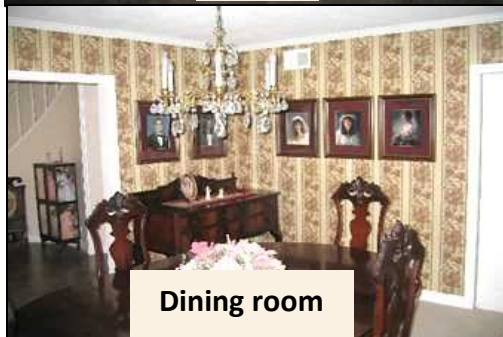
Some of the Rooms of the House



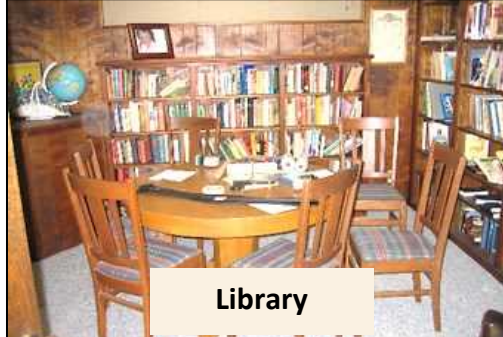
Entry



Living room



Dining room



Library



Family room

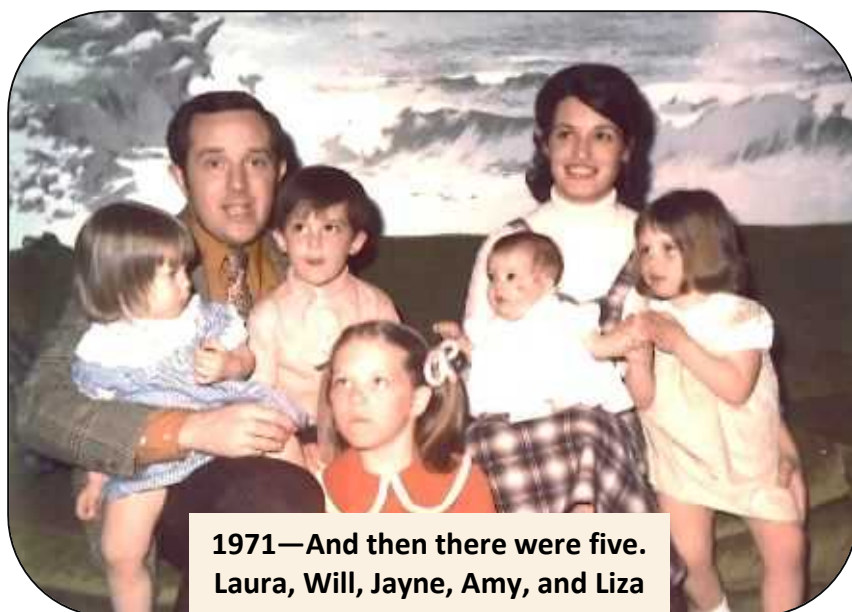


Recreation room

Another positive aspect of the move was that we had family here. Bruce and Joann and their family lived in Fountain Valley, and my mother and father moved to Placentia just before we came. Ultimately, at least for part of the time, all of my brothers and sisters lived down here, and we did much together. We would go to Bruce and Joann's for Thanksgiving, to Mom and Dad's for Christmas Eve, to our place for the Easter Egg hunt, etc. Ultimately, all would move away except for Bruce's family and us.

For a few months after moving here, I commuted to the DMI office in Los Angeles. They were in the process of moving to a new building in Orange County. Finally, our offices were completed, and I only had to travel a couple of miles to get to work. By this time, I was not very involved in the political side of our business, mainly the commercial side. With DMI, I was a member of the board of directors and the executive director of the company. There was a string of exceptional talent there.

Over the years, DMI went on to be the polling firm for President Ronald Reagan during his eight years in office, with Dick his chief political adviser who met with President Reagan weekly to advise him. Dick played a big role in both elections including being Reagan's campaign chairman for the second election. Five others who were at DMI ultimately went on to form their own political consulting firms, and in the presidential elections of 1988, all five were involved with different Republican presidential nominees, although none of them were with Bush.



**1971—And then there were five.
Laura, Will, Jayne, Amy, and Liza**

In addition, the man who formed DMI with Dick, Vince Barraba, became the head of the bureau of the census under two presidents.

October of 1971 Liza was born. She

was a beautiful dark haired baby. Liza ended up being one of our stranger problems.

When she was a toddler she became a head-banger and would bang her head against the wall, the door or anything hard she could find. Finally she started banging her eye against the knobs on her crib until her eyes were black and blue and her head all puffed up. She looked like she had been beaten.

A doctor prescribed a helmet, but she would poke right through that. Finally, one evening she woke up and was crying and banging her head, and I was so tired I didn't know what to do. I said, "Liza, if you don't stop that, I'm going to spank you." She didn't stop, and I pulled her diaper down and gave her one swat on her bare bottom.

She stopped banging her head and never did it again.

If only I had known earlier that was the solution it would have stopped a lot of concern on our part and saved her some headaches. As it turned out, later on she started to throw up all the time and spent some time in the hospital with the doctors trying to diagnose what her problem was. The conclusion was a "migraine stomach". I often wondered if that was why she was banging her head as a baby. A migraine headache?. In any case, thank goodness, she outgrew the problem. We were very, very worried.

The fall of 1971, I was called to serve as second counselor in the Tustin 2nd ward bishopric. Bob Poole was the bishop and Bruce Carter was his first counselor. It seemed that everybody in our ward was rich. We certainly felt like the poor kids on the block. I was sitting in one bishopric meeting, and they were talking about a brother in the ward who was having financial difficulty. One man said, "I understand he has to sell his airplane." Another said, "Yeah, that's too bad. I think he's also selling his Cadillac." Then the bishop said, "How much does he want for the Cadillac?"

This was all so foreign to me, I could hardly comprehend it.

Within a few months, Bruce Carter was called onto the high council, and I was called as first counselor with Bob Lindahl as second counselor. This change was made at stake conference. Elder Marion G. Romney of the Quorum of the Twelve was our visitor, and he set me apart as the first counselor and gave me a wonderful blessing.

Things were not going as I wanted them to at DMI, and in the early winter of 1972 I told Dick I was going to leave DMI. I didn't know where I was going to go or what I was going to do, but I knew I was going to leave and I had spiritual confirmation that was the right decision.

At this time a brother in our ward talked to me. He was a Ph.D. in physics and had been involved in the startup of some of the largest electronics companies in the United States. He had already helped set up several small companies to manufacture electronic consumer products, and he wanted me to help him start up a direct sell marketing company to sell those products. I felt right about it, and I agreed.

The experience was basically a financial bust. I began to question my promptings to become involved here. But I learned a valuable lesson. I was expecting financial success. That wasn't what the Lord wanted me to obtain. What I did gain was an understanding of our purpose here on this earth. I learned that the Spirit leads us to experiences that will help us grow up in the Lord. To become like Him. And I saw the hold that money has on most people, and that I needed to loosen its grip on me.

In 1974, our bishopric was released, and I was called on the high council. I served first as the stake teacher's adviser and counselor in the stake Young Men's Presidency. Later, I was called as the stake Young Men's president and also served as LDS Exploring District Chairman, which meant I had responsibility for all of the LDS Exploring posts in Orange County. While I was serving on the high council, our stake President, President Lloyd Rasmussen, was released, and Apostle Howard W. Hunter came and reorganized our stake. I was interviewed by him, and that was a choice experience.



1974—And then there were six. Laura, Will, Jayne, Amy, Liza, and Mary

In the summer of 1974, I worked for a savings and loan bank in Salt Lake and lived with the Swenson's for a month or two in Pleasant Grove. Then, in the fall of 1974, with Rowland Day, I set up a discount home furnishings store called DEBS. I went around to large employers in the county and gave them cards that would get their employees good deals at our store. For the next year or so we had our struggles keeping our business afloat, but it was growing steadily. Over the next few years, it was exciting to see how rapidly it grew, and although we were not getting rich, we had "sufficient for our needs."

Just before Christmas of 1974 we were out caroling as a family to the widows and the singles in the ward, when Joyce began to have labor pains. We cut short our caroling, and I took her to the hospital. Our beautiful Mary was born. She was very jaundiced and had to stay in the hospital a few days after Joyce came home. The pediatrician who was looking after the new babies was a friend. He did not know Mary was ours but remarked after what a special spirit he had detected in her.

Mary was the only baby I was allowed to be in the delivery room while she was being born. I was overwhelmed with the love I had for Joyce as I saw her literally lay her life on the line to help bring about Heavenly Father's "work and glory." And she had already done this five times. It was one of the spiritual highlights of my life.

Our economic situation had never allowed us to take much of a vacation. Usually our vacation consisted of visiting the Swenson's in Utah, but for a number of



summers we traveled up to the Sierra's by Shaver Lake for Family Camp. That was attended by several hundred LDS people, and we always enjoyed that vacation.

In April 1976, Ben was born. He seemed to come with a smile on his face, which belied the trouble he caused when he was born. When Joyce began her labor, as usual she progressed very rapidly. I took her right to the hospital, and she was soon fully dilated. The doctor came in and discovered that Ben was turned transverse inside. Her contractions were now at the maximum, and there was no way the baby could come. She was rushed into delivery, and they did an emergency Caesarean. Both hers and the baby's lives were in danger. She lost much blood and had to have a transfusion, but both survived the ordeal. And so did I.

In 1978, I bought out my partner in DEBS. That fall, Bruce Carter was called as the bishop of the Tustin 2nd ward, and I was released from the High Council and called as his first counselor. I felt a little bad about that one, since I had served in a bishopric so many times and had only been the stake Young Men's President for a year or so when I was released. But it was another opportunity for service and one I really enjoyed. Grant Inkley was the second counselor, and he and I became fast friends. He became the avenue for us to have sufficient financial resources for the rest of our lives.

1979 was a memorable year for our family. It is hard to imagine what else could have happened. This was the beginning of a severe recession and our business suffered greatly. Joyce's father passed away completely unexpectedly in April of the year. About in February, Mary was hit by a car in front of our home and thrown 50 feet through the air. Her head was swollen up like a basketball, and she was unconscious for two days. I was told by the Spirit that I could heal her by the priesthood and that was the blessing I pronounced. She was out of intensive care in two or three days and home a few days after that. A genuine miracle

Joyce was pregnant and complications developed. She was hospitalized approximately two months before the baby was due. Thank goodness for Shirley who came to stay with us and help take care of us for a month while Joyce was down. Finally, in order to give Joyce the best chance of surviving, the doctors decided to go in about six weeks early and take the baby. Joyce, lived,



but our beloved son, Jacob, died a few hours after birth. We were heart broken.

I went up to the intensive care unit where they were working on him to keep him alive. I told the nurses that I wanted to give him a name and a blessing. It was in the middle of the night, and they kindly let me in. One of them brought me a glass of water to "baptize" him with.

I told them he didn't need to be baptized. He was spotlessly clean. I proceeded to give him a name, Jacob Nathan Hanson, and thanked Heavenly Father for allowing him to come for this brief moment. I received absolute assurance that the Lord was involved, and that Jacob had done all that he needed to do here on this earth.

In the meantime, our little company, DEBS, continued to go downhill. In the summer of 1979, I took out my life insurance license and began to work with Grant Inkley in his insurance company. I continued to own and try to manage DEBS. In 1981, it looked like we were going to move to Canada (Calgary) with an insurance opportunity that Grant had shepherded, but that fell through. It was a motivation to do something with DEBS though. As it turned out, we sold it, or rather gave it away, and found ourselves in substantial debt. For the next three years, we really struggled to make it financially.

In the middle of these struggles, two articles I wrote were published in *The*

Ensign. “Christmas, Second Time Around,” in 1979. And “What to Do with Adversity,” in 1981. I knew something about that. 😊

Slowly our insurance business grew to where we were making the kind of income that allowed us to pay off debts and live reasonably comfortably. In 1982 our bishopric was released, and I was called back on the high council. This time I worked with the single adults and with the Melchizedek priesthood.

In 1983, Laura married Brett Oliver and our first grandchild, Nichole, was born. She ultimately became a life changer for us as we raised her for most of her young life. And Joyce ran for the Tustin School Board and was elected.

One of the other board members serving with her was Barbara Benson. She was not a member of the church, but was married to Ross

Benson, President Ezra Taft Benson's youngest brother. Ross was not active in the church, and he passed away just before President Benson became president of the Church. Over the years, both Joyce and I became close friends with Barbara. We took her to numerous church functions and brought her to the general conference satellite broadcasts at the stake center whenever President Benson spoke.

In December 1985, I was called to serve as the stake executive secretary. Then in February 1987 the stake president was released. Eldert Robert Backman, one of the seven presidents of the First Quorum of the Seventy, presided at the conference. Stuart Waldrip was called as the new stake president. Charles Sutherland was called as his first counselor, and I was called as his second counselor. The brotherhood that existed in our stake presidency was a great blessing to me, and the thousands of temple recommend interviews I conducted over the following nine years blessed my life.



Shortly after our new stake presidency was sustained, Will received his mission call to Argentina and was one of the first missionaries Stuart set apart. And in that same year, 1987, my first book, *The Mission*, was published.

Over the years, President Benson had constant contact with his sister-in-law Barbara. He did everything in his power to encourage her to accept the gospel. In the spring of 1988, he called me about Barbara. We talked for 30 to 40 minutes. I was overwhelmed with the love that came from him. I assured him that I would do everything that I could do to be a good influence in her life and that I loved her as well.

As I talked with him, it was clear that his mental faculties were slipping. He constantly repeated himself and didn't seem to remember what he had just said. But the Spirit and love were unmistakable. When I finished talking with him, I called Barbara and told her about my conversation with President Benson, and I said, "He really loves you, Barbara."

She replied, "I know he does, and I don't understand it because I won't join his church."

I said, "It's not his church, it is the Church of Jesus Christ, and President Benson is the Lord's prophet and is perhaps more like the Savior than any person living. That is why he can love you like he does."

That October conference, I was particularly anxious to see if President Benson would speak because of his physical and mental difficulties. He did speak and gave his inspired talk about flooding the world with the Book of Mormon. It was as though he had turned himself over to the Spirit, and my heart burned within me as I heard the Lord speak through his mouthpiece here on the earth. It was another great spiritual experience for me. I thought back to my conversation with him and his physical limitations then and how he was speaking now so clearly and so powerfully. Before my eyes, the Lord had "renewed his body" as promised in the 84th Section of the Doctrine and Covenants. I was a first-hand witness to how the Lord operates here on the earth. He uses His prophets, as frail and weak as they may be, to declare His word. When it was time for President Benson to speak for the Lord, he was blessed to be able to do so. Otherwise he was subject to the same limitations that are inherent in this telestial state that the rest of us are subject to. I suppose that kind

of miracle is at least as great as if an angel had been sent to declare the same message. I think it is.

And our travels.

During our years in California, Joyce and I traveled all over the world. We took the family across the United States in 1984 on a U.S. and Church history trip. We drove about 8,000+ miles and were gone for a month. We went on several cruises down the Mexican coast as well as to the Caribbean. We traveled to Hong Kong and China and took the



family to Israel. We went to England, and it was like coming home as some of Joyce's and my ancestors came from there. We picked Will up in Argentina from his mission and toured part of that country as well as some of Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Peru.



We went to the big island of Hawaii and traveled back to Israel when our sister-in-law, Kaye, was associate director of the BYU Jerusalem center, and from there, we went to Jordan and Egypt. With Liza, Chris, and his parents, we toured Germany, Belgium, The Netherlands, and Austria. Then we picked up Ben from his mission in Guatemala, visiting beautiful ancient Mayan sites and country towns.



I will detail the rest of our stay in Orange County by years from my journal.

1989-1990

A time of change. Will came home from his mission. Jayne and Rob were married. Two more grandchildren came—Justin and Chelsey. Five children were at BYU, counting Rob, with "only" Mary and Ben left at home. Grandpa Mints, my last living grandparent, died, as did Aunt Jean, the first sibling or sibling in-law of Mom and Dad to pass away. And...I began wearing a hearing aid. Just one to begin with. Another life changer.



I sought to live the Law of Consecration as it applies to the use of my time more so than I had ever done before. I came to see the need to have faith that the Lord will "provide the lunch," and that I must be about my Father's business to the extent I can. That awareness, in addition to serving in the stake presidency, led

me to be a set apart ordinance worker in the Los Angeles temple and to be involved in individual and community projects that, hopefully, benefitted others. I became a

volunteer chaplain in the Orange County jails and a name extractor for the family records extraction program. In addition, I increased my time in productive writings of all sorts and spoke at many funerals.



The political

conditions in the world underwent almost unbelievable change. Like a row of dominoes, the communist dictatorships in eastern Europe fell with democracies established in virtually every one of those countries. The church began to be established in those nations, and we saw the fulfillment of prophecy that the gospel would be preached to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

Yet with these positive signs, there was a dark cloud. The events of the Book of Mormon are a type and shadow of our present day. The events preceding the arrival of the Savior in the Book of Mormon, I believe, were beginning to be acted out in our day prior to his second coming. While we had reason to hope because of the fall of the Iron Curtain and the increased freedoms for the people in the Iron Curtain countries, the world was becoming selfish, immoral, greedy, and uncaring.

1991-1993

Another time of great change. Amy and Micah were married as were Will and Susanna. Liza went on a mission to the Missouri St. Louis mission, and we received temporary custody of Justin and Chelsey and legal guardianship of Nichole who now lived with us permanently. Bookcraft published my book, *Joy, the Other Side of Sorrow*, and Joyce decided not to run again for the school board. But from then until we left for our mission to Romania, she served in the county and at state level in numerous positions to help the children in California. I had some minor health issues, like skin cancer and high cholesterol, but nothing that wasn't manageable.

I compiled family histories for both my line as well as Joyce's and put them in binders. I gave the appropriate histories to our children, Joyce's siblings, her mother, and uncles and aunts, and to my siblings, parents, and uncles and aunts. That was a labor of love and a great blessing to me.

My call as a member of the stake presidency gave me many experiences with the Spirit as I sought to represent the Savior in my interviews. I felt His Spirit many times. In the temple, I worked with those who were receiving their own endowment and was called to serve as assistant coordinator and trainer. My service there brought me ever nearer to the Savior, and my understanding of Him and His purposes expanded dramatically.

I enjoyed working with those in the prison system. That was an eye opener

and a blessing to me. I had reaffirmed continually that I do not have the right to judge another. There are so many factors in this telestial existence that affect our actions in addition to desire. Until all the distractions are sifted away so our "pure will" is manifest, our stories are not finished.

And, some observations I had these years.

The moral decadence of the world, particularly of the west, approached that of those who lived at the time of Noah. Our revered capitalism was no better in its end result than was communism. It fostered dictators, power hungry despots, and the treating of the poor and the down trodden in despicable, un-Christian ways. And, as in the Book of Mormon prior to the coming of the Savior, there was a constant pulling away from unity as various so-called "minority" groups sought to establish their own power bases, led by unscrupulous men and women who were only interested in furthering their own selfish ends.

1994-1995

I was released as a temple ordinance worker after serving for four years. Liza completed her mission, and we picked her up, and I was able to renew friendships with some of my friends in St. Louis. We toured Church sights with her in Missouri, Illinois, and New York.

Nichole had a serious accident in the swimming pool of a friend, an orbital blow-out, but rebounded from it and was healed by the power of the priesthood. Both Nichole and I began wearing braces. Twins? 😊

Joyce accomplished much. She was a great force in implementing significant and positive changes in the grade schools of Orange County and finished her course work to become a music therapist. For years after, she used her extraordinary skills to be a blessing in the lives of many hospice patients and their families.

We traveled to the state of Washington for the Raymond Hanson reunion. We stayed with my aunt Carol and arrived just a short time after her husband, Gary, passed away. Life and death. Since I was called into the stake presidency, I gave as many as 4,000 to 5,000 interviews and felt the Spirit manifested countless times. Members had to renew their temple recommends each year, and it is likely that I interviewed virtually every member of the stake several times. I loved them.

Ben was called to serve a mission in Guatemala. Mary was married to David Hildt, and Joyce and I traveled to Israel and Jordan and Egypt. Kaye was associate director of the BYU Jerusalem Center and was our tour guide in Israel and went with us to Jordan. We stayed at the Jerusalem Center like we did before. Another trip of a lifetime. I felt most blessed health-wise. My single cross to bear was my hearing loss that got continually worse.

1996



In February of 1996, I was called as the stake president of the Orange California stake with Jim Brooks my first Counselor and Matt Goodman as second Counselor. Reed Farrar was our executive secretary. This was the first calling I had that came with priesthood keys. It changed my life. We served together for 10½ years. The following is extracted from my journal on the day I was sustained and set apart as stake president.

Well, the last two days have been life changing. I was called as the stake president so had all of the feelings that go with that kind of call. This whole process has been a challenging one for me. Over the last month or so, I had been in some turmoil. I went to the temple several weeks ago to try to resolve it and had a wonderful spiritual experience.

As I examined my feelings, the impression came to my soul that maybe I was not willing to keep my covenant to fully consecrate myself including my time and talents. Honestly evaluating

my feelings, I was battling the idea of being stake president. I knew as much as one can know what that calling entailed without actually serving in it. After a year as stake executive secretary and nine years as a counselor, I was acutely aware of the tremendous amount of time and personal sacrifices that would have to be made. While I was "willing" to make them, perhaps I was not "desirous" of making them. With that realization came repentance and a renewal of my covenant to consecrate. I would be willing and desirous to serve wherever and whenever the Lord wanted me to. That brought instant peace.

I decided that I was then going to prepare for either event—being called as stake president or just being released. I felt that I could accept either one. As the day began yesterday and we as a stake presidency met with Elders Callister and Caldwell (area authority 70 and general authority 70), I had a confirmation that I was going to be called as the stake president. I was interviewed by them and then went home while they interviewed the 34 or so other brethren from our high council, stake presidency, bishops, etc.

In the past, the general authorities have called the new stake president shortly after they completed their interviews. The interviews were over by about 1:15 p.m. and our priesthood leadership meeting would begin at 3:00 p.m. As the time came for me to go to the church for the leadership meeting, it appeared that I was not going to be the new stake president, or I would have received a phone call asking me to come to the church shortly after those interviews concluded.

I was trying to account for what appeared to be that non-call reality with the feelings of confirmation I had just that morning that I would be the next stake president. It was an excruciating exercise, and I determined that it really didn't matter. I would continue to serve wherever I was called and would grow and contribute. That was my covenant to consecrate, and I would keep it. With that decision made, I drove to the stake center. It had been over an hour since the last interview, and the authorities were still in deliberation. The leadership meeting they were going to conduct was about to start, and they had not called the new stake president.

Elder Callister was instructed by Elder Caldwell to begin the meeting while he called the new stake president.

I was asked to go into a little room off of the stake offices and to wait. After a few minutes, Elder Caldwell knocked on the door and came in. He asked me questions about my life—searching and to the point. I answered them without hesitation or equivocation. He then asked me to come with him to the stake president's office. And there was Joyce. She had been called while I was in that little room. With Joyce present, he issued to me the call to be the stake president. It was as though my whole life changed in that few seconds. And as overwhelming as things seemed, yet I had the most marvelous peace.

So as not to create speculation before Sunday morning, Elder Caldwell had the other two members of the presidency waiting to go into the priesthood leadership meeting until he finished calling me. The leadership meeting had already started and Elder Callister was speaking when the four of us came into the chapel.

I spoke that evening in the adult session, and Sunday morning the change was made. It was a poignant moment. Elder Callister did the sustaining. He first had me come up and stand by his side. He then presented my name as the stake president to the nearly 1300 people who were there and asked for them to sustain me. I will never forget that scene as I watched these people that I loved so dearly express their love and support for me. The tears were flowing freely.

Both the old and the new members of the stake presidency and our wives bore testimony with the visiting authorities then speaking. Elder Caldwell related the experience that he and Elder Callister had had in choosing the new stake president. He said that as the interviewing process began, he had decided that the current members of the stake presidency would not be a real consideration because of the length of time that we had served in the stake presidency. Particularly me, having served the past 10+ years in a stake presidency.

They went through the interviewing and deliberation process and tried to get confirmation on who they apparently had tentatively chosen. But confirmation would not come. Again and again they were unsuccessful. It then dawned on Elder Caldwell that he had arbitrarily kept the Lord from directing them as to who the new stake president was to be. They had told the Lord that He could only choose from among those who were not currently members of the stake presidency. When they removed that artificial barrier, their answer came quickly and powerfully. He then bore strong testimony that the Lord's will was done here.

I had had a roller coaster ride with a wide spectrum of feelings and emotions that flooded and ebbed within me.

After the meeting was over, people came up in droves. For the next hour or more, I was shaking peoples' hands and hugging them and being loved by them. It was an extraordinary outpouring of warmth, and it affected me deeply. It was over an hour after conference ended before Elder Caldwell set me apart and gave a most marvelous blessing. He bestowed on me the keys of the presidency of the High Priesthood in the stake and set me apart as the stake president. He blessed me with all that I would need to magnify the Lord. He blessed my home that in my absence it would be protected from any evil thing that may attempt to invade it. He blessed me with an increase in capacity along with many other blessings.

The mantle descend upon me, and I wept.

My call as stake president was every bit as life changing and time demanding as I thought it would be. The growth process was excruciating both in terms of the pain and the joy. My self-evaluation was significantly more consistent and more in-depth. I had sustained times of depression as a result of seeing up close all of my weaknesses that kept me from the Savior and magnifying my call as I felt it should be magnified.

On the other hand, that introspection resulted in perhaps the most significant personal growth that I had ever experienced within that kind of time frame. It involved overcoming aspects of my life that, when I was younger, I wasn't even aware needed to be dealt with. Perhaps that is why it is was so excruciating, because I was plowing through stubborn traits and characteristics that had been with me for decades.

Humility was really the key here and pride was by far my greatest obstacle. Yet through it all, or perhaps because of the struggle, I had more consistent communications with my Father. The Holy Ghost was *almost* my constant companion, and I felt a great joy and satisfaction as I counseled, interviewed, called, organized, and even chastised. I felt the Spirit work through me to help and bless those I worked with. And I felt that slowly, but surely, the Lord blessed me with the gift of charity as I conformed my life more closely to that of the Savior.

I felt the love of the people and their prayers. That was tremendously sustaining to me. One of the most difficult things I had to cope with (or adjust to) was the "up-front" role I had to play. In the past, I had nearly always been a background player and was uncomfortable being in the limelight, being the leader at the meetings, and being the one with the final say. But I adjusted to it. I had the keys.

I had to be the leader. That's who I was, and it was both a trying and exhilarating experience to be "compelled" to do that. While I loved the call, I felt weighed down by it on occasion as well. Grace was my salvation, and I felt that needed, extra physical, spiritual, and mental strength continually. My counselors, Jim and Matt, and Reed Farrar, the executive secretary, were outstanding, consistent, and inspired and inspiring. What was accomplished could not have come about without them.

What took place early in our stake presidency was almost overwhelming—particularly for a brand new stake presidency. We eliminated two wards within our

stake, reorganized the entire stake leadership, replaced most of the high council, called two new bishops, added 600+ members from the neighboring dissolved Santa Ana stake, and formed a new ward with five different languages spoken, many of who did not speak English.

There were ongoing challenges. Some of them extremely severe. For example, the murder of one of our members and the consoling of the family members who were left. Our wards functioned well, however, and our stake leaders were outstanding. There was a great spirit of love and cooperation among most of them.

On a personal level, there was more change. Liza's marriage to Chris brought another outstanding member to our family, and Will and Susanna moved to Oregon. During this time, I had some health challenges including a double hernia operation that was debilitating to begin with but left me much stronger. I also fought dizziness and light-headedness and was fearful that something serious was causing it. It may have been a precursor for the chronic vertigo I would suffer with for many years. Or maybe it was an early experience with a CSF leak that I would be beset with later.

1997-1999

Mother Swenson died. What a loss to the world and to me personally. She was a saint. She has been one of the great blessings of my life. Nichole went back to live with Laura for the first time in nearly eight years, and we were blessed to have Judy become part of our family. It was a great experience to see her accept the gospel and for me to baptize and confirm her, and then to perform the civil marriage for her and Ben.

Mary and Dave and Ben and Judy moved to Arizona. Will and Susanna also moved to Arizona from Oregon. Then Jayne and Rob moved to Atascadero. That left us alone for the first time since Laura was born nearly 35 years before.

I had uncounted "special" experiences including interviews with new converts, with members who were going to the temple for the first time or for the first time in many years, and with brethren to receive the Melchizedek priesthood. I interviewed, ordained, and set apart bishops, and interviewed and set apart and ultimately released hundreds of young men and young women who became fulltime

missionaries. I felt the Spirit in my counseling, and my body was renewed constantly.

We developed and implemented the powerful Spirit of Elijah plan in the stake. I was assigned by the Area Presidency to head up the planning of a regional conference involving six stakes with Elder Hales of the Twelve presiding. We had a luncheon at our house for the wives of the stake presidents and Sister Hales while we “brethren” met.

I was blessed by the men and women who served with me in the stake, especially the bishops, the members of the stake presidency, and the stake Relief Society presidents. They were my friends. Some marvelous blessings were received as well. Some I can speak about. Some I cannot.

Some thoughts.

The Savior suffered temptations of every kind but paid them no heed. I also suffered temptations of every kind, and through His grace learned to pay them *less and less* heed. I am grateful to my Heavenly Father for those experiences. I am grateful for Jesus Christ who gives me the strength to follow Him. I am grateful for the Holy Ghost for teaching me about The Way and for sanctifying me throughout this process. And I am grateful for Joyce who loves me and loves the Lord; and for children and grandchildren who are some of the Lord's elect.

2000-2001

I think by any measure this was one of my most challenging and difficult times. My father died. A great relief given his years of suffering from Parkinsons but a great loss, nonetheless. And Mom passed away. Literally the morning before she died, and with great emotion, she told me she wanted to be with Dad. That evening she was. In every respect, she is an angel and blessed my life in immeasurable ways. Mary and Dave divorced, and Mary and her children, Emma and Adam, came to live with us. Joyce was bedridden for much of the time with Crohn's that brought the possibility of permanently changing both of our lives. And there were significant financial concerns as well. Again.

Through it all, I experienced a depth of sorrow and despair that literally allowed me to taste of the length and breadth of my Savior's atonement. These

experiences were juxtaposed with those of a sublime nature. I received revelation after revelation from the Holy Ghost including promptings, thoughts, and insights. And I had visions where I was shown unspeakable things. Unspeakable, because I don't have the power or the memory to relate them.

Suffice it to say I know what took place when Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon had the vision that was partially recorded in the 76th section of the Doctrine and Covenants. Mine was not as "grand" nor as comprehensive. It was just as real and detailed in its own scope though. The promise that is made to all who will purify themselves before the Lord was fulfilled for me. Jesus Christ lives and Joseph was a prophet. I am becoming intimately familiar with both of them. These experiences humbled me, broke my heart, and helped my spirit become contrite. To a degree I had not experienced before, I knew Jesus Christ loves me with boundless love, and through His grace I can become one with Him.

2002-2004

While Joyce's health challenges were significantly alleviated during this time, I faced the most debilitating health challenges I have ever faced. My head pain was severe, chronic, and near debilitating. At Chris' urging, I went to the ER where I was diagnosed with terminal cancer—likely multiple myeloma. He gave me a blessing which, I believe, changed the diagnosis. The cancer was gone, but the pain continued.

That was a deeply moving spiritual experience for me to come face to face with death. I can truthfully say, I was at peace. No fear. I was ready. My concern was for Joyce and the children and grandchildren. My heart was literally broken as I saw their sorrow in losing their husband, father, and grandfather.

Over time, the head pain was alleviated but replaced by chronic and literally debilitating vertigo. My first attack, because neither Joyce nor I knew what was causing it, resulted in Joyce calling the paramedics, and an ambulance took me to the hospital. While nothing life-threatening was discovered, the vertigo condition remained and would be my bane for the next many years.

Through these health trials, I gained real empathy for those who suffer physically and mentally and emotionally. My own father, who was already high on my list, was elevated exponentially in my eyes as I considered the pain and suffering

he endured for many years. Through the Savior's grace I was able to do virtually everything I needed to do as a stake president, a husband, father, and grandfather, regardless of my physical challenges.

And there were events that were life affecting as well. After 15 years, I felt it was time to stop my service as a volunteer jail chaplain. That had been an extraordinary blessing to me. Mary met her prince charming in Matt, and they were married. She and the children moved to Utah leaving Joyce and me alone in the house. I continued heavily involved in the Gift of Family History. It was adopted by the new mission president in Sacramento who had great success with it in their missionary efforts.



2005-2006

Talk about change.

Stake presidents, as the saying went, were called by revelation and released by the computer—nine years after their call. I wasn't released. And wouldn't be until mid-2006. A total of 10 ½ years. Did the computer break? I don't think so. There was a reason for my extension. I was given a once in a lifetime opportunity to be intimately involved in preparation for a new temple. The Newport Beach temple. Revelation after revelation came regarding the use of family history in the preparation of the Saints to be involved in the temple, and in bringing about meaningful follow-up to a significant number of visitors who were not members of the Church. The result was an exponential increase in what was expected by Salt Lake in both the attendance at the temple open house and the number of requests from visitors for follow up contact as it pertained to family history.

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
THE PRESIDENCY OF THE SEVENTY
47 EAST SOUTH TEMPLE STREET, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84150-1700

February 7, 2006

President and Sister Steve D. Hanson
Orange California Stake
13682 Dall Lane
Santa Ana, California 92705

Dear President and Sister Hanson:

This past year has been truly remarkable. Of special note was the Newport Beach California Temple Open House. What a marvelous outpouring of the Spirit we felt. Thousands of our brothers and sisters were able to attend the open house and feel something that perhaps they had never felt before. At the very least many eyes and ears were opened to the restored gospel of our Savior.

A significant element of the open house was the offering of the Family History Kit. Approximately 10,000 kits were requested! The offering of the kit was unique to this open house and we have learned much about how we might be able to utilize this wonderful tool in the future. This is the first time such an effort has been attempted, and we consider it a tremendous success.

You and your faithful Saints have been instrumental in the fulfillment of these many requests. Thousands of kits have been prepared and delivered and some recipients have entered the waters of baptism as a result. Many are still being taught and are considered *progressing investigators*. I want to express my deepest appreciation to you and the members of your stake who have been so faithful in fulfilling the promise to our open house guests to prepare and deliver the Family History Kits. Please let them know of my love and the love of the Brethren for their exceptional efforts.

Now that nearly six months have passed since the open house, the work of the open house member-missionary committee has been completed. We now look to you, remembering that the reputation of the Church is involved, and that we have made a promise to each individual to deliver a Family History Kit, to fulfill this marvelous opportunity. Please do all that you can to make sure every request has been given full attention as soon as possible. We ask that you continue to update the tracking website until all kits have been delivered. We anticipate that this will be accomplished by the end of March.

Words cannot adequately express my appreciation and admiration to you as you have sought to extend the reach of the mission of the Church throughout your stake. I hope that you have seen ways in which the use of the Family History Kit can continue to be a vital part of your retention and missionary efforts. May the Lord bless you in this continuing effort.

Sincerely,



Ronald A. Rasband

Nichole married Dan Riley and that was one of the first temple marriages in the new temple. My book, “Principles of Love—Parenting of Adult Children” that I wrote with my “uncle” Garth Hanson was published by Covenant Communications. And some milestones—I started on Medicare and taking Social Security and moved my business office to home. Life changers. My goodness.

And then the real life changer. I was released as a stake president.

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
OFFICE OF THE FIRST PRESIDENCY
47 EAST SOUTH TEMPLE STREET, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84150-1000

May 25, 2006

President Steve D. Hanson
Orange California Stake
13682 Dall Lane
Santa Ana, CA 92705

Dear President Hanson:

After careful consideration in a recent meeting of the Council of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve, and in view of your tenure of service, it was determined to reorganize the presidency of the Orange California Stake.

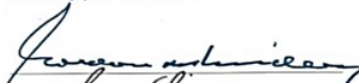
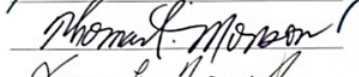
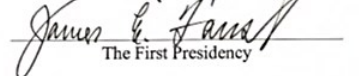
Accordingly, it is with sincere appreciation for your watchful guidance of stake affairs and deep concern for the welfare of the people that we now extend to you and your counselors honorable releases from your positions in the stake presidency. This will take effect at a conference to be held on August 12-13, 2006.

This matter should not be announced until the assigned General Authority contacts you about the reorganization.

We would like you and your counselors to accept our heartfelt gratitude for your loyal, consecrated service to the Lord, His cause, and the people over whom you have had the honor to preside. We also acknowledge the valued support and service given by your wife and the wives of your counselors.

We pray that the Lord will bless, protect, and be with you always.

Sincerely your brethren,




The First Presidency

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve oversaw that and the calling of a new stake president (my counselor Matt Goodman). Elder Perry stayed at our home for two nights, and Joyce and I had wonderful visits with him. The release was an emotional experience as countless members expressed their love and gratitude for me. Serving with Jim Brooks, Matt Goodman, and Reed Farrar for the 10 ½ years eternally endeared these brethren to me.

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
THE QUORUM OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES
47 EAST SOUTH TEMPLE STREET, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84143-1099

August 14, 2006

President Steve D. Hanson
Orange California Stake
13682 Dall Ln
Santa Ana, CA 92705



Dear President and Sister Hanson:

I want to express my sincere appreciation to you for all the kindness extended to me while on assignment to the Orange California Stake Reorganization.

It was a pleasure to be in your home and meet your family. How blessed you are. Those young grandchildren are beautiful and handsome as well as full of the spirit. Could you ask for anything more? How pleased we were to have the opportunity of spending some time with them and feeling of their great devotion to the gospel.

Sister Hanson, I cannot thank you enough for your kindness extended to me. The living quarters were comfortable and the food was just wonderful. I will long remember this visit to this stake.

President Hanson, you must have an overwhelming feeling of gratitude for the love your stake members have for you; it was evident as we watched them during the meetings of the conference. You are an exceptional leader and have given much to this stake. Now, enjoy the moments that you will have without the pressures of a major assignment. It will not be long before something else will be coming along.

We want you to know of our deep love and appreciation for the two of you and all you are doing to build our Father in Heaven's Kingdom.

Sincerely,

L. Tom Perry

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

MEMBERSHIP SERVICES DEPARTMENT

24 January 2007

MEMBERSHIP SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Steve and Joyce Hanson
13682 Dall Lane
Santa Ana, CA 92705

Dear Steve and Joyce:

Please accept this belated congratulations on the successful completion of Steve's term as president of the Orange California Stake. Elder L. Tom Perry returned from the conference at which Steve was released with comments of praise for what had been achieved under his administration. We heartily agree with every good thing that is said about both of you and treasure our relationship. We admire both of you and wish only that our paths would cross more often.

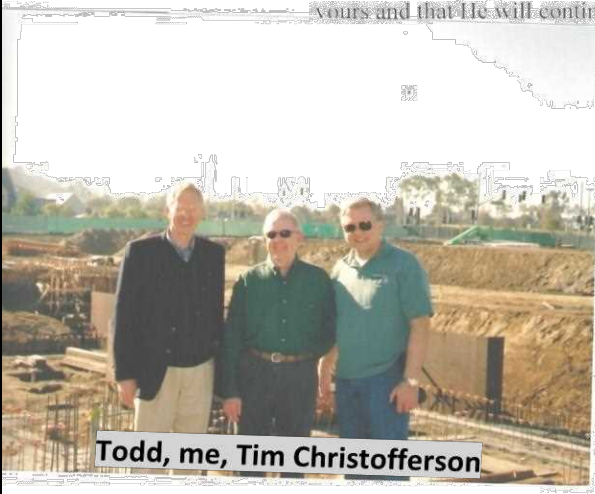
I am enclosing a picture that I had meant to send years ago of Tim and me with Steve at the Newport Beach Temple site when construction was just getting underway. I hope that before too long Kathy and I can visit the completed temple. It would be a joy to be there with you.

Congratulations and thank you once again for your wonderful example and all that you have meant in the lives of so many, ourselves included. We pray that the Lord's richest blessings will always be yours and that He will continually watch over you and each of your

Sincerely,



Todd Christofferson



Todd, me, Tim Christofferson

Joyce and I became ordinance workers at the Newport Beach Temple, and I was called as a Sunday School teacher for young adults in the ward. My first non-administrative call in 35 years.

I have very little to put on a resume as such. I have not sought in any way for power, notoriety, or money. That has been my desire, though being honest, I have fought those tendencies. Perhaps it would not be considered boastful if I were to simply list some things I have been involved in as a stake president that have blessed my life so remarkably.

- Thousands of temple recommend interviews with members of the stake
- Over a thousand personal interviews with my bishops
- Many thousands of telephone conversations and in-person consultations with my bishops regarding problems/challenges in their wards
- Over a thousand stake meetings with high council, stake auxiliaries, training, youth conferences, etc.
- Preparing, interviewing, setting apart and releasing 250 to 300 fulltime missionaries
- Hundreds of interviews with members to receive their endowment
- Hundreds of interviews of couples to be sealed in the temple
- Hundreds of interviews of young men to be ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood
- Setting apart of 18 bishops, scores of elders quorum presidents, and uncounted ward bishopric members, high priest group leaders, stake auxiliary leaders, and high councilors
- Preparing, participating in, and presiding at nearly 100 ward conferences
- Preparing, participating in, and presiding at over 20 stake conferences and general stake priesthood meetings
- Giving hundreds of talks at Church meetings
- Presiding at scores of funerals and giving talks at many of them
- Attending hundreds of wedding receptions with most weddings occurring in the temple
- Performing the civil marriage ceremonies for over a dozen couples

- Working with hundreds of members who had the kinds of challenges that required the stake president to be involved
- Hosting in our home a multitude of general authorities, area seventies, and other prominent Church leaders including L. Tom Perry, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, and Eric Shumway, President of BYU Hawaii
- Thousands of emails, telephone conversations, and hundreds of meetings with my dear friends, the members of the stake presidency
- Oversaw the Orange County regional family history center
- Oversaw the Orange County Bishop's Storehouse, including a major revamping of its facilities
- Oversaw the Santa Ana College institute of religion as its priesthood line authority
- Organized and oversaw the preparation for and carrying out of a six stake regional conference in Orange County with Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve presiding
- Proposed, organized, implemented, oversaw, and presided at the Young Single Adult monthly firesides held in Orange County for several years that were attended by a thousand or so young people at each fireside
- Developed and implemented the Spirit of Elijah concepts and approaches for our stake, including Turn Your Hearts lessons, that were ultimately used in the Sacramento mission with great success
- Worked with the members of our stake to raise millions of dollars to help pay for the Newport Beach California temple
- Initiated, planned, and assisted in the carrying out of the "Gift of Family History" at the Newport Beach California temple open house resulting in many thousands of follow-up referrals to those who attended but were not members

I will be eternally grateful to the Lord for His trust in me, and His constant grace to assist me as I sought to magnify Him as President of the Orange California Stake.

The first part of 2007, prior to our mission, was eventful. Julie and Ramon Beck stayed with us a few days. At the time, she was a counselor in the general Young Women's presidency and was subsequently called to be the general Relief Society president for the Church. She and Ramon are dear friends.

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

YOUNG WOMEN
76 N. Main St. Rm. 204
Salt Lake City, Utah 84150-6030
Phone: 1-801-240-2141
Facsimile: 1-801-240-5458

January 23, 2007

Steve and Joyce Hanson
Orange California Stake
13682 Dall Lane
Santa Ana, CA 92705

Dear Steve and Joyce:

How can Ramon and I thank you enough for the magnificent experience staying in your home this last weekend? We anticipated the visit with great joy but, had no idea how fulfilling that opportunity would be.

Thank you for the wonderful quarters, the bedroom with pictures that invited the spirit. Thank you for the delicious food and for introducing us to your family and inviting us into your circle. Thank you for teaching us through your example of love. Thank you for sharing some of the brilliant work and ideas that you have worked on that have given us food for thought and ideas of things we could do to improve. Thank you for talks and visits that lifted us. Thank you for being kind to Curtis and Rosanna and reaching out to them in love and friendship.

We feel a sweet connection with you and hope that continues on into the eternities. We keep you in our prayers and know that you are at a time of transition and decision making in your lives. We pray that you will be guided by the spirit to know the things to do but, in the meantime that you will continue to be the incredible influence you have always been to those around you.

Love,



Ramon and Julie Beck

Joyce received the annual Heritage Award given by the Latter-day Saint Utah-California Women to an outstanding Latter-day Saint woman leader in

California. That joined a wall full of recognition plaques given to her over the years. She is an extraordinary woman.

Attached Message
From: Viewsandnews@aol.com
To: Hansjoyce@aol.com
Subject: Thanks from Hugh
Date: Thu, 24 May 2007 12:52:47 PM Eastern Daylight Time

Hi Joyce:

Just a note to say thanks again for the wonderful effort you and Steve put into our family histories and the very warm reception you gave us at the stake. Betsy and I were surprised by how much was there and Will was just amazed at the detail and your willingness to do such a thing. You and Steve are really wonderful and extraordinary people. Please stay in touch as you enter the next phase of your lives.

Blessings and cheers

Hugh

Joyce and I hosted Hugh and Betsy Hewitt at the Newport Beach Temple open house, and I prepared a history of their ancestors for them. Hugh is a nationally prominent political

commentator and radio talk show host.

Amy and Micah sold their home and lived with us for a few months. We loved having them. In June, we received our call to serve as full time missionaries for two years in Romania and were assigned to work with young single adults in the European Institute Outreach program. An exciting call to serve in a country that not too many years ago was behind the Iron Curtain.

Liza had open heart surgery in June, and

Joyce went to their home in Spokane Valley, Washington to be with her and her children while she recovered. I got the house ready to sell and our belongings packed to ship to storage in Pleasant Grove, Utah. It was a sad day as I waved

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
OFFICE OF THE FIRST PRESIDENCY
47 EAST SOUTH TEMPLE STREET, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84143-3000

19 June 2007

Elder Steve Dunn Hanson
13682 Dall Lane
Santa Ana, California 92705

Dear Elder Hanson:

You are hereby called to serve as a missionary of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. You are assigned to labor in the Romania Bucharest Mission. In addition to your calling to share the gospel with nonmembers, you will be asked to spend considerable time in the Institute Outreach Center. It is anticipated that you will serve for a period of 23 months.

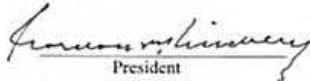
You should report to the Missionary Training Center at Provo, Utah on Monday, 27 August 2007. Your mission president may modify your specific assignment according to the needs of the mission.

You have been recommended as one worthy to represent the Lord as a minister of the restored gospel. You will be an official representative of the Church. As such, you will be expected to maintain the highest standards of conduct and appearance by keeping the commandments, living mission rules, and following the counsel of your mission president. As you devote your time and attention to serving the Lord, leaving behind all other personal affairs, the Lord will bless you with increased knowledge and testimony of the Restoration and of the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Your purpose will be to invite others to come unto Christ by helping them receive the restored gospel through faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement, repentance, baptism, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end. As you serve with all your heart, might, and strength, the Lord will lead you to those who are prepared to be baptized.

The Lord will reward you for the goodness of your life. Greater blessings and more happiness than you have yet experienced await you as you humbly and prayerfully serve the Lord in this labor of love among His children. We place in you our confidence and pray that the Lord will help you become an effective missionary.

You will be set apart as a missionary by your stake president. Please send your written acceptance promptly, endorsed by your bishop.

Sincerely,

President

farewell to the Harman family when they drove away from our California home to their new home in Pleasant Grove. I was left by myself to say goodbye to our home of 36 years. We were now officially homeless.

I drove by myself to Liza's and Chris' home to be with them for a month or so until we left for our mission. Joyce and I were set apart by the Lee's stake president, President Eli, and then at the end of August, we flew to the MTC in Provo. We leased out our California house so it would be there when we got back—whatever that meant.

And we were off to the adventure of a lifetime.



2007-2009

ROMANIA MISSION

WE HAD AN UNEXPECTED beginning to our mission. We spent a wonderful 10 days in the MTC and then... We arrived at the Bucharest, Romania airport and two of our bags were missing. We got that straightened out, but it took a long time, and when we finally came out into the main terminal, there was no one there from the mission home to greet us. It was a little challenging to figure out how to get Romanian money (leis) and how to find a telephone as we couldn't speak the language. But we finally were able to contact the mission home.

Apparently, someone had been there to pick us up, but when we didn't show after 30 minutes or so because of our delay, they assumed we had missed our flight and left. We were eventually picked up and taken to the mission home where President and Sister Ashby couldn't have been nicer. While we would be working with the young adults throughout the mission, and mostly in Bucharest, President Ashby felt impressed to assign us to live in Ploiești, roughly 50 miles north of Bucharest. We lived there for about a year, and then moved to Bucharest for the remainder of our mission.

My daily journal and other writings detail our extraordinary Romania adventures, and I will include only a few highlights here, along with some observations. I loved being a missionary. I loved the simplicity of the life and the significance of what we did. It took Joyce a little while to get used to things, but she

did and was an exceptional blessing to the young missionaries and to the members.

In both Ploiești and Bucharest we lived in concrete paneled five to nine story buildings called blocs. Our apartments were comfortable, but plain. We had an air conditioner in the window and in the winter, the heat came from a radiator which we could not regulate. We had hot and cold running water but had to have filters to make it potable. We did not have a car so



we rode buses and trains. And we often walked as much as five miles or so a day—rain, shine, or snow. We had not lived where there was snow for over 40 years, so that was an adjustment.



were modern, comfortable, and fast. Most of the time, they were straight out of an

As we visited locations away from where we lived, which we did often, we rode the trains. Sometimes they



old foreign movie and slow, not air conditioned, and dirty. But we always met interesting and good Romania people. And they all loved Joyce.

We worked with Church leadership in the branches, oversaw the young single adults in the mission, assisted missionaries in teaching, and, perhaps most important, we were like parents/grandparents to the wonderful young men and women we worked with who were fulltime missionaries like ourselves.

We traveled throughout the mission, including into Moldova a few times, and to the Black Sea (in the winter.). In our calling with



the Outreach program, we went with our young people to the Czech Republic and Hungary for eastern Europe young single adult conferences. And at the request of the mission president, I accompanied health challenged missionaries twice to Frankfurt, Germany to get needed medical care as that was lacking in Romania.



There were only four chapels constructed by the Church in the Romania-Moldova mission. Two in Bucharest, one in Ploiești, and one in Brașov. They were smaller buildings but very nice and recognizable architecturally as Latter-day Saint churches. There were no wards or stakes or even high priests that I was aware

of among the Romanians. There were two Church “districts” and a number of small branches with no more than a few dozen members in most branches. Most branches met in homes that were either owned or rented by the Church.

A joke shared by Romanians was that if word got out that the world was going to be destroyed in a year, everyone in the world would move to Romania

because it was behind the rest of the world by at least 50 years. Some examples.



Community wells in the small country towns

Kathy Christofferson, Joyce, and Sora Ashby on way to Moldova

The poor and beggars everywhere
Homeless woman warming herself by garbage bins behind our apartment



Vintage trains
Elder & Sora Wright and Joyce

Low quality medical care

Hospital room in three-story hospital with no elevators



Non-fenced pasture lands

Between Ploiești and Brasov

Fresh unpackaged food

Open market at Bran Castle



The missionaries and young single adults and saints and priesthood leaders we worked with were exceptional blessings in our lives. We loved them.



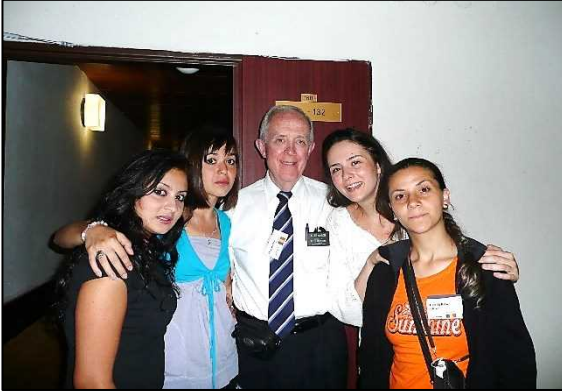
Members of the Ploiești Branch with some missionaries
President and Sister Ashby are marked

Senior missionaries serving with us
President and Sister Lundberg, our 2nd mission president, are marked



Many young missionaries blessed us
Sister Lovell and Elder McFarlane are shown here

Our marvelous young single adults



**Some Young Single
Adults from our
mission**

**Young Single Adult
service project at
Czech Republic YSA
conference**





**Moldova Young
Single Adults**
Elder & Sister
Telford YSA leaders
there marked

Rather than a chronological accounting of our mission, I will include some highlights that will give an overview of our great adventure. Details are in my journal.

LIVES WERE CHANGED

There were at least two reasons unknown to President Ashby at the time for why I believe he was inspired to assign us to Ploiești rather than Bucharest the first part of our mission.

First, in many ways, Brother and Sister Mușat were the backbone of the branch there. He was the elders quorum president and counselor in the district presidency, and she was an Institute teacher. They were planning on going to the temple to be sealed six months before we got there, but then their marriage unraveled. They stopped living together, and all divorce proceedings were completed except them signing the final divorce document. You can imagine the effect this was having on their two children and this small branch of the Church.

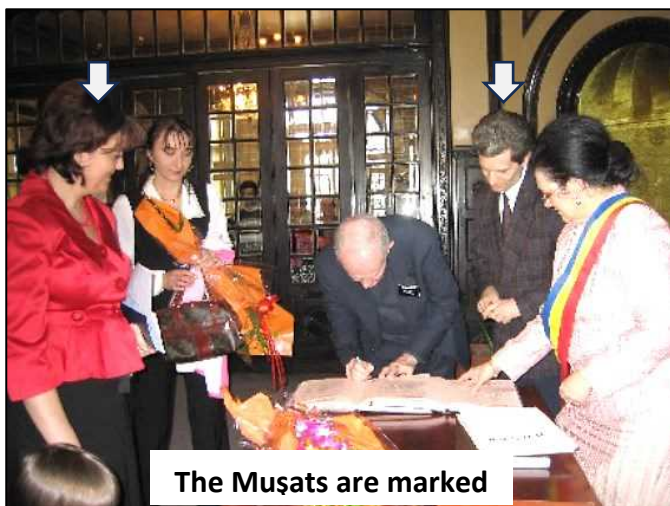
The branch president, district president, and mission president had met with them but to no avail. Probably because Garth Hanson, my uncle and previous mission president, had been instrumental in bringing Sora Mușat into the Church, she asked if she could talk with me. We went into an office at the Church, and one of the sister missionaries translated for us as I couldn't speak Romanian, and Sora Mușat could not speak English.

She wanted to preserve her marriage. She was weighed down with sorrow and distress and pleaded for help. With the mission president's approval, blessing, and literal assignment, I scheduled a meeting with Brother Muşat. He came with a dark cloud and within minutes we could feel the Holy Ghost there and that cloud was gone. I gave him a blessing.

A few days later, the couple asked to meet with Joyce and me. They were kind and loving to each other and requested us to give them temple preparation lessons so they could soon be sealed in the temple. And we did.

We met with them in their apartment, and then during one session they looked at each other with coy smiles and then sprung their surprise on us. They weren't married. Unbeknown to them the divorce papers they had filed actually went through. They were divorced and had been living together unmarried for several months, and they held current temple recommends. They counseled with their priesthood leaders and were assured that that would not preclude them from going to the temple, but, they had to get remarried now.

And they did. I was a witness, with my signature on an official document in the city of Ploieşti. The wedding ceremony was conducted by the city clerk.



was decked out with an official ribbon across her front. She turned on a little cassette player and played *The Wedding March* for 15 seconds or so and then took no more than a minute to marry them. All of us were smiling—for varied reason. And the Muşats were sealed in the Frankfurt, Germany temple shortly after.

My close relation to Garth was the key. It is highly unlikely that Sora Muşat would have approached me if I did not have that connection to Garth. And if we had not been assigned to Ploieşti the Muşats divorce may have been final since the previous efforts of their priesthood leaders had been to no avail. The Lord wanted Joyce and me in Ploieşti at that time.

There was at least one other reason for President Ashby's inspiration to send us there. Joyce and I taught the Advanced English class that missionaries offered to Romanians who wanted to learn English. We taught the advanced class because we didn't know the Romanian language well enough to teach the basic one. And one of our students was Teo (Corina Teodora Picioruș). She loved us. And we loved her.

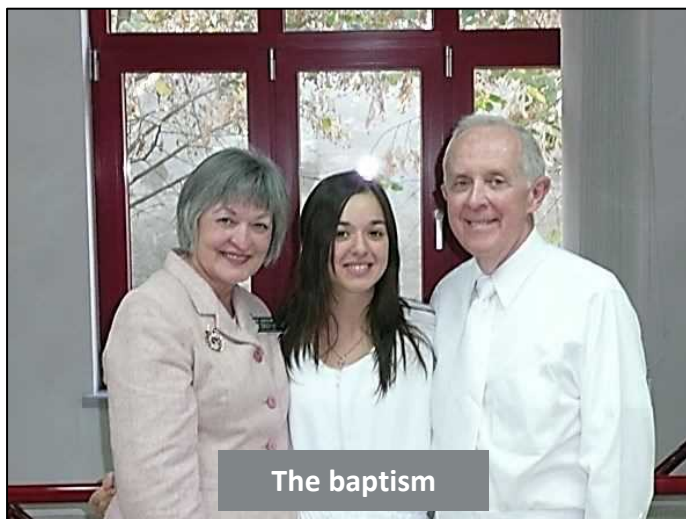


Over time, we became very close. She was living with her grandmother and father. Her mother had left them, and her situation where she was, was not very good. She had just turned 18, which meant she could make her own decisions as to the Church and her life. It was an unsettling time for her, and the Church and Joyce and I brought some stability for her.

She said to Joyce, "Why couldn't you have been my mother."

Teo asked me to baptize her. I memorized the baptism prayer in Romanian and told her I would administer the ordinance in Romanian.

She said, "Would you please do it in English so I can understand you?"



So much for my foreign language aptitude. I baptized her and she stayed active in the Church while we were there. After our mission she moved to England. We kept in touch with her, but she was not involved in Church much anymore.

She surprised us by coming to Ireland when we were there with Ben and Judy in

2017, and we did several things with her. Our closeness was renewed, and we will see where her experiences with this life finally lead her. We love her.

Some Experiences

The Police

There was a knock at the door of our Ploiești apartment when we had only been there a month or two. I looked through the peephole, and it was a police officer. I opened the door, and he only spoke Romanian, and I only spoke English. Fortunately, I was on a phone call with one of our missionaries who spoke fluent Romanian, and I handed the phone to the policeman so the Elder could talk to him.

The officer was there on a complaint from a woman on the floor directly below us. She had complained to the building manager that strange ultrasonic noises were coming from our apartment bathroom and hurting her heart. Hmm. Our landlady, Cristina, had gone to that woman's apartment a



week before to find out what the deal was. The woman claimed that she could also hear Cristina making noise here in our apartment at midnight. Cristina concluded the woman was “crazy.”

The woman had complained to the building manager, and he came to the same conclusion as Cristina. But the lady wanted action, so she called the police. That's why this officer was here. We invited him in, and Cristina came over. He “inspected” our bathroom. We had hidden the ultrasonic machine that hurts the hearts of women really well, 😊 and he agreed with Cristina and the building manager about the woman's mental state. Cristina and the officer visited for 45 minutes, and we all became friends. The policeman gave us his phone number and the number of his partner who could speak English and said if we ever have any

problem anywhere in the city with anyone, to give him a call. Thanks to the woman in the apartment below us, we now had police protection. That came in handy.

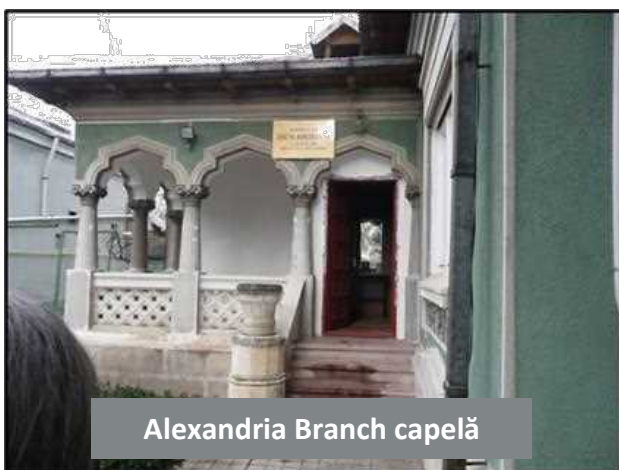


Some months later, the elders were stopped by a policemen when they were distributing flyers advertising our English classes and were told they needed to have a permit to do this. The missionaries asked us to contact our policeman friend to find out what they needed to do.

Joyce called the woman partner of the policeman who we had made friends with. She spoke good English and wanted to come to our apartment to talk about this. She didn't need directions. We were famous. She came, and for two hours we had the most delightful visit. Joyce's raisin cookies helped. She even expressed interest in the Church, and we had solidified our bond with the police.

The Church in Alexandria and a Dental Office in a Home

We were able to visit most of the branches of the Church in our mission. Alexandria is some 50 miles southwest of Bucharest and close to the border with Bulgaria. The villa the branch meets in there was once owned by an influential Communist leader who appropriated it for his own use. It is one of the nicest villas the Church uses, and the irony is it was once owned by a likely confirmed anti-Christ atheist.



The Branch president, President Matei, invited us to his home after the meeting to have dinner. Their apartment was on the bottom floor of their bloc and

on the wall of the little entryway inside their apartment were pictures of toothpaste, toothbrushes, etc. Most were advertisements that looked like they'd been taken out of a magazine. A little strange we thought to have those kinds of pictures decorating your walls. The small kitchen was off the entryway, and the table was set formally with nice dishes and napkins. They had taken wonderful extra steps to make this a special dinner for us. And it was.

At one point one of the doors leading off their hallway was opened, and there was a dental office.

There were two dental chairs, drills, and all the equipment a dental office would have—except no x-ray machine.

Their apartment was a dental office too. The pictures in the entryway now made sense. I told President Matei that my father was a dentist, assuming he was a dentist. He wasn't.

He was an engineer and used to

be a pilot. His wife was the dentist operating from their home.



One surprise after another in this wonderful Romania.

Beggar? Not So Fast

The beggars in Romania were ubiquitous. Just about everywhere you went, there were those who were asking for handouts. Old people, young people, men and women, and even children. Some were passive or hesitant, some aggressive. And just like here in the United States there were those clearly in need, and those who were less deserving—even flagrant in taking advantage of others.

One day we were riding with one of the local brethren on a crowded street in Bucharest when we saw a young man stumbling alongside the cars in the inside lane near a traffic light and begging for money. He was clad only in pajamas on this cold day and was shaking and twitching like he had palsy. He was a pathetic figure.



The brother driving the car said the government had cautioned everyone to not give money to the beggars, and he claimed that many of them worked for the mafia. As he said this, I was picturing the many beggars I had seen who appeared disabled and destitute. Then suddenly this pathetic handicapped beggar in his pajamas who looked for all the world like he could die right before our eyes, took off in a sprint. He leaped across the median, ran in front of the oncoming traffic, and then down a side street like he was in a 100 meter dash and had just heard the starting gun.

He had had a miracle recovery. Probably brought on when he saw the police officer coming toward him.

I still tried to be compassionate to those in need but was a little more cautious.

A Good Samaritan

We rented a car and were driving on backroads to see some of the small villages. A different way of life from what we had ever seen. Many of them had no running water in the houses but got their water from an open well. Some of the villages we visited were only accessed by rough, rutty dirt roads, and none of them had gas stations. And...

We were very low on gas.

We stopped at a small train station in one of the villages to ask someone where we were and where the closest petrol station was. We tried to communicate

that to a man who was supervising construction, but he couldn't speak English. Thank goodness, he understood our sign language.

He went to his house and picked up his car. He had us get in and drove us over 10 kilometers to a petrol station to get gas, then back to our car. I'm sure he understood our fervent "thank you's." I tried to pay him something for his time and for the petrol he bought for us so we could get our car to the petrol station. He refused. A true Samaritan.

Good Samaritan II

We were in Brasov, about 70 miles from our apartment in Ploiești, for a series of meetings. They went late, and it was after 8:00pm before we got to the train station. There were only two trains going at that time to Ploiești—the fast train and the "personal" train that stopped at every conceivable stop and was much older. We inadvertently got on the personal train. That was the wrong one.

Not many people were on it, and we got a compartment all to ourselves. It was dirty, rundown, and with little light. The windows were particularly dirty and hard to see out of. And, of course, no air conditioning. Joyce tried to make the



best of it, until a mouse ran across the floor of our compartment. With a yell that boarded on a scream, she lifted her feet off the floor and put them on the seat across from her. That's where they stayed for the rest of the trip. It didn't help when she saw another mouse run

down the corridor of the train outside our compartment.

The train stopped about every five minutes it seemed, and we couldn't see where we were stopping because of the dark and the dirty windows of our compartment. So, we were depending on the time we were told the train was supposed to be at Ploiești to determine when we would get off. That time came, and sure enough the train pulled into a station that, at first blush, looked like it might be Ploiești. But it was 11:30p and the windows were dirty and nothing was

lighted well, including the station, so we couldn't tell for sure. There was no one we could ask, and we had to make an immediate decision whether to get off because the train would be pulling out shortly. We got off.

I was first off with our luggage and then tried to help Joyce off as the train started to leave. She had to literally jump to make it. So far, an interesting night. We were the only ones on the platform or anywhere that we could see. There were stairs leading down to a tunnel that led under the tracks and over to the station, which kind of looked like the one in Ploiești from where we were standing. But when we went down the stairs and into the tunnel, we knew we were in trouble. Nothing looked familiar at all.

It was not Ploiesti. It was Buda. Wherever or whatever that was.

I had never heard of it. It was nearly midnight now and, other than the station, there were no buildings, no roads, no nothing. One man operated the station, and he couldn't speak English. In our halting Romanian and sign language we got through to him that we needed to get to Ploiesti which we found out was about five miles away. He said he could get a taxi for us for 50 lei, and we asked him to do it. He tried but was unsuccessful. No taxi wanted to come out from Ploiesti to Buda at that time of night. Apparently, the area was considered "gypsy" which no taxi drivers would ever come into at night.

Another man who lived at the station came in. The station manager talked with him and told us that this man was going to be able to drive us to Ploiesti. But we said no way because he was obviously drunk. He then went to wake up his wife, who he said was sober, to drive us and took us to his "car."

Joyce and I were now laughing, the whole thing was so ridiculous. Here we were at midnight out in the middle of nowhere—no towns, no nothing—with no one who could speak English. And with a man who was too drunk to drive. And the car that his wife was going to drive us in... Well, where the back seat should have been there were huge bags of wheat stacked to the roof. The man proceeded to pull the bags out of the car, and then picked up the seat that was laying on the ground by the side of the car and put it in. Then he went around to the front of the car and lifted the hood. He tinkered around in there for a few minutes, then got inside and tried to start the car. It took several attempts before it did.

We were laughing out loud now.

Then his wife came, and that was the first sense of relief we had. She actually looked decent and like she knew what she was doing. Most important, she was sober. We put our luggage in the trunk and climbed into the back seat—along with fleas and whatever else was in there—and off we went. We didn't exactly know where because there was no road that we could see. We were driving through a field.



Finally, we came to a real road, and we were on our way to Ploiești. With our help, she found our apartment, and I gave her the 50 lei that the station manager told me it would cost for a taxi. She said in Romanian, “No. No. Too much.” She gave me 20 lei back. We gave her missionary handout cards, took pictures of her and the car and invited her to Church. It was now one in the morning. We were tired, amused, and grateful. She was a super Samaritan.

The Romani or Gypsies

By some estimates there may be as many as two million gypsies in Romania. More than in any other country. The gypsies came into Europe around 1000 years ago, and many still maintain their ancient customs. Especially living in gypsy communities with their own unique cultural “government.”

While many gypsies have integrated fully into all aspects of Romanian life, including government, business, western lifestyle, and intermarrying with non-gypsies, they remain a persecuted and looked down upon people by many if not

most non-Gypsy Romanians.

There are some reasons for this besides just race/culture. Most beggars, legitimate and sham, are gypsy. Gypsy communities are considered by the law to be dangerous places for non-gypsies to be in. We saw several physically violent gypsy reactions to someone they were angry with. We



saw gypsy mothers pushing their little children to beg and treating them harshly for any recalcitrance.

The gypsies were almost exclusively the drivers of the ubiquitous horsedrawn wagons that were used in lieu of cars or trucks for just about everything. For me, they were always picturesque, and neither Joyce nor I ever had any personal unpleasant experiences with them. In fact, several with gypsy heritage were members of the Ploiești Branch and were our friends.

LIVING THE GOSPEL

An older sister missionary working in the mission office was commiserating with me about the lack of convert baptisms in Romania. She said her missionary grandson laboring in southern California was seeing a number of people join the Church and wondered why that wasn't happening here in Romania.

I said, "Where he is serving, he can take people to Church to show them what the gospel is all about. Here, all the missionaries can do is tell them what the Church will be like when there are many members."

Our small branches here did not have all the Church programs. For example, many did not have Primary or a young men/young women program.

Branch leaders had only been members a relatively short time and had little experience in Church leadership. Most members did not have cars to easily visit one another, and Church materials for administration and teaching written in Romanian were few.

But...

The example of faithful members who were trying to live the gospel and we missionaries who tried to be good examples of gospel living were impacting.

Home Teaching

We can hardly imagine in the United States what it is like in these tiny branches of the Church in a developing country like Romania. We visited a small branch in Sibiu and met with the newly called branch president to introduce home teaching. I asked him how many members/families he had in his branch. He said there were 55, and he knew them all and was trying to let them know of his love for them.

I then asked him how many brethren he had in his branch who would be willing to be home teachers to his members. He and the other brother in the room spoke for a few seconds in Romanian, and then the branch president said, "Two."

All of the potential home teachers in that branch to begin with were there in that room.

I said, "Well that only leaves you 27 each to home teach. Can you manage that?"

We all smiled.

Then I suggested that these two brethren each take just one family and meet with them weekly, using the special discussions we had developed, to try to rekindle the Spirit in that family. Then, at the appropriate time, go on to another prayerfully selected family. That this branch president had been trying to show his love for the members of the branch was a really good start.

Paying Tithing and Offerings

I was in a priesthood class in one of the two branches in Bucharest. It was probably the largest branch in Romania and all priesthood holders attending that day, both Aaronic priesthood young men and older brethren, were in that meeting. About a dozen or so.

The priesthood instructor talked about how to budget your income to pay your tithing and offerings. He used an example of making 1000 RON a month.

That's only about \$333 and may have indicated what he made. First, he said, you need to take out 100 RON for tithing and 20 RON for fast offerings. He talked about taking some out for savings and then gave suggestions on how to buy inexpensive food and clothing.

He then said that he and his wife currently live with her parents, and the budget he explained to us would allow them to save money to buy their own apartment—in 10 years. He would be 40 then, and their child would be 16.

He was not talking about a house. He was talking about a two or three room apartment in the blocs. Not even a condominium. That was the kind of living the gospel faith I saw in many of the Romanian saints.

Gratitude

The people there had so little and were so very grateful for the smallest thing. Dr. David Glen Hatch a renowned LDS concert pianist from the states brought some of his prize students to Romania to hold a concert and a fireside. The concert was held in the oldest concert hall in Bucharest and was very good. The fireside was held in a Bucharest LDS chapel, and they used what was available—an electronic combo of an organ and piano.

In essence the concert pianists played their fare on what amounted to a Clavinova. But they were great sports and it was okay. The members were thrilled. Our Ploiești branch president hired a bus to take the branch members from our branch in Ploiești to the fireside in Bucharest.

After the concert, Brother Padescru from our branch went up to Dr. Hatch and asked if there was any way he could buy one of his CDs. Dr. Hatch reached into his briefcase and gave him a CD, telling him there was no cost.

Tears ran down Brother Padescru's cheeks at that offer of kindness, and Dr. Hatch just put his arms around him. The humility and gratitude for the smallest gifts endeared these marvelous saints to us and was what living the gospel is all about.

The Spirit Was There

We went to Brasov to train branch leaders, and I was asked the night before to speak in sacrament meeting. That was really a blessing because we usually didn't find out they wanted us to speak until just before sacrament meeting.

The congregation was small with just over 20 there, including the missionaries, but the Spirit was in that sacrament meeting in a powerful way. My

topic was pride, humility, and our divine potential. After the meeting, Joyce and I were talking to an investigator woman in the congregation who was in her early 20s.

I found out later that she had been meeting for a while with the missionaries and last week apparently told the missionaries she would not be coming out to Church anymore. But here she was, and the meeting she attended in that small branch that day affected her.

She told me that she was introduced to the Church through the English classes and had received missionary lessons. I said, “What you are hearing from the missionaries is true. This Church is true.”

She responded that she was Orthodox, and she had been taught these same truths there.

I said, “Many of these truths are taught there, but some very important ones are not. And you can feel what you are being taught here is true.”

Her eyes became teary, and she said she could feel the truthfulness of what I had said in sacrament meeting. She couldn’t speak anymore as the tears ran down her cheeks. I put my arm around her, and she lay her head on my shoulder until she had gained composure.

Joyce then said, “What you have felt here today is the Spirit.”

And it was. The Spirit was there. In this small gathering of saints who were trying to live the gospel, the Spirit was welcomed and came.

It Was a Woman Thing

I know a woman thing when I see one. And the activity that Sister Davison and Sister Lovell, two young sister missionaries in Ploiesti, planned was definitely a woman thing. They were putting on a dinner at the Ploiesti branch chapel for several of their women investigators and invited some of the Relief Society sisters in the branch to attend to assist in fellowshipping them. Joyce was also invited to come, and since I am permanently attached to Joyce, I was invited to come too.



I thought this was a really nice thing for these sisters to do, but I would be the only man there. I thanked them and planned on asking the elders in our district if they could use my company during this event. But then, one of the women investigators asked if she could bring her husband. So the sisters nearly pleaded with me to come so that man would not feel isolated. I went.

The sister missionaries who did all of this were both physically challenged during the past two weeks. One with wisdom teeth extraction, and the other one was so sick she couldn't move. Another problem was no one had any money. Not the members, and certainly not the missionaries. In addition, missionary transportation and most member transportation was walking. If you lived more than two or three miles from the Church, you could use a bus.

In spite of all this, these missionaries put on the event and used their own scarce resources to make it as good as they could possibly make it. Since the Church room was simple and the Branch had no available linen or dishes to use, I thought we basically would be sitting around plain white tables, and the sisters

would cook up something nice, and we would eat and talk to each other. That would be great.

But I wasn't remembering what a woman thing in this Church really is. I was reminded. The tables in that room were transformed. The sisters taped overlapping strips of crepe paper over the table tops and put out individual place settings, complete with handmade name tags, for each person who was invited. It was a formal setting using cheap plastic utensils, plates, and cups. A thin paper napkin was neatly folded and placed inside each cup. And on a stacking chair in the corner of the room was a little battery operated CD player that one of the sister missionaries brought on her mission that they used to create mood music.

I was impressed.

The food was simple and delicious. A salad was served first. Each plate was prepared individually and brought out to us. Just like a fancy restaurant in the United States. Making a salad in Romania was not just opening a couple of packages of vegetables and mixing them together. You made it from scratch, and to keep from making everybody sick who ate it, each vegetable had to be carefully washed and soaked in a chlorine solution before it was prepared.

When we were through eating the first course, the salad plates were cleared and the second course was brought out. It was a chicken/pineapple/rice goulash kind of thing that was delicious. Then that was cleared and a great dessert, a cake with powdered sugar sprinkled on it, was brought out.

Now, I was really impressed.

The sisters had given careful and prayerful thought to the seating arrangement. Investigators and missionaries and Relief Society sisters were all placed in a way to facilitate fellowship. There were four of us missionaries including the sister missionaries, Joyce, and me. There were three Relief Society sisters, including the district Relief Society President who lived in the Branch. There were four investigators, including three women and one of their husbands, who I was there to help make comfortable.

None of the investigators spoke English, and only one of the Branch members did. So, most of the time I just nodded. In this setting with the Spirit there, I didn't feel isolated at all. I couldn't understand most of the words that were being spoken, but I certainly understood the feeling of love and fellowship that was there.

Then came the primary reason the sister missionaries had planned all this. Sister Lovell went over to the little CD player and inserted a Jenny Oaks Baker CD. It served as the background music for the presentation they would give. Sister Davison held up a copy of *The Living Christ*, the testimony of the latter-day apostles of the Savior, and explained what it was. She had one of the Branch sisters read it in Romanian to the rest of us. While she read it, Sister Davison held up 5" x 7" pictures of the Savior that coincided with the testimony being born.

I had read and have heard read that document many times, but never have I heard it read more powerfully, more sincerely, or with greater impact. I could barely understand a word, but it didn't matter. The Spirit permeated the room and wrapped around every heart that was there. Tears were flowing freely. None more than from me and the other man in the room.

It was a singular experience.

When composure was regained, one of the Relief Society sisters invited the investigators to come to Church Sunday where we would serve the sacrament in remembrance of the Savior. And another branch sister testified, "The feeling that you have felt here is the Holy Ghost." And it was.

This was an extraordinary woman thing and a demonstration of living the gospel regardless of the setting and circumstances. An experience I will never forget.

Renewing the Consecration Covenant

One morning in Ploiești, Joyce called me over to the window overlooking the garbage area. And there sat a little woman in rags by a fire she had made from the paper and cardboard she found in the garbage bins. The temperature was in the teens, and my heart was broken. I decided I was going to ignore an unstated but understood mission rule to not give to the beggars because there were so many.

I put on my coat and took some garbage with me to throw in the bin. I did that, then walked over to this woman and handed her three 10 lei bills—about \$12. That is many times what is normally given. She looked at it as if she couldn't believe it.

Joyce was watching as I walked away, and she said the woman just kept looking at me and crossing herself. As I took the elevator up to our apartment, I thought about the unexpected commission from past insurance sales that we found out about last night. Many times more than what I had given.

As I came into our nice apartment with its warmth and furnishings and food and kitchen range and oven and refrigerator and bathroom and hot and cold running water and bedroom and comfortable bed and me dressed in my warm overcoat and waterproof shoes, I broke down and sobbed.

This woman and all of the countless ones like her in Romania and throughout the world were, like me, a child of God. I was overwhelmed with the



feeling that I had no right whatsoever to take or use more of the bounties of this earth than what is sufficient for my needs. And everything I have ever been given or will be given belongs to the Lord, and I have, by covenant,

the responsibility to use it as He would use it if He were where I am, doing what I am doing. And I was saddened by how inadequately at times I have done this. I wanted to do better.

CHRISTMAS IN ROMANIA

Well, the two Christmases we spent in Romania were white. We hadn't been in snow at Christmas time since 1966 at BYU in Provo. And it was pretty neat. A few things were different. For example, "Father Christmas," who we saw in Moldova, was not the traditional Santa. He would not be coming down any chimneys.

And we did have our presents under our Christmas tree, but with a little twist. We couldn't get a full size Christmas tree. No place to put it and no decorations. So we got a small one, put it on our little table and put our presents under it. It worked.

And we were able to Skype our family, so we were "home with them" for Christmas. Kind of. There was also much visiting to do, young missionaries to buoy up, and testifying of the Savior. The branches held their version of a Christmas party which was fun. Including another version of Santa Claus that was

much less sophisticated than Moldova's Father Christmas.

And then, at our second Christmas, there was the Christmas Eve party at the mission home. Joyce had the missionaries put on the nativity play. The Lundberg's son, Josh, was Joseph, and Sora Lundberg was Mary, while President Lundberg was

the Star. The angels were missionaries in their white shirts and blouses, the wise men used their scarves for turbans, the shepherds used whatever, and the sheep... Well, white-shirted missionaries on all fours did it and were my favorite of all. I was the narrator and picture taker.



It really was a very tender thing for all of us to participate in and brought back memories of our family Christmas Eve tradition. The only thing missing was the sugar cookies, colored icing, eggnog...and our family. But we were where we should be.



MOLDOVA YOUNG SINGLE ADULTS

Moldova, a tiny former communist country between Romania and Ukraine, had one of the strongest branches in the mission. Because Russian and Romanian and English were spoken in the country, those languages were used in all branch meetings. And in that branch were something like two dozen active young single adults. It was amazing.

All of them spoke English, and there was great camaraderie among them. On the top floor of the villa the branch met in was a large room used by the YSA for games, firesides, and just being together. They constituted about a third of the active members of this extraordinary branch.

Two stories.

Tațiana

Tațiana was one of our beautiful YSA's who lived in Moldova. She had scoliosis. Really bad. Several years before, a steel rod was placed in her back, I believe by Moldovan physicians or maybe Russian, but it broke. And in Moldova there was no way to repair it. Her life was literally 100% pain. And her ability to do much of anything was drastically impaired.

The doctors said that she could only expect to live for a few years under these conditions. But she was always upbeat and cheerful whenever we saw her. She participated to the extent she could in our YSA activities in Chisinau, Moldova, and she made a super-human effort to attend our mission-wide YSA conference. That was a 10+ hour bus ride, and she suffered every second of the way even though we had the back seat reserved for her so she could lay down.



When President & Sister Ashby were serving as mission president they initiated some inquiries in the United States as to what could be done to help. The bottom line was that not

only would such an operation be prohibitive cost wise—many hundreds of thousands of dollars—but the doctors who saw her x-rays refused to do it saying that her chances of survival from such an operation were slim.

All of that changed when the Ashby's went home. They found a national scoliosis association out of Florida who took on the project and determined that they could do the operation. Actually two operations, 10-12 hours each. They arranged for the facility and doctors who would do it for free. Other donations were raised to pay transportation costs for Tațiana and her mother to fly to Florida and to live there for the six months it would take her to recuperate.

Tațiana went to Florida, and the two operations were completed with great success. Tațiana's life was changed dramatically. Here she is after her operations and two or three inches taller than she was.

Regional YSA Conference in Hungary

In the summer of 2008, the Church held a regional YSA conference in Hungary for the young people in the eastern Europe countries. The Moldova youth spent hours and days trying to get visas to come. Moldova was very careful who they let out of their country because they were afraid they wouldn't come

back. About 20 from Moldova came, taking a 30 hour bus trip to get there. They went through a version of hell to be with the YSA's from neighboring countries.

One of the evenings featured talents from each of the countries, and our beautiful Moldovan youth were the highlight of the evening. They first showed a video of them folk dancing to traditional Moldovan music—with a beat. The dancing was done on location in Moldova. Then the lights came on, and through the two doors leading into the assembly room where the talent show was being held, flowed these extraordinary Moldovan youth in their costumes and dancing as they came in. It was a show stopper, and the place went wild. I swallowed to keep the tears back.

But that wasn't all.

There were about 15 workshops/breakout sessions during the conference. The Romanian youth planned it all out so at least one of them would be in each of these sessions. They would all take copious notes, so they could share the conference with their friends in Moldova who were not able to come. They were always thinking of one another. I sent an accounting of this to Todd (Elder Christofferson), and he related part of this story in his October 2008 conference talk.

SPECIAL VISITORS

Throughout our mission, we were blessed to have some visitors. Some who came just to be with us, and others who came with responsibilities pertaining to the mission, but who were “special” to us.

Todd and Kathy (Elder Christofferson) the Newest Apostle

Todd's first assignment as a newly called apostle was to come to Romania with his wife, Kathy. And, I believe, there were reasons. Our kind mission president, President Ashby, made certain that Joyce and I could be with Todd and Kathy as much as possible, and we spent five days with them.

We were with them for a slew of meetings in Bucharest and touring Bucharest sites.

We then rode with them and President and Sora Ashby nine hours to Moldova to meet with the saints there. They flew from there to the western part of the mission, and Joyce and I drove the mission car back to Bucharest. What an experience.



Sightseeing in Bucharest

Some impressions. He is an apostle of the Lord. The mantle was there and his Light and demeanor are what apostles emanate. It was a thrill to watch and listen to the members and missionaries as they prepared to see and be taught by an apostle. For most, this was their first experience with an



In Moldova

apostle. I believe one of the reasons he was sent there, though, was to bless Joyce and me. And he and Kathy did that in some extraordinary, very personal ways.

There was another reason for him being there on his apostolic first assignment. He and Joyce talked and talked about heritage and the blessing of family. I believe it was important for both Todd and Kathy to have there in that remote part of the church on his very first assignment as a prophet, seer, and revelator, a family member who he grew up with and who represented their extraordinary heritage. Perhaps our small contribution to the impact Todd and Kathy had on the missionaries and saints in the mission, was that we were simply there to be with them. We represented the support of their family. We carried the love of those living and those who had passed away to Todd and Kathy. And for us it was a blessing of a lifetime.

Kaye and Garth and Sheila

First Kaye. She visited us just to visit us. And we used her. She helped with special YSA conferences, teaching, mentoring, and loving our young single adults. And we took her to some of the beautiful Romanian sites. Castles, fortresses,



villages, and throughout the beautiful countryside. She taught our YSA's how to improve their communication skills, had fun games with them, and taught them about the Savior. This dear friend of ours had blessed our lives in so many ways and did again in Romania.

And then...

Kaye was called as a fulltime missionary to serve in the Europe Outreach program to help with Young Single Adults throughout Europe—including Romania. And Garth and Sheila were called to head up that program in Europe. Garth and Sheila came to Romania to work with us and our youth and to re-visit



the mission Garth presided over several years before. Kaye came with them, and they stayed in our apartment in Bucharest. Five Hansons in Romania. They were all a great help and it was wonderful being with them.

Some of Our Children

Ben and Judy came over first, then Laura came. We loved that.. We were able to take them on adventures throughout Romania including “Dracula’s” castle They got to ride trains, see our wonderful Romanian friends, and get an idea what our life was like here. We wish all of our children could have visited.



Ben & Judy on Bucharest tram



Laura at recreated Romania village

HEALTH CHALLENGES

What would a mission be like without some health challenges—especially given our ages? I included on a previous page, a picture of a patients room at a Bucharest hospital. I told Joyce, “No matter what happens to me, DON’T ever have me go to a hospital here in Romania.”

My physical challenges were minor. I did have an iritis episode, and the doctor I had was okay. And my chronic vertigo I managed to control for the most part with the medicine I had and just being wise. But Joyce...

When we were about a year out, she had symptoms of breast cancer, and with the lack of adequate medical facilities in Romania, the Church whisked us away to the United States for her to be tested and the appropriate procedures be taken. Since we did not know whether we would be coming back to Romania, we had to pack as though we were not coming back.

Our kind landlady bent over backwards to assist us with respect to holding our apartment for us and coordinating the disposition of our “things” in the event we did not return. From the time the symptoms were first discovered to the time Joyce was being examined by a breast surgeon in Spokane, WA was only 1½ weeks. The Church moves fast. We stayed with Liza and Chris, and Chris, as a radiation oncologist, arranged everything through his wonderful state-of-the-art oncology clinic.

Joyce was operated on a few days later, a biopsy done, and the result was benign. As we were awaiting results and for Joyce to heal, our kind nephew-in-law Mark Jensen, a dentist in Spokane, insisted on giving our teeth a checkup and cleaning, and several other doctors did “their thing” just to make sure everything else was okay as well. We were so grateful for the prayers and concern of everyone. Especially for Liza and Chris and all they did to assist.

But there was another tender mercy as well—actually two. During the time we were in Spokane. Our granddaughter Norah was baptized in Pleasant Grove, Utah and our newest grandbaby, Gabe, accommodated us by coming two weeks early in Salt Lake. So we spent a few days in Utah for those events and were able to help Mary shortly after Gabe’s birth. That kept Joyce’s perfect record intact of being to the birth of every one of our grandchildren to help the baby’s mother.

We worried that the Church might not send us back to Romania for us to complete our mission. Apparently they wanted us back, and we were on the plane

to Romania the day after the missionary department received word of Joyce's good bill of health from her oncologist.

And then...

Some months later, she had another potential cancer diagnosis. This time, the Church sent her to Frankfurt, Germany to be examined, diagnosed, and treated. Kaye and Garth and Sheila were there, and Joyce spent five days staying in Kaye's apartment. It was as though they were on vacation sightseeing in Germany. Well, maybe not exactly.

Joyce had a significant abscess in her breast, not cancer, thank goodness, and she got the treatment necessary to clear it up. It would likely not have cleared up by itself. She had a couple of rough days but was soon back at being the extraordinary missionary she was.

Who didn't like Joyce? Nobody. Her smile and her genuine love made everyone happy... Including...



We served in Romania for nearly two years. It was an adventure in growing, serving, learning, and being in a country that was isolated from the world because of communism for decades. In the 1970's I watched a film of President Kimball as he prophesied the gospel would be preached to these iron curtain countries that had prevented it for so many years. I remember thinking when I saw that film, "This won't happen in my lifetime."

It not only did, but Joyce and I were part of the direct fulfillment of that prophecy.

Hopefully, we made a difference while we were there. Joyce certainly did in her extraordinary one-on-one involvements with missionaries and members. In addition, she helped provide the music at many of the branches we visited.

We both worked directly with the young missionaries and branch leaders and members to encourage them and give them counsel and love. We made progress in establishing the YSA/Outreach program to bless our young adult members throughout the mission and set up an Outreach Center in Bucharest.

I was called to serve as the district executive secretary in Bucharest to the wonderful district president, President Vasile Doru. The first time we met, he put his arms around me and lifted me off the ground, and said, "This is what I do with my mother." It was a strange way to tell me he loved me. We all laughed, and he and I became fast friends.

"Teach me to be a stake president." he said.

For the next six months that I served with him, I introduced some ideas and programs that could help him do this. They included ways for members to be involved in family history; a DVD in Romanian about our divine heritage and potential that could be used by members and missionaries; a branch president's handbook; a systematic, recurring leadership training program; and an activation, member missionary program. Perhaps most important was my supporting and sustaining and encouraging him as he went about being a stake president disguised in district president's clothes.

As is always the case when one serves in the name of the Lord and seeks to magnify their calling, their proximity to Jesus Christ increases exponentially. For us, that was the singular blessing of our mission. He lives. This is His Church. His gospel of potential, ordinances, covenants, and directions is nothing more or less than the way to become like Him and our Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother. We did not know this more surely than when we came on our missions,

but we came to know it more deeply. And that knowledge permeated our lives to a far greater extent than ever before. For this we were eternally grateful.

It came time for our mission to end, but what next? Where would we go? Our house in California was rented out, so we had no home to go to. Kind Liza and Chris invited us to live with them in Spokane Valley while we tried to answer these questions. As a finale of sorts, we went to a Young Single Adult East Europe conference in the Czech Republic just before coming home, and then we were on the plane to Spokane.

We did not expect what we saw when we arrived. All our children and most of our grandchildren were at the Spokane airport to welcome us home. And we wept.

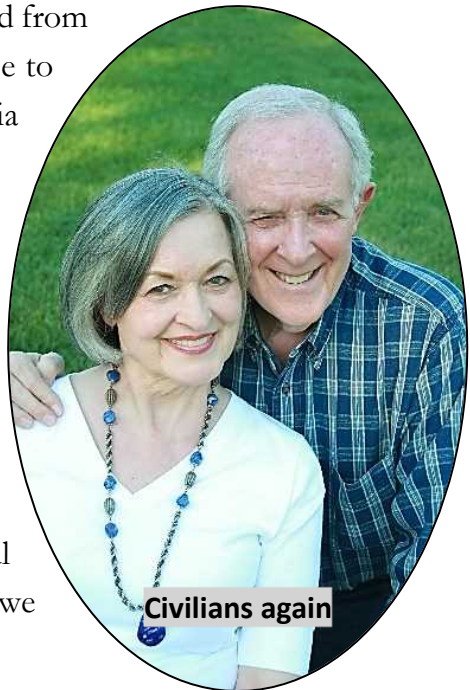




2009-2024

SPOKANE VALLEY

WHAT NOW? ALL OF the children had moved from southern California, and we wanted to live close to some of them. We decided to put our California home up for sale when its lease was up in January and look in the Spokane and Utah Wasatch front areas for a new home. For the next 10 months until our call to serve in the Spokane Temple presidency, we tried to keep busy. I was hired by the Church audiovisual department as a contracted writer for videos to be used throughout the world including east Europe. I worked closely with a wonderful brother from Europe, Chris Wills, and what we were doing was very meaningful.



Dear President Hanson,

This is our last day in the office, we fly home tomorrow. As I was reviewing the many events of our busy fortnight I became aware of a feeling of the portent of the work we are engaged in. There are some major announcements to be made shortly and I felt the need to tell you how much we all appreciate your great skills and your desire to help this wonderful work. I also wanted you to know that I am praying for you and will fast that the Spirit might be close to you as you craft and create these four additional scripts for the Europe East Area Presidency. The storm clouds may be gathering fast but the Lord will support and sustain His faithful servants.

Bless you both, with love and appreciation, Chris & Jeannie

We traveled to Utah a couple of times to visit with family, including to Ray's cabin in Island Park where we were with my brothers. We went to Massachusetts for Jacob's birth and spent several days there with Ben and Judy seeing some beautiful sites and enjoying being with them. We traveled to Arizona at Thanksgiving to be with Ben and Judy, Will's family, and Laura. Other members of our family also came, and it was the beginning of a wonderful Hanson family tradition.

Joyce and I served in the ward we were temporarily residing in. Joyce was ward organist and choir director. And, like in our Tustin ward in California, she directed the best ward choir ever. I served as a Sunday School teacher, ward missionary, and as ward mission leader. Then Joyce and I served as "older" adult singles leaders. We also became ordinance workers in the Spokane temple.

When the lease was up on our California home, we put it up for sale. Not a good time to try to sale a house, but... For months, we looked for a home to buy. We did spend time looking at homes in Utah, but felt we would likely end up in Spokane.

The Lee's continued to graciously allow us to live with them during this very extended interim period. We loved being able to associate intimately with their children. We had many get-together's with Rob and Jayne and their family as well, and with Kerry and Mark and their family. We were getting used to Spokane and loved the beautiful surroundings and "reasonable" pace of the community.

Healthwise, my hearing continued to deteriorate, and I had some stomach/esophagus issues likely caused by my diet for two years in Romania. Those

challenges were mostly resolved. My vertigo continued, and I had some disturbing episodes that I mistakenly thought were manifestations of vertigo. Finally, in July of 2010, because of the constant nature of what I termed “seizures” but were episodes of light headedness, Chris took me to the ER, and I was hospitalized. I went through a battery of tests, and it was determined I didn’t have seizures but had cerebral spinal fluid (CSF) leaks in my spine, and they used my blood to patch two holes. It took me a few days for everything to resolve itself, but it mostly did.

Just in time for me to get the phone call from Salt Lake.

It was our good friend Whit Clayton who I had wonderful experiences with when I was a stake president in California. He was Elder Clayton now, one of the Seven Presidents of Seventy. After we caught up with each other’s lives, he said he was calling on behalf of President Monson. That got my attention.

He asked me some temple recommend questions and asked to speak with Joyce. Then he called me to serve as the first counselor in the new Spokane temple presidency beginning November 1, and to be the temple recorder. I would be given the sealing power. Joyce would serve as an assistant temple matron. I would be serving with two brethren who I didn’t know. Bud Recht would be the president, and Ken Nelson would be the 2nd counselor. To say I wasn’t expecting this is a gross understatement. I did know the current temple president, President Green, but not well. I would not have been surprised with this call if we were in California, and it was to serve in the Newport Beach temple, but here where no one knew me?

Joyce and I were excited and humbled by the call. It was a fulltime Church call for three years. And all of a sudden...

1. We now knew where we were supposed to live, probably for the rest of our lives.
2. Within a few days, I received a call from our realtor who was selling our California home. She had three offers on her desk to purchase the house. And within a month, we sold it.
3. We found the house we wanted to buy just five minutes from the temple and on a large hill with a beautiful view. It had just come on the market, and we bought it. The sale of our beloved California home would close in September/October, and we would move into our new Spokane Valley (Veradale) home the first of October just before we began our service in the temple.

My goodness. Our faith in being guided as to where we were to live and what we were to be doing was fulfilled. I contacted Todd (Christofferson) and asked if it were possible for him to bestow the sealing power on me. Either the President of the Church or one he designated to represent him were the only ones who could do that. He was appointed by President Monson to represent him and on our wedding anniversary, August 24, 2010, Joyce and I met with Todd and Kathy in the

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
OFFICE OF THE FIRST PRESIDENCY
47 EAST SOUTH TEMPLE STREET, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84160-1200

July 20, 2010

Mr. and Mrs. Steve Dunn Hanson
2023 South Morningside Heights Drive
Greenacres, WA 99016

Dear Brother and Sister Hanson:


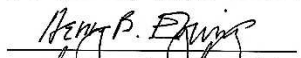
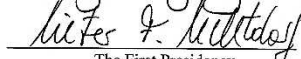
This will confirm the call for Brother Steve Dunn Hanson to serve as first counselor to newly called President Charles H. Recht of the Spokane Washington Temple, effective on or around November 1, 2010. This will also confirm the call to Sister Hanson to serve as an assistant to the temple matron.

President Recht will be authorized to set you apart for these new assignments after he has been set apart to serve as temple president. Inasmuch as Brother Hanson has not received the sealing authority, arrangements will be made for this to take place at the earliest possible date.

For your information, Brother and Sister Kenneth Everett Nelson have been called to serve as second counselor in the temple presidency and assistant to the temple matron, respectively.

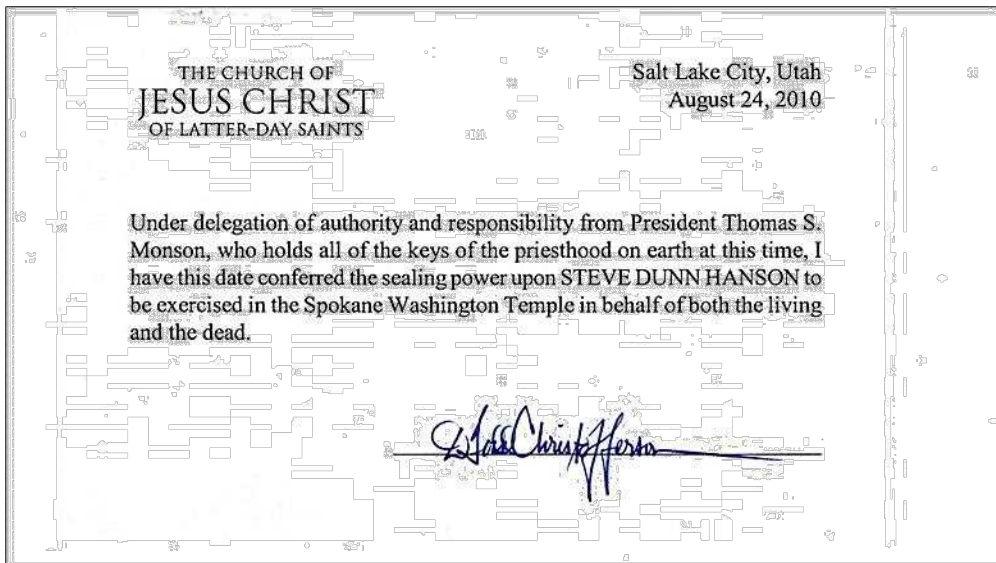
We commend you for the goodness of your lives and for your willingness to accept these sacred and important calls.

Sincerely yours,




The First Presidency

room where the Twelve Apostles and the First Presidency meet, and Todd bestowed that power on me and gave me a wonderful blessing. Amy and Micah and Mary and Matt were there too. A most extraordinary gift that has blessed my life and the lives of my family without measure.

And one of the most remarkable experiences in my life began.



While in Salt Lake, we saw Elder Whit Clayton who referred us to leaders in the missionary department for us to share some ideas we had that we felt the Church might be interested in. Here is the email note he sent me.

*Dear Steve and Joyce,
I loved seeing Joyce and you. It always lifts my spirits to be with you. Your new callings are exciting. Multiple blessings will come to you through that service. Your dedication to missionary work speaks volumes about the devotion of your souls to the Savior and your gratitude for his atonement. I hope that we cross paths again very soon, and that Kathy can be with us.
Love to you both,
Whit*

Liza and Chris had put us up for a year. What a gift. But now we moved into our new home. It was seven years old, low maintenance, and we both were of the mind that we didn't want to move again. We each had our own offices on the main floor, with a large, finished basement including a TV viewing area, guest bedroom, a place for exercise equipment, and a storage room. And the view. The following are images of our Veradale home, surroundings, and views.



Front



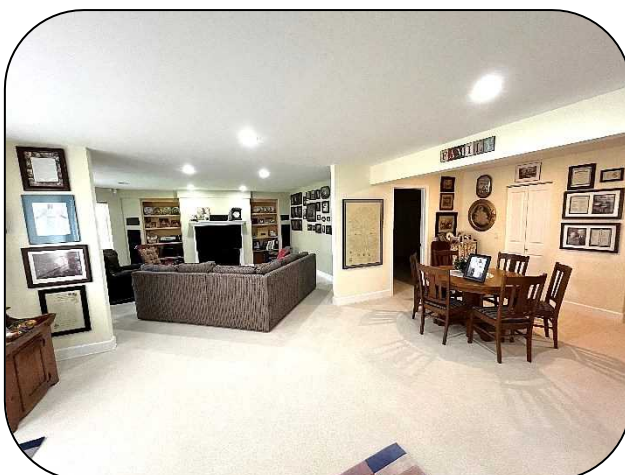
Back



Our bedroom with Shirley's quilt



Our living room with view and our forever furniture



Our basement with family history written all over it

Front yard winter



Front yard fall



And the view from our house



Our service for three years in the temple presidency began November 1, 2010. I took several seasonal pictures of the temple. The ones below I shared with a number of members here who asked for them.



Our schedule at the temple was two weeks on and one week off—sort of. One week we presided at the morning shifts, and I opened the temple each morning, including the gates to the grounds and the temple itself. The next week we worked the afternoon shifts, and I was the last one out of the temple each night, securing the doors and gates to the grounds. Our week off meant we were not at the temple during the shifts, but we were there on Monday for presidency meetings and involvements.

Then the weekends and firesides, etc. We received authorization and a budget for the presidency to travel throughout the temple district to visit and speak at wards and stake conferences. Joyce and I personally visited and spoke at the sacrament meetings and many youth meetings at virtually every one of the nearly 140 wards and branches in our district. Geographically, they were spread from Grangeville on the south up to Bonners Ferry near the Canadian border on the north. From Medical Lake and Cheney on the west, to past Missoula on the east.

Virtually every weekend for three years, we were speaking at a ward or stake and seeing the extraordinary, beautiful country here. We met with scores of bishoprics, and dozens of stake presidency members. We visited with and got to know thousands of members who blessed our lives.

One of the great blessings for me was I was in the temple frequently by myself. It was a time of meditation, introspection, prayer, and inspiration. As the temple recorder, it was my responsibility to oversee all the ordinances and functions of the temple and every year certify that they had been done according to Church policy and direction. I became thoroughly familiar with every temple policy, recording process, ordinance administration, and interfacing with our beloved ordinance workers.

I spoke at each youth baptism held while I was at the temple and met, instructed, and counselled with scores of members receiving their endowment or being sealed/married or being sealed to deceased spouses, children, or parents. For three years, I spent most of my waking hours in a City of Enoch environment.

Being able to work so closely with Joyce, like I was able to do for two years on our mission, was another great blessing. That brought us even closer together as a significant part of our after temple hours discussions pertained to what had happened in the temple.

While not directly involved in proxy sealings at this time, I conducted many “living” sealings for members in the temple district. And virtually every day in the temple, I had extraordinary experiences with the Spirit, with growing up in the Lord, and with learning about love. I will relate one experience here that was in many respects typical of the countless ones I had.

A brother came in to be sealed to his parents who had died. He was in his 60's and was by himself. I was curious about his situation, and while he was preparing for the sealing, I looked up his family's temple records. His mother and father and his siblings were sealed as a family decades back. This man would have been in his late teens early twenties at that time and obviously not prepared then to be in the temple. Now, after all these years, he was. He was ready to be one with his family. I could literally feel how his parents and his siblings were feeling now, and I wept.

Serving in the temple reinforced in my soul the beauty and the love represented by the Great Plan of Happiness. The temple is all about uniting and helping us become one with our family, with each other, and with God. And whatever time it takes for us to choose eternally who we want to be, we will have that time. For both Joyce and me, the temple became a prime focus in our lives.

The following are my Spokane observations and experiences and are not in any particular chronological order.

CHURCH SERVICE AFTER THE TEMPLE

The ward we lived in reminded us of our old Tustin II ward in the leadership experience and faithfulness of the members. Where we met was adjacent to the temple, so you would expect those who loved the temple would gravitate to that ward. And they did. We have been and are continually blessed by our association with these good people.

Since being released as a temple matron, Joyce continued to immerse herself in service. She became a weekly ordinance worker again and was the shift coordinator. For a time she renewed her involvement in music therapy. She served as choir director, organist, and music director in our ward, and with me, oversaw stake public affairs, and then we were Primary teachers for a few years. She was called as an Institute teacher for young adults and for years has affected the lives of

her students in profound ways. She was then called as a service missionary in the Church Education System teaching Institute students throughout the United States.

Besides my service with Joyce in the ward and stake, I have served as the ward temple and family history leader and have conducted temple preparation classes for those receiving their endowment. I have served as a sealer since being released from the presidency.

Since approximately 1970, I have strived to fulfill the assignment the Lord gave to me as a young man in my patriarchal blessing to be immersed in family history work. In addition to my temple callings and ward temple and family history leader responsibilities, I have done the research for and submitted the names of over a thousand of my ancestors to receive the ordinances of the temple. I have contributed many thousands of family pictures and documents to FamilySearch and have worked extensively with FamilySearch projects to provide access to ancestors records for others to do the temple work for them. I have served as a proxy in the temple for countless who have passed on, and as a sealer, I have performed many ordinances for those who are alive, including for my grandchildren, and tens of thousands of proxy sealings.

FAMILY

While in Spokane, our family has grown with the addition of grandchildren, great grandchildren, and the marriages of some of our grandchildren. I have been able to perform the marriage/sealing in the temple for several of our grandchildren.



And there have been divorces. Joy and sorrow define life. We now have something over 60 members of our immediate family. And they love each other and love us. What a blessing. We are so very grateful for this. And to live close to Liza and Chris and Jayne and Rob with their constant love and care for us is the reason we wanted to live close to our children in our later years. We are thankful.

We held annual reunions in Utah, California, and the Spokane area. Our family celebrated milestones in Joyce's and my lives. For our 50th wedding anniversary, we were in California where our children and the LeSueur's put on a wonderful party for friends and family. For our 60th wedding anniversary, our family celebrated in Salt Lake at Mary's. And both Joyce and I commemorated our 80th birthdays in Utah where our family presented us with a treasured collection of letters of love from family members and friends.



And there were sibling deaths. First, my brother Bruce who had been ill with Parkinson's for a number of years. Then my sister, Lynette. Joyce's brothers-in-law, Jim and Leon, and Glen's wife, Margaret, passed away, as did my Uncle Garth and his wife Sheila who I was particularly close to.

The two most impacting deaths for us occurred within just a day or two of each other. Shirley, Joyce's sister, was so involved with ours and our children's and grandchildren's lives that it was hard to imagine life without her. She had been suffering physical for a few years, and her death was expected.

The morning after she passed, Joyce was on the phone with her sisters to arrange the funeral. I was on the phone with our sister-in-law, Kaye, for our scripture study that Joyce and I were doing with her long distance each morning. Rather than talking directly about the scriptures we were studying, we just talked. I told her that I had two women peers who had had an extraordinary effect on my life. Shirley and her. And I told Kaye what a blessing she was to me.

She tutored and mentored me through much of my writings. She was my sister in every respect. We had had so many adventures and experiences with her. Most important, she was an eternal friend. This was Friday. The next day we drove to Utah for Shirley's funeral. Sunday, we received a call from Kaye's son, Rolf. Kaye had passed away apparently Saturday. A complete shock for everyone. It is possible I was the last one to talk with her. So, the next week we attended the funerals of our dear Shirley and Kaye. Elder Todd Christofferson spoke at Shirley's, and some of the great women of the Church, including general Young Women and Relief Society presidents spoke at Kayes. I spoke at both of them, and Joyce led the music for both.

Order of Service

Family Prayer James Harvey (brother-in-law)
Prelude/Postlude Linda Margetts (cousin)
Chorister Joyce Hanson (sister)
Opening Hymn #136
"I Know that My Redeemer Lives"
Invocation John Harvey (nephew)
Life Sketch Mary Doyle (niece)
Music Number Primary Medley
Performed by (nieces)
Sara Jensen, Jenny Oman, Jolynn Peterson,
Karalee Kettle, Laura Hanson, Jayne Fraser,
Amy Harman, Liza Lee, Mary Doyle, Nichole Sirios
Accompanied by Barbara Harvey (sister)
Speaker Steve Hanson (brother-in-law)
Music Number Organ Medley
Performed by Linda Margetts (cousin)
Bishop's Remarks Steve Daly
Speaker D. Todd Christofferson (cousin)
Closing Hymn #152
"God Be with You 'Til We Meet Again"
Benediction Jolynn Peterson (niece)

Dedication of the grave Leon Gillman (brother-in-law)
Pleasant Grove City Cemetery

Shirley's Funeral

FUNERAL SERVICES

Friday, September 30, 2016, 11:00 a.m.
Edgemont 14th Ward, 4200 North Foothill Drive, Provo, Utah

Presiding & Conducting: Bishop Daniel Snow
Family Prayer: Abraham Knell, Son-in-law
Opening Hymn #292: *O My Father*
Chorister: Joyce Hanson, Sister-in-law
Organist: Phyllis Frogley, Neighbor
Invocation: Sally Hanson, Daughter-in-law
Life Sketch: Virginia Pearce, Friend
Memories of Bamma: Grandchildren
Speaker: Gretchen Hanson Knell, Daughter
Speaker: Rolf Hanson, Son
Musical Number: *Hymn Medley*
Kory Katseanes - Violinist
Forrest Howell - Pianist
Tribute: Friends who served with Kaye from the
Young Women General Presidency & Board
Speaker: Steve Hanson, Brother-in-law
Remarks: Bishop Daniel Snow
Closing Hymn #165 *Abide With Me; 'Tis Eventide*
Benediction: Kent Terry, Brother
Interment: East Lawn Memorial Hills Cemetery
4800 North 650 East
Provo, Utah
Dedication of the Grave: Rolf Hanson, Son

Kaye's Funeral

Family. That is what we are all about. What Heavenly Fathers and Heavenly Mothers are all about. I am eternally grateful for my family.

TRIPS

Other than our three years in the temple presidency where we had to get permission from Salt Lake to leave the Spokane area, we were able to do some out of state traveling. As I mentioned, we were with Ben and Judy in Boston, and for most Thanksgivings, we traveled to Arizona to have Thanksgiving at their home. We were in California a few times, Utah many times, and Island Park, Idaho and Yellowstone Park with Ray and Bev and sometimes Reed and Glen and their wives several times. We traveled into western Canada and throughout Washington and the Idaho panhandle.

And then some exotic trips. With Ben and Judy and Jacob and Maya we

took a marvelous trip to Australia and New Zealand. It was my first time back to Australia since my mission. We were able to go to most every place I lived so I could show them the locations of many of my experiences. The highlight for me was to visit with Ann Cattle Boehm and Lorraine Carden who I taught the gospel to and have kept touch with all this time. They love me, and I love them.



Visiting with Lorraine opened the door for me to get in contact with her daughter, Kay, who was eight years old when we taught Lorraine the gospel. She was baptized with Lorraine, and I was one of “her” missionaries. Kay subsequently met and married Terry Vinson and introduced him to the Church. He became a general authority seventy

and one of the seven presidents of the Seventy. We were able to visit with them several times and had them stay with us at our home and go with us to Leavenworth for a family outing with the Lees and the Frasers. They have become choice friends.

In New Zealand we saw many beautiful things, including Hobbiton where the Lord of the Rings movies were filmed. Fascinating. We were in the south seas area during their summer down there, and then during our summer we went with Ben and Judy to Europe. First to Sweden where we visited places our ancestors lived, and then to Denmark. We flew to Ireland where Teo, our friend from Romania, met us and went with us to some of the sites. We next went to France. The highlights for me there were the palace at Versailles, and the Louvre.

Rob and Jayne bought a condominium on the big island of Hawaii and had us come over to visit them. We first went to Oahu and saw the extraordinary sites there—like the Punchbowl cemetery and Pearl Harbor—and then to the Polynesian Cultural Center. Wow. But what we especially loved was staying with Rob and Jayne

and touring the big island at our leisure. I even went snorkeling.

The year we did our exotic traveling to the south seas and to Europe, we also went to Orange County to attend the tribute Orange Stake was paying to former stake presidents. We met with many dear friends, and memories of our nearly four decades there occupied my thoughts. The kindness and love of the members of the Orange Stake was overpowering. I received several letters as a result, with this one being especially tender. Her husband had recently passed away, and I spoke at the funeral of this sister's son who was murdered in Colorado.

October 6, 2017

Dear President Hansen,

What a great opportunity to celebrate Orange California's Stake 60th anniversary! We have been members of the stake for over 46 years and have been greatly blessed by being here. When I think of the Stake Presidents that we have had, you are on the top of my list. We were blessed by the counsel and influence you had upon us as we dealt with the challenges of raising our family. I especially remember the evening that you immediately came to our home after we receive word that Steven had been killed in Colorado. I remember the love and concern you brought into our home. The beautiful blessings you gave to both of us, calmed and sustained us through that horrific experience. We received such comfort through the power of the priesthood and our faith in the Lord.

Richard loved serving with you as a High Counselor and then as Bishop of the Orange Third ward. He mentioned many times how much he appreciated your wisdom and influence that you imparted to him. He was grateful for the opportunity to work with you so closely. He loved you dearly.

You and Joyce have been good friends and always examples of how we have wanted to live our lives.

I love you both,

Anita Bates

BOOKS, WEBSITE-BLOGS, POETRY, PHOTOGRAPHY, SONGS, MUSICALS

Spokane became a time for me to develop and utilize some creative gifts I have been given. In a sense, I considered myself a typewriter. In many instances, I was literally the instrument for the Spirit to bring about beauty and Christ-centered truths. And perhaps even prophecy. While the errors and less than perfect execution in my work is me, the concepts and power of the words are the Lord's.

I cover in some detail what these gifts entailed in the last section of this history. But in a summary of sorts, so far in Spokane, I have written six novels and two gospel-centered non-fiction books. I had several articles published online at Meridian and LDSPMA, and I created a website, stevedunnhanson.com, that contains my blogs, poetry, photography, and information and video of the musical I wrote. I continued to write poetry and throughout our travels, both out of country and in country, I took landscape photographs which I have used both to hang on our walls and to combine with my poetry in an artbook.

And the music. Well, at least the lyrics for music.

I teamed with my dear friend, Jackie Halversen, an extraordinary musician, who composed the music for the lyrics I wrote. Together, we produced a number of hymns and children's songs. She also had me write the script for a Christmas program in her stake, and we wrote an anthem to go with it.

But that was just the beginning of our joint efforts.

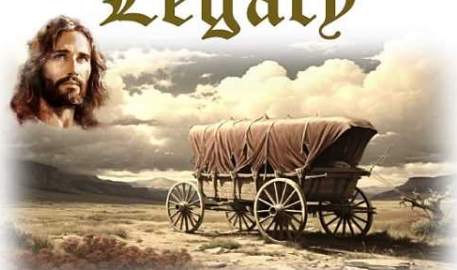
I wrote the script and lyrics for a musical, *Legacy*, and Jackie wrote the music. We were both involved in producing beautiful slides to go with it. A sister from my stake directed and produced it. Joyce led the choir and assisted in recruiting the cast and choir members. Jackie accompanied the production on the piano. Our combined stakes performed it to an audience of about 1500.

It was, by any measure, an extraordinary event. The talent was exceptional, and many people, including technicians, performers, and viewers, had life changing experiences because of it. I know of at least one convert baptism that was a direct result of the play. Many spoke to me or emailed me to tell me how

the production had blessed their lives. The Spirit was deeply involved.

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
PRESENTS

Legacy



An original musical play*
By Steve Dunn Hanson and Jackie Frost Halversen

Songs

My Legacy
I Know the Gospel's True
Don't Know If the Gospel's True
There Has to Be a Wilderness
Why Did I Leave Home?
Left Behind
I Am Finding Joy in This My Journey
What Would I Have Done Back Then?
Honoring His Name
I'd Do It All Again
Reprise

*Based on a true pioneer experience

Legacy

CAST

FATHER.....Myron Thurber
DAUGHTER.....Renee Porter
SON-IN-LAW.....Steve Porter
YOUNG KARNA.....Natalie Smith
HAKAN.....David Demars
KARNA.....Stacy Julian

Introduction: Paul Halversen

CHOIR

Jessica Carlson	Dave Johnson	Jill McComas
Shelley Crump	Daniel Jones	Bryan Osborn
Melanie Fischer	Geoff Julian	Joseph Quim
Rob Fraser	Jane Kessler	David Richards
Melissa Gren	Jay Kessler	Natalie Thurber
Melodie Gren	Eric Ladwig	Paula Thurber
Jim Hemenway	Larry Longhurst	Stephanie Toftdahl
Kerry Jensen	Jonathan Martinez	Rochelle Yates

PRODUCTION

DIRECTOR.....Samatha Call SYNTHESIZER.....Maren Longhurst
CHOIR DIRECTOR.....Joyce Hanson CELLO.....Karen Hawkins
ACCOMPANIST.....Jackie Halversen PROJECTIONIST.....Paul Halversen
SLIDE CREATION.....Jackie Halversen, Steve Hanson

PRODUCTION CREW

Stage Manager: Carrie Tolley ∞ Technical Director: Mark Orndorff ∞ Technical Assistants: Debbie Hemenway, Lani Call ∞ Vignettes: Jill McComas ∞ Set Construction: Dan Powell ∞ Set/Prop Mistress: Stephanie Toftdahl ∞ High Counselor: Luke Peterson ∞ House Operator: Aaron Howard/Missionaries ∞ Set Assistants: Michael, Hyrum, & Joseph Call, Steve Porter, Martin Ladwig, Jon & Michael Tolley ∞ Lobby Set-up: Deborah White, Julie Johnson ∞ Publicity/Programs: Steve Hanson, Shelly & Keith Clark, Glen & Charlotte Squires

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO SUPPORTED THIS PRODUCTION!

HEALTH ISSUES

Sort of a good news/bad news kind of thing. The good news—to my knowledge, I have had nothing genuinely life-threatening. A number of times a serious potentially mortal challenge appeared, but extensive testing ruled otherwise. And, we weathered the Covid storm. We were careful in where we went and what we did, and neither of us contracted it when it was in its deadly form. The bad news? I certainly have been “inconvenienced” a number of times with significant health issues that were sometimes downright debilitating. But what do you expect when you are in your 80’s?

An initial “diagnosis” that I had multiple myeloma—shades of my cancer scare in Orange County—turned out to be MGUS. Potentially serious as it is a precursor for multiple myeloma, but is, in itself, asymptomatic. I do have to have blood tests regularly to check to see if it is evolving into cancer. I also had a suspected TIA, but no brain damage was detected.

A chronic pain in my hip area was problematic for a couple of years. Then

radiation treatment at Chris' Cancer Care Northwest clinic alleviated the pain significantly and hopefully permanently. A blessing. I had a CSF leak in my spine when we first moved to Spokane. I was hospitalized, tests done, and that is what they showed I had. They "patched" them with some success, and over time the symptoms that were significant—light headedness and head fullness—went away. They came back, however, after a number of years. And as of this writing, I am still trying to resolve the problem.

My hearing continued to decrease over time to the point that hearing aids were no longer a significant help. I received a cochlear implant that not only improved my hearing significantly, but the operation also "cured" whatever was causing my vertigo. I had chronic vertigo for 20 years, and with this operation, it ceased. A blessing. I did have to have the cochlear device replaced because it was faulty. Another operation but well worth it because the new device was an exponential improvement in my hearing over the previous unit. I often thought what a difference this would have made in my mother's life as she, like me, was nearly deaf.

And then my eyes. I had had cataract surgery in Orange County on my right eye, but the doctor placed the lens in wrong, and over time it rubbed off a significant part of my iris. Ultimately, I had to have that artificial lens replaced and the new one positioned where it should be. I then had an iris implant to keep light from entering my eye through my iris. And...I have macular degeneration in both eyes, but a serious "wet" condition in my chronically troubled right eye. That has required periodic shots in that eye to control it.

And skin cancer. I've had many "MOS" surgeries on my face here in Spokane to remove the cancers growing there. They were successful, but my face looks like a battlefield.

Oh yes. I fell down a flight of 15 stairs. Nothing broken that I know of, but I'm careful going down stairs now. Suffice it to say, I have helped keep doctors and ERs and Urgent Care facilities in business.

So far, though, my health issues pale in comparison to most people who are my age. It might help that I have been regular in significant exercising for the last 40+ years. Joyce has had few health issues here in Spokane, and those have primarily been varicose veins in her legs. She, overall, is in very good health.

OBSERVATIONS

I am 84 years old as I write this. I do not know how many years I will stay here on what I call the telestial tour. I thought my time on earth would end two or more decades ago. I was wrong. I am willing to stay or go. I just want to stay long enough to do what I am assigned to do and learn what I need to learn. I have every confidence that the timing of my departure will be right.

As a sealer, I have had countless experiences with those on the other side. Not necessarily speaking or seeing them directly but feeling their presence and acceptance of what we are doing for them. They are as real as I am. One of the things I've said in my sealing sessions is that perhaps our big surprise when we pass on is we won't be surprised. It will be as natural as getting up in the morning.

Over the years, I have come to some understandings and some certainties.

Family

I am eternally grateful for my heritage and Joyce's heritage. Each one of those who have gone on before us and who impacted us so greatly while they were here, I am indebted to. I love them. Our siblings and extended family have likewise been an extraordinary blessing in our lives. And our children and grandchildren have expanded my understanding of charity, the pure love of Christ. Every one of them has taught me about love, and their love for me and for one another is what existence is all about.

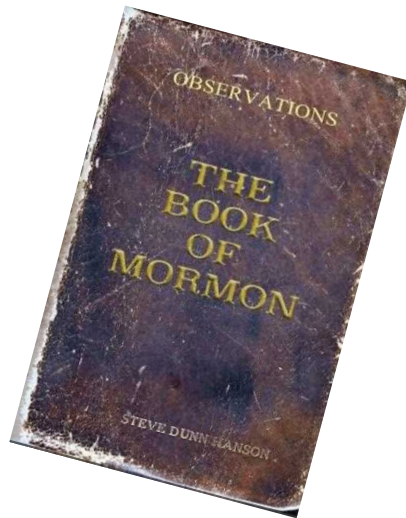
Joyce is my soul mate, friend, and the one I will cleave unto for eternity. She has been a singular blessing in my life. Her lifetime of faithful service, love of the Savior, love for me, and love for our family is truly Christlike. I am becoming one with her and all that that means.

What I Know with Certainty

I have had a lifetime of extraordinary experiences for which I could never thank my Heavenly Father enough for. Those experiences have led me to three truths that I know with a sureness now.

1. Jesus Christ is who He said He is, and His great plan of happiness was restored through Joseph Smith so everyone can choose and become who they want to be eternally.

2. I will follow Jesus Christ in every way. I am seeking to love Him purely and know with certainty I want to be One with Him.
3. I want to eternally be with every one of my family—ancestors, Joyce, and posterity.



APPENDAGE

MY CREATIVE EFFORTS

I HAVE REFERENCED in this history some of my creative efforts. They have included scores of talks and blogs, magazine articles, fiction and non-fiction books, poetry, lyrics for hymns, anthems, and children's songs, and the script and lyrics for a musical, *Legacy*, that was produced in my stake in 2024. I have also produced several videos that I used for missionary work and wrote scripts for videos produced by the Church audiovisual department and used by Church units throughout the world.

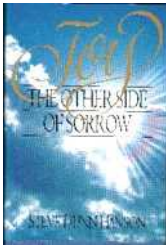
I have taken hundreds of quality landscape pictures, some of which hang on our walls at home and several that I have published with my poetry. I have created a few websites where I featured my writings, poetry, books, and photography. My intent with everything I have created is to testify either directly or indirectly of Jesus Christ and/or the beauty of the earth He created.

I include below some summaries and a few samples of my work. As I have said previously, I consider myself to be as a typewriter for the Lord to use in what He wants me to say or do. The Lord is not responsible for my inadequacies or errors. That part is me. I have simply wanted what Moses said to apply to me: "It was given unto as many as called upon God to write by the spirit of inspiration." (Moses 6:5)

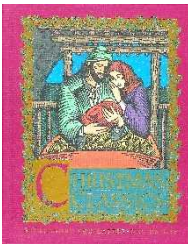
Published Books



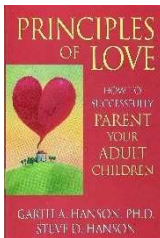
A novel, self-published in 1987, *The Mission* was the #1 bestseller in Deseret Book Stores for a time. Patterned after my experiences on my mission, it has been read by 1000's of young missionaries, and many years after its publication, grandfathers have told me how the book helped them on their mission and in their lives.



Published by LDS book publisher, Bookcraft, in 1992, *Joy the Other Side of Sorrow* relates the challenging experiences of people I knew to show how we can come to a greater understanding of Jesus Christ and joy through our sorrow.



Published by Deseret Book in 1995, *Christmas Classics* is a collection of Christmas stories and articles that have impacted members of the Church through the years. My Ensign article, *Christmas, Second Time Around*, was one of them.



Published by Covenant Communications, a subsidiary of Deseret Book, in 2004, *Principles of Love* gives counsel and examples pertaining to parenting adult children. It was co-authored by Garth Hanson.

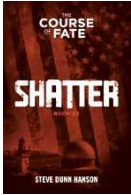


A novel, self-published in 2016, *Sealed Up* was named an overall “Best Seller” by Amazon. An adventure story about finding the hidden Nephite records, it may be a foreteller of sorts. Kaye Hanson was a huge help as I wrote this book.

Published 2020



Book 1—A newer version of Sealed Up



Book 2—The splitting of the United States & the world into smaller political entities.

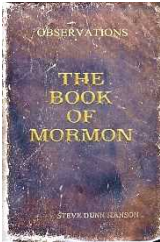


Book 3—The prophesied destruction of the world

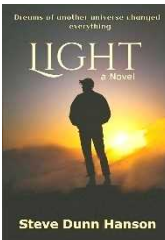


The Course of Fate
A gripping trilogy grounded on scriptural prophecy. A riveting scenario of what the future just might hold.

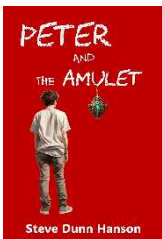
Covers by Matt Doyle



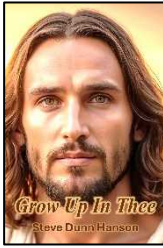
Self-published in 2020 as my 80th birthday gift to my children and grandchildren, *Observations—The Book of Mormon*, includes chapter by chapter comments that are based on the margin notes I wrote in my several copies of the Book of Mormon over the years.



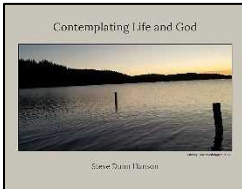
A novel self-published in 2023, *Light* is a metaphor of our journey to self-discovery. In the words of one of my reviewers, it is the Gospel in different clothes. It is highly symbolic on a number of levels.



A novel for tweens and teenagers self-published in 2024, *Peter and the Amulet* is significantly autobiographical and written to both entertain and teach eternal principles of love, kindness, to act and not be acted upon, and grace.



Pending publication, *Grow Up in Thee* is centered on Doctrine and Covenants 109:15. The observations shared in this book open doors to an expanded understanding of our origin and potential and how to obtain it.



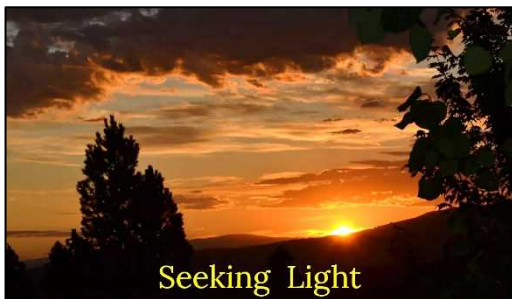
Pending publication, *Contemplating Life and God* is an art book that combines my affecting poems with my impacting photographic images.

Other Published Works

I have had several articles published in online venues like Meridian and LDSPMA. When *The Liabona*, the Church magazine, was called *The Ensign*, three of my articles were published, including “Christmas, Second Time Around” (Dec 1979), “What to Do with Adversity” (February 1981), and “Families Are Forever—and So Is Parenthood” (July 2006). The latter article was co-written with Garth Hanson.

References to and quotes from “What to Do with Adversity” were included in a Church general conference talk (Elder Jack Goaslind, April 1986), several Church manuals including the Family Home Evening Resource Book and talks at BYU events as well as in some journal publications. My poetry was also featured in an LDS focused Magazine, *This People Magazine*, the spring of 1996 issue.

Blogs, Poetry, Photography, Videos



My website, *Seeking Light* (stevedunnhanson.com), has many of my blogs, poems, and photographs. Poems and photographs are also included in my *Contemplating Life and God* book. My poems, photos, and talks that I have given over the years are preserved on my computer. I have also printed many of my best photos in large print form suitable for framing.

I have written and produced four videos that were available on YouTube.

- *I Am a Child of God*—The song is played by renowned violinist Jenny Oaks Baker with my photos as images
- *The Eternal Family*—I created this to be used by missionaries and Church members to introduce family history to their contacts and friends.
- *The Eternal Nature & Divine Potential of Man*—This was produced in Romanian and English languages while we were on our mission in Romania for missionaries and members.
- *Legacy*—I took the “raw” video done by our stake of our Legacy performance and upgraded the format to portray the musical more esthetically.

In addition, I wrote the script for several videos that were produced by the Church Audio-visual department and used by Church leaders throughout the world.

Hymns, Children Songs, Musical

As of the writing of this history, I have composed the lyrics to six hymns, ten children songs, a religious anthem, and ten songs and a reprise for my musical, **Legacy**. All but one of the hymns, Jackie Halversen wrote the music and arrangements for. In addition, I wrote the script for **Legacy** and Jackie and I did the graphics for it. I have included below the intro **Legacy** slide and samples of the **Legacy** music as well as a hymn and children’s song.



10. I'd Do It All Again

Wife's Solo, Cello, Synthesizer, and Piano

Text by STEVE DUNN HANSON

Music by JACKIE FROST HALVERSEN

$\text{♩} = 66$

Vocal *mf*

(Continued directly from song #9)

Piano *mf* *rit.*

A *a tempo*

think of all my Sav-ior did, His sac - ri - fice for me. _____ My

a tempo

rit. *ten.* *a tempo*

chal - len - ges all pale to His, His grace I have re - ceived.

rit. *ten.* *a tempo*

Song from Legacy

When We Partake

Humbly ♩ = 72-84

1. When we par - take the bro - ken bread, The em - blem of His ran - somed flesh,
2. As we the sa - cred wa - ter sip, A type of His re - deem - ing blood.
3. We of - fer, Fa - ther, all we have: A bro - ken heart, a con - trite soul.
4. Help us, dear Fa - ther, to o - bey, Re - mem - ber Christ e - ter - nal - ly,

The cov - nants we have made with Thee, We will to - day re - new a - fresh.
We pray Thy Spi - rit al - ways be In us a Light; a still - ing flood.
Of Thee, we beg for - give - ness now, That thru Thy grace we may be whole.
En - grave His name up - on our hearts, That we be one with Him and Thee.

Text: Steve Dunn Hanson

Music: Jackie Frost Halversen

Hymn

A Miracle From God

(The Book of Mormon)

Sincerely ♩ = 92

1. The sa - cred Book of Mor - mon is a mir - a - cle from God. He
 2. The Spi - rit whis - pers to my heart, With ev' - ry page I read, That
 3. The Book of Mor - mon helps me know That through my Sav - ior's grace I

sent it by Mo - ron - i To be my i - ron rod.
 Je - sus is my Sav - ior And has great love for me.
 can be pure like He is, So I will see His face.

Chorus

I love the Book of Mor - mon. I'll read it ev' - ry day. Then

I'll re - mem - ber I'm God's child, And on His path I'll stay. _____

Text by Steve Dunn Hanson
Music by Jackie Frost Halversen

Children's Song

