

Three Witnesses in the Restoration

My Testimony: Verneil Simmons

Along with my two good friends, Mildred Smith and Louise Gregson, I make my record of the many years I have lived as a member of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

We shared the life of the Church through the Great Depression, the Second World War, the birth of Israel, the hippy-flower children era, the demise of the Russian empire, the changing mores of our national culture, and the heart-rending divisions of the Church.

Beyond that we have all lived abroad, we have all written books and other church materials, and Mildred and I spent many years as appointee wives serving the Church in many areas of the world. We are each in the eighth decade of our lives, and the memories are many.

Where do my memories begin? My first memory of the Center Place came on a visit to see the birth of the coming Auditorium. As a child I ran down the open cement stairs because there were no walls of the main floor. In 1940 I sat on a park bench for the Communion service of the April Conference, the building still unfinished but already in service to the Saints. In 1968 I was very comfortably seated in the beautiful main chamber when my husband was ordained a President of Seventy.

Choice among all the memories are the many blessings from the Lord—gifts of the Spirit that came in answer to prayers. But my greatest testimony came as a total surprise, and unasked for gift. I was recovering from surgery when the doctor told me that the ovarian tumor he had removed was malignant.

In 1958 that was a chilling revelation because ovarian cancer was considered terminal. My husband called our pastor to come and assist in the administration that I asked for. I asked only for enough time to raise my three sons who were still in school.

I heard the voices of the elders as they prayed for God to extend my life, but suddenly I found myself in a different sphere. I was walking in a beautiful meadow with a small group of people in the company of Jesus. I did not see his face but I was fully aware that He knew I was there. My first impression was the endless joy that filled my soul being in the presence of my Lord. Then I became aware that all the trees, the flowers, even the grass were singing praises to their Lord. From the uttermost depth of space the melody came in recognition of the Creator. Time did not exist, but I was in my hospital bed when the prayer closed.

My petition was granted. I have been permitted to raise my sons and to continue into old age. But I had questions about why that experience had been given to me. The answer came years later, at Gareth's death. This experience came vividly to mind, and I realized how the Lord had prepared me for the loss of our son. The experience with Jesus gives me the assurance that He has been with me all the days of my life, through both joy and tragedy. I know how all of God's creation longs for the return of its Creator. May my testimony have value for the Saints.

Much of the ministry we three have given to the Church throughout the years was our testimony of the truths of the Book of Mormon. My belief in that record, which was given to the world before the Church was organized, will always keep me a member of that Church.

I had the good fortune to be born into a family who had been identified with the restored Church of Jesus Christ since the day of Joseph Smith, Jr. I was brought up on family stories of how my great, great grandmother carried food to brother Joseph and the brethren confined with him in the Liberty Jail, and how her husband, Charles Allen was tarred and feathered by the mob in Independence because he refused to deny the Book of Mormon. (*RLDS Church History*, Vol. 1: p. 351.)

In the exodus from Nauvoo the Allen and the Galland families followed Brigham Young to the Winter Quarters in Nebraska. However, they did not agree with the action taken there that placed Brigham Young in the position of President over the Church. At that point, a number of church families sought home sites in western Iowa.

Maria Allen and Benjamin Galland were married at Galland's Grove. There my grandfather, Abram Galland, was born. Later the family moved a few miles northward to Deloit, Iowa, which had originally been settled by other church families under the name of Mason's Grove. This was my mother's home.

My father was an avid reader and I inherited his love of books. My brothers and I were encouraged to read the Scriptures for ourselves and church publications were held in high regard in our home. The history of the Church had always fascinated me perhaps because I felt my family had been intimately involved with it.

As a teenager, my deepest desire was to be an archaeologist—a desire that the Great Depression of the thirties made only a dream. College for me was out of the question. My family moved to Cameron, Missouri in 1936. There I met and married a young Church member, Wayne Simmons, who held the

office of priest. Wayne's family also had a church heritage going back five generations, to the building of the Kirtland Temple. He was born at old Far West and his father was the pastor of the small church, which still stands there today. We shared a mutual interest in the Book of Mormon as he was teaching that subject to the adult class in the Cameron Branch.

The years following our marriage saw the birth of two of our sons, five war years spent in the Caribbean island of Aruba, a year in Costa Rica and nearly two years in Caracas, Venezuela.

My husband, Wayne, worked for Standard Oil, the Inter-American School Service and then became the director of the Cultural Center for the U.S. State Department in Venezuela.

These varied assignments gave us an opportunity to study Spanish and to delve into the culture and pre-history of much of Latin America. During these years I continued to spend hours studying various aspects of the Book of Mormon.

We had chosen to live in Latin America with our sons because of our conviction that the Church must eventually open missions to the Lamanites there. We thought that hope was fulfilled in 1950 when the General Conference named Wayne as the first Spanish speaking missionary to Latin America. Actually, it meant waiting years on the border in south Texas, with only vacation trips into Mexico for my archaeological research.

My years of study had convinced me that the lands described in the Book of Mormon could only be found in the area of southern Mexico, to El Salvador, an area called "Mesoamerica" by archaeologists. Therefore, *Mormon's Hill Cumorah* had to be somewhere in southern Mexico. The search for that hill became a family quest. Studies of the ancient trade routes, as recorded by

the Spaniards, led to exploration of an area new to us. Through a most unusual experience we found Cerro Rabon which fit all the requirements I had listed from the book itself. It was a great satisfaction to the family.

In 1965 we were finally sent to Mexico City by the Church. Our older sons had married and only Dana, born in 1950, accompanied us. He got the archaeology degree I had wanted at the University of the Americas in Mexico. In 1965 the Church purchased a beautiful residence on Embassy Row, which had the promise of fulfilling all the needs of a center for missionary work in Latin America.

A congregation was developed with the help of a number of couples who came to Mexico for work or study. We provided a home there for many RLDS students who came to Mexico for language studies in Spanish, and for six years we were the Church guides to the museum and the archaeological ruins for the many saints who visited. Dana enjoyed sharing the story of his night on Cerro Rabón.

During the six years we spent in Mexico we came to understand that the leadership of the RLDS Church had no deep convictions about developing work in Latin America. We often discovered we were in opposition to the leadership of the Church when we urged more resources be given to the divinely appointed tasks of the Church. Instead of supporting the work to the Lamanites they were interested in secularizing the Church beliefs and programs. This was proven when in the mid 1970's they sold the Church property in Mexico City, and wiped out the work there.

We had been returned to the USA in 1970, first to serve in Minneapolis and later back to the border in Texas. I continued teaching Book of Mormon classes in districts, reunions, branches and study workshops.

Frequently, I was urged to put all the information into a book, which at that time I had never considered. I did believe that the promise of the coming forth of the original records still hidden in *Cumorah South* was of vital importance to the Church. Because of that conviction I yielded to my students and accordingly, *Peoples Places and Prophecies* was written, printed at the Herald House, and went on sale at the 1978 Conference when we were retired from Church appointment.

I consider the printing of this book no small miracle. The 1980 Conference brought an order from the Presidency to remove from the Church's bookstores all Book of Mormon materials. This forced Louise Gregson, Thelona Stevens, Roy Weldon and myself to find other outlets for our Book of Mormon materials. Because of our conviction that we must continue to witness the truths of the Book of Mormon to the Church and the world we found ways to do it. I gave my book to Brother Raymond Treat, and the Zarahemla Research Foundation published three thousand hard bound copies of the book. It is now out of print.

But in this same period, the RLDS leadership used its publications to raise doubts about the validity of the Book of Mormon as a historical document. Just one example from my files of many:

"Perhaps what Stanley Kimball calls, 'an exciting, readable adventure story,' can come more alive for us if we read it as a writing of Joseph Smith, from which we can grow in faith" (Excerpted from an essay by Bill Russell printed in Restoration Studies II.)

Bill Russell appears to believe that accepting the Book of Mormon as writing by Joseph Smith could *increase* our faith. I ask, increase our faith in what? A false record means a false prophet. This demeaning of Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Scriptures of the

RLDS Church has led to the present Community of Christ voting to accept only the newest International Version of the Bible as its scriptural base. No priesthood member of the Community of Christ needs to defend any Scripture of the original church as established by Joseph Smith.

Was Joseph Smith Jr. a prophet? Does the Book of Mormon contain prophetic statements, which Joseph could not have imagined from his position on the American Frontier of 1830? Let me offer two.

First, 3 Nephi 9:67-68; 85-86. Christ is speaking to the Nephites at Bountiful. The record declares emphatically that the Jews will return to Jerusalem “which is the promised land unto them forever...”

Second, in 3 Nephi 7:34 Christ warns our nation at that same time.

“At that day when the Gentiles shall sin against My gospel, and shall be lifted up in the pride of their hearts above all nations and above all the people of the whole earth...”

Is that not a description of our nation today as the only superpower in the world? The whole world recognizes us in that role. The Lord knew it would happen, but how could Joseph?

We have seen the fulfillment of these words. Why then should we doubt the word of the Lord that a remnant of Jacob shall build the New Jerusalem in the land of their inheritance? (3 Nephi 10:1-4).

The Book of Mormon issue quickly gave way to much bigger problems with the 1984 Conference which brought women into priesthood roles. When this was met with resistance by thousands of church members, enforcement action was taken. It fell on my family at the 1986 fall business meeting at our South Texas Branch, where Dana had served

as Presiding Elder for two years. We were the largest branch of the district, and Dana’s stand against ordaining women assured his re-election as pastor. But Church officials suddenly walked in and announced that the Branch was disorganized and would be a district *mission*. The District President would name the pastor. The following Sunday, the new pastor found fewer than ten people at his congregation. At the succeeding district conference all former branch members who did not attend the new “mission” were denied both voice and vote.

Administrative silences were soon imposed upon more than a dozen priesthood who had served that congregation including a Patriarch, two of the Seventy who had served under appointment, plus another self-sustaining Seventy, former pastors, and elders, and priests. I expressed my anger and heartbreak in a letter to the First Presidency, and I include the following portion:

“Though this is a letter of protest against the administrative silences imposed upon the men of my family, even more it is a protest against the excuse used by the Regional Administrator, Donald Thielke, in his conversation with my two sons. He stated that it was his duty to *protect* the church from people like us. I find his remark to be highly insulting.

“One would assume that the many years of appointee service, given to the Church by Wayne and Neil, (for which they were commended) would be indicative of the devotion and integrity of their ministry. It was Wayne who was named the first appointee to Latin America and it was Neil, who as a teenager, baptized the first members of what became the Honduras Mission. Dedicated service to the Church has continued to be given by both of them, throughout and following their appointment years. In fact, the commitment to the Church by our

family has been **total**. It has involved not just Wayne and me, but our sons, their wives and their children. They all lived abroad under difficult conditions, denying themselves and their children many material things, in their desire to be of service to the Church. Our second son, Gareth had a devotion to that hope which cost him his life. Our family has paid a high price, not only in Gareth’s tragedy, but also in the chronic health problems, which will affect Wayne and Neil for the rest of their lives.

“It appears that our “sin” is a refusal to accept what our conscience tells us is false doctrine. My own forebears were among the “dissenters” in Nauvoo, as were yours [Wallace B. Smith]. If such staunch church members, including Emma, had not had the courage to stand firmly for the truths of the Restoration message, perhaps there would have been no Reorganization. I am proud that my family still has the integrity and courage to be “dissenters” against unchristian, uncaring and even illegal actions and doctrines of the present leadership.

“These men will continue to give ministry to all those who stand in need of the Restoration Gospel. Since their ministry does not deviate from that which they gave under Conference appointment, whatever is presently unacceptable to the institution has to be the result of changes within the institution and not in the ministry of these men.”

The division caused by the document of 1984 hurt so many people in so many ways. We grieved to hear of families divided, marriages broken, and experienced for ourselves the loss of long standing friendships. We no longer had access to reunions, youth camps, or the joy of seeing friends at Conference. In 1985, in response to many cries for help, our family hosted a week-long meeting in Oklahoma and invited 120 of our hurting friends.

To satisfy the college where we had rented space, we gave it the name, *American Studies Association* or ASA. During that week we taught the gospel with a strong emphasis upon the Book of Mormon and the restoration of the House of Israel. The ASA continued to fill that role until the growing Restoration Branches were able to again offer camps and reunions for their members. The current Seventy Reunion at Lamoni, Iowa is a modern version of the old ASA.

The loss of our voice and vote in the affairs of the World Church opened the door for many changes that took place in succeeding years. The Church discarded the role of Joseph Smith as a prophet, and followed that by the rejection of the RLDS Scriptures. With the change of name in 2000, the Community of Christ faced the world with a whole new personality.

I believe these are the five pillars upon which the Community of Christ stands. They are:

1. Women's Liberation—expressed by the ordination of women.
2. Respectable Academia—All books and scriptures used in the church must be acceptable to other religious organizations.
3. The Peace Movement—which is the modern version of the hippy-flower children.
4. Liberal Protestant Theology—which demands the acceptance of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, and the social gospel "*embracing God's diversity*."
5. GALA—This is the support of organizations devoted to deviant sexuality.

These are the pressure groups which drive the agenda of the Community of Christ today.

We can be grateful that they have discarded the name of the Church. The disenfranchised saints should realize that their loss of voice and vote releases them from any responsibility for the heretical changes made by the Community of Christ. We did not vote for the change in name. We did not vote to discard the Scriptures, and we did not vote to join the modern Protestant liberal world.

As the Saints gathered in Restoration Branches we found we could continue our church life, in comfort, secure from the former leadership who had locked us out of our own buildings. The standing priesthood of the Branches could be maintained indefinitely—elders, priests, teachers, and deacons.

What individual Branches could NOT do was to fulfill the commandments laid upon the General Church to take the gospel into every nation and to build the New Jerusalem (D&C 65:1, 83:1).

As separate congregations each was on a dead end journey. Missionary committees were created to gather funds and support outreach to foreign missions, with limited success and many problems. The Elders Conference was an attempt to bring some unity where little existed before. The Pastors of Zion have recently recognized the need for greater unity and they called for a united Communion Service at the Auditorium. This should have alerted the thousands who attended that service of the pressing need to find a way to continue the priesthood office and presiding ministry of High Priests.

The Restoration Branches still have the ministry of a small number of High Priests, a few aging Patriarchs and eight active Seventy.

The Seventy cannot answer all the cries for help, which come from the many different parts of the world where the Lord is opening doors. Patriarchal blessing will become unavailable to

future generations. We do not have the luxury of time.

A lawful solution to these challenges has been found, and in spite of opposition, has been accepted by the saints. The November Joint Conference of Branches returned to the scattered saints the right of voice and vote. For the first time in more than twenty years, elected delegates had a forum where they could take part in the discussions of Church business that go far beyond their local Branch.

This will be repeated in the upcoming April Conference. The twenty-eight Branches which represented about 2,500 saints should double, perhaps triple, in April. The many thousands of Church members who, like me, still honor their membership in the RLDS Church should rejoice. There is light at the end of a very long and dark tunnel.

Eventually, the Saints will have to vote for the organization of higher-level conferences, such as districts or stakes. It takes a conference at the level of a stake to provide for the needed High Priests. This must come from the voice of the people, as it will not be imposed by the presiding officers of any conference of Branches. That was the mistake made by most other factional groups which have divided the Church. We cannot do that.

If the Saints will respond to the call for unity, and support the Joint Conference of Branches, we can disprove the Community of Christ's claim that the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints no longer exists.

This account touches on many memories of my 88 years with the Church. I am thankful to my progenitors who kept the faith, through great sacrifice, and provided me with my heritage. I have passed it on to my children, grand children, and great-grand children. They are active in and support the Restoration Branches. My

church life has been devoted to witnessing the truths of the Book of Mormon, and I am grateful to my Lord for letting me share in that work.

The Church, like the Phoenix bird of myth, can rise to greater glory, renewed from the ashes of its lost years. We, the members, can make that happen.

It is time to recall a favorite memory, "See you at Conference."

My Testimony: Mildred Smith

The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints has been my precious heritage since before I was born.

In Christ's Church I learned to know and love Jesus Christ, my Savior. In it I learned to love His word and to honor it as truth. In it I grew to have faith that has carried me through eighty eight years of joyous living with my Master my companion and guide in every phase of my life.

Early in life I learned of His miraculous power over all the issues of life from my parents and from the scriptures which they loved and honored.

My father was not able to learn to read. At age 16, he was asked not to come back to reading class because he just took up too much time spelling out the words and attempting to pronounce them.

But he longed to read the Book of Mormon. One day, after petitioning the Lord for that blessing, he said it was as though a dictionary was opened in his head, and the words were not only pronounced but their meaning explained as he read, page after page in that sacred book. Even the names were pronounced for him, and I have used those pronunciations through the years in deference to his testimony.

Papa was thirty four when I was born and the most scripturally proficient of any of the Priesthood in our area. He loved good books and read voraciously.

His sermons were always short, scripturally rich and often times closed with an appropriate poem.

His faith was monumental. I watched the hoard of grasshoppers stripping the neighbor's crop rise in a cloud that veiled the sun and fly right past the rest of the neighborhood at his prayerful request.

Papa was a Priest. I saw couple after couple, angry with each other and determined that something had to change, come to him for ministry and leave united in their marriage for a lifetime.

It was the God I had learned to love and trust as a child to whom I turned for guidance when I chose my profession and when I chose my companion.

Close to my last Sunday with the little branch where I was attending at Sikeston, the Pastor, prefaced his announcement of the last hymn of the service with a message from God for the congregation.

When he announced the hymn, I was assured by the Spirit that there was more to the message than we had heard. I tried to talk to him, but I had to wait until the next Sunday when he came early to speak to me, and I came early to hear.

There was a part of the message he thought I would appreciate being delivered privately. The Lord wanted me to know that if I would be patient, He would give me one of His servants to be my companion.

My Patriarchal Blessing said I should choose one "*of like precious faith*" if I wanted to have a really happy life. While I waited, I finished my Master's degree in Foods and Nutrition.

In my studies I discovered what had caused my secretary's terrible mental illness and learned that the Lord's Word of Wisdom would have saved her all that trauma if we had only known!

That knowledge defined my professional career for the rest of my life.

I have watched the scientific community gradually make more and more pronouncements affirming the truth of the Word of Wisdom until the "2005 Dietary Guidelines" are so close to the Lord's word that I joyfully proclaim that the entire nation has celebrated Joseph Smith as a prophet on his 200th birthday!"

I was working as a Foods and Nutrition Specialist for the Iowa State University Extension at the close of the Second World War, when a young navy man transferred to Iowa State from Graceland College. We worked together in the church and became great friends.

Then came the realization that this was the servant of the Lord for whom I had been waiting.

We accepted appointment in 1951. It was while we were on assignment in Hawaii, 1956 -1960 that we became aware that there were deliberate efforts being made by some to gain power to change the doctrine and practices of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

We were shocked when the Seventy were maligned and ridiculed, especially in the youth magazine of the Church.

I countered by offering some stories of the real work of a Seventy. Those stories were accepted. For a year one story was published monthly in Stride. Then, Paul Wellington, the editor, asked me to expand them into the book, the Master's Touch.

The book and title is based on Delbert's experience watching his Lord define his call to the office of Seventy. In the experience he watched the transformation of a dirty piece of coal into a magnificent diamond by the touch of the Master's Hand.

A Master's Touch Volume 2 followed some twenty years later, filled with the same sort of testimonies of the worth and mission of Christ's Church.

The efforts to change the Gospel were resisted first by those in positions of responsibility who could discern what was happening. Among them were men like Vivian Sorenson and Delbert Smith, both of whom bear testimony that they were seriously telling their God that they could no longer continue to represent the Church as appointees if that trend continued.

I don't remember just when Brother Sorenson was told by the Lord to go back to his assignment and preach the Gospel; but it was on the way to the 1968 World Conference that Delbert received his commission from His Lord.

He was crying to the Lord about the insidious changes he saw coming, and telling Him he could no longer remain an appointee if those changes were implemented. Instead of getting rid of those who were responsible, as Delbert had presumed He would, the Lord called his attention to Doctrine and Covenants 105:9-11; and Delbert, like Apostle Marsh, was told not to trouble himself about what was occurring among those responsible. The Lord would take care of that.

It was Delbert's job to teach God's people to know and trust the scriptures and to know and trust the Holy Spirit, and then, said the Lord, "*I will have a people who will be able to stand what ever happens!*"

From those early moments until now we have seen the Lord moving in wondrous

ways to bring to pass His purposes in spite of the efforts of Satan to disrupt His work and scatter His people.

Folks, that has been fifty years now, and for more than twenty years of it our branches have been living in impotent isolation.

Surely the time has come for us to unite our strength to foil Satan's efforts to scatter God's people and defeat the cause of Zion.

Saints driven from their church homes have built new church homes and continued to worship Christ in spirit and in truth. Large numbers of those deprived of their rightful place in outlying congregations have felt the call to gather and have moved their families closer to the Center Place of Zion.

One such move brought members of our family from the state of Washington in a group of some 75 displaced persons who moved as a body.

We have seen the growth of Saint's schools for our children that were not available before this disruption occurred. First there was Sionita, then Hope Day, followed by, Center Place Restoration School, now with Oak Valley an integral part of its program, and there may be more.

The facilities that were miraculously provided by the Lord for the Center Place Restoration School, have proved to be available for the assembly of the Saints in conferences as well.

The children of far away places have not been forgotten. There is an orphanage for some of the many children left alone, without family, in the civil war ravaged country of Liberia, and schools have been provided for some of those who still have homes both in Liberia and in Nigeria.

We have come to love people of different tongues and different colors. We have watched prejudices melt away

as the ministry of those who have been called to minister have come among us, and we have been witnesses to the working of the Spirit of God to us, in their ministry.

We have learned the worth of the Book of Mormon in sharing the Gospel with those of other nations. Not only does it resonate with those native cultures of the Americas, but it has been embraced by the tribes of Africa who say of their heritage, "*We too, are of Israel*".

And whether or not the peoples of Nepal and surrounding areas are related to Israel, the book has been brought to them by miraculous ways of which Indra Thappa, Ram Baral, and Peter Nepal bear witness in thrilling testimonies that warm the heart. (Peter exchanged his Hindu name for the name of his country when he became a Christian.)

We have learned to really fast, not just skip meals, in our effort to petition the Lord humbly so He can answer our prayers.

Upon learning that the Saints in the Congo periodically fast from Thursday to Sunday "*for the souls that know not God*" (Alma 4:6), our congregation sets aside one weekend each quarter in which we begin our fast on Friday noon and break it at lunch on Sunday.

In the meantime we gather to pray at the times we would normally be eating, and find ourselves knit together in love and common concerns for each other as well as for those who *know not God*.

It was at one of these prayer times that I learned that I had been asked to go to Kenya and the Lord called Diane Anderson to go with me to accompany Bryan Mundy, his fourteen year old daughter Breezy and Pat and Dale Carrick for the first women's retreat in Kenya.

Two years later I was back in Kenya for a second women's retreat, this time traveling with our son Douglas.

Eric Odida had asked me to come to his corn eating country to share the Lord's counsel about grains. He had heard me tell of my secretary's dementia from pellagra. He heard my testimony that had she known of the Lord's counsel that all grains are good for the food of man, nevertheless wheat for man and corn for the ox, she would not have suffered the illness. Eric asked me to repeat the story, then told me his sister had died of pellagra and they thought it was from a mental illness.

Corn is the staple food in Kenya, and Eric wanted his people to know why God had given that counsel: what danger there is in corn's excessive use, and to know how to choose foods to supplement their diet that would keep them from succumbing to pellagra. So I knew what I was to teach when the call came to go. But I had no idea that I would be called upon to answer numerous questions about the Gospel and the scriptures.

I had heard the testimony of Priesthood who had ministered to these expectant peoples, answering their questions far into the night, but it never occurred to me that I might have the same experience. Like them, I can testify that the Lord was true to His promise that in the very hour you have need of answers, He will supply them.

Diane, a nurse, supposed, her assignment would be to teach health and sanitation, so she prepared accordingly. Imagine her surprise when, at the retreat she was told she was to teach the relationship of a man and a woman in marriage.

Kenya is a polygamous society! She had men and women in her class. In Kenya, the entire family goes to the women's retreat. Without a moment to prepare, under the power and influence

of the Spirit of God showing her the scriptures she was to use and giving her the words she was supposed to say; she did it so well that when the people were asked at the end of the retreat what they had learned, one man held up one finger on each hand and said, "*One man, one woman.*" Then bringing them together he added, "*They are equal and work together!*"

Our group meetings were in a makeshift tent of a tarpaulin stretched over poles in the yard of the home Eric's company provided in Sotik. Without prior notice, we women were told that we were to form a panel. We were each to make a presentation, then the entire camp could ask questions about the sanctity of the home. We asked, "When?" Eric said, "Now!"

Since I was the oldest, I was pressed to be the first to speak, and as soon as I was on my feet, I knew exactly what the Lord wanted me to say. The Lord even pointed out one young boy to me and instructed me to see that he got certain materials we were distributing and a set of the scriptures from which he could study.

During one service we were singing *What a Friend We Have in Jesus* when I thought the angels had joined us in the song. The Kenyans have an arrangement of that song that is beautiful beyond words. The last part of the retreat was their singing it for me so it could be recorded. Although the recording has been lost, the memory is continually inspiring.

Not only in Kenya have we learned to trust the Lord to give us answers to questions about Him and His work when we are in need of those answers.

We have found it necessary to spend unmeasured hours responding to the accusations against Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon of those in the Community of Christ, those who call themselves "*Ex RLDS for Jesus.*"

These have abandoned the "*way of truth*" (2 Peter 2:2) which once they espoused: Carol Hodges Hansen, Paul Trask, Joan and Larry Mannering name some exceptionally outspoken ones.

The Liahona Research group has published a book of answers to these unbelievers to assist in answering these charges. These answers, with others, have been placed on the internet for those who are searching.

God has graced our worship and by His Spirit has manifest His presence in the gifts of the Spirit. Not only have we witnessed the Spirit in the love we feel toward each other and those with whom we try to share the good news of the gospel, we have experienced every good gift the scriptures promise.

Our Priesthood have been inspired to share the gospel in new meaningful terms with emphasis on the Kingdom of God into which we have been called.

And this Gospel of the Kingdom has gone into many nations, carried there by men and women who would never have felt free to go, or even thought of going on their own, had these assignments still been made from the top.

As the Gospel has gone forth, we have testimonies of instant healings, freedom from addictions, witchcraft being abandoned by one who gave up his livelihood for the Gospel by smashing his "*devil pot*" at age 114, others changing from voodoo worship to the worship of God, dreams and visions bringing humble people long distances to hear a gospel they had never known existed.

One of my favorite stories concerns the gift of tongues and the interpretation of tongues. Our son Ronald sat for three hours with a young man named George, searching the scriptures, discussing the Gospel of the Kingdom. It was not until the next day when he was asked who

interpreted for them that he learned that George did not speak English.

Then there was that marvelous worship experience of *"The Gathering"* at the Auditorium last year where a larger number of Saints spent a longer period of fasting and prayer and worship than has even been recorded in the church's history.

It was called by a dedicated group of High Priests at the request of our Patriarchs and was experienced by a large number of children, youth and adults alike. I sat for almost three hours in one service behind a family with seven small children. In all that time only one child had to go to the bathroom. There was no fidgeting, no complaining, no effort to get anyone's attention. Those children were worshipping under the same Spirit by which we were all moved.

Our services in our home branches have been enriched because of those who have heeded the invitation of the Fellowship of Patriarchs to read the scriptures daily and to fast before the Wednesday night and the Sunday morning services.

Now we are joining the young Priesthood members who asked us to take the eleven o'clock hour of the second Sunday of each month until October for fasting and prayer.

Many congregations have published the testimonies of those who worship in their group—testimonies that would never have been shared had we still been depending on the General Church publications alone.

Our congregation publishes all of its sermons and sends them into more than one hundred and seventy homes every month, homes all over the USA, Canada, Kenya and Australia.

Cameron Restoration Branch has a Sunday morning radio program.

The Restoration Voice and the Tidings of Zion bring information and testimonies to all who wish to keep informed.

The Conference of Restoration Elders has provided a great service. It has given us a sort of clearing house for materials and information and drawn those who wished to gather periodically for worship, study and fellowship.

But we have not established the cause of Zion. As scattered groups of Saints separated by space and time and misunderstandings of the nature and love of God and His scriptures, we cannot expect to be effective in our Zion efforts.

I believe the time has come for us to unite our efforts so God can move among us and direct in the way He wants us to go.

Repeatedly He has told us that unless we are one, we are not His.

Struggling branches on the periphery and even large comfortable branches in the Center Place cannot expect to establish the kingdom by themselves.

My testimony is that it is time to look forward to the events prophesied in Doctrine and Covenants 100:3d-3f when Zion shall be redeemed with power, the Lord Jesus Himself accompanying His angels and directing our way.

That cannot happen in our scattered state. To which branch or small group would He come?

We must gather together and come so close to our Savior that we will find ourselves one with each other and one with Him!

The coming Joint Conference of Branches is, I believe, our opportunity to move forward with our Savior to fulfill the purpose for which he restored

His Church, to establish the cause of Zion!

My Testimony: Louise Gregson

Aloha, in the precious name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Unlike my two dear sisters in the faith, Mildred Smith and Verneil Simmons, I was not "born into the Church." My father left his home in Santa Maria Ilocos Sur, Philippine Islands and immigrated to the "Big Island" of Hawaii in 1918 as a plantation laborer. Born in 1898, he was of Filipino, Spanish and Chinese ancestry. My mother's father was a whaler who sailed on one of the many whaling schooners that came to Hawaii during the 1870s. He loved the island and never returned to Portugal again. My mother was Hawaiian and Portuguese. Both of my parents were of the Catholic faith.

However, when my mother was eight years old, she had a dream that impressed her so greatly that she never forgot it. She dreamed that she saw Jesus Christ walking along the seashore attired in beautiful white garments. Gazing upon Him longingly, she was filled with a great desire to wear the same kind of garments He was wearing. With this desire, God gave her the knowledge that somewhere upon the earth she would find the true Church of Jesus Christ. In that moment, she determined in her heart that someday she would find His Church. A few years later she joined the Calvinist Church.

My parents were married in 1919. Three years later I was born in an old house on the coffee lands of Kainaliu, Kona, Hawaii. When I was three years old, my father was offered a job as a police officer in the capital city of Hilo on the Big Island which was located about two hundred and fifty miles from Kona. It was a lonely time for our

family and many years would pass before we would see our relatives again.

A Seventh Day Adventist lady stopped by every Sabbath morning to take us to her church. When I was five years old, it was necessary for our growing family to locate a larger home. We moved next door to the Joseph Camara family who immediately visited and invited us to attend church with them. They were such lovely people and it did not matter to us that their church had such a long name, "The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints." I begged my mother to let me go to church with them, but she reminded me that Mrs. Sickles was to pick us each Sabbath day. The children at the Seventh Day Adventist Church had always been good to me. However, shortly after I had a great desire to go to church with the Camara family, one of the children at Sabbath school pinched me really hard and made me cry. She said, "Why do you come to our church? Your mother and father do not come either. Why do you come? You do not belong here."

Naturally, I went home crying and mama said, "That little girl was right. You don't belong there. Tomorrow you will go to church with the Camara girls. Oh, how happy I was; it was worth every pinch to be able to go to the church with the long name. My first lesson in Sunday School touched my heart deeply. It was about Zion, the beautiful City of God that would be built in Independence, Missouri. Jesus Christ would come and live there with people who were kind and good. Everyone would love one another. I had never heard anything like that before and I was fascinated with the whole idea. It was then that I determined in my heart that someday, I would be a part of Zion. My teacher was Clara Lillian Williams, the wife of missionary D. J. Williams.

In the meantime, Sister Camara brought the Book of Mormon to my mother.

She accepted it graciously. After she left, Mama picked up the book and was horrified to see that it was the Book of Mormon. Gingerly she put the book on the shelf and muttered, "How can good people like the Camara's believe in this awful book?" You see, the Mormons had established their church in the islands in 1852 and they had quite a large following. Mama knew of some polygamous LDS Hawaiian families and she wanted no part of that nonsense.

Three weeks went by before Sister Camara came to visit again. She asked if Mama had read the Book of Mormon yet and she said no. Sister Camara said, "Well, I brought another book that I am sure you will like." After she left, Mama picked up the book called Doctrine and Covenants. She liked the title and eagerly opened it to Section 1, Paragraph one and read,

"Hearken, O ye people of my church, saith the voice of Him who dwells on high and whose eyes are upon all men; yea, verily I say, hearken ye people from afar, and ye that are upon the islands of the sea, listen together; for verily the voice of the Lord is unto all men."

When she read these prophetic words, she was pricked in her heart. The Spirit of God encircled her in the arms of God's love. She was given to know, without a shadow of a doubt, that this was indeed the Church of Jesus Christ which she had longed to embrace from the time that she dreamed of Him when she was eight years old. Quickly she picked up the Book of Mormon and began reading it. She wept as the Spirit of God pointed out the many truths contained therein. She sought for forgiveness for the wasted time when she had shunned His Word. She rejoiced now in the glorious messages of truth. From that time on she faithfully attended church with her six children. She did not just send us as before.

At the age of eight I asked for baptism but my father refused as he reminded me that I was a Catholic. I let the matter rest until I was ten and a half years old. On December 25, 1932, one of the Camara's granddaughter was to be baptized prior to the Christmas program. I waited till vacation started before asking my father about baptism. Several times throughout the day I would ask if my brother and I could be baptized. He was soft spoken in the morning, but by evening he was pretty loud when he said, "No!" I knew then that it was time to stop asking for that day. I kept this up for two weeks and the answer was always the same. Christmas day came, but I did not ask; however, I had not given up. I waited until an hour before church started, but meanwhile, my brother and I had packed our change of clothes and towels in two paper bags. My brother was two years older than I, but he refrained from asking for fear of getting a spanking. This was our last chance, and my brother said, "You go and ask, he won't spank you." I mustered my courage to make a last stand.

I stood before my very stern father and said, "Daddy, can Sonny and I be baptized tonight?" He looked at me and shook his pointing finger and said in a resigned voice, "Young lady, if this is what you want more than anything else in this world, you just go ahead and be baptized, you and your brother."

Oh what joy welled up in our little hearts. At last we would belong to Jesus' Church. We both kissed our father, picked up our bags and ran to the church as fast as our legs could carry us. Permission for my baptism did not come easily, therefore, I treasure my covenant relationship with my Lord very highly.

That night, we were the only two candidates for baptism. Alice was ill with bronchitis and the font had been prepared especially for us. More than two months had passed since my

baptism. On Wednesday at the supper table, my father said to mama, "And when are you going to be baptized?"

She said, "Do you mean that I can be baptized?" When he said "Yes," she immediately stood, gave him a hug, picked up some things and hurriedly walked to the church more than a mile away. Excitedly, she told our missionary, Ralph Lester McCrae from Webb City, Missouri that she was going to be baptized. He was glad and said that they would schedule it for Sunday. She said, "But you do not understand. I am going to be baptized tonight, and I'm not going home until then."

He did not think that it was possible to fill the extra large font in time for the service. However, he immediately started running the water and by a miracle, it was filled before it was time for the service to begin. She was baptized even though she was heavy with child. Two weeks later, my sister, Evelyn Laila Jordan was born. Years later, my father was also baptized.

When I was fifteen years old, I received my Patriarchal Blessing. The Patriarch, Gilbert J. Waller, said that I had a mother who loved me very dearly and that the greatest desire of her heart was that I should study the Three Books of the Church in which God's laws are found. And through my study, others would be blessed. Being young and foolish I did not know what that meant. But thirty-five years later as I was holding the first volume that I had written on the Jaredites, the Spirit of God whispered to me, "This is what was meant when you received your blessing and were told by the Patriarch that through your study of the Scriptures, others will be blessed."

I was very humbled to think that the Lord could have chosen a tomboy like me, running barefooted, climbing and swinging from the trees, long hair flying in the wind, to assist Him by teaching

the Book of Mormon as well as the other Scriptures to some of His people.

I am so grateful that the Lord brought me to Independence to live. Had I remained in the islands, I would not have had my eyes open and would not have seen the many subtle changes that were taking place in the Church. As time went by, my loving companion would point out some of the changes. For example, years before, a space of time was granted to openly confess your sins before partaking of the sacrament of the Lord's supper. When asked why this had been done away, the answer was that this was a very embarrassing and unnecessary tradition.

When we first joined the Church, we had been instructed to use the consecrated oil for external medicinal purposes. Our family depended upon it's healing power and more especially because we were poor, we did not consult with doctors but depended almost wholly on administrations for healing.

One day my mother was telling one of the missionaries about the healing my seven year old brother received. His hands were covered with warts and they hurt so badly when he tried to work or play, his fingers would bleed. She told him that he needed to pray to Jesus and ask Him to heal him of the warts. He rubbed the consecrated oil on the afflicted areas and he asked the Lord to heal his hands. A few days later when he looked, the warts were all gone. He was so elated that God had answered his prayer of faith. The missionary was very angry and berated my gentle mother harshly for using the oil for such purposes and that it was only to be used by the elders for administration.

In 1968, my husband was teaching the "Basic Beliefs" class at Gudgell Park Congregation. He told me that many changes had been made and that he could not agree with the precepts of men. He warned me that shortly I

would see many of my friends who held key leadership positions, take another path other than that which I espoused. He was concerned about me being swayed by those in leadership because in Hawaii, we set the hierarchy of the Church on a pedestal. Whatever they said was gospel truth and we would never question their integrity. Albert knew that I was quite naive and did not want to see me hurt and misled.

Wolves in sheep's clothing came amongst us to sway our thinking toward the New Age concepts. Proof to do away with our Scriptures came forth through the *Position Papers* and the *Presidential Papers*. It was a great conspiracy to destroy the Church of Jesus Christ and to wrest the Scriptures. Our Gudgell Park Congregation was slated to be the "model" that would whip all of the other congregations to comply with the "*Faith to Grow Program*" that would be initiated later. But there were those whose roots were deep in the faith and we voted against Geoffrey Spencer from becoming the Pastor, and we voted against Joe Serig when he was seeking to fill that office also. Sensitivity training was introduced to our young people which was in opposition to their upbringing in the Gospel. Some of the youth nearly lost their sanity because they were so mixed up with double standards.

In 1970, one of my siblings came over to reprimand me about why I had not sold my home in Lamoni and divided the money among my five children. He chastised me for two hours. He was angry too because he wanted me to go to college and I refused. I was still weeping when I hurried to the kitchen. I said, "Lord, what has happened to my brother? We used to be the best of buddies in Hawaii. Why did I ever come to Independence? "I should have stayed in Hawaii where I belonged."

Immediately, a still, soft voice spoke to me saying, "I have led you every step of the way to bring you to this place."

Quickly, I dried my tears and said, "Lord, since you have led me every step of the way to bring me to this place, then what is it that I can do for you?" His response was very clear, "Write the stories of the Book of Mormon for my children, for the time will shortly come when there will be nothing for them to study!" Excuses came to my lips swiftly, "I can't do that, Lord. Why don't you ask someone who has studied journalism or story writing?" But the Lord left off speaking to me.

Every day I thought about what the Lord required of me. I was crushed because I did not feel well and I knew I had cancer because of the severe pain that I suffered each day. About six months later, I could no longer tolerate the increasing pain and discomfort so I told Albert about my suspicions. He made an appointment with a radio oncologist who was rated as one of the top ten doctors in the USA in this field. His diagnosis was cancer of the colon at the ileocaecal valve and I had to have surgery immediately. There are more details to this story, but suffice it to say, that I refused surgery and asked God to heal me.

About two weeks later, the radio oncologist called. He wanted me to come in for another appointment for re-examination. I asked why he wanted me to go through that painful experience again. He said he just wanted to be sure that his first diagnosis was correct. He added that it would not cost me anything to do this and that the expenses were on him. Later reflections caused me to see that God had His hand upon me in this time of pain and suffering

The day before my second examination, I was again administered to, this time by three elders. Prior to the administration I had prearranged with Seventy Glen Johnson to confirm the anointing. He was reluctant to do so. He had not fully recovered from the massive cerebral hemorrhage which he had suffered

several years before while serving in Hawaii. His speech was still impeded and his memory was short. I told him that if my faith was not sufficient for me to receive a healing blessing that his would be. When hands were laid upon my head, I felt the power of God. I did not have any more pain after that. I did not realize what a tremendous blessing I had. The next day, even during the examination, there was no pain. I felt so wonderful that when I returned home, I did housework, laundry, cooking and baking that day. I told Albert that I was now ready to start writing the stories of the Book of Mormon.

That evening I wrote and crumpled the paper and threw it into the trash. After several unsuccessful attempts, I gave up. I said, "Lord, this is not the way you want me to do this work. Tomorrow morning at 4:30 will you meet me in my study? There I will ask you to show me how to write."

At 4:30 A.M. I knelt in my study. I told the Lord that now I was ready to do His will. I asked if He would show me how this work was to be done. I asked for His Holy Spirit to guide and bless me. I went to my desk and opened the Book of Mormon to the Book of Ether. Immediately I was given five titles: *The Jaredites, The Nephite Migration, The Reign of the Kings, The Reign of the Judges* and *Christ in America*.

The first day I wrote four stories and I did the same the following day. In all this time I had absolutely no pain and I enjoyed a wonderful sense of well being.

While writing stories the next morning, I received a call from the doctor. In a quiet voice he said, "Mrs. Gregson, "A miracle has happened. Your first examination showed every indication of cancer. Your second examination shows that there at the valve, you now have the colon of a twenty-one year old." He added that at age thirty-five, that area

starts to deteriorate in women; and he commented on how everything was as good as new even though I was fifty years old at that time.

I was so grateful to the Lord. I dropped to my knees right there by the telephone and praised God. When Alice Johnson returned from work, I called her to give them the good news I wanted to relay the message to Glen, He began to weep and could hardly contain his emotions, finally said that he had been so deeply touched because he had never had such an experience as this in twenty seven years of ministry. No sooner had he placed his hands upon my head when the Lord spoke to him saying, "*She is an elect handmaid and I will heal her, for she has a work to do for Me.*" And I was very surprised when Glen just presented me to the Lord, and asked Him to heal me. He ended his prayer and abruptly rushed out of the room as fast as he could with the use of his cane. Indeed the day of miracles has not ceased.

But I had many lessons to learn along the way. The story writing went well. But pretty soon I began to swell with pride. I said, "Why hasn't anyone written these stories before. They are so easy to write." The next day I struggled to write one story where I usually turned out about four in a day. The following day I also found the stories difficult to write. I prayed and asked the Lord why the stories that had flowed so nicely were so hard to do now. When the answer came, I was humbled. I learned quickly that all praise and honor and glory belong to God. I was indeed privileged to be an instrument in His hands to assist in the work of the kingdom. But even though I had asked for His forgiveness, He withheld the gift of writing for a few days longer

The work moved swiftly. Six weeks to write a book of 188 pages. The work of proofreading took awhile as the galleys went back and forth from the proofreaders to me. They would change

many words and I would change them back. Finally I told the woman to leave my work alone because that was the way the Book of Mormon stated it. Her haughty answer was, "Well, the Book of Mormon is wrong!" From the start to finish it took about three months for the books to roll off the press.

One day, Edna Easter, who worked in the Religious Education Department, wanted to know how I wrote the books. I said that I wrote by the Spirit of God. I said that the Lord had given me five titles for five volumes and that I immediately began writing the stories. She said that in her department it took a year for them to write their format, then after that they would begin their writing of the material.

Before the first volume was finished, I asked the Lord if the Church was going to publish the book and He said "No." However, He impressed upon my mind the names of three people. I called Marian Van Fleet to inform her that I had written some stories on the Book of Mormon. She wanted Albert and me to come over right away because she wanted me to read them to her. As soon as I finished the first story she said, "When you are ready to print I will give you \$1,000.00 to help." Then I called David and Ruth Sheehy and told them about the work the Lord had asked me to do. They said they would love to hear the stories but it was at the peak of tax season and they were busy. I suggested that if they came over for lunch I could read to them while they ate. I promised to set the alarm for forty-five minutes because that was all the time that they could spare. They came over for lunch and I read to them. When the alarm went off I told them that they were free to leave. They both said, "Read on!" And they listened for another forty-five minutes. Before they left, they promised to give \$500.00 toward the publishing costs. They said that they would have a meeting of friends at their house to discuss my

work. They felt that there were many people who were withholding their tithes and offerings from the Church because they did not like the way their money was being squandered. The Sheehy's thought that some of their friends would like to donate toward a worthy cause.

At the appointed time, Albert and I arrived at the Sheehy's residence. When we walked into the house, I was alarmed to see Bishop DeLapp present along with several others. He was holding my manuscript on his lap while I was holding my breath. The meeting started and the Bishop got right to the point. He said, "Our sister has written something here that is of great worth to the Church. However, she says that the Lord told her that the Church will not publish her work. But I would say to my sister, give this book to the Church and let them reject it. Then, when you publish it, they can never accuse you of not giving them the first opportunity." He was a good and wise man. That night, \$2,000.00 was pledged making a grand total of \$3,500.00 for printing.

I took the manuscript to Paul Wellington at the Herald House and watched him flip through the pages with a frown. He said, "Sister Gregson, your work is heavy with doctrine!" I replied, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ." He made no response except to say that he would deliver it to the First Presidency.

Three weeks went by and I did not hear from the First Presidency. I called Maurice Draper and asked what he planned to do with my manuscript. He said that they had been very busy and had not had time to look at it. I told him that they had it for three weeks and that they already had it too long. If they were not going to do anything with it, then I wanted it back so I could publish it.

He said, "Just a minute and I will look at it. Well, Louise, I see that your work

is highly doctrinal." I answered "Maurice, I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

"But, Louise," said he, "When people like you go ahead and publish material that is not sanctioned by the Church, it only causes confusion among the Saints and they won't know what to believe."

I said, "You are right about some people getting confused, but you don't have to worry about anyone getting confused with what I have written because I got the information right from the Book of Mormon."

"Well, he said, "I'll see that Joe Serig gets it today and we'll have an answer for you tomorrow."

The next day Brother Wellington called me to come to the Herald House to pick up my manuscript. He did not invite me to his office for a private conversation. He met me at the receptionist's desk and as he handed me the manuscript, he said, "The Herald House would never print such a book as this! You know what the Boy's up there think of your material. But I hear you are going to publish it and I would like to see it after it is done." I assured him that he would see the book and I took the manuscript from him and thanked him.

We went to the Herald House for a quote on publication cost which was unreasonably high. We went to a couple of other places with no success. Finally, I asked God to show us where to go. He said, "Go to the Herald House." I said, "We have been there, Lord. Where shall we go?" "Go to the Herald House."

We met Jack Ferguson in his office and he gave us a good contract. The price was right and furthermore, he would market the books for us as well as store them. God is so good! To start with, 5,000 books were printed very quickly and sold out within a few months and had to be reprinted about the time that Volume II went to press.

Then the Lord asked me to write Book of Mormon Story's and color books for His little ones. I wrote five books but when I wrote Volume VI, I was told that I had no right to put the stories in my own words, but rather that I should just quote the Scriptures verbatim. Discouraged, I put the stories into my file cabinet and left them there for twenty-four years.

In 2001, I was dying of pneumonia. I could feel my spirit ebbing away. I had not eaten nor had I drunk water for several days. An elder had just stopped by to visit and he administered to me. While praying over me, he had an open vision. He saw the angel of death standing down at my gate looking up toward my house. The elder heard a voice saying, "You may not have her because of her strict obedience to my dietary laws."

I got well, but regretted that I had to remain here on earth. The Lord reminded me that I had not finished my work yet. I said, "I know that, but if you want me to finish the story and color books, I have to have three requests granted. I need to have a donor, a typist and an artist." In two days the three requests were granted. In ten days 44 stories were written. Right now I am working on Volume XIII. And for each book God has provided the means to accomplish the task.

In the 1970s, problems in the Church were increasing. People were being swayed by every wind of doctrine. I had taken Volume V, *Christ in America*, to Jack Ferguson, to print. He shook his head sadly and said, "I am sorry but I can't do it. I am on the carpet with the First Presidency. They are threatening my job. Duane Couey said that I am unethical because I have printed your books. He came to Herald House because he wanted to see how well the new curriculum had been accepted. He looked at an invoice from the Montana Reunion and was livid with rage when he saw that eighty of your books had

been sold as compared to \$2.75 of the new curriculum that the hierarchy had purchased from the Protestants.

I left the Herald House sadly. Where would I go to find another printer? I was very troubled and I cried unto the Lord. He comforted me by saying that these books would go into all the world for all the world must learn the stories of the Book of Mormon. I was so happy and I repeated to Albert what the Lord said to me. I then received a call from a friend who asked if she could translate the color books into Spanish. Then came a call from Texas asking permission to translate them into Portuguese for the children in Brazil. I was asked to go to World Conference to autograph books. While there, Brother Compier from Holland asked if he could translate the books into Dutch. A youth pastor asked if he could do this for his German saints. God is faithful.

Later Jack Ferguson called and said, "Bring down your manuscript of *Christ in America*." I am going to print it anyway. I do not care if I lose my job over it. He did print it, but not long after that, the First Presidency issued an edict that Book of Mormon authors were to pick up their materials immediately. They were Francis Holmes, Theolona Stevens, Gregory Donovan, Roy Weldon, and me. But I really did not have to remove my books from their premises because they had purchased them by the thousands. The Herald House was making money on them. Roy Weldon came to my house and we discussed what the Church was doing to the Lord's precious book, and we wept over the decline and deplorable condition of the Church.

In 1990, Albert was silenced for preaching to 200 "unauthorized" people at the Hall-McCarter School in Blue Springs, Missouri. At the same time, I received a letter saying that I no longer had any rights or privileges in the Church and that we both had been placed in an unaffiliated group. I had

not done anything wrong to my knowledge, except that I may have hurt their agenda by writing the Book of Mormon stories for our children. I do not fear what man might do to me, but I do fear the living God.

Now is the time to exercise great faith in the Lord. I count it a great blessing to have been privileged to serve my God in spite of the persecutions and sufferings that I have experienced from the priestcraft which is so prevalent in the Church today.

I pray that Christ will come soon to set His Church in order. I have been fasting and praying that the priesthood of the Church of Jesus Christ will lead us into the paths of righteousness.

All of the saints need to seek the Lord for guidance and direction. Ask for wisdom and understanding. But also ask God for the gift of discernment that we might not be deceived.

The Scriptures say, "*If ye are not one, ye are not mine.*" My earnest desire is that we will all learn to love one another.

These testimonies can viewed on the internet at: www.conferenceofbranches.org

The Testimonies of Three Witnesses of the Restoration

- *Verneil Simmons*
- *Mildred Smith*
- *Louise Gregson*

Recently it was suggested that there were three remarkable ladies in the independent Restoration Branch Movement each of whom has lived into their eighth decade of life. They seek no power, no special privilege, and have no hidden agenda. Their lives are righteous evidence of their great love for the Lord and His Work. Their testimony and their counsel is of great value to the work of the Lord.

Each has consented to write their own personal witness to the Church membership.

In the following pages these three outstanding women of the Restoration share their testimony of the Lord, Jesus Christ, and the Restoration Gospel. Each has made enduring contributions to the Lord's Church and each has a powerful testimony of God's work in these last times. As they share their special witness of the work of the Lord, may we all be enriched by their vision for the future of the Church.

The Joint Conference of
Restoration Branches
P O. BOX 3310
Independence, MO 64057