

The Blessed Life of an **Ordinary Man**

The Autobiography of Larry Richman



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Larry Richman

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PROLOGUE

Although the title of this life history is *The Blessed Life of an Ordinary Man: The Autobiography of Larry Richman*, I do not want people to think I believe I am anything extraordinary. My life is blessed, remarkable, and even extraordinary in some ways—not because of what I’ve done but because of the remarkable things the Lord has done in my life.

I’ve always recognized the need to keep a journal, even though there were years in my life with very few journal entries. Spencer W. Kimball once said, “Those who keep a book of remembrance are more likely to keep the Lord in remembrance in their daily lives. Journals are a way of counting our blessings and of leaving an inventory of these blessings for our posterity.” (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982, p. 349.) (“Listen to the Prophets,” *Ensign*, May 1978)

Journaling helps us understand life. Re-reading journal entries and compiling them into a life history gives us perspective. We never really know where we are going until we look back. Journaling and reflecting on life can help us be more grateful for what the Lord does in our lives. I also feel that producing this life history is a way of giving an accounting of the blessings God has given me.

I resonate with this quote: “Though I am not what I ought to be, nor what I wish to be, nor what I hope to be, I can truly say, I am not what I once was.” — John Newton (the man who wrote the hymn “Amazing Grace”)

When I was a child, our family had the tradition that each new year for family home evening, each person would write down what happened that year—where we went on vacation, what happened at school or work, and so forth. I wish I would have kept up that tradition with my own family. It was a valuable source of information to me to compile my dad’s history and my own history.

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“One day, you will tell your story of how you overcame what you went through, and it will be someone else’s survival guide.” –Anonymous

President Spencer W. Kimball offered this challenge: “Get a notebook...a journal that will last through all time, and maybe the angels may quote from it for eternity. Begin today and write in it your goings and comings, your deepest thoughts, your achievements and your failures, your associations and your triumphs, your impressions and your testimonies.” (“The Angels May Quote from It,” *New Era*, Oct 1975)

I found it difficult to organize my life history. I tried to make it chronological, but then it seemed to be a random travelogue that was not very interesting. So, I’ve organized it topically by chapter, which means that things will jump around a bit chronologically, but the topics allowed me to step back a bit and give perspective.

In this document, I reference things I wrote in my journals. I have condensed those journals into this document and have discarded them.

I will constantly update my life history and publish it online at LarryRichman.org. See that site for more photos. Also see family photos at RichmanFamily.org.

LIFE SUMMARY

I grew up in Utah and Idaho. I am the second of four children of Lynn Thomas Richman and Kathryn Joyce Seely. My mother passed away of kidney failure when I was 16 years old. My father later married Mary Elizabeth Smith, who had two children from a previous marriage. Together, they had five more children ($4+2+5=11$). My family has been active in the Church ever since I was born.

My mission to Guatemala determined my career. I spent most of my mission among the Cakchiquel Indians in central

Guatemala. A linguist from BYU spent a few weeks in Guatemala to teach a dozen missionaries same basics of the Cakchiquel language, then left us on our own to learn the language. A few of us excelled, and by the end of my mission, the Church asked three of us to translate the missionary discussions.

I returned to BYU after my mission and worked part-time for the Church translation division and changed my major from business to Spanish and linguistics. I spent the next few summers in Guatemala either working for the Church translating the Book of Mormon, compiling a Cakchiquel-Spanish-English dictionary, or doing linguistic studies just for the fun of it. After I received my bachelor's degree, I stayed in Provo and earned a master's degree in instructional science. My intent was to build a business by developing language learning systems. But the Church offered me a full-time job and I spent the rest of my career involved with translations and Church publications.

For a few years, I supervised translators in Latin America and Africa. I later project managed non-English publications, assigning them for translation and coordinating the steps of translation, typesetting, graphic design, printing, and distribution. I helped develop computer tracking systems to manage these stages of production. I helped realign production, printing, and distribution to save millions of dollars in printing and distribution costs. For several years, I traveled three or four weeks a year to Church printing and distribution centers.

I later worked with the Relief Society, Primary, Sunday School, Young Men, and Young Women General Presidencies to develop Church programs, leader training, and other resources. I helped set up Church efforts on the internet and in social media and for five years was the director of LDS.org.

My work responsibilities included developing and implementing Church resources and making sure they are translated and available worldwide. Other assignments included both project management and product management for resources such as leader training, Sunday programs,

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curriculum for the home and church, scriptures, magazines, and other materials used in the home. For most of my career, I also coordinated the official letters and notices sent from headquarters to stake and ward leaders. My final position was the director of communications and messaging, helping improve messaging to members and leaders.

I have had broad experience in my 45-year professional career, including translation, publishing, project management, product management, marketing, communications, and social media. But at heart, I consider myself a writer. I've authored over a dozen books and thousands of articles.

My crowning achievement was marrying the most perfect match for me, Teri Jackman, and raising four wonderful children. They are warm, loving individuals and parents with strong testimonies of what matters most in life.

FAMILY

I was born July 10, 1955, at Cooley Memorial Hospital in Brigham City, Utah at 11:15 a.m. I weighed six pounds 10 ounces at birth and was 19 inches long. I was born on a Sunday between meetings. (My dad was in the bishopric at the time.)

I am the second child of four born to my father Lynn Thomas Richman (1928–living) of Paradise, Cache County, Utah, and of my mother, Katherine Joyce Sealy Richman (1928–1971) of Malta, Cassia County, Idaho. My oldest brother, Jeffrey Lynn Richman, was born February 3, 1951, and married Don Peterson. My younger sister, Joy Lynn Richman, was born, April 8, 1959, and married Blair Jacobson. My youngest brother, Ricky Lynn Richman, was born March 12, 1961, and married Wendy Tillery. Jeff was born in Salt Lake City, and the rest of us were born in Brigham City.

I owe much to my ancestors. All eight of my great-grandparents were converts to the Church in Europe. Each of

these stalwart souls sacrificed everything to come to Zion. (See President Russell M. Nelson's talk "[Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives](#).") In 2000, I built the website [RichmanFamily.org](#) to honor my current and past family. It contains stories, histories, and photos.

LYNN RICHMAN

Since I helped my dad compile his [life history](#), I will not repeat here much about my dad's life. This chapter consists mostly of bits and pieces that show my dad's personality and remembrances of him. (See [Lynn's page on the Richman Family website](#).)

On March 28, 1974, Dad wrote me the following letter when I was at Brigham Young University (BYU) for my freshman year of college.

Dear Larry,

How is my very special son? Hope all is well. We would sure like to come down and visit you.

I gave my high council spiritual thought last Sunday evening. I don't know when I've worried more, prepared more, or prayed more for an assignment. When I stood up, the Spirit took over. Larry, I don't know of any time in my life when I have lived closer to the Spirit or had a stronger testimony of the Gospel than now. I want you to know how much I'm enjoying my calling on the high council. It is an honor to serve and be a part in our Father in Heaven's kingdom.

Larry, I want you to know how much I loved your mother, and how much I pray that she knows, understands, and approves. How thankful I am that we were married in the temple and that our family will be sealed together in eternity. I'm very happy, as I know your mother is, of your desire to serve a mission. After you have completed your mission, the most important thing in this life that you can do is marry the right person in the right place by the right authority. I know that the Lord is preparing a very special sweet, pure spirit

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for a mate for you. There is not a thing in this world you could do that would bring us greater happiness.

I'm sure that Joyce approves of Mary. What a very special spirit she is. Last Sunday, Mary prepared a very special dinner and invited Brother Wes Poole, Mitch, and Brad to join us. They sure enjoyed it. Brother Poole wishes you the very best. [Brother Poole was my home teaching companion for years.] Mary teaches Sunday School and never misses Relief Society. She is a visiting teacher to five families. She sings in the choir and prepares things for people who are sick. Our Father in Heaven has certainly blessed us. What a special blessing it is to bring a special spirit into the world. Now he is blessing us and trusting us with two of His precious spirits.

Larry, this is beginning to sound like a sermon. I just want you to know how special I think you are and how much I love you. I want you to know of my testimony. The gospel is true and is the most important thing in our lives. I want you to know you can always depend on me and can always confide in me. Your success and happiness is my greatest concern. I would make any sacrifice for you. Pray always and strengthen your testimony.

Love Dad

For Christmas 1975, he wrote me the following letter while I was on my mission:

December 19, 1975

Dear Larry,

I hope this letter gets to you in time for Christmas. United Airlines are on strike, and we've been fogged in for over a week. We know that we can't mail you any presents and it bothers us not being able to express our love to you with presents. We want you to know how much we love you. How much we appreciate the kind of young man you are. We are proud to be the parents of such a fine son. We are thankful for the testimony and dedication of our Father in Heaven and Jesus Christ that you have. Your dedication in

fulfilling an honorable mission is the highest reward and tribute that a son can pay his parents, and that you will return home clean and pure. We are so proud of you. All of the people in the stake ask how you are doing and are concerned about you. [The earthquake in Guatemala happened earlier that year.] They all express their love and admiration for you. Then I stand a little taller each time. When you get home, we will make up for all the times and holidays we've missed together.

May our Father in Heaven's choicest blessings be with you each day, that you may enjoy His Spirit as a constant companion in everything you do.

Merry Christmas.
All our love and prayers,
Dad and Mom and Family

In his later years, Dad loved to go to the store Costco. It was a social experience for him. On a visit to Boise in 2000, he and I went to Costco. As we got out of the car and crossed the parking lot, a 20-something-year-old employee came up to Dad and greeted him with "Hello, Lynn" and gave him a high five. (No lie. An actual high five.) He then followed up with, "I won't be working on Thursday this week, so if you come by Thursday, I won't be here." I am afraid Dad spent *way* too much time at Costco. Did you see the movie about the girl who lived in a Walmart and delivered her baby there? I sometimes wondered if Dad was secretly living at Costco.

Dad often used a computer but did not understand much about it. My brother David was often his computer technician to upgrade components or clean up software problems. One day, David upgraded the amount of RAM in Dad's computer. Dad reported, "David fixed my computer and put a new gig in it. How big a gig do you have in your computer?" Once he relayed to me that he heard that Micron was producing a new 6 GB chip. He pronounced GB as "gilabeater."

Later in life, Dad would only wear a watch on Sundays because that was the only time he really cared about the exact time. When he took off his watch after church, he would pull

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out the stem so the hands would stop moving—and stop using battery power. Then the next Sunday, when he put the watch back on, he would set the hands to the current time and push in the stem, so it started ticking again.

In 2017, I helped Dad compile his life history. He had various versions that he had written over the years, so I helped him merge them and fill in the gaps. I published the final version on the Richman Family website (RichmanFamily.org). I enjoyed working with Dad on this and learning more about his life. There were lots of interesting stories about his life and not all of them made it into the final life history. For example, Dad said that when his high school friends showed up at his wedding reception, the gifts they brought consisted of old towels stolen from clotheslines and silverware stolen from a bar in Willard. We also went through all Dad's photos to identify names, dates, and events. I then scanned all those photos to add to the family website. See Lynn's page on the Richman Family website.

JOYCE SEELY RICHMAN

My mother, Kathryn Joyce Seely, passed away of kidney failure when I was 16 years old. Through her trials, she came to love the Savior and His gospel. She taught us about Him and showed us through her example how to follow Him. See Joyce's page on RichmanFamily.org for photos and stories about her life.

JEFF

My oldest brother, Jeffrey Lynn Richman, was born February 3, 1951, in Salt Lake City, Utah. Jeff served a Church mission in Germany, beginning in June 1970. He graduated from Utah State University in 1975. He married Don Peterson. See Jeff's page on RichmanFamily.org for photos and stories about his life.

JOY

My sister Joy Lynn Richman was born April 8, 1959, in Brigham City, Utah. In 1978, Joy graduated from Ricks College. On June 5, 1980, Joy married Blair Jacobson in the Idaho Falls Temple. See [Joy's page on RichmanFamily.org](#) for photos and stories about her life.

RICK

My brother Ricky Lynn Richman was born March 12, 1961, in Brigham City, Utah. He served a mission in the California Anaheim Mission. Rick married Wendy Tillery and was a grade school teacher. See [Rick's page on RichmanFamily.org](#) for photos and stories about his life.

MARY

Dad married Mary Elizabeth Smith on July 19, 1972, in the Idaho Falls Temple. Mary was a strength in the family. Even though I moved away to college just a year after Mary and Dad got married, I've always felt close to her. Mary had two children from a previous marriage, Tonya Gayle Hawkins and Marjorie Hawkins. Together, Mary and Dad had five more children (4+2+5=11). It was not easy to combine a yours-mine-and-ours family, but Mary did a marvelous job in bringing everyone together. It took an amazing woman to raise eleven kids. I also appreciate the loyalty and love she has always shown to Dad. See [Mary's page on RichmanFamily.org](#) for photos and stories about her life.

TONYA

My sister, Tonya Gayle Hawkins, was born October 4, 1963, in Pocatello, Idaho. She was married to Scott Thurman. See [Tonya's page on RichmanFamily.org](#) for photos and stories about her life.

MARGIE

My sister, Marjorie Lynn Hawkins, was born July 29, 1967, in Boise, Idaho. She married Merrell Sams and was later divorced. See [Margie's page on RichmanFamily.org](#) for photos and stories about her life.

JULIE

My sister, Julie Ann Richman, was born May 12, 1974, in Boise, Idaho. She married Johnny Hester on November 10, 2001. See [Julie's page on RichmanFamily.org](#) for photos and stories about her life.

JENNIFER

My sister, Jennifer Lynn Richman, was born May 12, 1974, in Boise, Idaho. She married Spencer Wintersteen. See [Jennifer's page on RichmanFamily.org](#) for photos and stories about her life.

BECKY

My sister, Becky Lynn Richman, was born June 12, 1975, in Boise, Idaho. See [Becky's page on RichmanFamily.org](#) for photos and stories about her life.

DAVID

My brother, David Thomas Richman, was born June 10, 1977, in Boise, Idaho. He served a Church mission in the Philippines Baguio Mission. He married Angela Mortensen. See [David's page on RichmanFamily.org](#) for photos and stories about his life.

ELIZABETH

My sister, Elizabeth Ann Richman, was born July 1, 1979, in Boise, Idaho. She married Jeremy Drievergen. See [Elizabeth's page on RichmanFamily.org](#) for photos and stories about her life.

TERI

I met my wife, Teri, in a BYU ward family home evening group, even though neither of us was a BYU student at the time. Teri was working at the BYU registration office, and I was working full-time for the Church in Salt Lake. Teri was the ward Relief Society president.

I took her to see the movie "The Elephant Man" in October 1981. Our next date was January 2, 1982, to see the movie "Taps." In February 1982, I hired Teri to type addresses on envelopes for my project to publish the book *Prominent Men and Women of Provo 1983*. I needed the help, but I also wanted to have more chances to interact with her. On April 10, 1982, I took her to see "Behold the Lamb of God" at the University of Utah Special Events Center. Mom and Dad and several relatives were also there. I felt relaxed around Teri, and we got along very well.

On May 22, 1982, I had a serious talk with her about our relationship and where it was headed. We talked about our personalities and how compatible we would be as a husband and wife. I had spent several evenings in the temple that week contemplating whether to marry her. I made the decision and sought a confirmation of that decision. On May 24, 1982, I formally asked Teri to marry me. We walked along a path on campus for a long time before I got the courage to ask her. I think the words I used were something like, "What are you doing for the next million years?" When she did not know how to respond to such a question, I said, "Well, are you going to marry me or not?" We set the date July 9, when many of my relatives would be in Boise for my brother Rick's homecoming.

On Memorial Day weekend in 1982, I met with my family and Teri in Brigham City. After my family left to return to Boise, Teri went on to Blackfoot to begin planning the wedding with her parents, and I went to Logan to ask Jason Nielsen to be my best man. The weekend of June 12, Teri and I went to Blackfoot so I could meet her father.

We were sealed in the Idaho Falls Temple on July 9, 1982, by the temple president Robert Kerr, Jr. It was a wonderful ceremony, and many relatives and friends were there. Teri

looked beautiful and everything went as planned. Jason Nielsen was my best man, and Dorothy Mucklaroy was Teri's maid of honor. The wedding lunch was at the Westbank restaurant after the traditional pictures on the temple grounds.

That night, we had a reception at the Rose Ward meetinghouse in Blackfoot. On Saturday, we drove to Boise for a reception at our home in the breezeway and back yard. Sunday morning, we attended the Boise 20th Ward sacrament meeting to hear Rick's homecoming talk. I was impressed with the depth of his remarks and the breadth of his experience. Tuesday morning, we returned to Provo to be back at work on Wednesday. We kept the honeymoon short, because we had planned a three-week trip at the end of September. (See the chapter "Trips and Vacations.")

When our youngest child Hailee started first grade, Teri decided she needed more to do during the day and got her real estate license. In October 1995, she enrolled in real estate school and passed her board exam in December. She got her real estate license in January and worked for Robison and Company and Century 21.

By 2000, Teri began working part-time as the attendance secretary at Hillsdale Elementary. It was a challenge since over half the school children did not speak English as their native language. One day, a mother went into labor as she dropped off her child for school. Teri got on the phone with 911 to coach another office worker as he helped the mother and translated into Spanish. The baby was delivered in the ambulance in front of the school.

Below is a letter I wrote to Teri on January 10, 1991:

My Dearest Teri,

In keeping with our new-found New Year's tradition, I am writing this letter to you to express my feelings about you, about myself, and about the prospects for the new year.

I want you to know how much I love you. I appreciate the support you are to me. You are always by my side when I need you. And even though I may not say it or show it very

often, I really appreciate it. I am growing a lot—and although growth is good, it can often be painful. Growing pains are difficult for teenagers, and they are even more difficult when that teenager is chronologically an adult. I appreciate the fact that you stand beside me as my equal.

I love you, and I love our family. I want to be the best husband and father I can be. Continue to help me see ways I can improve.

All my love,

Larry

In December 2004, Teri was still working at Hillsdale Elementary but changed jobs to be the Computer Lab Tech. In 2005, she started working at Hunter High School as the attendance secretary. Teri retired from Hunter High in August 2018. See [Teri's page on RichmanFamily.org](http://Teri's_page_on_RichmanFamily.org) for photos and stories about her life.

LANAE

On April 13, 1983, our first daughter, Lanae, was born. She weighed 7 pounds 8 ounces and was born at 7:08 a.m. She was 20 inches long, had brown hair, and was the most beautiful baby at the hospital. When Lanae was born, the tears welled up in my eyes as I realized that I now had a little daughter and was responsible for her. Teri's parents drove down from Blackfoot that night to see her. Something Teri's father said stayed with me for a long time, "Your Father in Heaven expects you to get her back to Him." I committed to do my best to make that happen. I knew she was precious and deserved all the effort it would take.

I blessed Lanae on May 1, 1983. We had 32 family and friends there, who all came to our little apartment for lunch.

Lanae slept through the night since her first day home. As she grew up, she had loads of personality.

Saturday night, May 4, 1991, I baptized Lanae. It was hard to believe that I had a daughter that was eight years old! It was

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also a humbling experience to realize that as her father, I was responsible to see that she knew what was right.

Lanae took piano, dance, and voice lessons. She was chosen to be a cheerleader at school. In the spring of 1995, she sprained and broke her ankle on the stairs. In December 1995, Lanae, Jamie, and Hailee danced at the Dickens Festival in Salt Lake. She was on the jazz, tap, and ballet team. In April 1997, Lanae and Jamie went with their dancing group to perform at Disneyland and Knott's Berry Farm.

Lanae was an excellent artist and enjoyed remodeling and redecorating her bedroom.

In 1999, Lanae turned 16 and got her driver's license and began dating. It was a bittersweet experience to see our children grow up and start going out into the world without holding their hand. Nothing prepares a parent for their children driving and dating.

In 2000, Lanae went to Cyprus High School. During high school, she took college art classes from Salt Lake Community College. In December, she painted the four walls of her bedroom with scenery. In 2003, she transferred from the University of Utah to Utah State University and majored in interior design and fine arts. She had a great eye for design. She completed an internship at the design firm Denton House Interiors, and then they hired her full-time.

In 2001, Lanae graduated from high school and seminary and began attending Salt Lake Community College. In 2002, she transferred to the University of Utah. She was a member of a Latter-day Saint sorority at the University of Utah.

She worked at Lone Star Steakhouse, Circuit City, Wet Seal, and Red Bull. She said Red Bull was the best job ever—to get paid to talk with people and give them free stuff. For spring break, Lanae and some of her college roommates and Jamie went on a cruise to Catalina Island and Ensenada, Mexico.

In 2007, Lanae worked for Home Depot and fell in love with Jay Christiansen, who also worked there. Jay later worked for E*TRADE and later for Square. Lanae and Jay were married in

the Salt Lake Temple on June 21, 2007. It was what the Seely family calls “a counter.” That is, one of those memorable experiences in life that really “count.” Counters remind you what life is all about. Life is all about raising children to be worthy to go to the temple, then living worthy to return to our Father in Heaven together.

June 16, 2019 was Father’s Day. Lanae and Jay came by the day before and gave me Superman air caps for my car tires and a card that said: “Happy Father’s Day, Dad! You are truly my hero. You have always worked hard and accomplished so many amazing things. Things you never really mention but are amazing. We see you, dad. I see all the good that you do and all the hard things you have overcome. I look up to you and strive to be more like you. All my love, Lanae. Jay and my girls are so lucky to learn from you, too.”

I am very proud of the woman Lanae is. I am proud of her as a person, a wife, and a mother to four wonderful kids. I am proud of the family that she and Jay have raised. They are wonderful parents and have an impressive family. See [Lanae's page on RichmanFamily.org](https://RichmanFamily.org) for photos and stories about her life.

JAMIE

We were expecting twins. On July 19, 1984, Teri had a sonogram that showed that one of the twins had died at about 18 weeks. The pathology report showed she was a girl. They are not sure why she died, except that for some reason she did not get a sufficient supply of blood. After talking it over with the bishop, we decided not to name her or have a funeral.

On July 26, 1984, Teri was dilating and about ready to deliver. The doctors decided not to try to stop the labor but proceed with a cesarean section. Two well-respected surgeons who just happened to be at the hospital at that time delivered a two-pound, 8.5-ounce little girl at 1:25 a.m., who we named Jamie.

After breathing on her own for 12 hours, Jamie’s lung collapsed, so they inserted a chest tube and put her on a

ventilator. We had faith she would be all right. The pediatrician commented to one of the nurses that he had not seen a baby crash as bad as she did and live. After Jason Nielsen and I gave her a blessing, she began to improve.

We got to know the nurses and respiratory therapists in the intensive care nursery well. We were there twice when a baby died. It made me want to walk over and put my arms around them. We felt very fortunate that Jamie improved as she did. Except for her immature lungs, she was healthy and well. The Utah Valley Medical Center was very well staffed with competent people and good equipment. KBYU-TV featured Teri and Jamie on a special about healthcare in Utah Valley.

Teri came home July 30th, and within a few hours had a fever of 102 degrees. We quickly realized that both she and I had the flu. Teri's mother and niece had come to stay with us for two weeks, and they had two sickies to take care of. We were both over it soon.

Jamie was in the hospital about two and a half months until she was well enough to come home. At 4.5 months, Jamie weighed 10 pounds (from a birth weight of 2 pounds 8.5 ounces). We blessed her on November 4, 1984. We were grateful for good insurance; we had to pay only \$235 of the total \$63,198 doctor and hospital bill.

For several years, Jamie was in and out of the hospital to treat asthma and bronchial pneumonia.

Jamie took dance lessons and danced at the Dickens Festival, Disneyland, Knott's Berry Farm, and Disneyworld in Orlando, Tuacahn Amphitheatre in St. George, and the MGM Grand Theme Park in Las Vegas. The singer Marc Anthony was at the theme park that day and Jamie got her picture taken with his arm around her.

Jamie always had a lot of friends and really enjoyed life. From the summer of 2002, through September, our department at work hired Jamie and two others to scan 108 file drawers of historical documents. It was nice to have Jamie at work to spend time with her.

Jamie worked as a health unit coordinator in the emergency room at Primary Children's Hospital. She received her patriarchal blessing on November 5, 2005, received her endowment on November 26, was married December 1, and had a reception December 2.

At Christmas in 2011, Jamie sent me the following letter:

Dad,

...I want you to know how much I love you and what an amazing Dad and Grandpa you are.... I am so grateful that you met Mom and for the strong example you guys are to me and my family. I absolutely could not have better parents. You guys are my strength.

I would be one happy mother if my girls grew up and felt about me and Robert the way I feel about you and Mom. You inspire me to keep making good choices and living the life that I am.

Your granddaughters love you so much. You are the best grandpa ever. It's still weird to call you Grandpa sometimes, but I love it. I only hope that I am half the grandparent you are to my future grandkids. I love the excitement on Paityn's face when I tell her you're coming over or we are coming to your house. I love the bond that you have with her, and the fun little things you guys like to do together....

I love that you and Mom have created a home where all of us feel comfortable and can gather together and stay a close family. I'm so grateful for the example that you have been to me and the other kids and the good decisions that they have made. I think we all turned out good and are living righteous lives. I have an eternal family and we have you guys to thank for that.

To me, you truly are Superman....

Jamie

In November 2018, we gave to Jamie all her past medical records, thinking that they might be interesting or helpful to her. As she read through them, she cried to think of all we went

through—the many trips to the doctor and the hospitalizations—all while Teri was expecting other children or had young children at home. She told us how thankful she was for family and how she appreciated all we have done for her.

In October 2020, Jamie and Robert sold their house in West Valley and built a new house in Saratoga Springs.

I am very proud of Jamie. She is a wonderful person, wife, and mother to four great kids. I am proud of the family that she and Robert have raised. They are wonderful parents and have an impressive family. See [Jamie's page on RichmanFamily.org](#) for photos and stories about her life.

JASON

Jason Dru Richman was born at Pioneer Valley Hospital in West Valley City, Utah, at 4:00 p.m. on October 14, 1985. He weighed 7 pounds 1.6 ounces and was 20.5 inches long. Jason was named after my best friend, Jason Drue Nielsen. Besides liking the name Jason, I could not think of anyone I would rather have my son want to be like.

Jason got a drum set for his 12th birthday and began taking lessons from my brother Rick. Jason later played in the concert and jazz bands at school. He also played the saxophone at school. On November 19, 2001, Jason had his first gig as the drummer in the local band named Lack of Talent. I was proud of the fact that he was in a good band that wrote clean lyrics. He also had a job as an after-hours custodian at an elementary school.

Jason was constantly riding his bike, roller blades, or skateboard. Regular riding was not thrilling enough, so he and his friends were constantly devising jumps. Jumping on our trampoline also was not thrilling enough, so he and his friends began jumping to the trampoline from the top of our playground and then graduated to jumping off the roof of the house. (See the “Jason Skill” videos on the [Richman Family YouTube channel](#).) Jason played on school and competition soccer teams and basketball teams. He later coached the high

school soccer team. As a teenager, he also became an avid snowboarder. (I say “avid,” because once he went snowboarding before the resort opened. That was dedication to be willing to walk up the hill!)

On July 19, 2001, Jason was with the scouts at Red Fleet State Park by Vernal, Utah, and while waiting for their turn to water ski, four of them were innocently skipping rocks into the reservoir. After throwing a few small rocks, they graduated to larger pieces of loose shale. The boys did not know that they were in a protected area that had several hundred dinosaur track prints petrified in the rocks. A park ranger saw them, lost his cool, yelled at them, and issued citations. Afterward, he apologized for losing his temper and “over-reacting” to the situation. Newspapers and television news ran sensationalized stories with headlines like “Dino Tracks Near Vernal Vandalized by Boy Scout” (a front-page story in the Salt Lake Tribune on July 27, 2001) and “3 boys charged in dino destruction” (Deseret News, July 28, 2001, see [PDF](#)). All three boys had to hire attorneys and appear in court in Vernal. In the end, charges were dropped after doing community service and paying to have the rocks glued back into place after having been retrieved from the water.

Before he got his driver’s license, Jason already owned two vehicles. Four people in our family had driver’s licenses, but we had six vehicles. (We were a living insurance nightmare.) In 2002, he bought a 1972 Chevy Nova to restore.

From 2004–2006, Jason served a mission in the Canada Halifax Mission, which included Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Labrador, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, and a small part of Maine.

Jason received his endowment on October 8, 2004, at the Jordan River Temple. On October 15, we attended the Salt Lake Temple where we continued our family tradition of standing in the celestial room and relating the experience of Lorenzo Snow in 1898 when he learned of President Wilford Woodruff’s death and went to the Holy of Holies to pray. We then walked out into the hallway and read the account of how Christ appeared to

Lorenzo Snow and instructed him to reorganize the First Presidency. (See *The Improvement Era*, Sep 1933, pp. 677, 679.)

On Father's Day 2005, Jason wrote me the following in a card: "You've always been such a great 'Pa.' I've been realizing more and more every day exactly how much you have done for me. Every day, I look at people and wonder why they don't know how to do the most basic things. I say to myself, 'Man, I'm sure glad that I know how to do that.' But I would like to rephrase that, 'Man, I'm sure glad by dad cared enough to take the time to teach me how to do that.' It's been a good experience living on my own and very humbling, but you have done an excellent job in preparing me for this journey, and it is a bigger blessing than you and I could ever know. I love ya, Pa."

When Jason returned from his mission, he had a clear idea to form his own business, which he did in the summer of 2007—Mission Prep Lawn Care. His business model was based on a mission organization with districts and zones and focused on helping future missionaries earn money for their missions. Later, he added landscaping and Christmas lighting and renamed the business MP Lawn Care and Lighting.

In August 2007, Jason married Abigail Rose Nickel. They both grew up in our ward, but hardly ever talked until after Jason's mission, when they fell in love and got married. Abbie was a para-professional at Westlake Junior High and taught the after-school dance program.

In 2021, Jason invited me to go with him on a scuba diving trip to Cozumel. He took a certification class and I attended it with him as a refresher. For details about the trip, see the section "Trips and Vacations."

I am very proud of the man Jason is. He is a great husband, father, and business owner. I am proud of the family that he and Abbie have raised. They are great parents and have an impressive family. See [Jason's page on RichmanFamily.org](#) for photos and stories about his life.

HAILEE

Hailee Richman was born May 29, 1990.

Hailee went to Whittier Elementary, one of the oldest schools in the valley. Harold B. Lee was a principal there. Over the Christmas break in 2000, she moved into the new school they built next to the old one.

When she was six years old, Hailee began taking piano lessons and performed in recitals.

Hailee took dance lessons, was on the dance company in school, and in December 1995, danced with her sisters Lanae and Jamie at the Dickens Festival in Salt Lake. In May 2005, Hailee and I had a chance to learn a dance and perform together in the junior high school dance program.

In 2000, Hailee and Jamie spent a week in Seattle visiting their cousin Krista.

In the sixth grade, Hailee was on the student council and in a local singing group.

In junior high, Hailee took Access classes, was in the dance company, and kept busy with piano, snowboarding, and most importantly, friends.

On July 16, 2005, Hailee participated in the Day of Celebration at the University of Utah stadium along with 46,000 other youth to commemorate the 200th birthday of Joseph Smith and the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Church. It was an amazing program featuring a 15,000-voice choir, 4,800 dancers, 2,400 flag bearers, 1,000 chanters, and 100 drummers.

In high school, Hailee was in the dance company and kept busy with snowboarding, longboarding, piano, guitar, friends, and working at Vans. She also did an internship with an architectural firm in Salt Lake.

On Father's Day 2005, Hailee wrote me the following in a card: "I hope you know how amazing you are as a dad. I am so grateful to have had a dad like you growing up. You always supported me in anything I was doing, you taught me the importance of making good choices, you taught me how to

work hard, and, most importantly, you taught me how to love my kids unconditionally through example. Thank you for being the best dad and grandpa to my kids. Happy Father's Day. I love you, Dad!"

In November 2020, President Russell M. Nelson invited us to share on social media all the things we are grateful for. (See "President Nelson's Video 'The Healing Power of Gratitude'" in the "Major Projects" section of the chapter "Church Employee.") Hailee posted this on Facebook on November 25: "I am so grateful for my parents. If you know them you know how generous, kind, and loving they are. I'm grateful for the values and lesson they taught me and for molding me into the person I am today. I'm grateful for the vacations and the experiences they gave us as young kids. It's funny how you don't realize how blessed you are until you just grow up a little. My mom is the most selfless and dependable person I know, she is always willing to help me at the last minute. She will drop everything and come to my rescue, and she always know the right thing to do or say. I'm so grateful that she loves my kids like they're her own. My dad is one of the funniest people I know, I'm grateful that I get his dad jokes now. He is the happiest and best grandpa ever, always getting down and playing with my kids. I love him so much for that. He is also one of the hardest working people that I know, he is in his office 80% of the time but the second we walk through the door he will always stops because he puts family above everything. They continue to support me and my family in ways I couldn't ever imagine, and I love them so much. #givethanks"

I am very proud of Hailee—as a person, as a wife, and as a mother to two wonderful kids. I am proud of the family that she and Chance have raised. They are great parents and have an impressive family. See [Hailee's page on RichmanFamily.org](https://RichmanFamily.org) for photos and stories about her life.

GRANDMA BOSTON RICHMAN

On February 26, 1978, Grandma Richman passed away. My sister Joy, my cousin Donna, and I spoke at the funeral.

Everyone had a calm, peaceful feeling. We were glad she could now be active and engaged in important work in the spirit world. For the three years since her stroke, she had not been able to do much. She was then reunited with her husband who died 44 years earlier, and with her child who died shortly after birth. What a joyous reunion that must have been! Grandma Richman was a good example to me of love and sacrifice. She worked hard to support her family and raise them without a husband. When Dad was a boy, she used to tell him that it was no shame to be poor, but that there was no excuse to be dirty. Soap is cheap. See [Boston Richman's page](#) on RichmanFamliy.org.

GRANDMA GRACE SEELY

My grandmother Grace Seely wrote me the following letter on June 10, 1976:

Dearest Larry,

One month from today is your birthday, so I'll say "happy birthday" now in case I don't get your birthday card in time....

Larry, both your grandmas have thought you were a perfect child. We love you. We still look for a great future for you. You have the kind of stuff in you that makes great men—faith, love, humility, strength, and a strong faith in God. Your mission will soon be over, but then your real mission will soon begin. It will be by far harder than this one. Now will come your life trial to see if you will be valiant in all things and I know you will. I look for a brilliant future for you. First, find that lovely girl. Or have you already found her? Together, it will be easier than alone. Be prayerful. Remember, your mom is anxious for you, too, and your dad and Betty. I'm so glad your dad found Betty.

Have a happy birthday—twenty-one. Life is just beginning, but you have a good foundation.... Pack every minute as full as possible....

Lots of love, Grandma and Grandpa Seely

See [Grace Seely's page](#) on RichmanFamliy.org.

FAMILY TRADITIONS

BOATING

In December 1967, our family bought an 18-foot-one-inch Centurian boat. It was custom made by Century Marine in Salt Lake. The company made only three boats of that design. It was an inboard-outboard, 155-horsepower boat with all the seats in a semicircle. It had a lime green exterior and a dark green leather interior. The other two boats had a yellow exterior with a white leather interior and a blue interior and exterior. We enjoyed boating as a family at Utah Lake, Lucky Peak, and other places. (See Centurian boat brochure, pages [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#).)

CAMPING

1996. We went camping at Bear Lake.

1997. We went camping near Lava Hot Springs, Idaho.

August 2004. Jackman family reunion at Warm River campground in Idaho.

2008. We camped in Preston, Idaho, for a Jackman family reunion. We took a hike that was supposed to be a short hike to an amazing lake. It turned out to be over the top of two mountains and almost to Bear Lake. Most of us turned back, but Jason and his cousin, Mike Jackman, kept going. When they got to the lake, it was almost dark, and they were tired and thirsty. Luckily, they found a troop of scouts who gave them some water and directions. We were grateful for their safe return.

2011. We camped with our trailer at Panguitch Lake in central Utah.

June 2012. We camped at Warm River in Idaho.

June 2013. Zions National Park.

July 2013. Malad?

2014. Where?

June 2015. Where?

July 2018. Malad

July 2020. Canyon near Bear Lake.

2021. Big Spring, about 40 minutes past Lava Hot Springs, Idaho.

CHRISTMAS

In 1967, our family started a tradition to have a special Christmas program. These were characterized by typed programs which depicted the family's strange humor. (See Christmas program 1978 for an example. The reference to #11 was Elizabeth, the 11th child.) Each Christmas, we would each pull out our books of remembrance and write down the things that had happened that year. Each person would be weighed and measured and would record these along with our personal history.

In the first years of our marriage, Teri and I would alternate having Christmas and Thanksgiving in Boise and Blackfoot. Christmas 1982 was in Blackfoot; 1983 was in Boise.

In 1990, Teri and I had Christmas at our own home for the first time. On Christmas Eve, we suggested to the kids that we set up the video camera on the tripod and leave it running all night to see if we could catch Santa Claus. My friend Reed Coombs came over in a full Santa suit and filled the stockings in front of the camera and set out all the presents. The kids really enjoyed that tape and played it many times in the following weeks.

In 1997, we spent Thanksgiving in Blackfoot.

In November 2004, we went to Blackfoot to have an early Thanksgiving with Teri's family because her nephew, D.J. was deployed to Iraq and would not be there on November 25.

COIN COLLECTING

Dad and I enjoyed coin collecting. Dad would often bring home a whole bag of coins and we would lay them out on the pool table and sort through them to find specific dates and mints. We filled lots of collector books.

FAMILY HISTORY

Dad and I also really got into genealogy and family history research. We gathered photographs of ancestors and made photo family group sheets. We also typed up submission forms to submit names for temple ordinances. In two years, we submitted 2,000 names. On November 12, 1972, I was called as a Genealogy Research Specialist.

MEMORIAL DAY

On Saturday, May 27, 1990, we went to Brigham City to meet Dad, Becky, and David for Memorial Day. Rick and Wendy were there, but Reta and Paul were out of town, as were Kent and Mary. It was the first Memorial Day I remember that Reta and Paul were not there. It was a ritual without much feeling. And I wanted to feel something this year. I wanted to sit by Mom's grave and cry. But I did not. We left flowers and we were on our way. I did feel a bit of sadness driving to Brigham City as a few thoughts of Mom flashed through my head.

60TH BIRTHDAY

On July 10, 2015, I turned 60 years old. Teri planned a birthday party and Jamie contacted many family members, friends, and old ward members and asked them to write about their memories of me. She compiled a binder of these memories. (See parts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7.)

FRIENDS

It would be impossible to write here about all my friends. I list here a few who have had a significant impact on my life. Elder Marvin J. Ashton explained “Acts of a friend should result in self-improvement, better attitudes, self-reliance, comfort, consolation, self-respect, and better welfare. Certainly, the word friend is misused if it is identified with a person who contributes to our delinquency, misery, and heartaches.... Our friendship will be recognizable if our actions and attitudes result in improvement and independence.” (“What is a Friend,” Marvin J. Ashton, general conference, October 1972.)

THE “GANG”

In the ninth grade, I developed a friendship with David Beal who was in my ward. By the tenth grade, that friendship had extended to a group of three guys and three girls (David Beal and Claudia Flake, Bob Peck and Cathy Ellsworth, and KaLee Neal and me). We spent a lot of time with each other and participated in school and church activities together. The three couples dated regularly until the guys went on missions.

David and Claudia were married April 1, 1977. They had originally planned their wedding for June, but when they found out I would be in Guatemala translating the Book of Mormon into Cakchiquel, they moved the date up. David and I had been close friends since the ninth grade and there was not anyone I could talk with more openly than Claudia. It seemed natural for them to get married.

For many years, we kept in touch and met in the summers and at holidays. We also had a round-robin letter that we circulated. When each couple received the envelope, they would write a new letter and send it along to the next couple.

JASON NIELSEN

There are friends that it does not matter when the last time was that you saw them. When you see them again, it is like you

have not missed a conversation. Jason Nielsen was one such friend. He was my college roommate for years and was the best man at my wedding. I named my son after him. Besides liking the name Jason, I could not think of anyone I would rather have my son want to be like.

We first met when we were randomly assigned as roommates at Sessions House in college. In the winter 1981 semester, my roommates were Jason Drue Nielsen, Phillip Hatch Woodland, and Kim Perry Een. In May 1981, John Worsley from Boise moved in with Phil Woodland, Jason Nielsen, and me.

I really got along well with Jason. He was very likeable, consistent, and had good habits. We enjoyed each other's company. Aside from the high school "gang," I had not really let myself get close to many friends. Jason was very good *to* me, and he was very good *for* me.

For my 60th birthday, Jamie contacted my friends and asked them to write memories of me. Jason wrote the following: "We did tons (that means a lot) of fun things. We went on diving trips to Cancun, Mexico, trips to Lava Hot Springs, Downata Hot Springs, deer hunting, rode ATVs, went to concerts, played racquetball, and snuck into Helaman Halls to watch TV when we were poorer and didn't have a TV of our own to watch. These are just a few of the things I remember doing. I'm sure you could add to the list. On a serious note—I want you to know that over the years we have had many great times and I have enjoyed being your friend and college roommate. We did a lot of things together during our college years that I fondly remember and will treasure always. Thanks for always being a good example to me! You and Teri have been great friends to me over the years."

TRIPS WITH JASON

July 10, 1980 was my 26th birthday. I had entered my second quarter of a century of life. After work, I drove to Logan to spend the weekend with him, including a day trip to Lava Hot Springs.

In May 1981, I tried to talk Jason into going on an Eastern Airlines unlimited mileage trip (like the ones I took with Greg Martin in 1979 and with Bryan Flake in 1980), but that did not happen. Jason and I went on many other trips.

The weekend of September 5–6, 1981, Jason and I had planned a trip to Las Vegas, but Joy and Blair blessed their baby on September 6, so we changed our plans and went to Logan so I could go to Rexburg on Sunday for the blessing. Saturday morning, we drove to Downey, Idaho, to get Phil Woodland and swim at Downata Hot Springs. Phil was not home, so Jason and I went to the hot springs to swim. I cut my forehead on one of the metal rings they had to swing out over the water. We went back to Downey, got Phil, and walked over to the hospital in Downey where I got four stitches.

Monday morning, Jason and I drove up to the spot where he goes deer hunting with friends to check out the roads and sight in his gun. The first time I fired his gun, it backfired, and the scope caught me in the forehead. It hit just to the side of the stitches from Saturday. It cut through the skin, but not deep enough to need stitches. With the two vertical marks (one from the ring at Downata and the other from the gun scope) and the horizontal stitches, it looked like a railroad track. I was beginning to wonder whether I would make it back to Provo alive. I told Jason to call me Scarface.

In December 1981, Jason and I took a trip to Cancun, Mexico. (See details in the chapter “Trips, Vacations, and Youth Conferences.”)

HUNTING WITH JASON

Jason took me deer hunting for the first time the weekend of October 23, 1982, with two of his friends from Logan. I had a relaxing time with my best friend. That same group went hunting each October for eight years (1982–1989).

In 1985, on the last day, just before we were to break camp, we decided to push through the trees “up down over” into the bottom. Don and Terry took Jason and me up to the top on their motorcycles and dropped us off. We were to push down

through the trees and meet them at the bottom. The problem was that there were many bottoms. I thought they meant the bottom by the beaver ponds, but they meant the bottom down by the road. I knew where I was the whole time, but they were lost. When I got to the beaver ponds and did not see Don or Terry, and Jason did not come out soon after, I started back up the road to find them. We missed each other several times on the road. I ended up walking back to camp to find them, and when they were not there, I had Guy take me back down on his four-wheeler. When we finally caught up with each other, it had been an hour or more that they thought I was lost or hurt. Jason was a bit worried.

In 1987, I shot a two-point that dressed out at 98 pounds. In 1988, I shot another two-point and it dressed out at 107 pounds.

OTHER TRIPS WITH JASON

On Memorial Day weekend, 1982, I met with my family and Teri in Brigham City. After my family left to return to Boise, and Teri went on to Blackfoot to begin planning the wedding with her parents, I went to Logan to ask Jason Nielsen to be my best man. We went to Lava Hot Springs and stayed at the Mountain View Trailer Park (later renamed Mary's Place Campground). The owner, Mary Perkins let us stay in the "orchard," a small strip of trees along the side of the campsites.

After I got married, Jason and I still played racquetball every Friday. My brother Rick moved into Sessions House with Jason in the fall 1982.

CANCUN AND ISLA MUJERES, MEXICO

At the end of a work trip in December 1985 to Colombia, I met Jason Nielsen in Cancun and Isla Mujeres. In scheduling the flights to Bogota, I found that the ticket price was less with a stop in Cancun than for a non-stop return flight. Previously, Jason had discussed with me his plans to spend a few weeks during Christmas in Brazil with a friend of his. Those plans fell through, and so I suggested to him that we meet in Cancun for a few days as I returned from Colombia. I had originally

planned to spend a week in Colombia and four days in Cancun. Jason was to arrive in Cancun a few days before I arrived, and we would return home together. But just before I left, the people in Bogota informed me I only needed to be there four days. I had already booked my return flights from Cancun and could not change them. So, I ended up arriving in Cancun almost the same time as Jason and returning home the same day as well.

Jason and I stayed the first and last nights in Cancun at El Presidente, and the rest of the time at El Presidente Caribe on Isla Mujeres. We rented a car and took the 2.5-hour drive to Chichén Itza.

We rented wind surfboards for an hour but ended up drifting out and taking almost two hours getting back. We went scuba diving, snorkeled, and rode sea turtles. Jason learned the numbers in Spanish into the thousands, ordered his own food in restaurants, and got back and forth from the airport on his own. He did very well bartering for souvenirs.

It was overcast a few days, and there were fierce winds and rainstorms one day on the island that forced us to stay in the hotel most of the day and play ping pong and backgammon. We bet 100 pretend shares of IBM stock on each game of backgammon. I ended up owing him 400 shares. When we did leave the hotel, the wind was strong enough to blow Jason's sacred Venice Beach hat into the lagoon and he went right in after it. I enjoyed being able to brush up on my Spanish more. During the trip, several people asked me if I was a Mexican. What a compliment!

MOTORCYCLE ACCIDENT

On August 29, 2017, around 6:30 p.m., Jason Nielsen nearly died when his motorcycle hit a truck. He died on site, but the paramedics revived him. He was intubated on site because he had a broken jaw, and his airway was closing. He had skull fractures and a displaced tibia. He spent six weeks in some sort of hospital bed, had 23 doctors, 56 nurses, his jaw wired shut, 6 titanium plates and 33 screws inserted into his face, a feeding

tube, a trachea tube, and a ventilator. It was a long recovery, but he recovered.

I later sent him the following email:

My dear friend Jason,

I have been eagerly reading the updates from Sherie and Emily about your progress. I am so excited that you are making good progress! (Even though I'm sure it seems very slow and frustrating for you.)

I can't believe what you've been through, and I can't imagine how hard it has been. Please know that I (and the rest of my family) have been praying for you daily—many times a day.

When I first heard about your accident, my first thought was to get on a plane and come see you. But I knew that your family was right beside you, and they were what you needed. After the first week or two, I wanted to call you on the phone, but I knew that your jaw was wired shut, so you wouldn't be able to talk. Now I hear that you may be going home soon. I'm so glad for you!

Let me know when you feel up to talking and I'll give you a call. Please know that my thoughts have been with you every day, but I've wanted to give you a little space until you felt better.

DAVID FRISCHKNECHT

David Frischknecht and I were companions three times during the mission. After the mission, we spent a summer together in Guatemala translating the Book of Mormon into Cakchiquel. We were roommates after our missions, took BYU linguistics classes together, and we worked together as Church employees until I retired in 2022.

The following is a letter he wrote me Monday afternoon, February 2, 1976. He was serving in the town of Sumpango, and I was in Comalapa. He mailed the letter Tuesday morning, and the earthquake happened that night.

Dear Uncle Larry [one of David's nicknames for me],

What's happening, man? I was just remodeling my baggy book and being all nostalgic and stuff. Elder Choc has turned rebelde and is listening to music, and I'm kind of all messed up, too, because I wasn't going to write to Katie [his girlfriend] today and then a letter from her arrived so I ended up doing that. And with the nostalgia of doing my baggy book and remembering San Marcos, Patzicía, etc., I've really cruised off the deep end. So, a note to the wizard [another of David's nicknames for me] is completely in order to help get me straightened out.

Happy anniversary, Lare, If you get this letter on the right day, it will be exactly one year since we met. Congratulations! One year after I met Katie, I entered the mission home. Saber what I'll be doing this Wednesday. Anyway, it's like I say, I've been remembering the good old days in Hortencia's place with Garth and D and all the cool fights, and maps, and boogh, and stuff. It's been an eventful year to say the least. Now, instead of turning the page and seeing your hump day, you'll be turning it and seeing your going home day. I'm still never going home. Your six months sounds a lot shorter than my nine. I'm kind of glad, too. I'm not ready to go home....

How are things going in Comalapa? I hope the LTM hasn't closed everything down over there. The president told us to find a chapel here, even though we don't have members. We may have found a half decent place but it's not all that special.

Well, Dance [another of David's nicknames for me], thanks for the memories. Like President Arnold told Elder Howard, "All of us want to go home" (especially on baggy Mondays). But I imagine that we'll get over those feelings sometime, right? And when you're in a screwy class this fall at the "Y," you'll probably write me a letter and advise me not to come home because of the hassle.

Such are the rambling thoughts of Elder Frischknecht late on a Monday afternoon when he is psyching up to toc doors

and try to teach a lesson or two. Thanks for listening, Uncle Dance. Take care of yourself and be good. Try to keep your head on. Seriously, thanks for the things you've taught me in the past year. Le agradezco con bastante! (Oh, come on! Stay serious!) You've been a good example for me and taught me lots of things about humility, patience, and having concern for the individual. All—except your letters to the president—your life is a shining light for those of us who are around you.

Keep smiling, Dance. Remember that life is beautiful for all those who are MELLOW. With all my love and best wishes, Dave

Also, see my letter to David on August 25, 1979, in the section "BYU Senior Year, Fall 1978-Winter 1979" in the chapter "BYU."

In 1990, David was called to be the president of the Guatemala City North Mission. Sunday night, June 10, 1990, I had a significant dream about David. I dreamed that before he went to Guatemala to be mission president, we spent an afternoon together studying Kekchí. Afterwards, he said that he wanted me to write on his farewell cake. He handed me the tube of frosting and asked me to fill in the words he had traced on the cake. Along the top, it said, "30 years," which meant that collectively we've known each other for 30 years (we met 15 years ago). On one side, it said, "No Pain," meaning that we were not to feel sorry about parting, and on the other side it said, "Strength in Companionship," meaning that we'd always be there to strengthen each other.

I felt very close to David and wanted him to know how I appreciated his friendship. On Wednesday, I scheduled an hour with him, and we met in a conference room on the 22nd floor so we could be alone to talk. We talked about what it would be like for him in Guatemala. He noted that we have never been apart for more than three months since we met more than 15 years ago.

About June 1, 1991, I wrote the following letter to David Frischknecht:

THE BLESSED LIFE OF AN ORDINARY MAN

Estimado hermano eminente presidente,

Para mí es un placer saludarte en esta ocasión. Espero que el Señor este brindando todas sus bendiciones a ti y a tu familia. Vaya.

We have just finished the review and certification of the Cakchiquel temple ceremony. It has been a very nice experience, but I'm glad it's over.... Rigoberto Miza and Martín Per were here for two weeks and they worked hard seven days a week. Angel Chavez, Vidalmino Sarate, Alan Christensen, and Hugh Biesinger were also here working on Quiché, so we were able to consult with them and share ideas. We made lots of revisions, although they were all minor, but they really improved the readability and understandability of the translation. Rigoberto and Martín were a good team, representing two different dialects and two age groups. I really enjoyed working with them, and we felt a good spirit about the work. I feel very confident about the final product. The recording is slated for March 1992.

Your fame is really spreading. The people are in awe of your eminencia. News has spread even as far as Salt Lake of your Kekchí abilities. I have heard about the twenty-minute talk you gave in "absolutely perfect Kekchí." It means a lot to the people that you have made the effort to learn their language. They'll never forget you.

Teri and I are looking forward to our trip to Guatemala. It appears that we will arrive August 26 and return home September 2. It's something we've talked about doing since we were married nine years ago. (Can you believe it was nine years ago?)

It sounds like you are working hard. I'm sure it can be fatiguing and at times probably even discouraging but hang in there. It's really worth it. Take care. Remember there are lots of people who love you.

Love, Larry

On April 24, 2012, David Frischknecht wrote me the following letter. His comments about different assignments

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF LARRY RICHMAN

referred to the fact that the Curriculum Department (of which he was the managing director) was dissolved. The editing and design functions were moved to a new Publishing Services Department and the rest of the functions were moved to the Priesthood Department.

Dear Larry,

Thank you for a lifetime of friendship and warm association. As we separate into different assignments again, I express thanks again for your constant example and your abiding patience. You know me better than I know myself and are particularly aware of my weaknesses. Thank you for enduring me in spite of it all.

Thank you for these years of working together in the Curriculum Department. You have weathered the ups and downs and have been a catalyst for many good improvements in Church publishing and gospel instruction. You continue to learn new things and think new thoughts and accomplish new goals. You continue to be organized beyond compare and to be responsive to the Brethren and to all other requests for your assistance. Your example has been, and is, a light to me. Thank you.

I am grateful ever for our association and for the influence you have been in my life. Again, thank you, Larry.

And very warmest regards.

David

October 1, 2015 was David Frischknecht's 60th birthday. On my 60th birthday, he wrote 60 memories of me. (See "60th Birthday" in the chapter "Family Traditions.") So, today I returned the favor with 60 memories for his 60th birthday. (See [Frischknecht Memories 60th Birthday.docx](#).)

On April 6, 2019, David's name was read over the pulpit at general conference as he was sustained as an Area Authority Seventy. I sent him this email: "Congratulations on the new call, my friend. I knew this was coming someday." He responded with the following: "Thank you for this note. And thank you for being my friend and example my whole life (practically). Thank

you for your patience with me and for understanding me. I'm very grateful for our friendship and association over the years. Thank you again and again. David"

Every year on February 4, we exchange "Happy Earthquake Day" emails. 45 year later, on February 4, 2021, David wrote me the following: "Just remembering. So grateful for miracles that day and for so many days since. Thanks for your example then and now. Love and best wishes. David"

FRIENDSHIPS

In 1989, I visited several times with a therapist to help me understand and improve my relationships with other people. We discussed the friends I had during my life. In grade school, I often played by myself. During recess at school, I seldom played with other children, but would walk around the grass field by myself, projecting myself into fantasy worlds. (See the chapter on "School," section "Granger Elementary.")

Mom and Dad did not encourage me into team sports or other organized activities, so I did not have those opportunities to develop friendships with my peers. I withdrew and became a loner, convincing myself I did not need anybody. Since I did not participate in sports at school or in the neighborhood, and I learned few of the rules of basketball, football, or baseball. I hated P.E. class at school and the dumb exercises and relay races. I was always the last to be chosen for baseball teams (even after the girls!), and in the batting lineup I would say that I had already batted and slip to the end of the line.

As I look back through my junior and senior high school yearbooks, I realize that I had very few friends. I recognize many of the names and faces, but I only knew them by watching them, but not interacting with them. I had very few neighborhood friends. A year into scouting, just as I was beginning to form some friendships, our family moved.

See the description of the "gang" earlier in this section. These were fulfilling relationships, but the tight group also kept me from developing any other friendships outside of that group.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF LARRY RICHMAN

On my mission, I developed a close friendship with David Frischknecht, who was my companion three times. We were roommates after our missions, and we have worked together as Church employees ever since. Friendships with roommates in college were important to me, but I felt conflicted. On Saturdays, when they would spend hours together watching sports on television or doing other things together, I felt like I needed to do something more productive, like studying or putting in more hours at work. I rationalized this detachment as a higher and better use of my time, but it was mostly an avoidance technique. I wanted to be closer friends with them, but I did things to stay distant. I developed a close friendship with Jason Nielsen, who was my roommate for most of my college years. We took several trips together and went hunting every year for eight years. He was the best man at my wedding.

But overall, I find it easy to be distant with men at work, in my neighborhood, and at church. Therefore, I get very little emotional support from the very people I wish I had in my circle of friends. I would be more balanced and more emotionally stable with a broader base of friends.

My philosophy on therapy: In this complex world we live in, everyone can benefit from seeing a therapist about something at some point in their life. Seeking insight from a professional counselor is a sign of strength and humility. Sometimes it can be difficult to see yourself objectively and a counselor can help you see things you cannot see.

HOMES

BRIGHAM CITY, UTAH

My first home was in Brigham City, Utah, at 64 South 500 East, just across the street from the old Box Elder High School.

My second home was also in Brigham City at 134 West 300 South. Our phone number was 723-6827. (Everyone remembers

their first phone number, don't they?) Officially, it was "Parkway 3-6827 (PA3-6827). All you had to dial were the five numbers 3-6827. While we lived there, my dad built a carport on the west side of the house and did all the brickwork for a large planter along the side of the carport. In the back of the house, dad built a cement patio with a sandbox in the middle. On the east side of the house, he removed a green cement patio and dug a basement storage room. Above the storage room, he built two bedrooms, each with a sink. East of the bedrooms, he built a garage, two cars wide and two cars deep.

My father owned a grocery store called Lynn's Drive-In Market. It was on the south end of town right next to Seely's Motel. The building was owned by my grandfather and my dad managed the store for several years. When he sold the store, we filled the storage room downstairs with what was left over from the store.

On the west side of the house was a large chestnut tree. As a small boy, I remember trying to climb the tree. I tried for months to get on the lowest branch, which seemed awfully high to a young boy. Downstairs was a large recreation room with a pool table. We had several tropical fish in tanks. Once, my dad bought Ricky a little alligator. We had that downstairs and after a couple of weeks, the alligator grew so much that we knew we would not be able to take care of it. One day, it bit my brother's finger and that was the deciding factor to take it back to the pet store.

We also had a dog named Dutchess, a lazy cocker spaniel. She liked to lie on her back in the sun with her feet straight up in the air. She liked the warmth of the sun on her stomach. Sometimes she would lay like that in the road. One day, a man driving down the road saw Duchess and came to the door to tell mom that her dog had been hit and was lying in the road dead. She would call Duchess and she would turn over and lumber home to the surprise of the man at the door.

Later, we had a dog named Jasmine. She was part cocker spaniel and part French poodle. We later took her to Salt Lake

when we moved. Other pets included a tortoise, iguana, cats, snakes, tropical fish, and goldfish.

There were many large chestnut trees along the front of the house. In the fall, we played in huge piles of leaves.

Immediately to the east of us lived the Cazier family and in the next house lived the Knudsen family. The overflow irrigation water from Knudsen's garden would run down the side of the road. We would dam the water in front of our house and play in it. My mother did not approve of that too much.

On the west corner of the block was an opening to an underground irrigation ditch. One day, I put a toy boat in the water and then ran to the opening on the other side of the street to retrieve it. It never came out. And I was very sad, because it was one of a set of three boats.

I also took piano lessons from a lady a few blocks away (to the south). I remember walking down to her house. It probably took hours for me to get there.

I did not learn to ride a bicycle in Brigham City. I remember all my friends and my brother rode bicycles. But I rode in my wagon. It was yellow, but mostly brown from rust. I would put one leg in the wagon and push with the other leg outside the wagon. I could go fast, but I could not keep up with the bicycles. The whole center of the block behind our house was an open playground, mostly paved, probably for the grade school across the street to the east. I remember riding my wagon there while the other kids rode their bikes.

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

We moved to Salt Lake City, Utah, in July 1963 when I was eight years old. Our house was at 2780 Marcus Road (3960 South) in the Granger area. Our phone number was 298-9525. It was on a slight hill, so it had a walk-out basement. It was a beautiful house. The upstairs had white shag carpet, and the living room had a white marble fireplace. The living and dining rooms had large windows and a balcony along those two sides of the house with views of downtown Salt Lake City. In the

backyard, we had one of the few trees in the Granger subdivisions at that time. I remember weeding the park strip between the road and the sidewalk. It was planted with bushes and my arms would get scratched and would itch from pulling the weeds from among the bushes.

Dad tells of digging worms in the backyard for fishing. He left for a minute, and when he returned, he found an empty can of worms and Joy Lynn with dirt around her mouth. To this day she claims she did not eat them, but the mystery exists—where did the worms go?

Like normal kids, we fought a lot. When mom and dad were not home, the oldest one (Jeff) had seniority and demanded that everyone else obey him. If anyone crossed his path, it was “instant death.” And so, of course, the younger ones would always try to cross his path. When Jeff was home, he would command my obedience—or else! Then I would turn around and do the same with Joy and Rick because I had seniority over them.

I remember times when Jeff would chase me around the house, and when he caught me, I thought he was going to kill me. Once I locked myself in the bathroom, but that did not stop him. He came crashing right through the door. When he was through with me, we both worked frantically piecing the doorframe back together with glue so we would not get in trouble when mom and dad got home. (As if they would never notice!) Many times, we would be gluing something back together when they got home.

I remember playing marathon games of the board game Easy Money with Jeff. When we had to fold up the game, we would mark the houses and pieces with colored masking tape so we could continue the game the next day. He mounted the game board on the back of his bulletin board so we could pull down the bulletin board, replace the masking tape markers with playing pieces, and continue where we had left off.

Notable neighbors were the following: Mrs. Teddy Hawkes (on the west), who befriended Joy; the Hardman family (across

the street) who had a son Scotty; and the Hedin family (across the street to the east) who had a son Grant.

BOISE, IDAHO

We moved to Boise, Idaho, in July 1968. We lived at 5111 Mountain View Drive. Our phone number was 208-375-7918. While I was on my mission, Dad built an addition on the back of the house with four bedrooms, a master bathroom, a nursery, a storage room, and a laundry room. He also remodeled much of the upstairs of the original house with a large living room and a large kitchen.

In July 1979, Dad received a promotion with the Sperry and Hutchinson Company, and began working in Phoenix, Arizona. He lived in a motel in Phoenix and flew to Boise every other weekend while trying to sell the house. In September, his work assignment changed again, moving him back to Boise. It was fortunate that they had not yet sold the house.

PROVO, UTAH

As a BYU freshman, I lived in the dorms at Deseret Towers, Penrose Hall, room T-505. After my mission, I lived at University Villa for a year, and then spent my remaining years at BYU at the "Sessions House" at 782 North 300 East.

After Teri and I got married, July 9, 1982, we rented the upstairs of a little house at 553 North 750 East in Provo. Later, the owners sold the house and so we moved in March 1984 to a duplex at 2126 North 1060 West, Provo, in the upper Siler Shadows area near the city limits with Orem.

On April 12, 1984, I bought a Kawasaki 440 motorcycle. I used it each morning to drive to the parking lot where I met the carpool to drive to Salt Lake to work. (I also had a blue motorcycle when I was a teenager in Boise.) One winter day in the snow, I about dumped the motorcycle on a slick spot and decided that it was time to sell the motorcycle before I died on it.

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

In February 1985, Teri and I decided it was time we moved to Salt Lake. Teri and I both loved Provo, but since my work was in Salt Lake, it made sense to reduce commuting time. Also, working in the same city as we lived would make it easier to start a business of our own. Our goal was to start a part-time business that we hoped would grow into something we could do full-time.

We looked at many existing homes in the \$60,000 price range, then looked at a model home built by Holmes and Perry Builders. Although it was a \$75,000 home, the down payment and the monthly payments were less than those for \$60,000 existing homes because of the special financing the builder offered. We signed the papers on March 2, 1985, and watched the house go up. We moved out of our apartment in Provo on May 31 and into our new home on June 1.

I spent some time at the house while it was under construction to install a security system and was there during the final building inspection. The building inspector told me it was a well-built house, and that he was having trouble finding anything to be critical of. The only problem we had was that they failed to connect the house to the sewer line. A day after we moved in, the wastewater backed up into the unfinished basement. For some reason, the plumber did not show up on the day he was scheduled to connect the sewer line from the house to the city line. The next day, the backhoe showed up and filled in the hole, assuming that the lines had been connected.

There was also a dispute between our neighbors and the builder over the property lines. That was settled by legally changing the property lines. We deeded a small portion to the neighbors, and they deeded a small portion to us.

A challenge about moving into a new home was the landscaping. We found someone in the ward who installed sprinkler systems for a living, and he designed our system, purchased the parts for us wholesale, showed me how to install it, and even wired the valves for us. A similar system installed would have cost \$2,000. Before we could use a trencher to dig

the trenches for the sprinkler system, we had to get a rototiller to loosen the cement-like clay ground. Even then, I had to stop the rototiller frequently and loosen the ground with a digging bar. We gathered up and hauled away 12,000 pounds of rocks, then brought in 4 truckloads of topsoil. We brought in 14 cubic yards of playground sand for the sandbox. We also spent part of the summer building a cedar fence on our northern property line with our neighbors, the Hancocks.

We designed the landscaping ourselves to make it both visibly pleasant and productive. We planned a large vegetable garden and areas for strawberries and raspberries, and planted cherry, apricot, peach, apple, and almond trees. We poured a large patio in the back.

In 1988, we decided it was time to finish the basement. We planned it ourselves and did virtually all the work ourselves. Dad and Rick helped me do the electrical and plumbing work.

In the spring of 1994, we built a \$1,200 playground climbing structure in the backyard for the kids.

In 2003, we remodeled our bathroom to create a large walk-in shower and separate toilet room. We gutted the room, moved plumbing, and finished it off with green ceramic tile and cherrywood cabinets.

In the spring of 2005, we put money down on a building lot and planned to build a house. We met with a builder and designed a custom house and had an architect draw up the plans. During the process, the cost of building materials soared, interest rates went up, and adjustments to the plan kept driving up the price to \$400,000, at which time cooler heads prevailed and we decided that was too much money to tie up in a house. So, we abandoned the idea and decided to stay in our house and remodel it to meet our needs.

In July 2006, we embarked on a six-month “adventure” to remodel nearly every room in our house and add 800 square feet. It created a nice great room adjacent to the dining room and a new kitchen, a new master bedroom, new den, a full kitchen downstairs, and a large game room downstairs. The

idea for the kitchen downstairs was so our children could live with us during transitions in their life, like building a house. All four of our children lived with us for a time.

SCOUTS

CUB SCOUTS

I was active in the Cub Scouts and achieved my Wolf, Bear, Lion, and Webelos awards and many gold and silver Arrow Points. After graduating to the Guide Patrol, I went to a day camp at Tracy Wigwam. We went to camp each day for a week and came home each night. I had a lot of fun. I achieved the Webelos rank on August 15, 1966.

BOY SCOUTS IN SALT LAKE CITY

I entered the Boy Scouts in July of 1967 and was a member of Granger Troop 797 in the Great Salt Lake Council. Our scoutmaster was Wallace Wilford Wilding. I think Wally worked for Winder Dairy. Bob Calvin was an assistant scoutmaster and later became the scoutmaster. One of my friends in the troop and at school was Norman Nelson. His father, Wayne Nelson, was the previous scoutmaster before Wally. (He would have been a scoutmaster for my brother Jeff.) Norman went to Valley Junior High. Another friend was Rusty Chapman. Some of the girls in our ward were Debbie Grimm, Janice Thompson, Robin Wilding, Melinda Lott, and Mariana Fox.

TOP 50 TROOPS

Our scout troop was very active. We used the whole downstairs at the church, which had several large rooms. We had a special welcome ceremony whenever a new scout entered the troop. Our leaders emphasized earning merit badges and awards. And everyone enjoyed it. At scout camp, it was

considered average in our troop to earn four merit badges. Many from our troop would get five or six.

We had a stake court of honor every month. Randy Prince's father oversaw the stake court of honor. Each troop earned points for awards, merit badges, attendance at the court of honor, and the number in complete uniform. Each month, the troop with the most points could keep a plaque to hang at the top of their troop flag until the next month. There was a lot of structure and competition.

Each year, the Church would recognize the best 50 troops in the Church with a Top 50 Troop award. The award was based on factors such as the number of merit badges and awards earned. Our troop applied and was recognized as the 49th troop in the Church. We received a certificate and award for it.

EAST FORK OF THE BEAR SCOUT CAMP

I went to my first summer camp at East Fork of the Bear in July 1967. My brother Jeff also went on this camp, along with his friends Bill Cunningham, Randy Prince, and Craig Hedin. (Jeff and these three friends all received Eagle Scout awards on the same night.)

East Fork of the Bear had a legend of Hyrum, a contrived tale to scare the younger scouts. After years of retelling and elaborating the legend, the older staff members became quite good storytellers. I remember my brother telling me that the first year he went there, the various troops set up tents across the hillside. But after the campfire that first night when they told the story about Hyrum, once they went back to their campsites, each troop huddled around the scoutmasters' tents.

Hyrum was a legendary man who worked in the mines up in the hills near the camp. And he was not liked by his foreman. One day, they were blasting, but the charge did not go off as planned. So, the foreman sent Hyrum into the mine to find out why the blast did not go off. While Hyrum was down in the mine, the blast went off. And after the dust cleared out, they went into the mine, but they could not find Hyrum. All they

found was a spot of blood on a rock. The legend was that Hyrum was still seen around, but whether he was living, or dead was left up to the imagination of the scouts. The storytellers reported several instances where Hiram had been seen. And Hyrum came back to the area by the scout camp every seven years. And every year the story was told, it happened to be the seventh year.

One of the stories was about two guys driving late at night and they saw a hunched-over man walking along the side of the road. They pull over and asked if he wanted a ride. But he just kept walking as though he did not hear them. They pulled up again and asked him if he wanted a ride, but no reaction. The third time, as they pulled up next to him, he turned around and showed his horribly mutilated face. He grabbed the door handle, and they took off quickly. When they got back home, they saw that the door handle had been ripped off the car.

Another story was about a family who had a cabin near East Fork of the Bear. The mother and her two sons were home alone. When the father came home from work, he could not find his wife or sons anywhere. He went out back to their meat cooler where they hung sides of beef on meat hooks. There he found his family hung on the meat hooks. They told gory, scary stories like that. The best staff member was the one who could come up with the most gruesome stories to scare the young scouts. But we lived through it.

SMITH MOREHOUSE

In October 1967, we had an overnight campout at Smith Morehouse. The scoutmaster sent us out to clean up the picnic areas in the campground and I soon found myself separated from the other scouts. I wandered along a trail, getting more lost as I went. I could not have gone very far, but far enough to get scared. I ran through a small stream and up a hill in hopes of being able to see the campground below me, but I could not see anything for the trees. Although I was scared, I remembered that I could pray for help to find my way back. After praying, and I ran back down and crossed the stream. I went through

some bushes and found myself on a dirt road. I remembered that our scoutmaster had mentioned that the road in the campground was in a circle. I knew I could follow the road in either direction and end up at camp. I had gone just a short way and met my scoutmaster coming from the opposite direction, dragging a small, dead tree behind him. He was whistling, and I remember how happy he seemed. I wondered how he could be so happy when I was so scared being lost. He gave me the tree and told me to take it back to camp. I was relieved to get back and was happy to see everyone. I did not tell anyone that I had been lost.

ORDER OF THE ARROW

In 1968, my troop nominated me for the Order of the Arrow. The "ordeal" was at Camp Bear Lake, June 21-22, where we were initiated into the brotherhood of the Order of the Arrow. We were not supposed to speak a word from the minute the camp started until the end. We each whittled an arrow out of wood and tied it around our neck with a cord. Any time a member of the Order of the Arrow heard us say a word, they would cut a notch on our arrow. And if we got three notches, we were disqualified from the Order of the Arrow. I believe I got one notch.

We performed service all day and they put us through various ordeals to see if we were worthy to be a member of the Order of the Arrow. At night, they marched us up the hill and every 20 feet or so would tell a scout to bed down right there and be back in camp at six o'clock in the morning. We did not have an alarm clock, but we were expected to be there at six o'clock.

After I became a member of the Order of the Arrow, I think I went to about two meetings and then we moved, so that was the extent of my involvement with the Order of the Arrow.

SCOUT AWARDS

I received my Second Class in the May 1967 court of honor, my First Class in the July 1967 court of honor, my Star in

October 1967, and my Life in February 1968. I received my Eagle award on March 29, 1969, after we moved to Boise.

50-MILE HIKE

One of the major things that I remember in the scout troop in Salt Lake was a 50-mile hike July 8–12, 1968, before we moved to Boise. It was a good experience for a 13-year-old boy. I believe we had three leaders—Wally, Bob, and Blaine Grant, who lived right across the street from us in Salt Lake. We averaged about 10 miles a day on that hike. Before the last day of the hike, the scoutmasters figured that we had hiked almost the 50 miles, so they made a last-minute adjustment to the route. They found a path on the map that went over the mountain instead of around it. The plan was to end at Smith Morehouse, a camp where all our parents would meet us about 3:00 p.m. for dinner and a campfire program.

The scoutmasters charted the course and gave the map to Garth Ripley, a counselor in the bishopric. His job was to lead us on the path while the scoutmasters drove ahead to Smith Morehouse to prepare dinner and the program. Apparently, the path on the map had not been used for years, because it completely disappeared after about an hour's hike, and we got completely lost.

We wandered in the hills for hours. For lunch, we had warm bologna and cheese sandwiches and several of the scouts began to feel sick to their stomachs. Some of the younger scouts got scared and started to cry. Some of us older scouts (those of us who were 13 years old and older) who tried to comfort them were not too much more confident ourselves.

When it became evident that we were lost, we stopped and prayed to ask that we might find our way. We then noticed the beautiful scenic views from the top of the mountains. We could see miles of green hills. We saw what looked to be a farmhouse with a barn with an aluminum roof that reflected the sunlight. We decided to walk toward the farm where we could at least have shelter for the night even if no one was there. If someone

was there, we could get help to get to the camp where we were supposed to be.

Using our scout training, when we found a little trickle of water (just a few inches wide), we knew to follow it down the mountain. It flowed into a small stream, which later turned into a larger stream a few feet wide. It finally became a fast-moving river six feet wide. The river was hard to follow because there was no trail and a lot of trees.

We finally came to a little trail, which turned into a dirt road and finally a highway. We started to hitchhike and one of the first few vehicles that came by was a pickup truck with a man and his son, who happened to be a friend of one of the scouts in our troop. They had a cabin in the area. We hopped in the back of his pickup, and he took us to the ranger station in Kamas. When we finally realized we were getting back to civilization, we were very glad. Since noon that day, we'd eaten the half-spoiled bologna and cheese sandwiches and all we had left was about three oranges and a few suckers. We had rationed the food when we were lost, but now that we had found civilization, we quickly devoured the rest of the food.

It turns out that we had gone at a right angle to where we were supposed to go. The ranger in Kamas drove us in his station wagon over to Smith Morehouse and we got there about 12:30 a.m. to meet very worried parents. We finally got home about 2:00 a.m. It was an experience I'll never forget. Although it was not his fault that we got lost, Brother Ripley (our leader that day) earned the nickname "Wrong-way Ripley."

Shortly after the 50-mile hike, we moved to Boise. I hated to leave my friends—Grant Hedin (who lived across the street from our house), my cousin Paul Seely, David Blackwell, and David Durrant. I hated to leave, because for the first time in my life, I was beginning to form good friendships and they meant a lot to me.

BOY SCOUTS IN BOISE

In July 1968, we moved to Boise, and I joined Troop 119. On August 4–10, I went with the troop to Camp Billy Rice. The scoutmaster was John Neal. He had been a scout leader for many years and had received the Silver Buffalo award. I already had most of my Eagle earned and I received it on March 29, 1969. At that court of honor, Brother John Warnick, a scout executive and member of our ward, presented me the award. I gave my mother an eagle scarf. It was her second; my brother had also given her one. I later earned two palms—just enough to beat my brother Jeff.

SCOUT JAMBOREE 1969

July 13–23, 1969, I went to the National Boy Scout Jamboree at Farragut State Park, Idaho. (See [Jamboree-History-1969-07-16-22](#) and [Jamboree troop photo](#).) Our troop, number 30, held several organizational meetings in the basement of the Presbyterian Church on Tenth and State streets in Boise, beginning February 1 and every two weeks after that. Many other troops went to the Jamboree just to have fun, but our scoutmaster, Wes Sherrill, encouraged us to be a winning troop. We put effort into our campsite, including an impressive gateway entrance. Afterward, our scoutmaster told us that our troop had been rated the number one troop at the Jamboree. If it was true, it was quite an honor.

Friends who also attended the Jamboree included Ernie Webb, Bob Peck, and Scott Smith.

While at the Jamboree, Apollo 11 landed on the moon on July 20. They tried to show a tape replay of it the next day at the Jamboree, but they were not able to get a projector. (Technology was not that advanced back then.)

EXPLORER PRESIDENTS CONGRESS, WASHINGTON, DC

In the summer of 1971, Dad, I, and about 23 other explorers from our stake went to the Explorer Presidents Congress in

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF LARRY RICHMAN

Washington, D.C. It was a meeting of presidents of Explorer posts in the country. We met on the White House lawn with President Richard Nixon, who gave a special address as he stood in our midst. We then had a special tour of one of the wings of the White House. We saw the Lincoln Memorial, the Washington Monument, went through parts of the Smithsonian Institute, and the Capitol Building. We stayed at the Sheraton Park Hotel and there had caucuses and meetings about Exploring.

My cousin Mike Nelson lived in Maryland at the time, and one day he took Dad and me to Arlington Cemetery, where we saw the graves of Robert and John F. Kennedy. We also saw the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and observed the changing of the guard.

I have a picture of the group from our stake taken with Senator Frank Church from Idaho. We flew from Washington, D.C., to Salt Lake City, where we were scheduled to go to the Church Administration Building and meet the President of the Church, Joseph Fielding Smith. However, at the last minute, he was called out of town, so we met with Harold B. Lee, his first counselor. When we walked into his office, he had a newspaper on his desk, and I remember his concern over an airplane crash that had happened that day. He was concerned about the people involved, knowing that they were sons and daughters of God. His concern impressed me.

SALMON RIVER RUN

July 31 to August 5, 1972, while I was the Explorer president, we rafted the middle fork of the Salmon River. Joe and Scott Featherstone were our guides. Their troop had taken many trips down the Salmon River, and they were experienced enough to be our guides. In the 5.5 days, we went over 90 miles. There were 15 boys (including the Featherstones) and one leader, Blaine Huff.

EAGLE SCOUT TRIP

December 28–29, 1972, the Boise North Stake sponsored a

trip to Salt Lake for all the Eagle Scouts. We toured Temple Square and met with the Presiding Bishopric.

EXPLORER DEEP SEA FISHING

July 31 to August 4, 1973, the Explorers made a trip to Westport, Washington, to go deep sea fishing.

SCHOOL

Below is a summary of my education and certifications:

- Bachelor of Arts, Spanish/linguistics, April 1979, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT
- Translation Certificate, April 1979, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT
- Master of Science, Instructional Science, August 1981, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT
- Ph.D. studies, Instructional Science, 1979 to 1981, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT
- Ph.D., Religion, November 1982, Clayton Theological Institute, Clayton, CA
- Certificate for Project Management Proficiency, March 1987, American Management Association, NY
- Certified Project Management Professional® (PMP®) July 2001, Project Management Institute, Newton Square, PA
- Certified Product Manager, Association of International Product Marketing and Management (AIPMM), July 2008
- Certified Product Marketing Manager, Association of International Product Marketing and Management (AIPMM), July 2008

MISS JEANIE'S KITTY COLLEGE KINDERGARTEN

In kindergarten, I attended Miss Jeanie's Kitty College Kindergarten when I was five years old. I learned to speak some French and I was leader of the band in music. On my progress report, she wrote the following comment: "Larry is a precious student. He is full of vitality and does everything well. An ideal student if we could just tape some of that cute chatter." One day, Miss Jeanie actually put a piece of masking tape across my mouth. I also remember the orange juice and graham crackers that are typical of kindergarten and grade school.

BRIGHAM CITY ELEMENTARY, GRADES 1-2

In the first grade (1961-62), I went to Central Grade School in Brigham City for first and second grade. The school was just one block to the east of our house. I only had to pass two houses and cross the street to get to the school. It probably took me five or 10 minutes to walk home because how slowly little boys walk when they are not in a hurry. I remember walking on the top of the little stone retaining wall along Knudsen's property. I also remember one day being assigned by my teacher to teach another student how to skip. (I was apparently quite good at skipping.)

My first-grade teacher was Mrs. Lindstrom. One day at the end of recess, I noticed that someone had left a set of horseshoes out on the playground. They had the name of Mrs. Lewis (a second-grade teacher) on them. My teacher asked me to take them to Mrs. Lewis. When I took them to her, she thanked me and said I was a cute little boy. The next year, I ended up in Mrs. Lewis' class. (Coincidence? I think not.)

In the second grade (1962-63), my teacher was Margaret Lewis. I won first place in a poetry contest sponsored by the Brigham City Civic Improvement Club. I wrote the following poem about Abraham Lincoln:

Abraham Lincoln was a good, good man.
A president great and true.

I'd kind of like to be like him.

I would. How about you?

He went toward to save the flag.

The red and white and blue.

I'd kind of like to be like him.

I would. How about you?

GRANGER ELEMENTARY, GRADES 3–6

I went to Granger Elementary for the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth grades. Mrs. C. Poulson was my third-grade teacher. She was the typical grandmother type. She had potted geraniums on the windowsill. During that year, she read to us most of the book *The Hobbit*. I believe it was in the third grade that the teachers union had a two-day strike. For those two days, we just had to go to class, sign our names on a sheet of paper, then go home. I thought that was great.

In fourth grade (1964–65), Mrs. Wilma M. Cook was my teacher, and she was a strict disciplinarian. I remember I did not like her too well after having Mrs. Polson. She seemed like a mean old lady to me. I believe she was kind of tall.

In the fifth grade (1965–66), my teacher was Mr. Alvin Ferrin. He was really concerned about students and did a lot to help us any way he could with fun learning experiences. This was the second year that I played the drums in the school band.

In the sixth grade (1966–67), my teacher was Mr. Bert W. O'Leary. He was a Latter-day Saint in one of the other wards. We had parades through the classrooms at Halloween so that all the students could see everyone's costumes. I remember, in P.E. (physical education) it seemed we would always play dodgeball. Or we had a game where we had bowling pins at each end of the gym, and we'd run down and try to steal them from the other team.

The gym was also the lunchroom. I was always a very slow eater. No matter when our class went to lunch—whether it was the first lunch time or the last, I would always be one of the last few kids in the lunchroom. After most of kids had left, the

“lunchroom ladies” would have the remaining kids move to two tables at the end so they could clean the other tables and fold them up into the wall. Once most of the kids finished at those two tables, they would ask us to move to the steps in front of the stage. I remember many times finishing my lunch on the steps to the stage. I remember we had to fold our milk cartons flat so they could fit more in the garbage can.

There were tether balls and swing sets behind the school. I did not associate with the other kids very much. I usually played by myself. There was a little dirt path around the playground and I used to walk along it and pretend I was a secret agent. I would imagine that there were secret entrances to an underground headquarters where we kept our secret agent spy equipment.

There were two large fields of grass behind the school. One winter during the sixth grade, the field flooded with water from melted snow. They warned us not to go out there because any kid that played in the water would get in trouble. But a few kids from my class and I waded into the water a little with our boots. In fact, we waded in so far that the water went over our boots and got our pant legs wet. When we came back in, our teacher sent us to the principal’s office. We stood in front of the office counter and told the secretary that our teacher had sent us to see the principal. I remember hoping that the counter would hide our pants. But the principal took us into his office, gave us a lecture, and wrote our names down. He told us that if we ever got into trouble again, and he saw our name on this list, then he would call our parents. I remember how scared I was to have my name on a list, and I wished there was a way to sneak into his office and tear up that list.

In the sixth grade, we had a spring music festival where 13 of us from the sixth-grade class played a few songs on the ukulele. (See Granger Elementary Music Festival 1 and 2.) Our principal taught us to play the ukulele. I was also on the safety patrol. I felt power wearing that white strap over my shoulder with a badge. At lunch time I would patrol the halls to make sure no kids were running. Once, a kid came up to me and said

that two kids were fighting outside. I went out just as they were finishing, and I told them that I had “better not catch them doing that again.” We guarded the crosswalks before and after school. We had long red and white bamboo poles with a flag on the end to hold the kids back until it was safe to cross the street. We called ourselves “traffic cops.” We were also the referees on the playground. Whenever there was an argument about who won a game—especially in foursquare—the traffic cops had the final say.

I had a “girlfriend,” much as I did not want one. Her name was Debra Gwynn. On Valentine’s Day, she sent me a mushy Valentine card. It was the typical grade school “romance.”

I did not like to participate in sports, and I hated P.E. I was always the last to be chosen for baseball teams (even after the girls!), and in the batting lineup I would say that I had already batted and slip to the end of the line.

Once we had a bicycle inspection and I was proud to bring my Varoom bicycle by Mattel. It had a little motor that made the sound of a motorcycle. My uncle Glen was one of the safety inspectors. I must have run over something on the way over, because just as I got there, the tire went flat. But uncle Glen passed me anyway, knowing that I could not ride the bike until I got the tire fixed, so I should be safe. I remember how good it felt to have relatives in places of importance.

VALLEY JUNIOR HIGH, GRADE 7

In the seventh grade (1967–68), I went to Valley Junior High School in Granger, Utah. My home room was with Mr. Arnold.

I was in the concert band, the honor band, and, for a semester, in the orchestra. My band teacher was Mr. Hal Rendlesbach, and my science teacher was Mr. Rindlisbacher. It was unusual to have two similar, but unusual names.

Prior to Mr. Rendlesbach coming to Valley Junior High, there was no enthusiasm for band. When he came there were only a dozen or so old band uniforms in the closet. He energized the program and got 185 students to march in the Christmas

parade. Since there were not enough uniforms, we all just wore coats over our regular clothes. We all had matching stocking caps that served as our uniform. We had so many students, that our practices would take up the whole school field. There were over 250 students in the school's instrumental program.

I took my first year of Spanish from Mrs. Pat Cole. We had a Spanish festival one day at BYU where we put on skits and gave talks in Spanish. We also learned to make piñatas and I made one for our family Christmas party.

In our school district, the curriculum required you to take a P. E. class every year. I knew I was going to hate seventh-grade P. E. We did dumb little exercises and relay races, and I hated every one of them.

EAST JUNIOR HIGH, GRADE 8

When we moved to Boise in 1968, I should have attended Fairmont Junior High, but it was overcrowded, so we were bussed eight miles across town to East Junior High. I took my second year of Spanish from Mr. Loveland, a brother of Ron Loveland in our stake presidency.

My home room teacher was Mr. Allen Dougal (science teacher). Mr. Bill Morse was my history teacher and he had appendicitis during the year and almost died. I was sure glad I did not have to take P. E. In the Boise school system, P. E. was only required in the seventh grade and the sophomore year in high school. Memorable students: Craig Hurst, Mitch Poole, Bruce Dayton, David Smith, Mark Smith. And Mike Read.

FAIRMONT JUNIOR HIGH, GRADE 9, 1969–70

In the ninth grade (1969–70), I attended Fairmont Junior High. I was in the concert band and the marching band. We marched in the Boise Fairyland parade. Our band uniform consisted of yellow pullover sweaters with a falcon emblem on the back, a navy-blue ascot, and white pants with blue stripes from the pockets to the cuffs. Mr. Rollo Bacon was the band instructor.

As part of my ninth-grade speech class, I gave a Toastmaster speech on January 28, 1970. I also entered the Sunrise Optimist Oratorical Contest and, with fellow student Tracy Boldon, won first place on April 14, 1970, with speeches titled “Youth—Full Partners in a Better Tomorrow.” We went on to compete in zone and regional contests on April 16 and 24. (Tracy was a cheerleader, so this was a big deal for me.) I participated in the Boise City Junior High Speech Festival on May 9, 1970. I was also in the Reader’s Digest Speaking Contest and was the narrator in a school play.

In the ninth grade, I developed a friendship with David Beal who was in my ward. By the tenth grade, that friendship had extended to a group of three guys and three girls (David Beal and Claudia Flake, Bob Peck and Cathy Ellsworth, and KaLee Neal and me). We spent a lot of time with each other and participated in school and church activities together. The three couples dated regularly until the guys went on missions. One of the couples later married (David and Claudia), and the rest of us maintained close contact for many years.

It was also my first year of early morning seminary. For the first three years of seminary, I took early morning seminary at the Northview Chapel, 3.5 miles from our home. In the ninth grade, after seminary I would walk a mile to Fairmont Junior High. In the tenth and eleventh grades, I drove 2.5 miles from the Northview seminary to Capital High. Richard Nelson taught us Church history in the ninth grade. In the tenth grade, Farrell Bennett taught us the course on the Book of Mormon. My third-year seminary teacher was Bonnie Read, who taught us the Old Testament.

In my senior year, early morning seminary was held at the new Goddard meetinghouse. Richard Johnson was the teacher of the course on the New Testament. Our seminary class won the stake championship in scripture chase competition and on March 17, 1973, we placed second in district competition with ten stakes participating. Seminary was a testimony-building experience for me. Those four years helped to instill gospel standards in my life. I cultivated many good friendships there

and found it easier to live gospel standards through each day.

I completed the summer driver training course on July 15, 1970.

CAPITAL HIGH SCHOOL

GRADE 10, 1970–71

In the 10th grade, I went to Capital High School in Boise, Idaho.

P. E. was required in the sophomore year in high school. But I found that the Army Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) counted as P. E. credit, so I took it. (Also see the section “11th grade” below.)

I became friends with David Beal and Bob Peck. We began going to the Saturday night youth dances at the Cassia Stake Center. A girl from my ward, KaLee Neal, also went to the dances, and I danced with her whenever I got the courage. David Beal met Claudia Flake in their choir class.

In December 1970, we began Church dance practices taught by Sister Vinette Southwick, and my dance partner was KaLee Neal. David Beal’s mother helped by calling the dancers to remind them of practices, and Claudia Flake enjoyed any chance to talk with her.

On May 6, 1971, we held a surprise birthday party at Flake’s house for David Beal’s 16th birthday.

May 22, 1971 was the Stake Dance Festival at the Boise State College gymnasium. (See Dance Festival program.) I danced Cupid, Hitchin’ A Ride, Raindrops, Square Dance, Hopak, Charleston, Entrance, and the Samba. Sister Beal was not able to attend the festival because of her health, so two days later, we held a special performance at her home in appreciation of her help. (Dance practices were every Saturday from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. from December to May.

On June 12, 1971, the dance team traveled to Nyssa, Oregon, for a Regional Dance Festival, where I danced the same dances

as at the stake festival. Somehow it worked out that I sat next to KaLee Neal on the bus ride back to Boise. I put my arm around her, and she put her head on my shoulder, and we both sat in that rigid position the entire trip from Nyssa to Boise.

From June 22–26, 1971, I went to Salt Lake for June Conference and the All-Church Dance Festival. Bob Peck and David Beal were also there. It was held at the University of Utah stadium and was the last All-Church Dance Festival held. In the following years, dance festivals were held on a regional basis. We danced Cupid, Raindrops, and Hitchin' a Ride.

June 27, 1971 was the June Prom dance at school.

July 10, 1971 was my 16th birthday. My mother threw a surprise party for me and invited David Beal, Bob Peck, Claudia Flake, Wendy Warr, and KaLee Neal. We played pool and listened to records in the basement until about 10:30 p.m. when we went to the Saturday night dance. David and Claudia requested that they play "Bridge Over Troubled Waters," and when the disc jockey announced it was for a guy who just turned 16, Claudia and Wendy let out a big scream. Everyone there knew who was "Sweet 16."

July 23–25, 1971, was a tri-stake youth conference, complete with tubing down the Boise River.

July 31, 1971 was another dance festival, as we put on "Little June Conference" for the stake.

August 19, 1971 was Bob Peck's 16th birthday party at Ann Morrison Park, complete with games of wolf-wolf and truth or dare.

From August 23, 1971, until April 1972, I worked at the M&W Market grocery store at 912 North Ninth Street (on the corner of Fort Street). I made \$1.65 and a half cents an hour. (I was grateful for that half cent, which meant that every two hours of working made me an extra penny!) I bagged groceries and cleaned and stocked the store.

GRADE 11, 1971–72

By the now, the “gang” was well established. This was not a typical high school gang, but that was what we called ourselves. We were a group of friends that did things together and helped each other do what was right. We spent a lot of time with each other and participated in school and church activities together. The gang consisted of three guys and three girls—David Beal and Claudia Flake, Bob Peck and Cathy Ellsworth, and KaLee Neal and me. Jim Flake (with various partners over time) was also a member of the gang. The three couples dated regularly until the guys went on missions. One of the couples later married (David and Claudia), and the rest of us maintained close contact for many years. Sister Norma Chivers, a home economics teacher, was our unofficial “gang advisor.” The gang met in the high school library at noon to study (that is, talk and make noise). The librarians would throw us out regularly, but we would always beg our way back in the next day.

A party typical of the strange things we did as a gang was one on October 7, 1971, at Jim Flake’s house. We met early in the morning to help him deliver newspapers in his car (if you could call it a car) that he called the “Cherry Bomb.” We then had pancakes (if you could call them pancakes) for breakfast.

As a project for one of Jim’s classes in about April 1972, we produced a gang newspaper we called the Good News Gazette. (See Gang newspaper.) Everyone in the gang contributed articles, comics, and artwork for it.

My junior year was my second year in the Army Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC). Both years, I received the Superior Junior Cadet Decoration award from the Department of the Army. The award was given to the outstanding cadet in each year of military training at each school, based on overall academic and ROTC record. I also received the Academic Achievement award from the Reserve Officers Association. It was given to one “cadet in each class of each school earning the highest academic grades in ROTC during the school year.” I could have also earned the Morrison-Knudsen flight scholarship for a private pilot’s license had I decided to remain

in ROTC my senior year. On January 24, 1972, I was promoted to the rank of Master Sergeant. That same day, I was assigned the duties of Operations Sergeant, Guidon Bearer, and First Platoon Sergeant.

In my junior year, I was also on the school newspaper staff. I wrote a few articles, but mostly worked in the photo darkroom typesetting the headlines on a photographic machine.

On January 15, 1972, I went to the regional weekly Saturday night dance. When I got home, I found a note on the refrigerator that said, "Larry, President Featherstone wants you to speak 4 minutes at conference." Claudia found a similar note when she got home that night. The next day, we both spoke in stake conference with 3,000 people and the visiting authority was Elder Sterling W. Sill. Vaughn J. Featherstone was our stake president and was later called to the Presiding Bishopric. His first counselor was J. Richard Clarke, who became our next stake president and was later called to the Presiding Bishopric. Our next stake president was Seth Redford, who was later called as a mission president and then president of the Boise temple. The stake president before Vaughn J. Featherstone was L. Aldin Porter, who was later called as a General Authority.

On January 25, 1972, the Beals moved to Meridian, but David was able to finish school at Capital High. When school finished, KaLee Neal's family moved to Portland, Oregon. I saw her only a few times between then and my mission. After my mission, we saw each other only twice.

I became a member of the National Honor Society on May 9, 1972.

May 27, 1972 was seminary graduation. I received a certificate of achievement as a junior with one more year of seminary ahead of me. I also spoke during the commencement program. The visiting authority was Harold B. Lee, who at the time was the President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and first counselor to President Joseph Fielding Smith. (See Seminary commencement program 27May1972.)

JUNE CONFERENCE: TAN SHIRTS AND GREEN DRESSES

In June 1972, our region formed a youth choir that went to Salt Lake City to sing for June Conference. (See [June conference ticket 23Jun1972.](#)) Brother Sam Thompson, a member of the stake presidency and a relative of mine, was the director, and organized a choir of over 350 youth from the three Boise stakes. We were asked to sing in nearly every session at June conference. The men sung in the priesthood session, the women sung in the women's session, and awe sang as a combined choir in almost all the other sessions.

We began to practice around the end of 1971, and we had performances at the Boise Stake Center (June 10) and Meridian High School (June 16–17) before going to Salt Lake for June Conference. (See Regional choir program [1](#) and [2.](#)) We also sang for stake conference with Sister LaRae Carter conducting. The guys wore white ties and tan shirts with a Boise Regional Youth Choir patch on the pocket. The girls had green dresses.

Just after we arrived in Salt Lake, we went to the main arena of the Salt Palace, where most of the sessions of June Conference were held. We began practicing while a stage crew finished adjusting the lights for one of the plays they were to present. As we were singing, Brother Clair Likes, who was on the General MIA Board, stepped off one of the catwalks high above, crashed through the ceiling, and fell about 20 or 30 feet onto the seats. We were all stunned, not knowing what had happened. His breaking through the ceiling sounded like an explosion. Several men ran to help him. They gave him a blessing, and soon the ambulance arrived. He was in a body cast for quite some time, and later fully recovered, which we believe was from the blessing and the faith and prayers on his behalf. We joined together in a prayer after they took him to the hospital. That experience strengthened us and brought us closer together.

We felt the Spirit with us through all those conference sessions. We did not sing at the final session of conference but had a testimony meeting in the basement of the tabernacle. There were many who wanted to bear their testimony, but not everyone could in the time we had. One girl tried several times

to get to the chairs in the front, but before she could get to the chairs, they would be filled. Finally, she picked up the chair she was sitting in and carried it to the front.

The conference session ended before our testimony meeting did, and several General Authorities walked by our meeting on their way to the tunnel to the Administration Building. President Joseph Fielding Smith came by and started to walk over to us, but then turned around and left. Later we were told that he was so overcome by the Spirit that he did not want to say a word.

I grew from that experience. I thrilled as I sat in the Tabernacle Choir seats so near the General Authorities and listened to their inspired instructions. And I enjoyed associating with so many fine teenagers in such a spiritually rewarding experience.

GRADE 12, 1972–73

My senior year in high school was probably the most academically difficult of all four years of high school, but I took it more seriously and earned a 4.0 grade point average all year. Throughout high school, I had a cumulative grade point average of 3.578 and graduated in the upper 11% of my class (56th of 487 graduating seniors).

I took a class in German. David Beal also talked me into signing up for a cappella choir. I enjoyed singing but had never been in any organized choir. Jerry Vevig was the choir director. He was a bus driver in the summers and was one of the drivers of the Boise Regional Youth Choir at June Conference. In June, David had talked with Mr. Vevig about me joining the a cappella choir. He needed more tenors and agreed that I could sign up for the class, subject to an audition. I signed up for the class, but never had the audition. Sometime during the first few days of class, he came and sat beside me while we were singing. I guess he was satisfied because he did not ask me to leave the class. I learned a lot about music that year and we had many concerts and performances. In November 1972, we had a choral clinic and concert in Nampa. On April 27, 1973, we performed

at Boise Music Week. In May 1973, we went on a tour through Idaho, Oregon, and Washington.

From October 10, 1972, until August 1973, I worked for Dorsey's Dry Cleaners at 4920 Emerald. I earned \$1.60 an hour. I was the delivery boy and drove a van picking up laundry and delivering the clean clothes.

On April 14, 1973, the "gang" (see "Friendships" for a definition of the "gang") participated in a 20-mile walk-a-thon for the March of Dimes.

On June 30, 1973, I participated in another stake dance festival, and on July 4 in a regional dance festival at Bronco Stadium at Boise State College.

BYU

Additional information about my college years can be found in the "Church" chapter (which describes the ward, friends, and activities) and in the "Work" chapter (which describes my part-time work while going to school).

BYU FRESHMAN YEAR, FALL 1973–WINTER 1974

After graduating from Capital High School, I decided to go to Brigham Young University. All my friends were going to BYU, and I figured that BYU was as good as anywhere else. So, the summer after graduating, David Beal and I went with my father and stepmother to Salt Lake for June Conference and one of the days, we went to Provo to find a place to live.

The day I left Boise for BYU, I loaded up our green Ford Galaxy to drive to Provo. We had three cars in the family, so my parents let me take one of them. I had only been to Provo twice before—the day mentioned above when we went to find a place to live and once in the seventh grade when our Spanish class at Valley Junior High in Granger went to BYU for a Spanish festival.

I lived at Deseret Towers, Penrose Hall, room T-505 on the fifth floor. My roommate was David Beal. When I arrived, David had not arrived yet and the room seemed cold and empty.

But that soon changed when David arrived, and we moved in all our things. I really enjoyed living there as a freshman. There were 44 guys on the floor, and there was always something going on. I think the dorms made it easier for me to adjust being away from home than had I lived in an off-campus apartment that first year. I remember having water fights on the floor. The carpet got so wet that we could run down the hall and skid on our heels with water splashing in front of us.

I served a mission in Guatemala and El Salvador from August 1974 to August 1976. See the “Mission” chapter.

BYU SOPHOMORE YEAR, FALL 1976–WINTER 1977

CHURCH

In September 1976, Bob Peck and I moved into a four-man apartment at the University Villa, at 865 North 160 West, Apartment #62. I attended the BYU 2nd Branch, BYU 9th Stake. On September 26, I was called as the branch statistical and historical clerk. Our branch president was President Keele. We meet in a seminary building.

I took 18 credit hours, which was the most they allowed me to take. (A normal class load was 16 credit hours.) In linguistics classes, I studied some Russian, Chinese, Hebrew, and Esperanto.

In January 1977, Bob Peck and I moved from apartment #62 to apartment #3. David Frischknecht also became our roommate. (He had returned from his mission in December.)

On January 9, 1977, I was sustained as the elders quorum president. I asked David Frischknecht to be my second counselor. I felt good about what we accomplished that semester in the quorum. We ran things efficiently and tried to meet personal needs. We held a special meeting on home teaching and genealogy work one Sunday evening in one of the apartments. We announced that it would begin promptly at 6:03 p.m. and would last only twenty minutes. We had prepared well, covered everything we wanted to, got them

excited about the program, and sent them on their way. The closing prayer ended exactly at 6:23 p.m. From the comments I heard afterward, I think it was very effective.

At the end of the school year, it was hard for me to say goodbye to the people in the branch. Friendships mean a lot to me, and I find it very hard when the time comes to say goodbye to friends. There were many wonderful people in the branch that I came to love. Being assistant clerk the first semester and elders quorum president the second semester, I had the chance to get to know many people. As I worked with them individually, I came to see how precious they are as individuals and how important it was to keep the commandments. It hurt to see some not keep the commandments, and I searched for ways to help them. I was beginning to see what life is about. We are all in it together and we need each other's help to make it through. In life, there are temporary relationships and eternal relationships. The gospel is beautiful because it provides for eternal relationships.

LANGUAGE AND INTERCULTURAL RESEARCH CENTER (LIRC)

From September 1976 until April 1977, I worked as a senior research associate for Dr. James Taylor and Alan Meredith at the BYU Language and Intercultural Research Center (later the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies) writing and administering the Foreign Language Achievement/Aptitude Test in Cakchiquel. BYU gave these language tests, which measured a student's mastery of the language and gave up to 16 hours of college credit for their achievement in the language. I also took the Spanish achievement test for 16 credit hours. The grade given for those 16 hours was the grade I got in the Spanish 321 class.

The Cakchiquel test took some time to develop. Since BYU did not teach Cakchiquel, there were no textbooks for the various levels of language classes (101, 102, 201, 211, 301, and 311). Therefore, I had to structure what would be taught in each of those classes in Cakchiquel and then write a test to cover the material. In essence, I had to design six college language classes

and write tests to cover each.

LITERACY PROGRAM

From September 1976 to September 1977, I worked with David Tuttle as a language specialist at the David O. McKay Institute (funded by the Church Educational System) to write a bi-lingual literacy program in Cakchiquel and Spanish. It was based on a model developed by Grant Von Harrison but modified into two segments. The first was to bring a native Cakchiquel speaker to a level of literacy in Cakchiquel. If the speaker could also speak Spanish, he could then continue with the second segment to learn to read in Spanish. This was significant to me. The day before I talked with David Tuttle about this program, I had been preoccupied with what occupation I should choose. After prayer about these questions, I had read some passages from my missionary diary about a discussion that David Frischknecht and I had on July 20, 1976, about setting up a school to be taught in Cakchiquel. Perhaps we could use the literacy program in the beginning phases of the school. I was impressed that the Lord had a lot for me to do.

In March 1977, the literacy program was canceled. I felt bad, since I felt this program could help many people read the Book of Mormon and other materials we planned to translate. I continued with the project on my own since it was close to completion.

CAKCHIQUEL TRANSLATIONS

Julio Salazar was attending BYU and living with the Blair family. During the semester, Julio, David, and I continued our work on several Cakchiquel translations. We met several times with returned missionaries to show slides of Guatemala and discuss ways to help the people. We met at Daniel Noorlander's house and Bob Blair's house. The Noorlanders were agricultural missionaries in Patzicía shortly before I arrived there as a missionary. The Indians called Brother Noorlander "Bartolando." The Noorlanders have been back to help in Guatemala many times.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF LARRY RICHMAN

On October 22, 1976, David Frischknecht wrote me a letter from the mission field and said "Congratulations! I hope you've heard by now that they want you to help on the Book of Mormon." He said the plan was for him and me to go to Guatemala the summer of 1977 to translate the Book of Mormon. I was thrilled. Four days later, I received an official letter of invitation from President O'Donnal. I committed to arrange my personal affairs to be able to do it, and to prepare myself for the task. (See Translation Book Mormon Invitation Letter ODonnal and Book Mormon Translation and Recording Project Approval.)

In March 1977, David and I presented to Eb Davis our plan for the translation project in Guatemala, including the mechanics of how we would do the translation, the schedule, and the budget. Dr. Blair was a great inspiration in planning it.

SCHOOL

My mission changed my interests, and I changed my major from business to Spanish with a minor in linguistics.

In the fall semester of 1976, I took Religion 390R The Lamanite. As part of that class, I wrote "Journal: The Lamanite."

I also worked closely with Dr. Blair that year. I registered for some individualized study under him. We had many long talks about educational and occupational pursuits. We talked about my plans to study Spanish, linguistics, and instructional science and the avenues they would open for me to help others, especially the Indians. He invited me to help on a project in Esperanto that was to begin the next September. (It never did.) The idea was to use Eldon Lytle's model of Junction Grammar and the computer to translate the Book of Mormon into Esperanto. If it could be done, it would be a significant achievement in the field of machine translation and Junction Grammar. As well, many people would read and study the Book of Mormon, being a major product of machine translation.

A typical day: February 3, 1977. I went to the LIRC office at 8:00 a.m. to work on a Spanish composition due the next day. Classes started at 10:00 a.m. By 2:00 p.m., I decided to skip my

THE BLESSED LIFE OF AN ORDINARY MAN

PE class because I still had to do the following: finish the Spanish composition, spend a half hour on elders quorum business, begin a five-hour reading assignment in sociolinguistics due the next day, do my accounting class assignment, and revise with Julio and David eleven typewritten pages of Cakchiquel translations. At 9:30 p.m., David and I went to Julio's house and reviewed the translations until 12:30 a.m. I got up at 5:00 a.m. the next morning to study for an economics test. When I went to school, I had everything done except for the accounting assignment.

SUMMER

In April 1977, I returned to Guatemala with David Frischknecht to translate the Book of Mormon and other Church materials into Cakchiquel. For details about that summer, see the chapter "Translator, Linguist, Cultural Anthropologist."

Before leaving for Guatemala, I spent three days in Boise. Dad gave me a father's blessing for extra help on the translation project. I appreciated the support I got from Mom and Dad.

After returning from Guatemala, about August 8, 1977, I spent a few weeks in Boise before school started. After a few days there, David Frischknecht called and asked if I could go to Provo for a few days to help him and Julio Salazar type some of the translations. I took a Greyhound bus (hopefully my last) to Provo. I worked there 3.5 days (46 hours), then returned to Boise with Frischknecht. He spent two days in Boise. We tried to go waterskiing at Lucky Peak, but because of a drought, the reservoir was too low. We also went to Bob and Jeanie Peck's open house. They were married in the Los Angeles Temple. David Beal and I stood in the line at the open house.

BYU JUNIOR YEAR, FALL 1977–WINTER 1978

Before returning to school for the fall 1977 semester, I bought my first car, a 1974 Mustang II Mach I.

In September 1977, I moved into a \$60-a-month, four-man apartment at 782 North 300 East, nicknamed "Sessions South."

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF LARRY RICHMAN

("Sessions House" was divided into north, middle, and south apartments.) My roommates were David Frischknecht, Greg Martin, and Lynn Webb (a guy we did not know who was already living there).

CHURCH

I was in the BYU 100th Branch, BYU 1st Stake. The bishop was Kenneth E. Dahlberg. From September 18 through the next April, my calling was the young adult representative, as was Nancy Hamilton. Throughout the year, we planned and carried out several major branch activities, including a closing social dinner and dance at the Springville Art Museum. David Frischknecht was interested in her, so I set them up for a date and they ended up getting married. Bob Lonsberry (who was later a radio show host in Salt Lake) was also in the ward.

A typical Sunday consisted of the following: get up, dress, eat, study priesthood lesson (maybe), 8:00–9:00 a.m. priesthood meeting, 9:30–11:00 a.m. Sunday School, 11:15 a.m.–12:15 p.m. branch council meeting, 1:00–2:15 p.m. sacrament meeting, 2:30–4:00 p.m. choir practice, 4:30–5:30 p.m. young adult meetings or home teaching visits (we visited seven people, none of whom live in the same apartment), 8:00–9:15 p.m. fireside (not every Sunday).

I went to the missionary reunion during October 1977 general conference. President Arnold arrived half an hour after the reunion ended. It was good to see Garth Howard and Taz Evans.

In December 1977, our branch president, Kenneth Dahlberg, moved and Alden B. Tueller was called in his place. (See BYU 74th Ward 19xx-b, which was likely sometime between 1979–1981. Also see BYU 74th Ward 19xx-c, which was likely sometime between Jan 1978 to July 1980. See BYU 100th Ward Fall 1977 Winter 1978 directory.)

In January 1978, Bryan Flake (Claudia's brother) moved into Sessions and was my roommate. (See BYU 74th Ward 19xx-a, which was likely sometime between Jan 1978 to July 1980.)

THE BLESSED LIFE OF AN ORDINARY MAN

In March 1978, I gave a 2.5-minute talk in Sunday School on how to measure greatness. It was my first talk in the 100th branch. I said that our goal should be to reach the point where we keep the commandments because it is part of our character—who we are. We have “no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually” (see Mosiah 5:2). I gave two cautions. First, to act for yourself and not be acted upon, meaning that you should run your life and intentionally make decisions, and not let the situation make the decisions for you. Second, do not rely upon past greatness. You should measure the greatness of a person not by what he was going to do, nor by what he has done in the past, but by what he is now. Afterwards, a member of the Sunday School presidency got up to give an extemporaneous talk (the other speaker did not show up) and said, “It’s scary to get up to talk unprepared, knowing that the speaker before you just spoke like Boyd K. Packer.”

In April 1978, I went to the missionary reunion.

WORK

Julio Salazar, David Frischknecht, and I worked in building B-34 on campus. We worked that year to publish the translations we had completed during the summer. We had to type them into the computer, proofread them twice, typeset them, take them to Salt Lake for layout and paste-up, proofread the paste-up, and then have the books printed. We worked under the direction of Stuart Newton, the Aymara translator. During this time, the Language Training Mission (LTM) tried to recruit us to work for them teaching Cakchiquel. President O’Donnal did not want us to work for them, because he wanted to select which missionaries would learn which languages, and then teach them in the field. People from the LTM took us out to lunch and offered us more money than we were making with the Translation Division, but we had already committed all our time to Brother Davis.

In December 1977, I heard that the LTM wanted to write a culture book for Guatemala, including information about the Indians. Since I had just finished a 35-page research paper for

my English class on the cultural differences between the Latins and the Indians, I called the head of research and development for the LTM and offered a copy of my paper. He offered me the job of writing the book. That gave me four part-time jobs: (1) administering the Cakchiquel language test six hours a semester, (2) developing the literacy program 3–4 hours a week, (3) translating for the Church 23 hours a week, and (4) writing the culture book 6 hours a week. At the same time, I was taking 17 credit hours of school. Some weeks, I worked 40 hours. I worked for the LTM from December 1977 to April 1978 writing the book *Culture for Missionaries: Guatemalan Indian* to help missionaries understand the cultures of the native peoples of Guatemala. I tried to include not only general instructions and information concerning missionary work in Guatemala, but also specifics on how to approach the Indian people and how to respect their beliefs and ways of life. Review copies were sent to current and former mission presidents (Willard I. Skousen, Robert B. Arnold, and John O'Donnal). In October 1978, the name of the Language Training Mission (LTM) was changed to Missionary Training Center (MTC). After clearing Church Correlation, the manual was published in 1980 by the MTC.

On April 13, 1978, on my way to Boise, I was involved in my first car accident. Cars in front of me stopped short going down the hill on University Parkway headed toward the entrance to I-15 and I hit the car in front of me. No one was hurt, although my pocketbook suffered a \$1,300 loss. I had no collision insurance, and the insurance company for the lady who caused the accident refused to pay for damages. I had to wait until the next week to get a ride to Boise with Bryan Flake and had to miss David Frischknecht's wedding in Los Angeles.

SUMMER 1978

In the summer of 1978, I went to Guatemala with Drs. Robert Blair and John Robertson of the BYU Linguistics Department and 11 other BYU linguistics students to compile several dictionaries of Mayan languages. During the second half of the summer, I worked for BYU Sound Services to produce audio recordings of several Cakchiquel translations. For more detail

about that summer, see the chapter “Translator, Linguist, Cultural Anthropologist.”

BYU SENIOR YEAR, FALL 1978–WINTER 1979

CHURCH, ROOMMATES, AND SOCIAL LIFE

On September 10, 1978, I was sustained as the ward executive secretary in the BYU 100th Ward to Bishop Alden Tueller. Those first weeks, I spent 5–15 hours a week helping the bishopric staff the ward. In September, there were four nonmembers living in our ward. By December, three of them were baptized—and the other moved away!

I went to the missionary reunion before the October 1978 general conference.

On October 5, 1978, the Sessions House threw a housewarming party and invited the entire ward, plus our friends from outside the ward. The 18 from the house (all three apartments) bought the hamburgers and we assigned out the rest of the food. We had a dance on the back patio and parking lot. Hundreds of people came, and many brought small house plants.

On October 8, 1978, the four roommates had invited dates to our apartment to see my slides from Guatemala. David and Claudia were also coming over. Believe it or not, by 7:00 p.m. all our dates had cancelled. I began to wonder, “was it because they really didn’t want to see my mission slides?”

In January 1979, our ward had a night ski party at Park West. It was my first experience on skis. My roommates all said that skiing was easy, so they took me right up the ski lift. I got off the ski lift and successfully crossed back and forth across the run a few times. But then I got into an uncontrollable streak straight down the mountain. I went almost the full length of the run, gaining speed every second and not knowing how to stop, until I hit a bump and wiped out. After rolling several times, I came to my senses and gathered up my skis and poles, then on

for more punishment. The only way to learn is to take the lift the first time and tackle the run—that is, if you are crazy!

Our bishop was Alden Tueller, and his counselors were Mark Morris and David Frischknecht. My roommates were John Bringhurst, Bryan Flake, and Steve Graves. Greg Martin lived in the Sessions Middle (784 N 300 E).

In April 1979, our ward had a party at Aspen Grove, and Bryan Flake, Greg Martin, and I attended.

From April 25 to May 13, 1979, I went on trip with Greg Martin. Eastern Airlines offered an unlimited mileage trip for the set price of \$372. (See the chapter “Trips and Vacations” for details.)

On July 29, 1979, the 100th Ward was dissolved. Since there was a moratorium on creating new BYU wards, they transferred the 100th Ward name to another stake where it was needed more. Our ward members were assigned to various neighboring wards. The Sessions house was assigned to the BYU 74th Ward, BYU 1st Stake. The bishopric I was serving with as the executive secretary was moved to another stake. Bishop Tueller gave me the option of continuing as his executive secretary in the other stake or attending the 74th Ward with my roommates. It was a tough decision, but I felt it best to attend the 74th Ward with my roommates.

I felt a lot of satisfaction in my calling as executive secretary and enjoyed working with Bishop Tueller. I tried to anticipate topics in the bishopric meetings and be prepared with the information the bishop might need before he asked for it. Several times, something would come up in a meeting and the bishop would give me an assignment. I could pull out what he needed and hand it to him right there, having already prepared it. Bishop Tueller commented that I would have the answer before he even thought of the question. Bishop Tueller’s motto was to forget the past, worry a lot about the future, and live totally in the present.

THE BLESSED LIFE OF AN ORDINARY MAN

On August 14, 1979, I wrote the following letter to Bishop Tueller to thank him for the opportunity to serve as his executive secretary in the BYU 100th Ward.

Bishop Alden Tueller
A-350 ASB
Brigham Young University
Provo, UT 84602

Dear Bishop Tueller:

I would like to thank you for the fine example you have been to me as my bishop. I am also grateful for the opportunity of serving this past year with you, David Frischknecht, and Mark Morris as your executive secretary. Looking back on the year, I can see that I have grown tremendously in this calling. I am grateful for that opportunity, and now look forward to serving in my new ward.

I want you to know that I admire the way the 100th Ward was run. Your concern and love for the ward members was continually evident. I appreciate the way you kept a close watch on every member—meeting them as soon as they moved into the ward, seeing that they soon received a position in the ward organization, then closely watching their progress as the months went by. Being the bishop of a student ward is an unusual challenge, and in my estimation, you have met and exceeded all expectations. I appreciate the working relationship we have enjoyed, and indeed feel it a privilege to have worked with you. Your faith and leadership will long stay in my mind as an example of what I am striving to achieve.

Sincerely,

Larry Richman

I wrote a similar letter to Mark Morris, counselor in the bishopric. On August 25, 1979, I wrote the following letter to David Frischknecht, the other counselor in the bishopric:

Dear Uncle Dave,

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF LARRY RICHMAN

Well, I'm succumbing to the temptation to write you a letter. The fact that we see each other at work every day has nothing to do with it. While you've been gone on vacation and our trip down south, I fell and wrote a letter to the bishop and to Mark Morris thanking them for the chance to work with them in the 100th Ward bishopric. I almost wrote one to you also, but I thought, no, since we are still working together for Mr. Eb. But today I spent reading all the old mission letters I have saved. (I can do that now that I don't have anything to do on Sunday but go to church.) And now, I'm all nostalgic and baggy to the max. So now, I'm going to write you everything I'm thinking, and you had better listen.

First, here comes my two bits to you about working with the bishopric. I really admire you and the bishop and Mark for the efficient way the 100th Ward was run. The 100th holds a lot of memories for me, and they are all good ones. They are memories of a unified, well-directed ward. A lot has happened in these two years—you found and married your wife in this ward, we roomed together, left from here to go to Guate to translate the Book of Mormon. (No, we didn't, but we came here right after that.) I admire your leadership and help through all this. As I now look back on this past year as executive secretary, I can really see how it has helped me to grow and develop new talents. I wish you all the success possible in the new ward.

Secondly, here comes some nostalgia from the mission. I don't know how or why, but somehow during those few weeks we worked together in Patzicía as companions, a relationship developed that was destined to continue a long time. Things built from there. We were together again in Comalapa, then back to Patzicía for some translation work. I went home, and tried to keep up on Indians and Cakchiquel, and tried to be useful, while you continued to add days, then weeks, then months (and almost years!) to your mission. I was jealous to the max at you being in Guate todavía, and you were jealous to the max of me running around trying to get cuello with everyone here in Provo. Anyway, it worked out that you and I got to go back to Guate to translate the

Book of Mormon. Since then, we have both been up to our necks in Indians and Indian languages. I guess it is because we went through so much on our missions, and through so much together: the maps in Patzicía, the pink outhouse at Hortencia's, and the black-walled kitchen, then the humiliating actos en Tecpán with our friend the payaso, then the earthquake, losing Elder Choc, the earthquake camp, your efforts to keep the romance between Argueta and me in line, etc., etc., etc. From the way things look now, we'll both probably be spending the rest of our lives involved in some way with the Indians. I am really excited about it, and feel it is the right thing to do. In your letter of Feb. 2, 1976, you said, "Well, Dance, thanks for the memories." Now I say, "Well, Uncle Dave, thank *you* for all the memories. They're great ones, and a greater part of my life than you may think. I'm sure we'll always be "Eternal Friends."

Elder Uncle Larry "Dance" Richman

WORK

From September 1978 to August 1980, I served as the production coordinator for the Church Translation Division at the Provo regional office on the BYU campus. (For more detail, see the chapter "Church Employee.")

During the first two weeks of January 1979, I worked a total of 95 hours for translation services, the MTC, and the Cakchiquel dictionary project. That was in addition to full-time school, my ward calling, and social life. I had every minute scheduled.

From April to December 1979, I worked an average of 35 hours a week. During the summer of 1979, I worked over 60 hours some weeks.

On January 16, 1979, we had a meeting of people who were interested in organizing something to help the people in Guatemala. Attending were Brother and Sister Blair, Mario Salazar, Chris, David and Nancy Frischknecht, and me. A few weeks ago, we had a similar meeting at Brother Blair's house and about 30 people came. We talked about starting a

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF LARRY RICHMAN

newsletter to circulate among interested people to help coordinate ideas and plans. Ideas were shared about way to help raise the standard of living so they could have time for education.

I stayed in Provo through the summer of 1979 to work for the Translation Department coordinating the production of the materials in Indian languages.

SCHOOL

During the fall 1978 semester, John Robertson, David Frischknecht, Julio Salazar, John Bringhurst, Mike Hironymous, Hugh Biesinger, Robert Blair, and I formed a Mayan class (Linguistics 529R). We met in class an hour a week and spent two hours each Wednesday night in the BYU Manuscript Archives at the Harold B. Lee Library examining old manuscripts from the William E. Gates Collection. Mr. Gates believed he was the reincarnation of a Mayan priest, and he spent his life and fortune collecting and translating old Mayan documents. Each of us researched a project and planned to publish a paper from it. (See the chapter "Translator, Linguist, and Cultural Anthropologist.")

As part of my Spanish major, I took a class to prepare me to teach Spanish. We took a field trip to Salt Lake to observe some Spanish teachers in action. We observed Mrs. Cole's ninth grade class at Valley Jr. High in Granger. She was my Spanish teacher at Valley when I was in the seventh grade!

In April 1979, I graduated from BYU with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Spanish with a minor in linguistics. At the commencement exercises, I also received a Translation Certificate in Spanish. (See BYU commencement program 20Apr1979.)

BYU GRADUATE SCHOOL, FALL 1979–1981

CHURCH, ROOMMATES, AND SOCIAL LIFE

On November 18, 1979, I was sustained as the Sunday School gospel doctrine teacher.

See BYU Ward Directory 1979, which was sometime around the Fall 1979 semester.

During the winter semester 1980, my roommates were Bryan Flake, Phil Woodland, and Steve Pack. In the summer semester, Ron Teichert became a new roommate. He was in the 100th Ward.

From April 17 to May 8, 1980, Bryan Flake and I took an Eastern Airlines Unlimited Mileage trip. (See the chapter “Trips and Vacations” for details.)

On May 26, 1980, Bryan Flake got engaged to MayLynn Bird. He “bought the farm,” as we in the Sessions House referred to getting engaged. I went to his sealing in the Oakland Temple on July 12 and was his best man in the reception line. (See Flake Bryan MayLynn wedding announcement.) After the reception, the family stayed around to watch Bryan and MayLynn open their wedding gifts, while David Beal, Greg Martin, and I sat in the corner making puns about each gift. (Greg was married on July 5 and he and his wife were at Bryan’s wedding.) I spent a day visiting with the Bird family and the Flake family before returning home. Brother Flake (Claudia and Bryan’s dad) told me several times about how glad he was that I was a good friend of the family and how much he appreciated me. I had not realized how much he and Sister Flake like me. (See the chapter “Church” in the section “Boise, Idaho” for an account of receiving my patriarchal blessing from Brother Flake.)

In August 1980, I was called as a district leader in the ward. The ward was divided up into about eight districts, each with a male and female district leader. We were responsible for home evening meetings and home and visiting teaching. The elders quorum and Relief Society delegate much of their responsibility over these areas to the district leaders.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF LARRY RICHMAN

In mid-October 1980, Randy West was kidnapped. I used to work with Randy at M&W Markets in Boise. I understood that thieves broke into the store and took Randy as a hostage. I walked over to the temple several times during the month to put his name on the temple prayer roll.

During the Winter 1981 semester, my roommates were Jason Drue Nielsen, Phillip Hatch Woodland, and Kim Perry Een. In May 1981, John Worsley from Boise moved in with Phil, Jason, and me.

On May 10, 1981, I was sustained as the elders quorum instructor in the 11th Ward. That calling continued until July 1983.

On June 24, 1981, was Grandpa Francis Leland Seely's funeral. He passed away on Sunday, June 21. He was rejoined with his wife and my mother. During the previous nine or so years in the nursing home, he had been only more or less in touch with reality. Death was a rebirth. The funeral was not too sad. Grandpa would not have wanted it too serious. Everyone felt good, because they knew he had lived a rich and full life—one of complete honesty, trust, concern, and devotion. Those who spoke reviewed the characteristics that made Grandpa so well liked. D. D. Billings related his business relationship with Grandpa and told of the complete trust Grandpa had in him. He told of how Grandpa would deliver heating oil to people in town at any time, day, or night, without worrying about how or if he would be repaid. He knew the people needed it, so he gave it to them. His business dealings were always completely honest. Glen Seely talked about family life with Grandpa and reminded us of Grandpa's sense of humor.

All of Grandpa's children were there, except my mother who preceded him in death. The Seely siblings considered Dad as part of the family as though he were their sibling.

SCHOOL

On May 24, 1979, I was accepted into graduate school at BYU in the doctorate program in Instructional Science (today commonly called Instructional Psychology or Instructional

Technology). (See BYU graduate school acceptance letter.) My plan was to go into business creating language learning systems. Of 28 applicants, I was selected as one of four finalists for a full-ride scholarship. I did not receive the scholarship but did receive a full-tuition award for the fall 1979 semester.

When school began in September 1979, I really enjoyed the field of instructional science. I read all I could and found myself wishing the three-hour classes would not end. Since the field was so young, I felt I could make some important contributions to it. I also admired the faculty, many of whom were renowned in their fields.

A fellow student and I worked on an internship for Allen Ostergar at the MTC to look at the problems older missionaries have in learning a second language. From that, we developed a theory of the psychology of language learning in older people, we wrote instructional materials, and made recommendations to the MTC—none of which were used. They did let us teach a few older missionary couples during that time, and we also tried to give the teachers some insights and help them share their own insights with each other. In March 1980, I presented a paper, “Learning a Second Language: A Challenge Older People Can Handle” at the Deseret Language and Linguistic Society Symposium.

In summer term in 1980, our Instructional Science 580 class worked on developing computer programs for programmed instruction on Apple minicomputers.

As I was just finishing my Ph.D.—I had just four classes, three projects, and my dissertation to finish—I was offered a full-time position as a Church employee. I accepted it and began working full-time for the Church on August 18, 1980.

I did not see a reason to continue the degree. I also got disillusioned by the academic environment and did not feel I needed the degree for where I wanted to take my career. I would have needed an Ph.D. to do research, to teach, or to show credibility if I were to develop language learning programs. But by then, my interest was not in any of those things. In fact, I had reached the point that I did not *want* to be known as a Ph.D. I

felt that I had been taken advantage of by professors who wanted free work from students to create products that they could get credit for. Two professors recruited me and other linguistic students to donate our time to go to Guatemala for the summer at no pay to compile learner dictionaries in several Mayan languages. We were told it was for the benefit of future missionaries – so they would have innovative learner dictionaries to use to learn the languages. After we returned, they sold the rights to Garland Publishing, a prestigious publishing firm on Madison Avenue in New York City who printed the books and sold them for \$45 a copy. To my knowledge, no book ever made it to a missionary.

Another bad experience was with my Ph.D. committee. They approved a detailed prospectus for my final project. They were also involved as I proceeded with it and answered questions along the way. At the final review of the completed project, they called into question the basic philosophy as well as my approach to it and required me to rework it. It appeared to me that their actions were deceptive and self-serving.

In the end, I decided that I was no longer interested in academics for its own sake at the university level and that I did not want to be known as a Ph.D. So, I switched into the master's degree track and was able to finish it with a few different classes. I passed my orals on July 16, 1981, and I was awarded a Master of Science Degree with a major in instructional science on August 21, 1981, at the summer commencement. (See commencement program. See BYU transcript.)

Later, I thought that since I had earned a Ph.D., except for one class and two projects, it did not make sense not to get the degree. Although I did not have an immediate need for it, I thought it may come in helpful on my resume someday. So, I researched off-campus universities that did not have residency requirements. I applied to Clayton Theological Institute, and they accepted the work I had completed in the BYU Ph.D. program, gave me credit for seminary classes in Boise, for institute of religion classes at BYU, and even some credit for my two-year mission. After completing several of their online

classes and writing a dissertation on “Freedom of Faith and Philosophy,” they awarded me a Doctor of Philosophy in Religion on November 1, 1982. The school later closed, and I have not been able to verify their accreditation at the time I was awarded the Ph.D.

MY PHILOSOPHY ON SCHOOL

“And as all have not faith, seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith.” (See Doctrine and Covenants 88:118–119). Students should seek wisdom beyond what they must learn for a class. If there is a chapter in the book you are not assigned to read, you should read it anyway—not because it might help on a test, but just for the sake of learning and gaining knowledge. The reason we should be at school is to learn all we can—not just the details that will be on a test. Our goal should not be just to get a piece of paper that says “diploma.” We should seek learning by faith and prayer—not just religious learning but learning in all fields.

In graduate school, I once wrote a letter to one of my instructors to defend my efforts. In part, I said the following: “I wish I did not have to worry so much about grades. Personally, they mean little to me. What I learn in a class is much more important to me than a good grade. But as long as the department places such an emphasis on GPA as a basis for continuing in the program, and for granting tuition awards and internship awards, I must place the same emphasis on achieving nearly perfect grades to keep in the running.”

FINANCING SCHOOL

I received three scholarships: (1) A \$500 scholarship from the Sperry and Hutchinson Company for each of the first four years of college. (2) For the 1978–79 school year, I received the Alvina Soffel Barrett Scholarship from BYU for \$210 for each of two semesters. (3) Of 28 applicants, I was selected as one of four finalists for a full-ride scholarship throughout graduate school.

I did not receive the scholarship but did receive a full-tuition award for the fall 1979 semester.

Other than those scholarships and help from my parents to pay for some of my housing, I put myself through college by working. Even during graduate school, I worked 20–30+ hours a week. When I got married, I had \$30,000 in investments and no debt. (See the chapter “Finances.”)

CHURCH

BRIGHAM CITY, UTAH

I was blessed on September 4, 1955, by my grandfather, Francis Leland Seely at the Brigham 5th Ward building.

Both my parents were born in the Church but were not originally married in the temple. Mom tells of how my older brother Jeff came home from Primary one day when he was still very young. He told her that in Primary they had talked about the temple and that a family had to be sealed in the temple to be able to be together forever. He asked, “Were you and Dad married in the temple?” When Mom confessed that they had not been, big tears came to Jeff’s eyes and he said, “Does that mean we can’t be together forever?” She said that right then and there she determined that they would be married in the temple, which they were on November 20, 1958, in the Logan Temple. Jeff and I were sealed to them at that time.

I was baptized a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints by my father on August 3, 1963, at the Brigham City 5th Ward building. The next day, I was confirmed by my father in the Brigham 9th Ward building, which was our regular meetinghouse. Kenneth Godfrey was the bishop.

Our church in Brigham City was at 230 West 200 South, just a block to the northwest of our house. (See [picture taken in 2013.](#))

Our junior Sunday school room had an organ that the organist had to pump with her feet. One day, I got my hand stuck in the bars on the back of the little wooden chairs. My teacher had to help me get it out. All she had to do was turn my hand vertical and it slipped right out.

In the back of the church, there were large cement window wells for the classrooms in the basement. The window wells had bars that spanned the opening about every three feet. I remember playing and swinging on the bars.

There were also several large trees behind the church which had seed pods that would drop from the trees. They looked like squashed brown bananas. We thought they were boomerangs and would throw them around and have lots of fun.

While we lived in Brigham, my father was the second counselor in the bishopric of the Brigham City 9th Ward with Bishop Claudius B. Olsen and Glen Dixon as the other counselor.

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

When we moved to Granger, we were in the Granger 17th Ward. The bishop was A. Barclay Gardner. Our first counselor was Scott Smith, and our second counselor was Garth Ripley, who because of the 50-mile Scout hike got the nickname "Wrong-way Ripley."

I was ordained a deacon by my father on July 9, 1967, in the Granger 17th Ward. In December, I became the first counselor in the quorum. Ronald Muir and Richard Langford were the quorum advisors. Later, Brother Langford became my deacons quorum advisor. He lived across the street from us in the downstairs apartment of Wright's house.

BOISE, IDAHO

In July 1968, we moved to Boise, Idaho, and were in the Boise 19th Ward, Boise North Stake. We attended church at the Northview meetinghouse, which was 3.5 miles away from our

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF LARRY RICHMAN

home. Later, a meetinghouse was built on Goddard Road, just a mile from our house.

Our bishop was J. Richard Clarke (who was later called to the Presiding Bishopric), with Dale Olpin and Tracy Wright as counselors. Dale Olpin later became our bishop, with Walt Jones and Reed Hanson as counselors, then later, Pete Williams and Robert Packard were his counselors.

On August 3, 1969, I was ordained a teacher by my father. I was president of the teachers quorum, with Bryan Roberts and Mitch Poole as counselors, and Randy Page as secretary. Howard Furner, Mike Haradick, Ralph Goff, Blaine Huff, and Steve Gardner were advisors during those two years.

I was ordained a priest by my father on July 11, 1971. Our first priests quorum advisor was Bob Blaine. At that time, Gary Ames, Dale Morgan, and others in our quorum were about to graduate from high school. Almost every lesson was on missionary work, as Brother Blaine tried to instill in us a desire to go on a mission. Nearly all his lessons were about how we were growing up and the responsibilities that entailed. Bob Bennett (our neighbor) later became our advisor, and I became the secretary.

My home teaching companion from September 1971 until I graduated from high school was Wes Poole. He was a great example to me. Although we usually visited our families toward the end of the month, they were always visited each month.

When my mother died on December 13, 1971, Dad was working with Richard J. Salisbury in the stake YMMIA program. On January 17, 1972, Brother Salisbury sent the following letter to us kids.

Larry, Joy Lynn, and Ricky Richman
5111 Mountain View Drive
Boise, Idaho

Dear Young Richmans,

I just wanted to drop you a note to tell you how much I appreciate your good father. He sets a great example for me,

THE BLESSED LIFE OF AN ORDINARY MAN

gives me 100% of his support and is totally dedicated to his calling. But then I don't need to tell you how great he is, if anyone is aware of his attributes it should be you three fine young people.

I'm really writing to tell you how much I appreciate the support you give to him. He could not give the time and dedication that he does to his calling if it weren't for the efforts that each of you put forth in his behalf. Even though he has to be away many hours, and as a result you are required to accept additional responsibilities, I'm really sure that you will be a happier family because of his service and the support that you give him.

Will you do me one favor? If there is something special you would like your dad to do, if you would like him to participate in a school or church activity in which you're taking part, or whatever the case might be, or any other special event, please let me know, or make sure that he lets me know so that we can arrange to have him with you.

Again, thanks so much for being such wonderful young people. Thank you, Larry, for your conference talk, and your support in the M.I.A. programs. May our Father in Heaven bless each of you in all of your endeavors.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Salisbury, Y. M. M. I. A. Superintendent,
Boise North Stake

On May 20, 1973, the stake presidency sent me the following letter. It is an example of how involved the stake presidency was with the youth of the stake.

Dear Brother Larry,

Word has come to us of your excellent scholastic achievement in attaining straight "As" during the past school term.

Your accomplishment is evidence to us of hard work and of the fact that you have applied the natural talent given you

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by your Father in Heaven. We encourage you to continue in these worthwhile efforts.

We are proud of you and are so pleased to have you represent our Church and this stake at Capital High School. We know you are not only outstanding in your scholastic work, but also in your living patterns.

We assure you of continued blessings, self-satisfaction, and success in your life if you continue to put forth such effort.

May the Lord continue to bless you always.

Sincerely, your brethren,

Boise North Stake Presidency

Seth D. Redford

Ted C. Peck

Ronald L. Loveland

I received my patriarchal blessing from Dennis E. Flake on August 26, 1973. Brother Flake had been called as a patriarch shortly before that. I knew Brother Flake and he knew me because I was a good friend of his daughter Claudia. I had been at his home many times. However, after the blessing, he remarked "I know you much better now."

I was ordained an elder by my father on February 24, 1974. By then, the ward boundaries had changed, and we were in the Boise 20th Ward. I received my endowment in the Logan Temple on August 2, 1974, the day before I left for the Guatemala-El Salvador Mission.

Three of our stake presidents in Boise became General Authorities: L. Aldin Porter (stake president in 1965, General Authority in 1987), Vaughn J. Featherstone (stake president in 1970, Presiding Bishopric in 1972) and J. Richard Clarke (stake president of the new Meridian Idaho Stake in 1972, Presiding Bishopric in 1976, and General Authority in 1985).

GRAPE SODA AND PEANUT BUTTER SANDWICHES

The summer of 1974, before I received my mission call, I

decided that I wanted to read all the standard works from cover to cover. Although I had read most of the scriptures in seminary, I really could not say I had read them all from cover to cover. If I was going to preach the gospel, and someone may ask me if I had read and believed every word, I had to be able to say that I, indeed, had read every word. I had recently read the entire Book of Mormon, but I had not read the full Bible or the Doctrine and Covenants. So, my goal was to read the remaining books from cover to cover before my mission.

I worked at the M&W Market at 6423 Ustick Road from April until July 1974. On my lunch hour, I would sit in the green Ford Galaxy 500 in the parking lot and read scriptures while I ate my peanut butter and grape jelly sandwich (same lunch every day). To avoid boredom, I sometimes added variety by switching between drinking Shasta grape soda and orange soda that I would buy from the store for 17 cents. (17 cents was a chunk of change from my hourly salary.) I am not sure how much I was making at that point, but when I started working for M&W Markets, I made one dollar and 65 and a half cents an hour. (I was grateful for that half cent, which meant that every two hours of working made me an extra penny!)

I remember that experience to this day and am grateful for that decision to read all the standard works to know them and be able to testify of them. My testimony did not come in those hours in the Ford Galaxy 500, but it was certainly reaffirmed and solidified then. It continues to grow.

MISSION CALL

I received my mission call June 24, 1974. I was working at the M&W Market on Ustick Road, and mom and dad brought me the envelope with the call the minute it arrived in the mail. We opened the envelope and found that it was to the Guatemala-El Salvador Mission. I did not even know where Guatemala was. I thought it was in South America.

After mom and dad left, I went into the restroom and knelt and thanked the Lord for the call and for the chance to serve Him on a mission.

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During July 1974, the Boise Regional Young Adults were preparing the play Saturday's Warrior. They had their final dress rehearsal for it on Friday, July 26, the last Friday I was home before leaving for the mission home. My girlfriend, KaLee Neal, was there, as was Jeff and Grandma Richman. We all went to see the play. The missionary theme in it really hit home with me, and the excitement and vision of the play helped me get even more excited about my mission. Cathy Ellsworth was in the play, and for some time afterwards, she wrote me letters calling me a Saturday's warrior and relating some of the themes of the play to me and to the other guys in "the gang."

The next day, Jim Seely and Reta, Paul, and Donna Nelson came to Boise for my farewell on Sunday, July 28, 1974, in the Boise 20th Ward. Dale Olpin was the bishop. Mary spoke first, then me, and then Dad.

On Friday, August 2, 1974, Mom, Dad, and I went to the Logan Temple where I received my endowment. Saturday morning, I entered the mission home in Salt Lake City.

PROVO, UTAH

For information about wards I attended and Church callings I held while attending BYU as a student, see the chapter "School."

PROVO 20TH WARD, MARRIED

After marrying Teri on July 9, 1982, we became members of the Provo 20th Ward. I was called to teach the Sunday School gospel doctrine class from about March 1984 to the end of December.

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

36TH WARD, 6TH WARD, ETC.

In 2015, the Hunter 6th Ward had ten former bishops living in the ward: Rick Turner, Randy Sylvester, Larry Richman,

Steve Fullmer, Lynn Despain (YSA), Don Wilkerson, Darrell Curtis, Jay Harding, Craig Miller, and Ron Sanders.

MY TESTIMONY AND PHILOSOPHY ON LIFE

From my youth, I knew that the gospel was true. The gospel teachings made sense to me and have always felt very familiar. And as I read from the scriptures, their beauty and warmth reassured me. And as I prayed to know the truth, each time I got that warm, comforting feeling that the scriptures are true. A testimony is a gift of the spirit. It is a miracle. Often, we think of miracles in terms of something spectacular, something that happens quickly. But miracles can happen slowly. The speed of a miracle does not change its value as a miracle.

If the best we can do is say that we received a testimony at a particular time in our life, then perhaps we need to re-examine our lives and find ways to reaffirm, re-establish, and strengthen our testimonies. Testimonies need to continually grow and expand as our life experiences accumulate and as our knowledge of the gospel and life in general increases. My testimony did not come in one blinding moment. But it came in small moments, one stroke of revelation at a time. I know it more surely than if I had seen an angel. People can explain away an occurrence like a visit from an angel, but they cannot explain away an assurance that has been with them their whole life.

Elder David A. Bednar explained, “For many of us, conversion is an ongoing process and not a onetime event that results from a powerful or dramatic experience.” (“Converted unto the Lord,” general conference, October 2012.) My testimony is an accumulation of gold flecks. The reference is to the story of a prospector during the California gold rush in 1849. Because he was only looking to find a large gold nugget, he missed all the flecks of gold, which in accumulation were of more value than a nugget. (See “Finding Joy through Loving Service,” M. Russell Ballard, general conference, April 2011.)

Answers to prayer usually do not come as a “big” answer. We cannot always expect an answer the minute we say “amen.”

Usually, answers come gradually, with many small answers—line upon line—over time. They usually come as we are working to accomplish the things for which we have prayed. We may first receive a small prompting of assurance to proceed in a particular direction, then a small nudge to adjust our course, and finally a growing confidence and confirmation that the pathway we are pursuing is in accordance with the will of the Lord.

The Lord does not want us to *do* what is right. He wants us to *choose to do* what is right and to *be* what is right. We do not obey the commandments to *earn* something. We obey to *become* something.

When I meet the Savior, I do not think he'll ask to see my resume and a long list of things I have checked off that I have done in life. I think he will mostly ask me how I love Him and how I treated other people and helped them along the way.

REVELATION AND TESTIMONY

In preparing for my mission, I prayed for a confirmation of my testimony. I knew that if I was to be a missionary and testify of the Gospel to others, I had to have a sure witness for myself. I could not just rely on my parents' testimony or that of others. I had to know independently for myself. The answer I received was like Doctrine and Covenants 6:22–23, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, if you desire a further witness, cast your mind upon the night that you cried unto me in your heart, that you might know concerning the truth of these things. Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter? What greater witness can you have than from God?" I knew that I already had a testimony and that I did not need any greater witness because I already knew. I had received my testimony line upon line (see Doctrine and Covenants 98:12.)

I have never had a heavenly manifestation or visitation, and I do not need one. Sometimes people seek for a glorious sign from heaven to prove the things that are true. But spiritual things are proven through the influence of the spirit. Things that you see, hear, or touch can be explained away over time.

As the recollection dims, people can begin to doubt what they actually saw, and they find ways to explain them away. But when the truth of something is confirmed to you by the Spirit, you cannot deny it or explain it away. The Spirit can provide a more sure, continuing witness than you can have by sight, hearing, or touch.

I remember contemplating on the eternities as a Primary child. I distinctly remember one day coming in late to Primary and sitting on the back row of the chapel. Perhaps someone was talking about eternal life—I do not remember anything that was said—but I remember looking at the bricks on the wall of the chapel and thinking about eternity, and how a row of bricks seemingly never ends.

On my mission in Guatemala, key spiritual influencers included Pablo Choc, Daniel Choc, the earthquake, Camp Patzicía, and Cakchiquel translation work.

Temple experiences have added additional layers in the lasagna of my testimony. I love the account of Lorenzo Snow in the Salt Lake Temple and my dad's experience in the Boise temple.

I worked for the Church for 45 years (42 years full-time and 3 years part-time). Over those years, I often worked with General Officers and General Authorities, including members of the Quorum of the Twelve and the First Presidency. I got to see many of the inner workings of Church administration. Every experience I had increased my testimony in their divine callings, in the surety that this is Jesus Christ's church, and in the value of gospel principles

THE RIGHT THING AT THE RIGHT TIME

Through 45 years working for the Church, I have files of good proposals. Sometimes, I could not understand why a given proposal was not approved when we proposed it, but in retrospect, I realize that they were necessary steps to move from one step to another. For some, it was not the right thing to do. For others, it may not have been the right time. And for yet others, it was just a learning experience for the staff who were

involved. None were uninspired, they were necessary steps for us to take to learn what the Lord would have us do.

CALLINGS AND ORDINATIONS

I have enjoyed various Church callings during my life. I have typically excelled at callings such as executive secretary and clerk because I am an effective administrator. But I've always had to consciously emphasize one-on-one personal ministering because I tend to focus too much on being an effective administrator.

Summary of callings: Stake presidency (4 years), bishop (5 years), bishopric first and second counselor (twice, 4 years), high council (3 years), ward clerk (3 years), ward executive secretary (2 years), ward historical clerk (1 year), elders quorum president (twice, 1 year), high priest group leader (2 years), Sunday School president (1 year), Young Men president (3 years), Sunday School teacher (4 years), PEF Church service missionary (1 year), Scout committee chairman (1 year), and full-time missionary (2 years).

Below is a list of callings and ordinations.

- Ordained Deacon, July 9, 1967, by Lynn T. Richman, Granger 17th Ward, Bishop A. Barclay Gardner
- Deacons Quorum First Counselor, 1968, Granger 17th Ward, Granger Stake
- Deacons Quorum First Counselor, 1969, Boise 19th Ward, Boise North Stake
- Deacons Quorum President, 1969, Boise 19th Ward, Boise North Stake
- Ordained Teacher, August 3, 1969, by Lynn T. Richman, Boise 19th Ward, Bishop J. Richard Clarke
- Teachers Quorum First Counselor, 1970, Boise 19th Ward, Boise North Stake
- Ordained Priest, July 11, 1971, by Lynn T. Richman, Boise 19th Ward, Bishop R. Dale Olpin
- Genealogy Research Specialist, November 11, 1972

THE BLESSED LIFE OF AN ORDINARY MAN

- Ordained Elder, February 24, 1974, by Lynn T. Richman, Boise 20th Ward, Stake President Ted C. Peck
- Full-time Missionary, Guatemala-El Salvador Mission, 1974–1976
- Branch President, Comalapa, Guatemala, 1976
- Elders Quorum President, BYU 2nd Branch, 1977
- Ward Executive Secretary, BYU 100th Ward, 1978–1979
- Ward Historical Clerk, Hunter 36th Ward, December 17, 1989–November 1991
- Ward Choir Director, September 23, 1990–
- Ordained High Priest, November 10, 1991, by Lynn T. Richman
- Bishopric second counselor, Hunter 36th Ward, November 1991–January 1992
- Bishopric first counselor, Hunter 36th Ward, January 1992–December 1993
- Stake High Council, Salt Lake Hunter Central Stake, January 1994 – about January 1997. On June 12, 1994, I spoke as a high councilor in two wards. Richard Summers was my companion again. We had spoken in six wards together. Richard was always very complimentary of my talks. The previous Sunday when I sat down after giving my “Understanding Adversity” talk, he did not say anything for about 30 seconds. Then he turned to me and said, “Have you ever done better than that?” Then he said, “That’s as fine a talk as any general conference talk I have heard.”
- Bishopric first counselor, Hunter 36th Ward, about January 1997–January 1999
- Sunday School Teacher for the 16- and 17-year-old class, September 12, 1999–
- Sunday School teacher, courses 16 and 17, June 2000–January 2003. During these two and a half years, I had the chance to teach Lanae, Jamie, and Jason.
- Family Relations Class teach, February 2005
- Combating Pornography Committee, February 18, 2005–2008. This was a general Church committee to consider measures to combat the challenge of

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF LARRY RICHMAN

pornography. I helped develop publications, training materials, and websites. See more detail in the section “Major Projects” in the chapter “Church Employee.”

- Ward Young Men President, January 2003–July 31, 2005
- Marriage and Family Relations course teacher with Teri, January 2005–December 2006
- Scout Committee Chairman, September 4, 2005–December 2006
- Ward Young Single Adult Representative, December 2006–2008
- Part-time Church Service Missionary, Perpetual Education Fund, Spanish-speaking, September 27, 2005–May 2006
- Served three times as Pa and Ma of stake and ward pioneer treks
- Tribal leader at stake youth conference, June 2006
- Bishop, Hunter 36th Ward, March 30, 2008–August 5, 2012. In March 2008, I was on a business trip to Miami, Florida, and was in the car when I got a telephone call from Teri saying that the stake president, Cornell B. Porter, had called and wanted to see me. My immediate thought was that I was going to be called as a bishop.

Several Sundays prior to that, President Porter visited our ward, thinking about who the next bishop of the ward should be. I had come into that meeting by myself and sat in the center section toward the back of the chapel. I remember President Porter looking at me, and I knew that he was thinking about me, because he looked at me several times. He later recounted that when he saw me come in and sit down, he knew very clearly that I was the one the Lord wanted as the next bishop. He said that his feeling was clearer and more direct than any other calling he had extended.

I was set apart as a bishop on March 30, 2008. I loved caring about the members of the ward. Sitting on the stand, I watched people come in and I thought about their lives and needs. Sometimes the Spirit would tell me something that I needed to do for them. It would tell

me when it was time to follow up with them on a given issue. I could sense when they were happy or sad or tell if they had a concern that I needed to address with them.

Serving as bishop were days never to be forgotten. I met with members in jail and cried with them and gave them blessings. During my tenure as bishop, I helped various members through divorces, imprisonments, suicides, an attempted murder, and a murder.

Susan and Josh Powell were members of our ward in December 2009. (See "[Disappearance of Susan Powell](#).") I had met with them as their bishop to help them resolve conflicts they had in their marriage. I knew he was a controlling person, but I had no idea he would be violent toward her. I also wasn't aware of the concerns she expressed to some of her friends that he might hurt her. Although Josh only occasionally attended church, the Sunday after Susan disappeared, he was at church. From my interactions with him, my impression was that the only reason he was there was to keep up appearances. He wasn't worried about her being missing, nor concerned about where she may have gone or what else might have happened to her. His only comments to me were about his need to move forward. He was resigned to the fact that she wasn't coming back.

I learned a lot about the process of revelation. Sometimes it came in small pieces over time. For example, as a bishopric we felt inspired to call Bruce Johansen as the Young Men president. After we called him, we met with him to discuss the needs of the young men and to discuss possible counselors. In the middle of this discussion, it became clear that he wasn't to be the Young Men president, but the scoutmaster, because that age was the most critical group, and he was uniquely qualified at that time to reach them. Calling him as the Young Men president was the necessary step that led to yet more inspiration. That taught me that sometimes, things are revealed to us line upon line.

For months, we had planned a ward temple night with a dinner at the temple on July 30, 2009. We got

permission to have the youth come with us, attend the dinner, then do baptisms for the dead. I had worked hard with the youth and adults to get a good attendance. We had 13 youth there and a few dozen adults, including two who hadn't held a temple recommend for 8–10 years. I had talked personally with nearly every endowed member of our ward who did not have a recommend to determine if they could be ready for this temple night, and if not, if they could be ready in time for the dedication of the Oquirrh Mountain Temple in August. Several people renewed their recommends, even though some of them could not attend that night. Elder Ray Bateman (who I worked with many years ago as an assistant executive director in the Curriculum Department) was in the temple presidency and was a speaker at the dinner. He was Diane Lavender's father. After the dinner, I went with the youth to the baptistery, and was able to perform the baptisms for all the youth—about 75 baptisms. The spirit present at baptisms and confirmations in the temple made it a wonderful experience to bond with the youth.

I was released as bishop August 5, 2012. About a month before, President Porter told me that the boundaries of our ward would be realigned. The change would put both me and Bishop Rick Turner in the same ward, and since I had served longer, I would be released, and Bishop Turner would continue. I was grateful for the advanced notice, as it gave me time to wrap up some issues with the members. It also helped me mentally prepare for the release, since it was shorter than the typical five-year term for bishops. (I only served four years and four months.)

- High Priest First Assistant, September 2, 2012
- High Priest Group Leader, Hunter 6th Ward, July 7, 2013–July 5, 2015
- Ward Clerk, Hunter 6th Ward, June 14, 2015, to April 29, 2018. When I arrived at the interview when President Jerry K. Hunt called me, he said, "You always

look the same. You never change. You're like the Dick Clark of the stake."

- Elders quorum president, Hunter 6th Ward, April 15, 2018–September 30, 2018. I was called to be the elders quorum president just after the April 2018 general conference where elders and high priests quorums were combined into a single quorum and where home and visiting teaching were changed to ministering.) I had been heavily involved as a Church employee in preparing for the combination of elders quorums and high priests groups and in the transition from home teaching to ministering. I felt honored to be called as the elders quorum president to implement this in my ward.

The following is an entry from my journal on August 19, 2018: "Maybe our ward's elders quorum is getting somewhere after all. Instead of the planned lesson about how to figure out what people need, we spent the whole time talking about real needs of each other. It was quite an open discussion. I think we broke down some walls and several people opened up about their real needs, without worrying about what other people might think of them. It was different than the typical feeling that we must present a perfect façade for others to see. We had a visitor who began by saying that he and his wife (who is pregnant with twins) are living under a bush behind Walmart. So, we talked openly about what he needed. An inactive member of our ward committed suicide last week, so we talked about suicide. Several men in the quorum have cancer and they readily talked about their needs. One man talked about his Parkinson's and that it was the reason that they were moving. He admitted that he had fallen several times, so they need to move to a single-story house. Another talked about his upcoming surgery for prostate cancer and his feelings about the fire chief who died recently fighting a forest fire. One man talked about his injuries from falling off a roof and how he is dealing with it. Another man talked openly about his daughter who is a drug addict and had thoughts of

suicide. It was quite a good discussion about ministering to needs.”

- Stake Presidency, second counselor, September 30, 2018–2022. In the stake priesthood meeting on September 30, 2018, I was sustained as the second counselor in the stake presidency of the Salt Lake Hunter Central Stake. There were probably a hundred people in the stake who could have done this job. Apparently, the Lord had something in mind that I needed to learn from this calling. And hopefully, there were people I helped in the process. Jerry Hunt was the stake president, Randy Sylvester was the first counselor, Darrell Curtis was the clerk, and Mark Warnick was the executive secretary. Later, Mark moved, and Steve Beck became the executive secretary. In October 2021, Brad Rowe replaced Darrell Curtis as stake clerk.

MISSIONS

The missions I have served are documented at LarryRichman/mission.

- Full-time proselyting missionary in the Guatemala-El Salvador Mission (Spanish and Cakchiquel) from August 1974 to August 1976.
- Perpetual Education Fund Service Missionary from October 24, 2005 to May 2006. I was a part-time, Spanish-speaking Church-service missionary.

TRIPS AND VACATIONS

Nearly every year, our family took a vacation. Not only did this give us a chance to see much of the country, but also to grow together as a family as we experienced new things together.

AFRICA

1983, February 8–March 1. I traveled to Africa on a work trip for the Translation Division. On the way there, I stopped in Rome. I went to Kenya, to meet with translators and missionary couples there about Swahili and Kisii. I then flew to Johannesburg, South Africa, to coordinate Afrikaans translations. I went to Soweto to coordinate Sotho South translators. I then flew to the coastal town of Durban to meet with the Xhosa and Zulu translators. I also took photographs of members to be used in the missionary flipcharts. I then flew to Harare, Zimbabwe (formerly called Rhodesia until 1980 when a black government was elected and the name of the country was changed to Zimbabwe), to meet with Shona translators. On the return trip, I spent two days in London. I then spent a day or two in New York City. (See more details about the trip in the chapter “Church Employee.”)

CANADA

2007, May. I went to Banff, Canada, for the 16th International World Wide Web Conference at the Banff Springs Hotel. I attended the conference with Ron Schwendiman and a few other Church employees.

2007, July 11–25. Our family took a two-week trip to eastern Canada to tour Jason’s mission. We flew to Maine, then drove 2,300 miles up the eastern seaboard, through New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland.

CRUISES

2005, October. Bahamas

2010. Larry, Teri, Don, Merle, Hailee, and her friend Katie Hess.

2012. Caribbean

2019, May. Caribbean

EUROPE

2001, October 27–November 7. At the beginning of a work trip to Europe, Ron Schwendiman and I spent a few days in Bern, Switzerland. Ron's father Gary L. Schwendiman was the president of the Swiss Temple and we stayed at their house in Switzerland behind the temple. I went to a temple session in French, I listened with earphones in Spanish, the men at the veil spoke in German, and I responded in English. How was that for a multilingual session!

We also visited the Nazi concentration camp in Buchenwald, near Weimar, Germany. It was one of the first and the largest of the concentration camps within Germany's 1937 borders. Prisoners came from all over Europe and the Soviet Union—Jews, Poles and other Slavs, the mentally ill and physically disabled, political prisoners, Romani people, gays, Freemasons, prisoners of war, and ordinary criminals. The prisoners worked as forced labor in local armaments factories. The insufficient food and poor conditions, as well as deliberate executions, led to 56,545 deaths at Buchenwald of the 280,000 prisoners who passed through the camp and its 139 subcamps. The camp gained notoriety when it was liberated by the United States Army in April 1945 at the end of World War II. General Dwight Eisenhower, Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces, visited one of its subcamps. He ordered all possible photographs to be taken, and for the German people from surrounding villages to be ushered through the camps and even made to bury the dead. He did this because he said in words to this effect: "Get it all on record now. Get the films. Get the witnesses. Because somewhere down the road of history some bastard will get up and say that this never happened." We see that today, as the president of Iran and others publicly claim that the Holocaust never happened.

Today, the remains of Buchenwald serve as a permanent memorial, exhibition, and museum. I walked through the buildings, stood in the gas chambers, and spent time contemplating in the execution yard. I stood before the wall where 1,100 people were strung up by their necks to thrash

about until they were dead. The youngest person to be killed this way was an eight-year-old boy. I then walked through the crematorium and saw the tables where the teeth were pulled from the dead and the hair cut off to sell before the bodies were cremated. And this was still happening up until ten years before I was born. (See Remembering the Holocaust.)

On the way to Buchenwald, we drove through the Black Forest, and I bought a cuckoo clock. (For more detail on the trip, see the chapter “Church Employee.”)

2006, May 22–26. I attended the 15th International World Wide Web www2006 Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland.

2015. Teri and I took a European tour to Italy, France, and Spain.

2021, October 17–27. Teri and I took Hailee and Chance to Greece. It was a guided tour, with five days with a tour guide to learn about the major historical sites, then four days on our own on two islands to relax and enjoy.

We visited the Acropolis with the Greek temple of the Parthenon, which was dedicated to the goddess Athena, whom the people of Athens consider their patron. The Acropolis also includes the gateway Propylaea, the temple of Athena Nike (built in 420 B.C.), and the temple of Erechtheion (dedicated to both Athena and Poseidon). We had a delightful stay at the Zafolia Hotel.

We took a bus to Delphi, the center of the Ancient World (the navel of the earth), to visit the sanctuary Delphi, which was for many centuries the cultural and religious center. It was the seat of the Pythian Games, the second most important game in Greece after the Olympics. The sanctuary includes the legendary temple of Zeus, the treasury of the Sifnians, the Sphinx of Naxos, and the famous bronze Charioteer.

We drove to Meteora and had a marvelous night view of the sheer rock cliffs that encircled the city. We stayed at the beautiful Grand Meteora Hotel with a balcony view of the cliffs. The next morning, we drove up the mountains to see the monasteries atop the rock formations.

We drove back to Athens for a ferry trip to the island of Mykonos where we spent two days relaxing on the beach near our Hotel Petinos and shopping in the quaint town of Mykonos.

We took a ferry to the island of Santorini and rented a car to explore the island and see the blue-roofed houses and sunsets. We stayed at the beautiful El Greco hotel.

LATIN AMERICA

1978, Summer. I spent the summer in Guatemala with BYU professors and linguists to compile dictionaries of Mayan languages. In June, we went to Tikal, Belize, and Isla Mujeres. I then returned to Guatemala for more translation projects and linguistics studies. See the section "Dictionary Project 1978" for more details.

1981, December 15–23. Jason and I took a trip to Cancun, Mexico. We spent a week basking in 80-degree sunny weather. We got as good a tan as one week would allow. We stayed on Isla Mujeres. It was my fourth time there. (The first was with the dictionary guys in June 1978, the second was with Greg Martin on the Eastern Airlines unlimited mileage trip in April–May 1979, and the third was with Bryan Flake on another Eastern Airlines unlimited mileage trip in April–May 1980.)

We spent all but one day on the island snorkeling, swimming, or laying on the beach. One day was cloudy, so we went over to Cancun to shop. Two days were spent snorkeling at Garrafón. One day, I found a 100-peso bill floating in the water, which almost paid for the face mask I lost earlier that day. I think Jason enjoyed himself. It was the first time he had been to Mexico, and he's a beach lover at heart. We returned on December 23 to several inches of snow in Salt Lake.

In Boise at Christmas, Tonya married Tom Fackrell. The wedding and reception were at the stake center. It was on short notice. Tonya only gave Mom 10 days' notice.

1982, August 30 to September 13. I traveled to Latin America on a Church trip to through all the areas where I supervised translation work, except Peru and the South Pacific. I went to

Paraguay, Bolivia, Ecuador, Panamá, Guatemala, Mexico, and Haiti. (Read more detail about this trip in the “Church Employee” chapter.)

1982, October. Travel to Mexico and Puerto Rico with Teri

1984, May 7–24. I took a three-week work trip through Latin America for International Publications, then part of the Translation Division. I traveled to Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Guatemala to coordinate the printing and distribution of Spanish materials that are translated and prepared in Salt Lake. We were able to identify many ways to increase the quality of work, decrease already reasonable costs, and improve service. We consolidated and shifted the printing of Spanish hardbound books, which saved the Church over \$150,000 a year. While in Guatemala, I was able to attend a district conference in Patzicía and see many people I know and love from the Cakchiquel area. I noted good progress since I was last there four years previously. (Read more detail about this trip in the “Church Employee” chapter.)

1985, December 3–7. I traveled to Bogota, Colombia for Publications Coordination to make final arrangements for the printing of Spanish hardbound books. We found a way to use bulk mailing rates for the Church magazine, saving over \$100,000 a year. (Read more detail about this trip in the “Church Employee” chapter.)

1989. Teri and I took a trip to Cancun and Isla Mujeres.

1990, January 18–February 7. I traveled through Latin America for the Curriculum Department. I traveled with my managing director, Ronald Knighton, to evaluate the use of the curriculum materials and to review procedures relating to translation, production, printing, and distribution of printed and audiovisual materials. We met with the Area Presidencies, DTAs, materials management managers, translation supervisors, and distribution center supervisors. We visited the presses that printed materials and the audiovisual vendors who produced and duplicated videos. We also met with groups of Church leaders and teachers to discuss curriculum materials and receive their suggestions on how to improve them. We also

visited many members in their homes. We visited eight countries in sixteen days. It was a grueling trip, with most days beginning before 7:00 a.m. and lasting until after 10:00 p.m. But it was also very rewarding. We got a lot of good feedback on how to improve the curriculum materials, and we were able to build relationships and find ways to coordinate our work more efficiently with the Church employees.

We traveled to Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia, Ecuador, Chile, Argentina, Paraguay, and Brazil. In Colombia and Paraguay, we set up procedures for printing major Spanish books for all Latin America. Paraguay was then printing almost all the Spanish copies of the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants/Pearl of Great Price, as well as many of the standard hardbound books. Colombia printed the hardbound books the previous year and would be printing the Triple Combination that year. In 1989, we estimated that we had saved the Church over one million dollars by doing this printing in Paraguay.

At the end of the trip, I flew through New York and took a side trip to Washington, D.C. for two days to see Jeff. It was good to spend some time with him and Don. They were just getting settled in their new house in Arlington, Virginia.

1991, August 26–September 2. Teri and I traveled to Guatemala. We stayed with David and Nancy Frischknecht, while they served as president of the Guatemala City North Mission.

1993, March 18–28. I traveled to Guatemala and Colombia for Scriptures and Production Coordination. In Colombia, I attended a four-day training seminar for Materials Management personnel from the South America North area. I also stopped in Guatemala for a day to coordinate the printing of materials and to train employees at the distribution center. See the chapter “Church Employee” for more detail.

1999, July 4–10. I took the family to Cancun and Isla Mujeres, Mexico. We stayed at the Calinda Cancun Beach Hotel. Monday was a day at the beach. Our hotel had a very calm sandy beach with jelly fish that stung both Hailee and Jason and made Jamie

petrified to enter the water. Therefore, the kids spent most of the time in the hotel's two pools. We did not see or hear of jelly fish at any other hotels. We rented a wave runner for an hour, so each person had a chance to drive it. About one in ten women on the beaches in both Cancun and Isla Mujeres were topless, which disgusted Lanae and Jamie and probably intrigued Jason. At noon, I rented a Suburban and we drove down to the Oasis Hotel to spend time in the larger waves.

On Tuesday, we drove to Chichén Itza, about a 2.5-hour drive. The kids enjoyed the ruins. We had dinner that night at the Rainforest Café in Cancun.

On Wednesday, we took the ferry to Isla Mujeres and stayed at the Cabañas María del Mar, a quiet hotel on Coco Beach. We stayed in the tower, but next time would choose the cabañas around the pool.

On Thursday, we rented three motorcycles to explore the island. It was raining that morning, so we tried to be cautious on the motorcycles. As Jason and his rider started out, they ran straight into Teri and her rider. Then Teri started out and ran straight into the curb and fell into a tree. I then began to reconsider the wisdom of putting the family on motorcycles and damp streets. We traded two of the cycles for a golf cart, which proved to be a much safer alternative. Five of us rode on the golf cart and Jason followed on a motorcycle, grinning from ear to ear the whole time. We rode to Playa Lancheros and took pictures with the kids in a pen with a shark. We then went to the turtle farm and then on to Garrafón. The kids enjoyed learning to snorkel and were impressed with the fish.

On Friday, the girls went shopping and Jason and I rented motorcycles and returned to Garrafón. We snorkeled down to the point. It was a long swim with large waves, but we explored all the way to the point, then back to the reef. We then rode the cycles all over the island.

On Saturday morning, Jamie and Hailee had their hair braided on the beach. We then took the ferry back to Cancun, ate at the Hard Rock Café, and then went to the airport to catch

our flight home. The family had a lot of fun and we all had a good time together.

2002, September. Frank Armstrong and I traveled to Latin America to install the Project Information Network (PIN) system that we developed to track the translation, printing, and distribution of Church resources. We traveled to Colombia, Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico. (See the chapter “Church Employee” for more information.)

2005, October. Teri and I went on a cruise to the Bahamas and got caught in Hurricane Wilma. We spent an extra two days at sea waiting for the hurricane to subside and for the power to be restored to the port so we could disembark. We were blessed enough to get on one of just 18 flights (out of a normal 2,800 flights) that left the Miami airport that day.

2006, July 8–15. Teri and I went to Nueva Vallarta with Rick and Wendy. We stayed at a resort, snorkeled, swam with dolphins, and went on a canopy zip line. We even went on a pirate ship dinner cruise with (a look-alike) Elizabeth Taylor.

2021, March 27–April 1. Jason and I went on a father-son scuba trip to Cozumel, Mexico. (When we were in St. George in October 2020 with Jason, Abbie, and their family, Jason invited me to go on this trip.) Jason certified at The Scuba Dive shop in Riverton on December 26, 28, 29, and 30, and I took the course with him as a refresher. Our dive instructor was Ivan Hartle. I had originally certified as a PADI Open Water Diver in April 1987, and my open-water dive was at Lake Mead, April 11–12, 1987.

The trip to Cozumel was amazing. We left Salt Lake on March 27 and returned April 1, 2021. The Scuba Dive shop arranged the trip with about 20 people. We stayed at the all-inclusive resort Wyndham Hotel Cozumel, which only had about 100 people staying there because of the continuing COVID-19 pandemic. The 20 people divided onto two boats, with Eric Larson (dive shop owner) on one boat and Ivan Hartle (our dive instructor) on the other boat. The dive master on our boat was Guillermo. He led each dive and Ivan followed in the rear to make sure everyone was safe.

Cozumel was an amazing place to dive—one of the best in the world. The reefs and animal life were amazing. On our 12 dives, we saw turtles, crabs, huge lobsters, manta rays, stingrays, a green moray eel, puffer fish, squids, octopi, jelly fish, and every other kind of sea life imaginable. The reefs were lively and colorful. On several of the dives, we had reef swim throughs (short caves and archways). It was great to spend that much time with Jason.

MIDDLE EAST

1995, June 2–22. Teri and I took a trip to Rome, Israel, Jordan, and Israel. In November 1994, we began attending classes and studying at home to prepare ourselves to visit the Holy Land. The study experience and trip were sponsored by the Church Educational System (CES) for seminary and institute teachers. Each year, CES extended the invitation to two employees of the Curriculum Department since we helped produce their manuals.

We visited Rome for 2–3 days and then went to Cairo, Egypt. We then climbed Mount Sinai to see the sun rise in the morning. It brought new meaning to the word “wilderness.” We then went to Jordan and saw Petra and many of the ancient Roman ruins. We then went to Tiberias on the Sea of Galilee. This was a beautiful part of Israel. It was easy to see why Jesus loved it so much. We traveled to Jerusalem and were taught much about the places that Jesus went and lived much of his life. It was a life-changing experience.

SOUTH PACIFIC

1984, November 15–20. I traveled to New Zealand, Samoa, Tonga, and Fiji for three weeks for Publications Coordination. I met in New Zealand with the materials management managers from Australia (Ron Innis) and Hawaii (Kris Christensen) to evaluate the Church printing center in Auckland, and establish procedures for coordinating schedules, quantities, printing, and shipping of materials to Samoa, Tonga, and Tahiti. We identified ways to save about \$60,000 a year, maintaining an

acceptable standard of quality. Kris and I then went to Samoa and Tonga to work out details with the distribution centers there. We also evaluated the Church magazine printed there. I then went on to Fiji to meet with Church leaders and identify needs for Fijian and Hindi translations. (See more details in the chapter “Church Employee.”)

2001, November 29–December 16. Michael Berry and I traveled to the South Pacific to install the Project Information Network (PIN) system that we developed to track the translation, printing, and distribution of Church resources. We traveled to Sydney, Australia and to Suva, Fiji. Marty (Stephens?), the materials management manager in Sydney, traveled with us to Fiji. That weekend, we had time to tour Fiji a little, including a scuba diving trip to Beqa Lagoon and jet skis to Beqa Island where we snorkeled. I had a one-day stop in Auckland, New Zealand on the way back. (See the chapter “Church Employee” for more information.)

UNITED STATES TRIPS

ALASKA

2006, June 14–23. Teri traveled to Alaska with her parents.

ARIZONA

2005, April 12–14. I was a keynote speaker at the DCI Conference on “Content Management, Portal, and Collaboration” in Phoenix. I spoke on April 12.

BOSTON

2013, August. Teri and I took a trip to Boston.

2015, June 23. Elder Mervyn B. Arnold, Lee Gibbons, and I spent the day at the Harvard Business School in Boston with Clayton Christensen and his wife to discuss ways to encourage members to share the gospel. (See more detail in the chapter “Church Employee,” section “Priesthood and Family Department.”)

2019, April 15–20. I attended a Content Marketing Conference in Boston.

CALIFORNIA

1968, San Francisco. In 1968, our family vacationed in Portland, Oregon. We also drove to San Francisco and rode the trolley and ate at Fisherman's Wharf. We also drove down Haight and Ashbury Streets. This was during the hippie movement, and we saw many dirty teenagers sitting on the streets doing nothing but begging for food. It was quite a revelation for us children.

1981, December 7–10. I attended the seminar "Basic Project Management (Planning, Scheduling, and Control)," taught by Ira Bitz of the American Management Association in San Francisco.

1984, May 25–June 3, Los Angeles and San Diego. I spent two days in Los Angeles at the end of a work trip before Teri arrived. She stayed in Blackfoot while I was in Latin America, then drove to Los Angeles with her mother, sister, grandmother, niece Krista, and nephew DJ. I drove around L.A. and spent most of the time on the beach. I rented a pair of skates and skated along the beachfront to Santa Monica and back. I enjoyed watching the break dancers and other street performers, and all the other strange people that hang out around muscle beach. MTV was interviewing people on camera, as was CBS Sports.

Teri and her family were to meet me in San Bernardino at 4:00 p.m. Saturday at "the gas station nearest the off-ramp of the most northern exit of town." Our interpretations of that were different enough that it took 1.5 hours to find each other. When we finally did, we drove to San Diego and stayed at Eldon and Lucille Holly's house (Teri's uncle and aunt). We went to Sea World, Disneyland, and the beach. We drove to Anaheim and went to the Movieland Wax Museum and Knott's Berry Farm. We also went to Santa Monica to stay with Helen Berger, the lady Teri lived with on her mission. Teri enjoyed visiting with her and driving through some of her mission areas. We then went to Universal Studios, Hollywood and Vine, and

drove through the temple grounds. We drove through Beverly Hills and Belair to look at the stars' homes. At a stop sign, Fred Astaire pulled up next to us in his Rolls Royce. Sunday, we went to church in Santa Monica and then flew home Sunday night. It was a fun trip. It was Lanae's first time at many things, such as the beach, Disneyland, and Sea World.

1985, November 20–22. I attended the seminar "Managerial and Team Building Skills for Project Managers," by Lynn Kearny and Pat Selsor of the American Management Association in San Francisco.

1986. We took Don, Merle, Lanae, Jamie, and Jason to San Diego and visited Donna and her husband Ken Frandsen. We went to the San Diego Zoo, Knotts Berry Farm, and the beach.

1989, June 26–30. I attended the seminary "Bottom-Line Project Management" by Planning and Control, Inc. in Los Angeles.

1996. We went to Disneyland, Knott's Berry Farm, Universal Studios, Sea World, and the San Diego Zoo. We also stopped in Nevada and rode the world's tallest roller coaster at the State Line.

1998, June 23–26. I attended the seminar "Improving Your Project Management Skills: The Basics for Success," taught by Patricia Selsor of the American Management Association in San Francisco.

1998, October 9–14. October 9–10, I attended a two-day workshop "A Focus on the Project Management Controlling Process" by the Project Management Institute. October 11–14 was the Project Management Institute annual symposium. Over 3,000 project managers attended the symposium in Long Beach.

1999, December 6–10. I attended the ProjectWorld Conference in San Jose.

2003, September 8–11. I attended the Seybold Conference on Enterprise Publishing and Digital Media in San Francisco.

2004, November 8–11. On November 8, I attended the seminary "Business Architecture Bootcamp: Connecting

Strategy with Capability through Process Management.” November 9–11 was the Business Process Management, DCI Conference, in San Francisco.

2005. We went to Disneyland with Teri, Lanae, Jamie, Hailee, Merle, Donna, Krista, Mike, Rachel, and Tatia.

2008, April 22–25. I attended the Web 2.0 Expo in San Francisco.

2011. Teri and I went to San Diego and Disneyland.

2011, November 2–5. I attended BlogWorld in Los Angeles.

2016. Teri and I took Merle to Universal Studios to see the Harry Potter experience.

2019. We went to Disneyland with the Walkers and the Christiansens.

CHURCH HISTORY TOUR, SEPTEMBER 2001

In September 2001, Dad and I visited Church history sites with Brian Judd Tours, including Adam-Ondi-Ahman, Carthage, Far West, Independence, Kaneshville, Kansas City, Liberty Jail, Mississippi River, Mt. Pisgah, Nauvoo, St. Louis, Warsaw, and Winter Quarters. I had amazing experiences as we toured the Nauvoo temple with the temple president Spencer Condie. (Earlier, Elder Condie had been the Executive Director of the Curriculum Department.) I enjoyed learning more about my grandpa Brigham Young as I learned more about him at Kaneshville. I gained a greater appreciation for the life and works of Joseph Smith in Nauvoo and Carthage. During the trip, I read Hoyt Brewster’s book *Behold, I Come Quickly* about the final events in the last days. I read about the final events that will happen at Adam-Ondi-Ahman, and I wondered if I would be worthy to be counted among those who will be invited to that holy place.

COLORADO

1984, February 13–16. I attended the seminar “Senior Project Management,” taught by James R. Cumberpatch of the American Management Association in Denver.

FLORIDA

1994. I attended the Orlando Temple dedication on October 9 with Teri, Lynn, and Mary. I had connections in the Temple Department to get us four tickets to the dedication session in the celestial room. We sat about three rows from the front. While in Orlando, we also went to Disneyworld.

1999, October 1–9. Our family took a vacation to Orlando, Florida. My dad also joined us. We stayed at a 3-bedroom condo and spent three days in Disney parks—one day at MGM Studios and Epcot, a day at Magic Kingdom, and a day at Animal Kingdom. We also spent a day at Busch Gardens in Tampa Bay and a day at Universal Studios Islands of Adventure.

2021, June 8–17. Teri and I flew to Pensacola, Florida, and spent 10 days driving down the gulf coast, exploring towns along the way. We were impressed with Mexico Beach, a tiny town on a beautiful white-sand beach. We thought we might spend a month there during an upcoming winter. (Clearwater was another option.) We drove 1,300 miles from Pensacola all the way to Key West, then drove back to Miami to fly home. We were disappointed with the keys. We found them to be commercialized and expensive—and they do not have great beaches. Since the keys (or *cays*) are formed on the surface of coral reefs, they do not have natural sand beaches. The few beaches in the keys are man-made.

GEORGIA

1993, May 23–30. I attended the FUSE 1993 Educational Conference and International Users Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia. I also gave a presentation titled “A FOCUSed Look at Dates.” I had been frustrated by the lack of documentation

about how to use dates in the FOCUS programming language, so I did some research about how to use the various date formats and gave a presentation on my findings. (See agenda and handouts.)

GLACIER NATIONAL PARK

1960, July–August.

GRAND CANYON

HAWAII

1972, August 17–25. Shortly after Dad married Mary, the family went to Hawaii. It was a great chance to bond as a new family.

1987. Teri and I went to Hawaii.

2004, June 25–July __. We took a two-week trip to Hawaii with the family and Don and Merle Jackman. We spent a week on Kauai, staying at the Pono Kai resort in two nicely furnished condominiums. We attended church at the meetinghouse just across the street. We swam and snorkeled at Lydgate Park Beach and then drove up Waimea Canyon. We also swam at Poipu Beach and at Tunnels Beach on the north shore. We took a catamaran up the beautiful Na Pali Coast (where they filmed the airplane scenes in Jurassic Park). We saw dolphins and sea turtles and were able to snorkel along the way. Besides getting a little motion sick, we all had a great time.

On July 3, we flew from Kauai to Oahu and stayed in two condos at the Royal Kuhio near Waikiki Beach. We attended church at the Manoa Ward at the beautiful Honolulu Tabernacle. We surfed and parasailed at Waikiki. One morning, while Jason and I surfed near the Outrigger Waikiki, Lanae, Jamie, and Hailee walked along the beach. Teri and Merle stayed in a grassy spot at Queen's Surf Beach to relax and read. Don stayed in the condo watching TV. After Teri and Merle were laying on the grass for a while, they suddenly noticed that there were not any other women in the whole area. They

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thought it was rather odd, then realized they were in a gay section—there was not another woman around for 200 feet! But, since they were settled in, they stayed there for the morning, feeling rather safe around gay men. Afterwards, we all had a good laugh about it, except for Don, who did not think it was very funny.

Don really enjoyed going to the memorial at the Punch Bowl crater and reminiscing about World War II. We also toured Pearl Harbor. Three of our children went swimming with the sharks (in a metal cage). We also spent a day at the swap meet and several of the kid bought designer knives.

2016, July. Teri and I went to Hawaii.

IDAHO

1971. Craters of the Moon

Also see “Camping” in the chapter “Family Traditions.”

ILLINOIS

1997, September 22–October 2. I attended the Project Management Institute Symposium in Chicago. September 27–28 was the seminar “Team-based Strategic Management for Competitive Advantage” taught by Dr. David Cleland and John Tuman. The symposium was attended by about 2,000 project managers from the United States and many countries around the world.

LAS VEGAS

1997. A family trip to Las Vegas to enjoy the family stuff—like the roller coasters and the MGM theme park.

2000, June 15–18. Hailee’s and Jamie’s dance troupe went to Las Vegas and St. George to perform. On Thursday, they danced at the MGM Grand Theme Park on an outdoor stage in 114-degree heat. We spent the rest of the day at the theme park. The singer Marc Anthony was at the theme park that day and Jamie got her picture taken with his arm around her. Friday

afternoon, we drove to St. George and met Teri's parents and watched the girls dance at the Tuacahn Amphitheatre and Center for the Arts. We also attended the play "The Music Man." Lanae and Karina decided not to go to Tuacahn, but instead drive around St. George and see if they might be interesting in attending Dixie College. They also wanted to understand why St. George had such an attraction for youth during spring break. We returned to the hotel from Tuacahn at midnight and met Lanae and Karina in the lobby. They talked us in to letting them stay out until 1:30 a.m. When they had not returned to the hotel by 2:30 a.m., I borrowed Jackman's car and went looking for them. By 4:00 a.m., I found our van parked a short distance from the hotel, but no sign of Lanae or Karina. We then called the police to help us search. They began searching St. George and notified the authorities in Mesquite (to the south) and Cedar City (to the north). At 5:00 a.m., Lanae and Karina returned to the hotel. They had met some boys and went to their house to watch videos. They fell asleep and woke up shortly before 5:00 a.m., about the same time Teri, I, and the Jackmans had gathered in the hotel room to pray for their safe return. That was a parents' nightmare!

2004, April. We took a short trip to Las Vegas to ride the roller coasters and just have fun. Lanae did not go with us because she took a trip of her own to San Diego for Spring Break. She had a great time as did the rest of us.

2013, January 6–11. I attended the New Media Expo (January 6–8) and the Consumer Electronics Show (January 8–11).

LAKE POWELL

1990, October 25–28. Teri and I went to Lake Powell with four friends—Reed and Julie Coombs and Jerry and Mary Duke. It was a perfect trip because it was still warm (80-degree weather and 70-degree water) and there was hardly a boat on the lake. We set up tents on a sandy beach near Wahweap, then then explored the Escalante River and hiked up Hole in the Rock. When we returned to our original camp, we discovered

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that some of our belongings that we had left in the tent had been stolen. The police later recovered the stolen suitcases.

2003, June. Lake Powell trip with Don, Merle, David's family, Donna's family, and our family. Don and Merle rented a houseboat, and we rented a ski boat.

2007, August 1–8. Lake Powell, Bullfrog with Don, Merle, Jason, Abbie, Robert, and Jamie.

LOUISIANA 2009

Teri accompanied her parents on a trip to Louisiana to visit her niece, Krista. Her parents bought a new car and wanted to drive across the country to see more of it. "Martha," the navigational device, led them astray a few times.

NEW YORK CITY

1991, February 2–8. I attended the Top Gun School and Workshop and Symposium by Information Builders, Inc. in New York City.

1994, July 28–29. I attended the seminar "Budgeting Techniques for On-time, On-budget Project Performance," taught by Marie Scotto of the American Management Association in New York City.

1996, May 1–3. I attended a project management seminar titled "Managing Project Managers: The People, the Resources, the Politics," taught by Lee Lambert of the American Management Association in New York City.

1997, October 22–26. Teri and I spent five days in New York City.

1998, July 17–22. I attended the class "Teaching Techniques for Accelerated Learning," a professional development training for American Management Association (AMA) instructors. It was taught by Jim Vidakovich and John Carey in New York City.

2005, February 28–March 3. I attended the Search Engine Strategies Conference by JupiterMedia.

THE BLESSED LIFE OF AN ORDINARY MAN

2009, March 23–25. I attended the Publishing Business Conference and Expo in New York City. I learned about current trends and processes in the publishing industry to take advantage of the web, XML, print-on-demand, and other new publishing technologies. Teri met me there at the end of the conference and we toured the city and saw the Broadway play *Wicked*.

2010, March 6–11. I attended the Publishing Business Conference and Expo in New York City.

2011, February 5–11. I attended the Social Media Online Marketing Summit, Publishing Business Conference.

2012, February. I attended the O'Reilly Tools of Change Publishing Business Conference.

2012, June 5–7. I attended BlogWorld at the Jacob Javits Center.

OREGON

1968. Our family vacationed in Portland, Oregon.

2010, July. We had a family reunion on the Oregon Coast. Teri, Jamie, Paityn, and I went from our family. We had a fabulous time with the family and watching 14 little kids playing together. Margie and Jennifer organized it. Jeremy and Elizabeth arranged a deep-sea fishing trip. Nearly everyone got seasick. Jeremy caught crabs and we had a crab feast. We enjoyed early morning trips to the beach to see the tide pools. We went shopping in the coastal shops. Best of all, we survived 38 hours in the car with a two-year-old. Paityn was a very good traveler.

2014, July. A relaxing vacation with Teri at Cannon Beach, Oregon.

SOUTH DAKOTA

1970, August 21–29. We took a trip with Grandma Richman and went to Mount Rushmore, the Black Hills, and saw the Passion Play. I made a detailed log of that trip for Jeff, who was

on his mission in Germany. It was the first vacation that the whole family was not together.

TEXAS

1992, April 26–May 3. I attended the FOCUS Computer Workshops by FUSE, Inc. in Dallas.

1993. We took a road trip to Texas and tried to see as much of the country as possible along the way. We tried to see Zion's National Park, but it was too crowded. We spent a night in Las Vegas, and then went to the Grand Canyon. Then, for a cultural experience, we went to El Paso, Texas. and walked across the border to Juarez, Mexico. It was an eye-opener for the kids, but they really enjoyed shopping in the marketplace. We then went to Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico. We camped in a tent and had spiders in the bathrooms at the campground. We spent five days with Reed and Julie Coombs in Dallas. We also visited our former neighbors, Mike and Deanna Christensen. We also visited Teri's aunt Diane and her cousin Kanae. On the way home, we visited our friends Steve and Karla Stotts in Oklahoma City and saw the Arbuckle Wild Animal Park in Oklahoma. Then we were "off to see the Wizard" at the Land of Oz in Liberal, Kansas. The trip was fifteen days and 4,000 miles.

2008, March 16–20. I attended the training seminar "Building a Next Generation Project Management Office (PMO)," in Houston, Texas.

2008, June. Teri went with her parents to Texas to her mother's family reunion. It was fun for her to meet people she had never met and to see people she had met but did not know very well. She was also able to gather a lot of genealogical information.

UNLIMITED MILEAGE TRIP, SUMMER 1979

1979, April 25 to May 13. I went on trip with Greg Martin. Eastern Airlines offered an unlimited mileage trip for the set price of \$372. You could fly any route they offered for 22 days. We planned the flights so that almost every flight was a meal

flight. We also took some night flights to save the expense of a hotel. I spent \$261.50 for food, lodging, and all expenses besides the plane ticket. (See Eastern Airlines trip 1979.)

First, we flew to Washington, DC to spend two nights with Jeff. Jimmy Seely was in town on vacation and Kent and Mary were living there, so the three of them and Jeff, Greg, and I spent a day and a half seeing the sights. Kent had a friend who worked for a congressman, and he took us on an inside tour of the Senate and House offices in the Capitol Building.

We then flew to Bermuda for a day. We found a nice guesthouse on the beach and went snorkeling. We then flew to Mexico City for 3.5 days. We went to the Ballet Folklórico in the magnificent Palacio de las Bellas Artes. We saw the Plaza de las Tres Culturas and took a bus to the ruins at Teotihuacán. We went to the Basilica de Guadalupe. The new basilica was right next to the hill where Juan Diego reports to have seen the Virgin Mary and where her image was imprinted on his cloak. It was May first, día del trabajador (Labor Day), so we watched the parade through the Zocalo main square.

We then flew to Orlando to spend two days at Disney World and Epcot Center. Disney World had an attraction that told Walt Disney's story. I was impressed with what he accomplished during his life. He did a lot to promote wholesome family entertainment. He had wonderful dreams and vision. I hope he accepts the gospel. What he did and what he stood for was an inspiration.

We then flew to Cancun, Mexico and spent four days on Isla Mujeres, where I went scuba diving the previous summer with the guys from the dictionary project. We slept in hammocks at a little place near the north beach for 30 pesos (US \$1.50) a night. We shared a sand-floor room with three other guys. While Greg and I were walking along Coco Beach (the north beach) one morning, we noticed several bills folded in half lying in the sand. We picked them up to find ten 1,000-peso bills (US \$435). No one was around and we did not know who to return it to. We asked the man at the hotel desk if anyone had reported losing money. Later, the police came after us trying to get the

money “to return it to its rightful owners.” We avoided the police the rest of that trip. On Sunday, we went back to Cancun to attend Church. During the meeting, they asked Greg and me to help bless a baby.

We spent the next three days in Puerto Rico at the Sands Hotel. From there, we flew to Trinidad—the only mistake of the trip. Our hotel was the worst of the trip and we had to pay US \$21 a night for the room! It was hot and humid, and we could hardly sleep. The only place we found with air conditioning was the Holiday Inn, so we sat in their lobby for a while. It was Saturday morning, and everything was closed. It was 10:00 a.m. before we could find a place open to eat. Every few minutes, we were accosted by taxi drivers who wanted to take us somewhere. Everyone spoke English, but with such a heavy accent that we could hardly understand them. We were told there was a lot to do in Trinidad, but no one could tell us exactly what. After a day, we were ready to leave, so we took a taxi to the airport and sat there until a plane left for Puerto Rico. We were scheduled to go on to St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands, but when we heard it was raining there, we decided to skip it and fly home.

UNLIMITED MILEAGE TRIP, SUMMER 1980

1980, April 17 to May 8. I went on a trip with Bryan Flake. Eastern Airlines offered an unlimited mileage trip for the set price of \$383. You could fly any route they offered for 22 days. We spent another \$205 each in other expenses. During those three weeks, we flew a total of 19,000 miles (that is 80% of the number of miles to fly around the world at the equator), drove another 1, 775 miles, and set foot in 15 states and 3 countries. That vacation was a lot of work.

Our first stop was four hours in St. Louis to see the natural bridge arch. We then flew to Omaha to meet Bryan’s brother Lawrence, who was president of the Independence Missouri Mission. He rented a car and drove us to Winter Quarters to see the cemetery where about 600 Saints were buried. We drove to Far West and saw where the temple sight was dedicated, and

the cornerstones laid. We spent some time at Adam-Ondi-Ahman and Liberty Jail.

For lunch, we stopped at McDonald's Tea Room in Galatin, Missouri, which was rated as one of the ten best places to eat by Duncan Hines. In Independence, Lawrence lived in a beautiful mansion, complete with a stainless-steel swimming pool. I enjoyed being with Lawrence and hearing about his challenges and successes in the mission.

We saw the Church's visitor's center in Independence. We also visited the Reorganized LDS Church's Auditorium. In their museum, we saw the Bible that Joseph Smith used in making his inspired translation of the Bible. We visited the temple lot and spoke with one of the apostles of the Church of Christ.

From Independence, we drove back to Omaha, and flew on to New Orleans to spend a day and a half with Bryan's oldest brother, Dennis, who lives in Hattisburg, Mississippi. (That day we covered seven states in twelve hours: Missouri, Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa, Georgia, Louisiana, and Mississippi.) Dennis had been recently called to be a mission president in Australia.

Our next stop was two days in Mexico City. It was to be a one-day stop, but we missed the plane and had to spend a second day. That meant our day and a half with my brother Jeff in Washington, D.C., was reduced to a half day. Jeff took us out to eat, then for a walk around the city. Later, Kent and Jimmy Seely called with some good news and some bad news. The good news was that Joy was engaged to be married. The bad news was that Grandma Seely had passed away. I was sad, but also happy, for Grandma Seely. She was frustrated by not having the health to do the things she wanted to do. She could now join her parents and my mother on the other side of the veil.

The only way for me to go to the funeral would have been for both Bryan and me to fly to Salt Lake and end the trip, since the Unlimited Mileage restrictions would not allow any changes to the itinerary. I did not feel that would be fair to Bryan, and I knew that Grandma Seely would not want me to do that, so I missed the funeral.

Our next stop was Guatemala City. We took a bus to Panajachel and swam in Lake Atitlan. We surprised Doña Mere in Patzún. She said she was thinking about me that very morning as she was washing a pair of pants I had given to her son. She was wondering if I would ever come back to Patzún. We spent Sunday in Patzicía, and I had a good talk with Pablo Choc (then a counselor in the district presidency), Fulgencio Choy (district president), Luis Alonzo (Patzicía branch president), Rigoberto Miza (Comalapa branch president, who was in Patzicía for a meeting), and my good friends Alejandro and Roman Choc. Bryan and I walked up to the cemetery to see Daniel Choc's grave.

Our next stop was Cancun, Mexico. Bryan had never swum in the ocean before and got rather sick drinking the salt water. Bryan got sunburned badly in the two days we were there. While snorkeling at Isla Mujeres, Bryan was so impressed with the fish and the coral reefs that he would come up out of the water and say, "I can't believe it! I've never seen anything more beautiful in my life!"

We met Bryan's brother Joel in Pittsburgh, and he took us through Pennsylvania to Morgantown, West Virginia. Bryan's other brother Layne and his wife Jana had come from Plattsburgh, New York, and another brother Forrest flew in from a business trip for a three-day Flake family rendezvous. Although Bryan was very sore from his sunburn, it did not stop us from playing football most of the day, including on the AstroTurf at the West Virginia University stadium. I am sure that playing football that day more than doubled the total time I had played football in my life.

Bryan and I then flew to Rochester, New York. We drove a rental car to Fayette to see the Peter Whitmer farm, the sight of the organization of the Church 150 years and one month before. The previous month during general conference, President Kimball had dedicated the restored farmhouse, the chapel, and visitor's center. We then drove on to Harmony, where we helped Bryan's brother Layne baptize his son Oliver (named after Oliver Cowdery) in the Susquehanna River. We then

drove to Palmyra to visit the Joseph Smith home, the grove of trees across the street where young Joseph Smith prayed and was visited by God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, the Hill Cumorah where Joseph received the golden plates, the E. B. Grandin print shop where the Book of Mormon was first published, and the Martin Harris farm which was mortgaged to finance the printing of the Book of Mormon.

We then flew to Puerto Rico and stayed at the Sands Hotel (where Greg Martin and I stayed the year before). We then returned to Salt Lake.

It was a great trip. Bryan and I got along great. Our goals were to travel as many miles as possible, visit as many states or countries as possible, spend as little money as possible, and have fun.

UNLIMITED MILEAGE TRIP, SEPTEMBER 25–OCTOBER 16, 1982

1982, September 25–October 16. Teri and I took a three-week Eastern Airlines unlimited mileage trip. This was the first time Teri had been outside the western United States. It was our official honeymoon, since we only had a short honeymoon in July, having planned this trip. We first went to Palmyra, New York, to attend church and visit Church history sites. We then spent a few days in Washington, D.C. with my brother Jeff and sightseeing. Teri's cousin, Bill Sadler, was the director of presidential scheduling, handling everything on President Reagan's calendar. So, we arranged with him an inside tour of the west wing of the White House, including the oval office. (Regrettably, I did not sit in the chair at the president's desk.) We then spent a day in New York City and saw the Broadway play *Evita*. We then went to Mexico City and stayed at a hotel on the Plaza Garibaldi and listened to the mariachis play in the plaza. Teri was pregnant and got sick from the smell of chicken soup from the kitchen in the hotel. (Not everyone can say that their wife was pregnant on their honeymoon!) We also visited the pyramids of Teotihuacan.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF LARRY RICHMAN

We went to Disney World and the Epcot Center in Orlando. The Epcot Center had just opened on October 1, and we were there on October 5th. We then went to St. Croix in the Virgin Islands. We stayed at Cottages by the Sea and spent most of the time on the beach. We then went to Puerto Rico. We toured New Orleans and then spent a week in Cancun and Isla Mujeres, with a side trip to the ruins at Chichén Itza.

All this for the unbelievable airfare of \$549 per ticket! The regular airfare to all these places would have been \$2,949 each.

UTAH

1977, August 8. I returned home from Guatemala for a family vacation. I arrived at the Salt Lake airport and the family was waiting for me, including my new brother David, but not Julie, Jennifer, and Becky who were home with Chicken Pox. We spent a few days around Salt Lake, Lagoon, Provo, and Lava Hot Springs for a day, and then back to Boise.

2009, August. We took a trip to Moab with all our kids and grandkids. We did a lot of hiking and site seeing. The sites around Moab were amazing.

2020, October. We took Jason, Abbie, and their family to St. George for a long weekend. Teri and I had decided that over the next few years, we would take each of our kids on two trips: (1) a close, long-weekend trip with their kids and (2) an international trip with just the parents. This was the first trip of that series.

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

1960. We took a vacation to Yellowstone the year of the big earthquake. During the night, our trailer started rocking. My parents thought that a bear had crawled under our trailer. People from other trailers were outside to see what was happening. Mom stuck her head out and asked them if there was a bear under our trailer. A man said, "No. It's an earthquake. And it's not funny!"

1967, August. This was perhaps my most memorable vacation, mostly because it was filled with a remarkable number of mishaps. The first incident was at a service station when Dad backed the trailer house into a post, bent the Green Stamp sign on the post, and knocked out the back window of the trailer. Since Dad was a Green Stamp salesman, he promised the man a new sign. After looking for some time for a piece of cardboard to cover the missing window, we found some, but we could not find any tape. So, we propped a pillow up to the cardboard to hold it up. The next time we stopped, we found the cardboard had slid down behind the bed, and the pillow had gone out the window. We misplaced the keys to the trailer several times during the trip. We would usually find them locked in the trailer, at the last restaurant we stopped at, or in the trailer door. We started the trip with two spare keys. After we lost the original and one spare, we decided to get a few more copies made. We were later glad we did because we lost several more. The original key was on my mother's key case with her driver's license. Luckily, someone found it, and it was in our mailbox when we returned home.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Teri and I visited Jeff and Don and stayed at their apartment in the city. They had a ferocious cat named Kitty. One day, after Jeff and Don had gone to work, Teri and I tried to get Kitty into the bathroom before we left, but the cat did not want to. We tried for quite a while to get her into the bathroom, but she would run to a corner of the apartment and hiss at us.

1998, July. Mom, Dad, Rick, Wendy, Jennifer, Spencer, Teri, and I went to Washington, D. C. when Jeff and Don celebrated their 25th anniversary.

YOUTH CONFERENCES

VENTURER CAMP, 2003

We went boating. Jason did not attend.

YOUTH TREK, JULY 7–11, 1994

July 7–11, 1994 was the stake youth conference pioneer trek. The experience was based on the program that BYU used to sponsor, which consisted of recreating a pioneer experience of coming to Utah in a handcart company. The total trek was 26 miles. Water and food were rationed, personal belongings were limited to specific items on a list, and participants were grouped into families with people they did not know. Over 300 participated, mostly youth with a few adults.

Teri and I went on this trek as a “ma” and “pa” over a trek family that consisted of 24 “children” and two handcarts. We were trained to be a ma and pa in several meetings and during a weekend trek wherein we went through the full course except for the first six and the last eleven miles. We were able to cover the miles over a weekend because we had only two handcarts rather than 22, because many of the mas and pas had been on trek six years ago when our stake did it last, and because we abbreviated some of the activities that were done during the trek. We were “children” during the training and learned a lot and enjoyed the experience. However, this time as a ma and pa, we learned many new lessons and saw things from a different perspective. In many ways it was harder to be a ma and pa, certainly emotionally, and perhaps even physically, even though we were not supposed to do any of the work ourselves. Our job was to get our trek family to pull and push the handcarts and do the work of pioneers in camp. It was a full-time job to keep track of them and supervise.

Thursday evening, we drove to the beginning point of the trek (18 miles up Daniel’s Canyon above Heber), played pioneer games in the field, ate dinner, and went to bed. Friday morning the families were organized and ate a scant breakfast of cream

of wheat mush and water. We started on the trail at noon and continued until 1:30 a.m. Food and water were rationed. The only thing eaten on the trail was one piece of beef jerky. The first day was the most difficult and was even more difficult the last several hours where the trail became increasingly steep and rocky. When it became dark, everyone was exhausted and hungry. Some had strained their backs, most had blisters, and all had sore muscles. When we stopped to rest, they would either vomit at the side of the road or collapse in the middle of the road motionless. Teri and I talked to each one to be sure they had not passed out. We reassured them and talked to each about their specific pains and concerns. During one rest break, I was afraid that Richard Otteson, who had strained his back earlier, was going to pass out. As he sat in the middle of the trail in the dark, I put my arm around him and talked with him. I think it helped him. They all expressed later that they really appreciated the love and concern they felt from us.

As the evening went on, I really wanted to help pull the handcarts, but knew I could not. They had to do it themselves. I was not allowed to touch the carts. As they inched up the steep mountain side, the carts bounced over rocks, and at times stopped dead still in foot-deep ruts. My heart ached to see them struggle, groan, stumble, cry, tug, strain, and still go on. When I was not walking ahead of the carts to clear the trail of large rocks and to point out ruts to avoid, I circled the cart to reassure them and to listen to their breathing. At times, I pushed on their backs or put my hand on the shoulders of those in the yoke and pulled them along. (Mark Allred later commented that he appreciated me pulling on his shoulder and said that it gave him the courage to continue.) As we stumbled in the dark, I kept praying for God to give them strength. I prayed that the end would be around the next bend in the trail. Although I had only met them earlier that day, I had already started to love them.

For about ten minutes during a steep part, we took the men off the carts and had the women pull by themselves. This was to teach the women that they could not always rely on the men. Many of the pioneer women lost their husbands and had to journey by themselves. It was also difficult for the men to watch

the women pull and not be able to help. Since they were not allowed to touch the carts, they spoke encouraging words, pushed on the women's backs, and some even took bags off the carts and carried them to lighten the load.

I caught a brief glimpse of how God must yearn to help His children as we struggle on earth. He would rather step in the yoke and pull the cart up the hill Himself, but He knows He must let us do it ourselves. He knows and loves us much more than I did those kids, and therefore He must feel our pain much more than I did theirs.

Sunday morning was a scavenger hunt where the participants were blindfolded in a meadow and asked to find five objects and then sit down. After everyone sat down, the mas and pas began singing in hopes that the youth would get up and walk toward the music. One by one they got the message to walk toward the singing as they heard others do it and the chorus grew in number and volume. On training, Teri and I participated in it and learned several lessons. However, it was a more moving experience for me to watch the others blindfolded and struggling to find their five objects and sit down. When we sang, some got up and walked toward the singing. Others did not know what to do, so they sat still. It was heart-wrenching to see them make the decision to get up, then grope about trying to walk toward the singing, and to liken it to us trying to make our way in life. Some stumbled. Others wandered off in the wrong direction. Some got tired of trying and sat back down. Some bumped into another struggler and clasped hands and helped each other toward the singing. After stumbling a bit, and losing some confidence, one teenager dropped to his knees and crawled toward the singing. I learned that we all have to go at our own pace, but still keep moving in the right direction. Several times during this experience, I got so choked up I had to stop singing as tears streamed down my face. (Tears well up in my eyes even as I write this.) I wanted to go to each one of them, lift them up, and lead them to the singing at the top of the hill. But I knew they had to do it on their own. So must our Heavenly Father feel. As they approached the hill, we went out to get them and guide them

in. I felt strong emotions as I put my arm around them and guided them to the top of the hill.

I spoke in priesthood meeting about the lessons I learned during the scavenger hunt. I also related the story of C. Allen Huntington, George W. Grant, and David P. Kimball, three teenagers who went to rescue the Martin Handcart Company and personally carry nearly everyone in the company across an ice-clogged river. After talking about how hard it was for the pioneers, I mentioned that I felt that the youth today have an even bigger challenge because the trials today are not as obvious (see Alma 38:5). Satan's temptations today are very subtle. Some of the things he uses are not even bad, but they turn our focus from things that are more important. I encouraged them to constantly evaluate what they were doing and set priorities to be sure they put their time and efforts in the things that matter most. I also encouraged them to use their solo time that afternoon [four hours alone on the hillside] to get in touch with two things inside them: (1) the Holy Ghost and (2) their eternal spirit deep within them that is ancient and wise and knows them best. I concluded with 2 Nephi 31:20.

In Sunday School, Randy Sylvester mentioned that some may not be looking forward to the solo time and the thought of spending four hours alone with themselves because they may not be comfortable being alone with themselves. The youth seem to draw a lot of self-esteem from their friends. It was affirming to them to see the reaction of others to their jokes. He told them they needed to learn to like themselves and to be comfortable with themselves. I felt that the people you need to like best are the following: yourself first, God second, spouse and family third, friends fourth, and others fifth.

Solo was a good experience for most of the youth, and I looked forward to it. Because of the hectic pace of my life, I did not take enough time to think, evaluate, and make plans.

During solo, two of youth did not follow the rules and wandered so far off they got lost. Corbin Summers came back about six hours late, and Jonathan Donkin was finally found nearly 24 hours later. Many prayers were offered in their behalf,

and I think it helped many people develop more unity and faith. Rick Donkin, Jonathan's father, was on the trek as the communications specialist and he helped coordinate the search. Early in the evening when Jonathan was lost, it was cold, but shortly after midnight a cloud cover moved in and warmed the air. Rick called it nothing short of a miracle. I constantly remind myself that God works miracles in answer to prayers and that those small miracles are as important and as real as the big miracles.

We held a family home evening Sunday night and exchanged gifts for "Christmas in July." Each person had made something for the person whose name he or she had drawn earlier. The gifts were mostly made of wood or flowers and were generally very creative. I received a wooden CTR ring. I made for a girl in our trek family a wall hanging made of wildflowers weaved into the leather band from my hat. The hat band was so she would have something permanent to remember me by after the flowers were gone. The flowers were to remind her of the variety of God's creations. When we look at a meadow, we usually see only one or two kinds of flowers and think that is all there is. But if we look closer, we find hundreds of varieties, shapes, and colors. In about 200 yards in that meadow, I found twenty different kinds of flowers to put in that bouquet. God has created all this, but we usually see only the surface and miss much of the beauty.

On the last morning of trek, we had a brief testimony meeting in our trek family, and we expressed our love for each other. I was very proud of the youth and told them so several times during the trek. Today's youth are very impressive, and their valiant souls can be seen at an early age. Complaints on the trek were few and not very significant. Virtually everyone did their share of the work and then some. There was a good spirit of unity and concern for each other. I saw a better side of today's youth than I had seen before. Back home, at church meetings, and at mutual, I had often seen the superficial side. They clowned around and were sometimes inconsiderate. But when the outside world can be set aside and they are faced with a challenge, their inner character shines through. The influence

of the world often hides that inner strength and pushes it deep within. Clothes, fashion, looks, money, status, and a concern about what others think of them can all work against them and distract them from what they really ought to be doing with their lives.

Teri and I tried to be loving in a gentle, but firm way. Part of the purpose of the trek was to help the youth learn responsibility and do most of the work. I had to keep backing off and remember to delegate.

David and Paula Ellis were the trail bosses. Bill and Cindy Rydalch oversaw the support team (water, food, portable outhouses at the base camp, cooking equipment, medical staff, and emergency communication). It was a lot of work, but it was worth it. If you strengthen the youth, you strengthen the stake. If you lose the youth, you lose the stake.

YOUTH TREK, 1995

Teri and I were a ma and pa.

YOUNG MEN ACTIVITY, SUMMER 1998

For the summer young men activity, we went to Paris, Idaho. We stayed at Ron Sander's cabin and went waterskiing on Bear Lake. It was a good experience. Everyone cooperated and afterward said they had a great time. We each received a dog tag with our name and "Team 7918, Bear Lake 1998."

YOUTH CONFERENCE, JUNE 16–19, 1999

June 16–19, 1999 was our ward's youth conference at Kodachrome Basin State Park, 22 miles south of Bryce Canyon National Park. Before we left, we held a fireside where the bishop spoke about the conference theme, "Build upon the Rock." The youth chose the theme so that the magnificent rock formations of Kodachrome Basin could remind us that Christ is our Rock. I also spoke at the fireside about being positive with each other.

We set up camp among beautiful red rock formations and had a photography hike with games and activities around camp. One of the goals of the youth conference was to give the youth time to interact with each other to build relationships. Since the ward was organized six months previously from two wards, many of the youth did not know each other well. I was gratified to see the youth organize themselves into simple card games, crafts, water fights, and even a game of human foosball. They interacted well together and built friendships among themselves and with their leaders. Whenever we get the youth away from the worldly influences of school and peer pressures, they shine.

YOUTH TREK, JULY 19–22, 2000

July 19–22, 2000 was the stake youth conference pioneer trek. Teri and I were asked to be a ma and pa, just as we were on the stake pioneer trek in 1994. I truly enjoyed being a pa. It was great to put the world aside for a few days and relate with the youth as brothers and sisters. I did not look at myself as an adult and the youth as teenagers. I considered them my eternal brothers and sisters. By putting the worldly things aside, you can see the true personality of these great youth—and I am impressed with the depth of their souls. They are becoming great men and women.

The experience reminded me of what Ezra Taft Benson said to the youth: “God has held you in reserve to make your appearance in the final days before the second coming of the Lord.... God has saved for the [final days] some of His strongest children, who will help bear off the kingdom triumphantly. That is where you come in, for you are the generation that must be prepared to meet your God.... “In all ages prophets have looked down through the corridors of time to our day. Billions of the deceased and those yet to be born have their eyes on us. Make no mistake about it—you are a marked generation. There has never been more expected of the faithful in such a short period of time than there is of us.” (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, pages 104–5.)

YOUTH CONFERENCE, 2003

Jason went with me on the youth conference at Snow College. One night, we attended the Mormon Miracle pageant in Manti.

SCOUT CAMP, JULY 12–14, 2004

July 12–14, 2004, Jason and I spent a week with the Venturer Scouts at the Teton High Adventure Base camp. We went canoeing, biking, and did a high ropes course. On the way back, we spent a night in Paris, Idaho, complete with night games in the town square.

YOUTH CONFERENCE, JUNE 2005

Hailee went with me on the youth conference at BYU in Provo. We stayed at Helaman Halls.

TRANSLATOR, LINGUIST, AND CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGIST

I speak the following languages: English (native), Spanish (fluent), Cakchiquel [Guatemala] (fluent). I have also studied Esperanto, German, and Russian. I have traveled extensively in Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and the Pacific islands. I have lived abroad in El Salvador (October–December 1974), Guatemala (January 1975–August 1976; summer 1977; summer 1978), and a senior mission 2022–2023.

I have published translations in Spanish and Cakchiquel for the Guatemalan Ministry of Education, Century Publishing, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (scriptures, hymns, missionary discussions, and temple ceremonies).

SPANISH AND CAKCHIQUEL

I took Spanish and German classes in high school. I was

called to a Spanish-speaking mission in Guatemala and El Salvador. After a week or two in the Language Training Mission (LTM), they progressed beyond any Spanish I already knew.

Spanish is the official language of Guatemala and is spoken in the major cities (30% of the population) and among the Latino people who live in the towns. There are also 23 native languages, which are mostly from the Mayan language family. Read an overview of languages in Guatemala. This assortment of languages causes several social, economic, educational, linguistic, and political challenges. (See my paper “Problems of a Divided Society: The Conflicting Cultures of Guatemala.”)

After four months in the mission field, I was one of a dozen elders assigned to work among the Cakchiquel Indians in central Guatemala and learn the language Cakchiquel. Cakchiquel (or, as spelled in modern orthography, Kaqchikel), is an indigenous Mesoamerican language from the Mayan family of languages. It is spoken by about 500,000 people in central Guatemala, most notably in and around the cities of Patzicía, Patzún, Tecpán, Sololá, Chimaltenango, Comalapa, and San José Poaquil. (Learn more about Cakchiquel and the history of Cakchiquel translation in the Church.)

A linguist from BYU, Dr. Robert Blair, came to Guatemala and taught us a few weeks of Cakchiquel and gave us each a Cakchiquel grammar book that he had developed in 1969. More importantly, he taught us techniques to learn a language, so that after he left, we could continue learning among the people. Learn more about this Cakchiquel class.

Although we had Dr. Blair’s grammar book, it was not comprehensive, so we had to learn a lot about the language on our own. Several of the original dozen missionaries learned to speak Cakchiquel well. Although we still spoke Spanish with our landlords and with the Latinos who lived in each town, the majority of the time we spoke Cakchiquel. I had the advantage of having a native Spanish-speaking companion, Elder Luis Manuel Argueta from El Salvador, at Camp Patzicía after the earthquake and I spoke Spanish with him exclusively for those

two months. That helped my Spanish a lot. By the end of my mission, I spoke Spanish well, but I spoke Cakchiquel even better than Spanish. In the evenings in our missionary apartment with David Frischknecht, when the topic was about the people and their way of life, we would often slip from English into Cakchiquel, because it was easier to describe the details of farming and life using Cakchiquel words, which often are more specific to their way of life than are English or Spanish words.

At the end of my mission (in mid-1976), David Frischknecht, Julio Salazar (who had just finished his mission), and I were assigned to Patzicía to translate the missionary discussions for publication.

The Cakchiquel language is complex and there was a lot about the language that was not documented in Dr. Blair's grammar book. After returning to BYU and engaging in linguistic studies, I found old Cakchiquel manuscripts (1521–1940) in the William Gates collection. I gleaned bits and pieces from each document and believed that there was more about the language than had been documented in any of the published grammar books. When I returned to Guatemala the following summers, I did additional research among the people and validated the following:

- **Adjectival forms.** I learned that the explanations in the existing grammar books about adjectives were insufficient. None of them included all the ways to form an adjective, and their explanations of when to use which form were insufficient. I presented my findings at the Deseret Language and Linguistic Society Symposium in 1981, and published the peer-reviewed paper "An Examination of Adjectival Forms in the Cakchiquel Language" in the *Journal of Mayan Linguistics* (vol. 3, num. 2, Fall 1982, University of Iowa Anthropology Dept.).

- **Ways to make nouns plural.** There are two ways to make nouns plural: by adding the suffix -a or -i'. The various grammar books tried to explain when to use -a or -i', but their explanations were superficial and had many exceptions to the rules. I found a more helpful way to explain when to use -a or -i' and presented my findings at the Deseret Language and Linguistic Society Symposium in 1979 and published the peer-reviewed paper, "The Semantic Value of the -A' and the -I' Noun Plurals in Cakchiquel" in the journal *Notes on Linguistics* (no. 13, January 1980, Linguistics Department of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, Inc.).
- **Verb forms.** The Cakchiquel verb system is one of the most complex aspects of Cakchiquel grammar. English and Spanish may use a whole phrase of verb elements to describe the action, including auxiliary verbs like *will* or *may*, pronouns, subjects, and objects. However, Cakchiquel incorporates all these verb elements into a single word. The verb is also conjugated with elements that identify the tense (past, present, and future), mode (indicative and subjunctive/imperative), and suffixes which mark aspect (perfective and non-perfective). Other elements can include prefixes that indicate a given direction of motion and suffixes that indicate aspects of the action like suddenness, quickness, or repetitiveness. Other suffixes can also be used to create verbs from nouns or adjectives. In his grammar book, Dr. Blair states, "Whereas in English, verbs have a maximum of five distinct forms (go, goes, went, gone, going), in Cakchiquel every transitive verb has more than 3,000 different forms." In fact, from my studies (including studies during the summer of 1978), I identified additional

verb elements that account for over one million ways to conjugate a verb.

- During the summer of 1978, I also conducted additional linguistic research on reduplicative and chiasmatic verb forms.

Upon returning to BYU, I decided I wanted to learn Spanish better, so I took classes in Spanish grammar, phonetics, phonology, and literature, and earned a bachelor's degree in Spanish. I minored in linguistics, and had many self-directed study experiences in Cakchiquel, including studying other Mayan languages. I studied historical linguistics and linguistic etymology (the origin of languages and how they evolve over time) with Dr. Robert Blair and Dr. John Robertson. I wrote several papers on the cultural impacts of languages (such as "Problems of a Divided Society: The Conflicting Cultures of Guatemala") and I wrote a cultural primer about the indigenous people of Guatemala for missionaries at the Missionary Training Center (see Culture for Missionaries: Guatemala Indian).

I spoke Spanish occasionally as a Church employee for about ten years as I communicated with the printing and distribution centers in Latin America. And I took a half a dozen 1–3-week trips to Latin America where I had the chance to speak Spanish.

In April 2016, I was sitting in the whirlpool at the gym after a workout and a lady I had never met sat down across from me and started to speak to me in Spanish. She commented about two people at the other end who were speaking in Chinese and how Chinese was interesting to listen to but was unintelligible to her. After we spoke for a few minutes—all in Spanish—she mentioned she was from Durango, Mexico, and asked what part of Mexico I was from. I said I was from Utah. She asked if I was born in Utah. I said, "yes." Then she asked, "but where were you raised?" I said, "in Utah." She then asked, "do your parents speak Spanish?" When I answered, "no," she looked at me puzzlingly and asked, "then where did you learn Spanish?" I then explained that I learned it 40 years ago as a missionary in Guatemala. Again, puzzled, she asked if I had married someone

from Guatemala. She then made several comments about how well I spoke Spanish and she could not believe that I learned it as a second language.

I was puzzled why she assumed at the outset that I was a Spanish speaker and began speaking to me in Spanish. I do not think I look Hispanic. Also, my mission was 40 years ago. Since all but four months of my mission was spent speaking Cakchiquel, I only spoke Spanish moderately well when I returned home. (My only Spanish-speaking companion was Elder Argueta for two months after the earthquake.) I then majored in Spanish at BYU—but that was 37 years prior to that time. I spent two summers in Guatemala. The first summer was in Patzún doing Cakchiquel translation work. The second summer, I lived in Guatemala City. During the day, I spoke Cakchiquel with the people who were helping with the audio recordings, but in the evenings and moving about town, I was immersed among Spanish speakers.

That occasion at the gym was not the only occasion where someone had mistaken me for a native Spanish speaker. Several months before that, someone at the Church Office Building spoke to me for a minute in the elevator lobby while waiting for an elevator. She was surprised when I told her I had learned Spanish on a mission.

TRANSLATION

Read a more complete history of Cakchiquel translation of Church materials.

SCRIPTURE TRANSLATIONS, SUMMER OF 1977

In April 1977, I returned to Guatemala with David Frischknecht to translate the Book of Mormon and other Church materials into Cakchiquel. David and I had been companions three times during the mission. David did the initial translation with a native Cakchiquel speaker from Patzún, and I typed the translations and reviewed them with groups of Church members from Patzicía and other towns. It was an intense project, working day and night. That summer, we translated

the *Selections from the Book of Mormon*, several sections from the *Doctrine and Covenants*, and many hymns. (See [Translation Book Mormon Invitation Letter ODonnal](#) and [Book Mormon Translation and Recording Project Approval.](#))

David and I arrived in Guatemala on April 25, 1977. It felt comfortable being back in Guatemala, however, it was different not being a missionary. We were now “Brother Richman” and “Brother Frischknecht” rather than “Elder Richman” and “Elder Frischknecht.” We were no longer missionaries, but not civilians either.

Before arriving, we had made plans to work in Patzicía, but it turned out that the informants we had arranged were not able to help us. “Informant” is a translation term that refers to a native speaker you consult with in writing the translations. The reason that David and I were needed was that the principal translators needed to speak and write Cakchiquel very well, as well as understand English. Guatemalans who are literate have learned to read and write in a Spanish-speaking school, so they do not have fluency writing or reading Cakchiquel. (Read more about this dilemma on my [About Guatemala page.](#))

Based on the informants we were able to work with, some of whom were only available part of each day, we determined it was better to work in Patzún. On May 2, 1977, we set up living and working arrangements. We rented a house where I worked and where we slept. David worked at Julio Teleguario’s house, and we ate at Doña Mere’s house.

David worked on his own each morning until 4:00 p.m. writing by hand the initial translations. He would break down the sentences into kernel structures and translate them, without trying to make them perfectly worded translations. Then, from 4:00–8:30 p.m. he consulted with Julio Teleguario to refine the translations and ensure they sounded natural. The goal was ten pages of the Book of Mormon per day. That meant a 5:30 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. day with a half-hour break for breakfast and dinner and 1 hour for lunch. About halfway into the project, we changed our schedule to 4:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m.

David would then pass the manuscripts to me for revision. I worked with men from different towns to ensure that the translation was understandable in the different dialects. The principal informants were Pablo Choc, Daniel Mich, and Leocadio Per from Patzicía and Herman Tum and Francisco Ajú from Patzún. I first read them a sentence or two and asked them to tell me in different words what the sentences meant to them. This was done entirely in Cakchiquel. (We almost never spoke in Spanish because we did not want any interpretation bias to enter the translation process from using a third language.) When we came to a word that was lacking, I did not give them the Spanish equivalent and ask them for the Cakchiquel word for it. Rather, I explained the situation in Cakchiquel and asked them what word they would use to describe it.

I then asked them questions to be sure that what we had written was what was intended by the scripture. What is done? Who/What does it? To whom/what is it done? For whom/what is it done? With what is it done? How long is it done? How much time does it take to do it? How frequently is it done? How quickly is it done? When is it done? Where does the event take place? What do people say about the event? How is it done? What caused the event to happen? What will happen if this event happens? What is another way of saying this? What is the opposite of this event? Who made/caused it? What is its purpose? What other things have this abstract quality? What other events have this abstract quality? What is another way to say the same thing? This depth of questioning was often needed, because Cakchiquel has an extraordinary number of ways to express verbs, and the verb form could carry unintended meaning if we were not careful. (Learn more about the language complexities of Cakchiquel in the chapter "Translator, Linguist, and Cultural Anthropologist.")

The next step was to read a whole section aloud to an informant. By reading a whole section—in contrast to verse-by-verse or sentence-by-sentence—the informant could see how the whole section fit together and determine if everything was said correctly. I also checked key words from the chapter with various informants from several towns.

I then typed the translations in a special format to be scanned by BYU's optical scanner. I sent some pages to Dr. Blair, Julio Salazar, Gary Larson, and Steve Schmolinger in the states to read, revise, and give feedback. I also sent a copy to Enoe de Jesús Matzer, Rigoberto Miza, and Luis Simón in Comalapa. These were returned with comments and corrections. These were then read to other native speakers to check their reactions.

On May 7, 1977, Eb Davis visited us, along with Josiah Douglas from the Church curriculum department. We talked with them about the needs for curriculum materials in Guatemala. I asked Eb some questions we had run into in the translations. One question was about whether the Brother of Jared was his older brother or his younger brother. The Book of Mormon does not specify whether he was older or younger. In Cakchiquel, there are different words for "older brother" and "younger brother." Eb thought about it for about five seconds and said he was his older brother. I asked him how he knew, and he answered that the first thought that entered his mind was that he was his older brother because Jared went to his brother for help. He said, "The Spirit said, 'yes' and so he was his older brother." Eb said that no one probably needed to know that before now, and the Spirit told him that he was his older brother. I am continually impressed with the spirituality of Brother Davis.

On May 15, 1977, we attended a district conference in Patzicía. The Mizas were there from Comalapa with their newborn boy. They told me they had named him Lery Robert Miza Xocop. They named him "Lery" after me. I was touched by that.

I worked one day with Francisco Ajú. Even though he could not read at all, he brought his Book of Mormon with him. Even though he could not read a letter, he would mark the scriptures in his book. When we came to a part that he really liked, he would ask me which verse it was, and he would find it in his book and mark it. He knew the numbers but could not read any of the words. After we had finished the work that day, we talked a few minutes about the Book of Mormon. Once he looked up at me and said, "Brother, this book is so beautiful and

true.” Although he could not read and did not have the opportunity to study the book, he still had a strong testimony about it. The people we worked with got excited about the stories and teachings as we went along. I could tell that they had only understood them superficially in Spanish. Francisco Ajú could not help but repeat “Gran Chucha!” as we went along because it was all so exciting to him. Wherever we attended church meetings and talked, we read parts of the Book of Mormon translations. It was exciting to read them to people who had been members for 10 or 15 years and see their faces light up as they understood things for the first time.

On June 28, 1977, Román Choc entered the mission home. He was the sixth missionary from Patzicía. He was preceded by Daniel Choc, José Leon Choy, Fulgencio Choy, Feliza Choy, Mauro Choc, and now Román Choc. (Julio Salazar was also listed as having left from Patzicía.) Those missionaries really strengthened the Patzicía Branch when they returned.

On July 9, 1977, the day before I turned 22 years old, David Frischknecht took me to Antigua for a pizza dinner for my birthday. It was the best pizza I’ve ever eaten.

We finished our process: (1) David’s initial translations and refinements with Julio, (2) my reviews with informants, both sentence-by-sentence and then chapter-by-chapter, (3) typing the translations, (4) reviewing them with others in Comalapa and in the United States, (5) reading passages in talks on Sundays, and (6) reviewing key terminology and key chapters with members in special meetings on Sundays after the regular meetings.

We then needed to translate and revise Joseph Smith 2, the *Family Guidebook*, *Small Branch Guidebook*, *Branch Organizational Guidebook*, the hymns, and another section or two from the Doctrine and Covenants.

I met with people in Guatemala City – the Minister of Education (about literacy materials), people in the Department of Education, and the director of the Summer Institute of Linguistics.

Eb Davis returned on July 23, 1977. He brought a camera and asked me to take pictures to print in the Cakchiquel and Quiché missionary flipcharts.

The Cakchiquel literacy program arrived and President O'Donnal assigned Sister Teri Turvaville to begin teaching from it.

I returned home about August 8, 1977.

TEMPLE ORDINANCE TRANSLATIONS

During August and September of 1979, I spent many days in the Salt Lake Temple translating the temple initiatory ordinances, endowment, and sealing ceremonies into Cakchiquel. David Frischknecht reviewed and revised them in December 1980. Later, Pablo Choc came from Guatemala to make a final review of it.

May 27–30, 1991, I worked at the temple with two native Cakchiquel speakers (Rigoberto Miza and Martin Per) to complete the native language review of the temple ceremonies that I translated in 1979 and 1980. During those two weeks, we made many revisions that improved the readability and understandability of the translation. Rigoberto and Martin were a good team, representing two different dialects and two age groups (two major concerns with the Cakchiquel translations). There was a good spirit about the work. During that time, we had the added benefit of two Quiché natives (Angel Chavez and Vidalmino Sarate) and two Quiché-speaking missionaries (Alan Christensen and Hugh Biesinger) who were also in Salt Lake working on the Quiché translations. Hugh and I became friends while in Guatemala the summer of 1978 when we worked on the dictionary project. Since Quiché is a sister language to Cakchiquel, we were able to consult and share ideas, which were most helpful.

The translations were certified on June 4, 1991, with Brother Metcalf (the managing director of the Temple Department), two others from the Temple Department, Eb Davis, Justus Ernst, Hugh, Alan, me, and the four brothers from Guatemala.

Another review of the translation was done with the help of two Guatemalans who came to Salt Lake the week of February 24–28, 1992.

The following cast members traveled to the Salt Lake Temple for the recording beginning June 8, 1992: Martin Per Toj, Santos Per Mich, Felisa Hologario Choy de Choc, Rigoberto Miza Moxo, Ruben Meren Ajsivinac, Rolando Mich Cua, and German Tun Ixem. I recorded some of the parts as well. The week prior to the recording, Martin Per Toj and Rigoberto Miza Moxo came to assist with the final review of the translation.

On November 9, 2005, I spent the afternoon in the Salt Lake Temple with the audiovisual sound engineers reviewing the audio recording of the Cakchiquel temple endowment. They recently re-edited it for their new digital equipment and needed me to verify that the editing was correct to match the two temple films. It was a privilege to carefully review the words of the temple ceremonies. It was amazing to study the repetition and understand its meaning more deeply.

In August 2018, the Translation Division approached me and David Frischknecht about translating into Cakchiquel changes in the temple ordinances. I was in the middle of planning for the changes in Sunday meetings that were announced at the October 2018 general conference. David had just returned from South Africa as the Director for Temporal Affairs and was just beginning as the managing director of the Welfare Department. It would have required one or both of us going to Guatemala for about ten days to work with native Cakchiquel speakers in the Guatemala City temple. Below is the response from David Frischknecht after they approached him.

Dear Brother Michael Peck,

I would be pleased to participate if asked to do so, dependent on approval from the Presiding Bishopric to be away from my responsibilities in Welfare Services for the week. Larry and I have worked well together over many years with native language speakers on translation. Having both of us would be the ideal for speed, quality, etc. However, I have full confidence in Larry if he is the person

assigned to this. He would go with my endorsement, support, faith, prayers, and confidence.

Warm regards,

David F.

In the end, they found another way to accomplish the work without either of us being involved.

OTHER TRANSLATIONS

In the 1980s, many more Latter-day Saint resources were translated into Cakchiquel. See a list of the [LDS materials translated into Cakchiquel \(Kaqchikel\)](#). See a [Church News report about emerging translations in the Church](#).

One session of general conference was interpreted into Cakchiquel, Quiché, and Kekchí every six months. Translators and interpreters included David Frischknecht, Julio Salazar, Fulgencio Choy, Martin Per, Feliciano Xocop, Elma Misa, Greg Sansom, Gary Larson, and me. In about 2005, processes were set up in Guatemala for people in-country to interpret and have the interpretation transmitted by satellite to the various towns.

I also completed translations in Spanish and Cakchiquel for the Guatemalan Ministry of Education and Century Publishing.

CERTIFIED SPANISH TRANSLATOR

At BYU commencement in April 1979, in addition to receiving my bachelor's degree in Spanish, I was awarded a translation certificate. (See [BYU commencement program 20Apr1979](#).) Requirements included two years of Spanish classes, mastery of the target language, six month's residence in the source language, sufficient reading of literature, thorough knowledge of and sensitivity to the culture, completion of four semesters of course work (12 credit hours plus 8 hours of labs) in translation and interpretation, and a senior thesis.

In November 1979, I took the American Translators Association accreditation test in Spanish. I organized a group of about 15 students who wanted to take the test, and I asked Lynn

Tyler (associate director of the Language and Intercultural Research Center) and Marian McMaster (one of my Spanish teachers) to proctor it. Only one student in the group passed. It was not me.

On February 26, 1980, I became an active member of the American Translators Association. (See [ATA certificate](#), and [ATA Translation Services Directory 1983](#).)

DICTIONARY PROJECT 1978

In the summer of 1978, I went to Guatemala with Drs. Robert Blair and John Robertson of the BYU Linguistics Department and 11 other BYU linguistics and anthropology students to compile several dictionaries of Mayan languages. We donated our summer to compile learner's dictionaries with the hope of helping missionaries and others who wanted to learn the native Mayan languages. Julio Salazar, Greg Sansom, and I worked on the Cakchiquel dictionary, along with native speakers Juan Yool and Alejandro Choc.

We drove from Provo to Guatemala in a school bus that was built in the 1950s—before I was born. We also took a red van. We had to get the bus ready for the trip by sanding and painting it, changing the tires, and removing some of the seats. The trip was long, but enjoyable because of the people in the group.

- Greg Sansom was my missionary companion in Sololá. I enjoyed his happy disposition. Greg was very athletic and there was some healthy competition between Greg, Hugh, and me. The three of us got along very well.
- Hugh Biesinger had been working for the LTM writing the Quiché grammar with Dr. Robertson. I admire him—and the other guys—for coming. They could have gotten jobs to help pay for school, but instead agreed to work without pay to do something they believed in. The dedication of the group was a missionary-type dedication.
- Randy Ellsworth was a determined guy who had overcome unbeatable odds. Two years before, he was

crushed under the Patzicía chapel in the earthquake. (See [article in the Washington Post](#).) Now, he was back in Guatemala and walking with little trouble. He was engaged to Silvia Lang from Momostenango and was married in August just after he returned from the dictionary project.

- Julio Salazar had been working with David Frischknecht and me in Provo for a year and a half. We got along very well and confided many things with each other. He was happy to be back in Guatemala.
- Doug Tedford had been working for the translation division with Quiché. He learned his Quiché from books and lacked the practical knowledge that Hugh had.
- John Bringhurst ended his mission in the Kekchí area only a few months before. He had mastered the language and loved the people.
- Steve Wilson did not know an Indian language, but he came along to learn some Pocomchí and write some materials to help missionaries.
- Margaret Blair, Dr. Blair's daughter, came to work on radio programs in Momostenango.
- Olivia de Rojas came as a guest of the Foundation for Indian Development to meet Cordell Anderson. She was from Mexico City and had been at BYU for three years.
- Lluvia was Olivia's 16-year-old daughter.
- Robert Blair oversaw the project. I saw him in a new light on the trip. He was unorganized, but incredibly smart and a hard worker. His sense of humor either eased the tension or built it. We all worked at an "animal" pace, so it was easy to get angry and discouraged.
- John Robertson was also responsible for the project. He developed theories about nearly everything. His theories were interesting and usually well-founded, but he sometimes jumped in head-first before checking

things out. I was impressed with his abilities and enjoyed working with him.

- Mike Hironymous, Myron Hill, and Jeff Bently were three who stayed in the lowlands of Mexico to work on Yucatec and other languages there.
- Larry Richman. I went back to Guatemala because I loved the people and wanted to see the Lord's work progress among them. The others called me "the animal" because I worked like an animal to keep up on the 400+ pages of dictionary entries that needed to be transcribed from the audio recordings. They would throw me a pen once in a while to keep me going.

We left Provo on April 26, 1978. We spent a night at the U.S.-Mexico border at Matamorros trying to get Julio through. We spent nights in small towns along the way. Sunday night, as Greg, Julio, Hugh, Randy, and I went to bath in a river that ran through town, we stumbled on a five-story hotel with a swimming pool. The workers there let us swim and shower. It was like an oasis.

We stopped at the ruins at Palenque. It was interesting to visit the ruins with a team of linguists and anthropologists. They saw things and explained things I would never have noticed. That night, we swam at a beautiful resort on the river not too far from Palenque. Drs. Blair and Robertson wanted to stay there another day to do a little work with the Chol language, so they sent Randy and me ahead to get things set up. Randy and I arrived at the Guatemalan border at La Mesilla about 11:30 p.m. After crossing the border, we had a two kilometer walk in the dark to the Guatemalan customs building. I was a bit nervous walking in the dark in a strange place near the Mexican border, not knowing about any possible drug cartel activity. We passed two men on the road who stopped to talk with us for a moment. They called us "hermanitos" ("brothers") and made us feel at home. I then felt safe, calm, and secure. It felt good to be back in Guatemala. After passing through customs, we slept in a bus that was to leave at 6:00 a.m. the next morning. We arrived in Huehuetenango at 8:00 a.m.

and talked with the people at the Proyecto Linguístico Francisco Marroquín who had been working on a Cakchiquel dictionary for several years.

I went to Patzún and Patzicía to locate informants (native speakers to consult with) to help us. I visited with some members who were working on the Patzicía chapel. It brought back good memories to see them and talk with them. Ricardo Cua had died that Monday. He was poisoned by insecticides he was preparing. His wife was the Relief Society president when I was a missionary. After she died in the earthquake, he was baptized, and I confirmed him. He was a counselor in the branch presidency when he died. Josefina Cua, their oldest child, asked me to see that her parents were sealed in the temple. So, after the required one year waiting period, I submitted the necessary forms and on July 18, 1979, David and Nancy Frischknecht and I went to the Provo Temple to do the work for them and for their son Baudilio who was eleven months old when he died in the earthquake of 1976 alongside his mother Arcadia. I did the initiatory and endowment work for Ricardo, and Nancy did the same for Arcadia. David and Nancy were sealed in proxy for Ricardo and Arcadia, and I was proxy for Baudilio as he was sealed to his parents. Temple work is truly satisfying when you can do it for someone you know.

We spent the next many weeks in Cobán at the Val Paraíso ranch run by Cordell Anderson. He ran the Foundation for Indian Development, which did many things to help the Indians in Guatemala. [He later apostatized from the Church.]

We had informants from Patzicía (Alejandro Choc and his wife), Patzún (Juan Yo'ol), Momostenango (Julian Acabal Wix), Totonicapán (Juan Batz), and Cobán to compile dictionaries in Cakchiquel, Quiché, and Kekchí. John Bringhurst worked with the Kekchí informant on his own. We compiled the Cakchiquel and Quiché dictionaries simultaneously. We began each day at 4:00 a.m. Julio would read the words and phrases in Spanish, and the informants would record their translations on tape. A monitor for Cakchiquel and one for Quiché listened to the responses and clarified them when necessary. At the same time,

Randy or Doug and I sat upstairs in the small A-frame house and transcribed the tapes.

We finished eliciting the responses from the informants before the end of May. I finished transcribing a day later. Greg and I compiled some domain dictionaries (themed word lists) while we waited for the Quichés to finish.

Once we finished work on the dictionaries, Randy, Hugh, Greg, José Obando (a part-time worker for the translation division who lived in Quetzaltenango), and I took two days and went to El Salvador. We stayed in San Salvador with Freddy Martinez, who finished his mission in Guatemala days before. We swam at the beach, swam at Los Chorros, ate the famous pupusas in Santa Tecla, and hit the big city at night. I tried to call Luis Manuel Argueta in San Miguel but could not find his number. On the return trip, we stopped at Ahuachapán to see the Sántigo family. It was the realization of a three-year dream to see them again. I wanted to go back upon completing my mission, then the next summer, but never could. We visited a few minutes with Jesús, Dalila, Rafael, Jaime, and Rutilio.

June 5-12, 1978, Greg and I stayed at Doña Mere's house in Patzún to revise and confirm all the entries in the dictionary and to fill in any missing pieces. Greg and I borrowed Enrique Teleguario's motorcycle on Friday and went to Sololá on the back road through Godínez. Greg ordered some kaïtes (sandals) at the market and we visited a few members. We then went back to Panajachel and swam in Lake Atitlán.

Later in the summer, John Robertson wrote me a letter and said, "You do superlative work. I've truly enjoyed working with you. The Cakchiquel dictionary is turning out to be an excellent piece of work. If I ever wrote you a letter of recommendation, I could surely write a strong one."

On June 13, 1978, we flew from Guatemala City to Flores where we met Dr. Blair, Brother and Sister Robinson, Mike, Mario, and Steve. We drove to Tikal and spent the afternoon climbing the temples. We spent the next day in Belize and the following day in Cancún. We took the ferry to Isla Mujeres, a small island off the coast. The water was so clear that we could

see the sea floor all the way to the island. We drove the bus down to the south end of the island to snorkel at the Garrafón reef. I was amazed at the colors in the coral and at all the life on it. There were schools with thousands of fish. We could dive down and swim through the school and be completely engulfed in fish. Some men on the beach told us they had seen sharks down at the southern point of the island, so Randy and I swam down to see them. Along the way, we saw hundreds of starfish and seashells on the pure white sand. As we got almost to the point of the island, we got caught in a current that began to carry us out to sea. We got concerned when we noticed it was carrying us towards four-foot barracudas, who are territorial fish. We had to swim full-strength perpendicular to the current to get out of it. We swam around the point of the island and climbed out on the sharp coral rocks. That night, we walked around the town at the north end of the island and had dinner at a restaurant. The “animals” (Hugh, Randy, Greg, and I) swallowed raw turtle eggs and we slept on the beach.

The next morning, the four “animals” planned to go scuba diving. We found out minutes before the ferry left that the bus was on it. We jumped on the ferry to grab our gear just as it was leaving. Randy did not make it back onto the dock before the ferry pulled away. He tried to jump off the ferry into the water and swim back to the dock, but the guard on the ferry would not let him. Fortunately, a man in a boat saw his predicament and drove alongside the ferry, picked up Randy, and brought him back to the dock.

We took the Mexico Divers excursion to the Manchones reef. While diving, our instructor speared a foot-long mackerel with his spear gun. That was the bait for a four-foot barracuda that came along and snapped the mackerel in two while it was still on the spear. The instructor then speared the barracuda. When he pulled in the barracuda, it still had half of the mackerel in its mouth. Our lunch was the barracuda and 20–30 large shrimp a piece. Just before lunch, we rode giant sea turtles which were in a corral near the shore. On the boat ride to another place to snorkel, we basked in the sun atop the boat. Every few minutes, Greg would sit up and say, “I can’t believe we actually did it!”

Then, someone else would say, "Can you believe that we're lying on top of a boat after scuba diving off an island in the Caribbean Sea?" The scuba trip was worth every penny of the US \$15.50 (350 pesos) that we paid for it. On the way back, we saw half a dozen dolphins.

We drove to the ruins at Chichén Itzá. They were impressive, although not as majestic as those at Tikal. We then drove over to see the night show at Uxmal. We arrived in Villahermosa, Mexico, the morning of June 18, 1978. I split off from the group there to return to Guatemala for the rest of the summer to direct the Cakchiquel recordings. (See the next section "Audio Recordings in Cakchiquel.") The dictionary group returned home. I had mixed emotions that morning. I wanted to stay with the group of "animals" I had grown to love, but at the same time, I wanted to go to Guatemala to get the recordings done. The last thing I wanted was to be left alone in a Mexican bus terminal at 6:00 a.m. on a Sunday morning. I arrived at the border at La Mesilla that night at 8:00 p.m. and slept in the bus that would leave the next morning.

Learn [more about and see photos of the dictionary project.](#)

After returning to Provo at the end of the summer in 1978, and until August of 1980, I worked as a linguistic consultant for New World Languages at BYU. I designed the format for computer processing for this and three other dictionaries. I edited the manuscripts and prepared the trilingual Cakchiquel-Spanish-English dictionary for printing. The dictionary also included a concise grammar section. In 1981, Drs. Blair and Robertson arranged for the *DICCIONARIO ESPAÑOL-CAKCHIQUEL-INGLÉS* to be published by Garland Publishing, a prestigious publisher in New York City. To my knowledge, no books ever made it to Guatemala or the hands of a missionary.

Years later, to fulfill the original intent of this project, I requested and received permission from the BYU Copyright Licensing Office to republish the dictionary as an educational and humanitarian effort to help missionaries, students, and others who want to learn the Cakchiquel language. I also hope that it would help native Cakchiquel Indians learn Spanish and

English. I provided a searchable PDF online to read and download. I also offered to send a photocopy of the dictionary to anyone who requested it.

AUDIO RECORDINGS IN CAKCHIQUEL

From June until November 1978, I was the director of recording for BYU Sound Services, responsible for producing audio recordings of written translations in Cakchiquel of the *TESTIMONY OF THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH* pamphlet, the *GOSPEL PRINCIPLES* manual, *SELECTIONS FROM THE BOOK OF MORMON*, AND *BOOK OF MORMON STORIES*. These audio recordings were an attempt to address the educational dilemma described on my About Guatemala page. Because many of the people are illiterate, or if they read, are unable to read their native language fluently, the Church made audio recordings of some of the Cakchiquel translations so the people can listen to them.

I selected recording facilities, located and trained talent, acted as sound technician, and coordinated editing and post-production later in the United States. After much searching, I was able to find two native Cakchiquels who could read somewhat fluently—a member of the Church who was finishing up high school (Fulgencio Choy) and a teacher (Juan Yo'ol) who was not a member of the Church. We recorded for about a month, until August 10. Most of it was recorded at a studio named CINTTA and some at the Radio Nuevo Mundo in Guatemala City. Julio Salazar helped the narrators rehearse and I directed the recordings. With some practice, they were able to read with good intonation and feeling.

The recordings then required a lot of editing at BYU Sound Studios over the next school year. I completed the proofing of the edits on June 1, 1979. The recordings were eventually duplicated, and a few copies were distributed in October 1979. Later, in December 2000, the recordings were digitally remastered and reissued with new packaging. I posted them online. See a list of Cakchiquel materials, which provides copies of all the Cakchiquel translations and resources I could gather.

My last Sunday in Guatemala, August 13, 1978, was a district conference in Patzicía. President O'Donnal was there, as well as my friends and the missionaries from the other towns. Fulgencio Choy was sustained as the branch president the previous Sunday. At the end of the meeting, he asked me to come up and say a few words. I told them how much I loved them, and I asked them to support Fulgencio. Fulgencio asked the members to stay and pick up the folding chairs that were used for the district conference. After the prayer, I expected to see most people leave, and only a faithful few stay to help. But to my surprise, everyone—including the nanas and the men—began folding up the chairs. I did not see anyone leave. It really warmed my heart. I do not know if my comments about supporting Fulgencio as branch president had anything to do with it, but I really felt a spirit of cooperation and service. The next day, I got on a plane and flew home. I hated to leave. I wished I were a few years older, graduated from school, and married, so I could stay and set up the school I had planned, and live in the Patzicía branch.

LINGUISTIC STUDIES, CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY, AND FOLKLORE

After completing the audio recordings in Guatemala on August 10, 1978, I kept myself busy. I stayed at Julio Salazar's house when in Guatemala City, at Doña Mere's when in Patzún, and with the elders when in various other towns. I translated and reviewed about 85 hymns, including a special hymn for the choir to sing at the dedication of the new Patzicía chapel. I translated the baptismal interview questions and phrases to help missionaries learn to give blessings, confirmations, and ordinations. I field tested the Book of Mormon in Tecpán, Patzicía, Comalapa, and Itzapa. I revised the Church glossary of Cakchiquel terminology and translated the Joseph Smith and Joseph F. Smith visions (now Doctrine and Covenants, sections 137 and 138). I also met with the Guatemalan Ministry of Education's Chief of Literacy and presented him with my translation of a reading primer entitled *Mi Primer Amigo*. In my spare time, I bought a guitar and learned to play it.

I conducted the linguistic studies mentioned in the section “Spanish and Cakchiquel” above. I also researched Mayan legends and folklore by interviewing many people and recording their stories. I later transcribed and translated the stories into Spanish and English and published them in the book *Tales of the Cakchiquels: Trilingual Collection of Folklore from the Cakchiquel Indians of Guatemala; Cuentos de los cakchiqueles: Recopilación trilingüe de cuentos populares de los indígenas cakchiqueles de Guatemala* and also in a supplement *Tz'ijonik pa Cakchiquel; Cuentos en Cakchiquel; Stories in Cakchiquel*.

In college, I minored in linguistics. I studied some Russian, Chinese, Hebrew, and Esperanto. The final exam in one class was to translate a page of the Bible from Esperanto to English.

In November 1977, I wrote a 35-page research paper on the cultural differences between the Latinos and the Indians.

In December 1977, I was hired by the Language Training Mission (whose name was changed to Missionary Training Center in October 1978) to write a culture book for Guatemala, including information about the indigenous people. From December 1977 to April 1978, I worked with Jeff Hafen to write the book *Culture for Missionaries: Guatemalan Indian* to help missionaries understand the cultures of the native peoples of Guatemala. I tried to include not only general instructions and information concerning missionary work in Guatemala, but also specifics on how to approach the Indian people and how to respect their beliefs and ways of life. Review copies were sent to current and former mission presidents (Willard I. Skousen, Robert B. Arnold, and John O'Donnal). After clearing Church Correlation, the manual was published in 1980.

CHURCH EMPLOYEE

I worked for the Church for 45 years (3 years part-time and 42 years full-time).

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF LARRY RICHMAN

My mission to Guatemala from 1974–1976 set the course for my career. I spent most of my mission among the Cakchiquel Indians in central Guatemala. A linguist from BYU spent a few weeks in Guatemala to teach a dozen missionaries same basics of the Cakchiquel language, then left us on our own to learn the language. A few of us excelled, and by the end of my mission, the Church asked three of us to translate the missionary discussions.

I returned to BYU after my mission and worked part-time for the Church translation division and changed my major from business to Spanish and linguistics. I spent the next few summers in Guatemala either working for the Church translating the Book of Mormon, compiling a Cakchiquel-Spanish-English dictionary, or doing linguistic studies just for the fun of it. After I received my bachelor's degree, I stayed in Provo and earned a master's degree in instructional science. My intent was to build a business by developing language learning systems. But the Church offered me a full-time job and I spent the rest of my career involved with translations and Church publications.

For a few years, I supervised translators in Latin America and Africa. I later project managed non-English publications, assigning them for translation and coordinating the steps of translation, typesetting, graphic design, printing, and distribution. I helped develop computer tracking systems to manage these stages of production. I helped realign production, printing, and distribution to save millions of dollars in printing and distribution costs. For several years, I traveled three or four weeks a year to Church printing and distribution centers.

I later worked with the Church auxiliaries (Relief Society, Primary, Sunday School, Young Men, and Young Women) to develop Church programs, leader training, and other resources. I helped establish Church efforts on the internet and in social media and later was the director of LDS.org. I have had broad experience in my 40-year professional career, including translation, publishing, project management, product management, marketing, communications, and social media.

My responsibilities included developing and implementing Church resources and making sure they are translated and available worldwide. For most of my career, I managed the Worldwide Plan for Church Materials. Other assignments included both project management and product management for resources such as leader training, Sunday programs, curriculum for the home and church, scriptures, magazines, and other materials used in the home. For most of my career, I also coordinated the official letters and notices sent from headquarters to stake and ward leaders. My final position was the director of communications and messaging, helping improve messaging to members and leaders.

My offices have been on the following floors of the Church Office Building: 21, 23, 24, and 25, and short time on the second floor of the west wing.

“Wherefore, as ye are agents, ye are on the Lord’s errand; and whatever ye do according to the will of the Lord is the Lord’s business” (Doctrine and Covenants 64:29). Sometimes when working on an assignment or walking from the Church Office Building to the Church Administration Building, I would sense a feeling of importance—not of myself, but of the important work I had been tasked to do.

I had the privilege of a front-row seat to many important efforts. I met with the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, General Authorities, and General Officers to discuss important issues, create documents and plans, and make presentations to help Church leaders make decisions. It was an amazing blessing.

I considered my job almost a calling. Over the years, I often felt the tug of entrepreneurship—and I had small opportunities to be involved in some outside efforts along with my employment with the Church—but I felt impressed to continue my career at the Church.

Arthur Brooks, who teaches a course on happiness at Harvard University, says that there are two elements that make work meaningful: earned success and service to others. Earned success is success based on diligent effort, where people use

skills that match their interests and passions that lead to upward mobility in life. Service to others means that one's work makes life better for others. My work for the Church was meaningful on both counts.

President Gordon B. Hinckley once said, "The major work of the world is not done by geniuses. It is done by ordinary people, with balance in their lives, who have learned to work in an extraordinary manner."

RESPONSIBILITIES AND POSITIONS

I worked in the following departments: Priesthood and Family Department, Curriculum Department, Translation Department, and Materials Management. The following is a summary of the key responsibilities I held:

- **Translation.** Managed translators in up to 60 languages.
- **International Publications.** Coordinated the graphic production, printing, and distribution of materials in up to 185 languages. Realigned printing and distribution across countries in Latin America and the Pacific to save millions of dollars.
- **Publications and Media Project Office.** Led a consolidated project management office for 8,000 projects per year (printed, audiovisual, website, event, and worldwide broadcasts).
- **LDS.org.** Defined the early vision and processes and completed a major upgrade of the Church website from 2003–2008.
- **Worldwide Plan for Church Materials.** Developed the process to (1) define the materials needed by members in developing and established areas of the world and (2) give priority and order to the translation of materials into languages.
- **Leader Communications.** Managed the approvals and distribution of official letters and notices from headquarters to local leaders. Served on the Communications Review Committee (CRC).

- **Priesthood and Auxiliary Division.** Worked with the General Presidencies of the five general organizations. I led teams to develop and implement several key Church initiatives, such as ministering, the combination of the elders quorum and high priest groups, and the implementation of the two-hour Sunday schedule. I also directed the development of resources to help members and leaders with sensitive issues such as abuse, incarceration, disabilities, LGBT, mental health, pornography, safe media use, and suicide.
- **Communications, messaging, and implementation.** Worked across departments to unify Church messages. I was also a de facto director in the Church Communication Department as a bridge between the two departments. Directed the efforts to work with Area Presidencies to adapt and implement programs and products in a way to better meet the needs of areas.

The following is a list of the specific positions I held:

Contract and Part-time positions:

- Contract Translator, Emerging Languages, Translation Division, Materials Management Department, April 1977–August 1979.
- Production Coordinator and Translation Team Lead, Translation Division, Materials Management, May 27, 1978–August 1980. I coordinated translation and production in the Provo, Utah, regional office. I helped develop an integrated word processing and typesetting system on the IBM 370 computer for 14 American Indian languages. I developed a means for coordinating graphics production and printing with the main office.

Full-time positions:

- Master Scheduler, Materials Management Department, August 18, 1980, to January 1, 1982.
- Translation Supervisor, Translation Department, January 1, 1982, to January 1, 1983.

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- Director of Publications and Media Project Office, Curriculum Department, January 1, 1983, to August 1, 2010.
- Director of LDS.org and Internet Coordination, Curriculum Department, January 1, 2003, to January 1, 2008.
- Director of Worldwide Plan for Church Materials, Curriculum Department, August 1, 2010, to April 18, 2012.
- Director of Product Awareness and Evaluation, Priesthood and Family Department, August 1, 2010, to May 1, 2015.
- Director, Priesthood and Auxiliary Division, Priesthood and Family Department, August 17, 2015, to June 28, 2020.
- Director, Communications and Messaging, Priesthood and Family Department, June 29, 2020, to June 2022.
- Director, Communications and Messaging, Priesthood and Family Department, June 29, 2020, to September 30, 2021.
- Director, Communications and Covenant Path (Implementation and Area Support), Priesthood and Family Department, September 30, 2021, to June 2022.

(For a more complete resume, see [Wikipedia archive August 10, 2014](#), [Wikipedia archive November 11, 2013](#), and [Resume Summary](#).)

I wrote a more complete work history with more names, dates, and details and submitted it to my department leadership and the Church Archives. This chapter is a condensed version of that.

CONTRACT TRANSLATOR

From April 1977 to August 1979, I was a contract translator to translate Church materials into Cakchiquel. I worked on the Book of Mormon and other scripture translation in Guatemala

the summer of 1976. I also translated the Church's temple ceremonies. I continued working on Cakchiquel translations for several years. The summer of 1978, I returned to Guatemala to produce audio recordings of written translations in Cakchiquel. (See the section "Translator, Linguist, and Cultural Anthropologist" above.)

PRODUCTION COORDINATOR AND TRANSLATION TEAM LEAD

While a student at BYU, from September 1978 to August 1980, I worked part-time for the Translation Division, Materials Management. I coordinated translation and production in the Provo, Utah, regional office. I helped develop an integrated word processing and typesetting system on the IBM 370 computer for 14 American Indian languages. I developed a means for coordinating graphics production and printing with the main office.

The process at that time for publishing a book involved setting type in a single column (called "slix") and cutting and pasting the type onto artboards to form pages (paste-ups). I worked with graphics production in Salt Lake to develop a more automated process, whereby a computer program would calculate the lines on a page and produce the composed page with headings, footers, and page numbers in place. I helped develop an integrated word processing/typesetting system using BYU's IBM 370 mainframe computer to produce full-page paginations. We used this system to produce books in 14 Latin American native languages (20 translators). My job was to coordinate all the production with translators, proofreaders, and graphics production in Salt Lake. I trained translators and inputters on the use of the system, trained proofreaders, and approved publications as ready to be printed. This new typesetting pagination system became the standard practice by 1981.

MASTER SCHEDULING, PRINTING SERVICES (AUGUST 18, 1980–NOVEMBER 1980)

Scheduled, monitored, and reported on non-English publications projects in the headquarters production system. Planned and scheduled over 350 projects per year through translation, production, printing, and distribution. Helped modify the Martin Marrietta TRMS computer system for use by project managers in workload planning, controlling, tracking, and reporting. Helped streamline processes to reduce production time and expense.

On August 18, 1980, I accepted a full-time position with the Church. My responsibilities were to schedule, monitor, and report on non-English publications projects. This included manuals, books, bulletins, magazines, pamphlets, missionary tracts, forms, and so forth in 76 languages. (All the languages except those that were translated and printed overseas.)

The following was my journal entry from August 22, 1980, after my first week on the job:

I just finished my first week on the job. I think I will enjoy working with my coworkers. (1) There are really some good people to work with. (2) The main challenge I will have is to get all the departments working together, rather than independently. (3) Coordinating efforts could save work for everyone by reducing the number of production steps. (4) We also need to develop better tracking and reporting procedures so we can keep closer track of the projects.

I also began cross-pollenating ideas. I found that if you spread your idea (or an idea of someone else) in the right way, you could get people to buy into it and help develop it. Pretty soon, everyone would come together and improve on the idea, and everyone was behind it.

PUBLICATIONS COORDINATION (NOVEMBER 10, 1980–MAY 1982)

On November 10, 1980, the Master Scheduling section was

combined with Publications Coordination of the Curriculum Department and our offices were moved from the 25th floor to the 24th floor. I was assigned to coordinate Spanish translation, Emerging Languages, and all non-English production in Salt Lake, including the international magazines.

On January 1, 1981, the Church established the Salt Lake Printing Center (formerly Deseret Press) as part of the Printing Services Division of the Materials Management Department to do all Church headquarters printing. It was a mammoth operation, and it was humbling to think that our Publications Coordination team would be responsible for all the work that went there to be printed. One of our first projects was to adjust the schedule for the Spanish *Liahona* magazine to get it in the hands of subscribers a month earlier.

In January 1981, we combined several specification documents together into a single form named Job Ticket. I helped modify the Martin Marrietta TRMS computer system for use by project managers in workload planning, controlling, tracking, and reporting. We streamlined processes to reduce production time and expense.

During that time, there was a big expansion in the number of languages into which we translated Church materials. For each new language, it required developing type fonts and computer systems to determine how to hyphenate words.

At that time, the Church rivaled any major publishing house. The Church produced over 125,000 printed pages of materials a year in 185 languages (with 29 different writing systems), including four monthly magazines (one of which was translated and published in 42 languages). The Church had 35 full-time editors, 70 full-time graphic designers and production artists, nearly 1,000 translators and interpreters, and hundreds of internet developers, information architects, and visual designers.

TRANSLATION DIVISION (JUNE 1982–OCTOBER 1983)

EMERGING LANGUAGES TRANSLATION SUPERVISOR (MAY 1982–1983)

On May 24, 1982, I transferred to the Translation Division. My director was Eb Davis, whom I worked for previously when I was a contract translator. My first assignment was for 21 emerging languages in Latin America and the South Pacific, which at that time included 40–50 translation workers. I was responsible for linguistic research and decisions on cultural and political matters. I traveled worldwide to identify publication needs in countries of responsibility and to locate and train translators. I enjoyed my fellow translation supervisors, Lowell Bishop, Ralph Richards, and David Frischknecht and enjoyed working with people in the field.

August 30 to September 13, 1982, I traveled to Latin America on a Church trip to through all the areas where I supervised translation work, except for Peru and the South Pacific. I met with mission presidents, stake presidents, translators, and distribution center managers to coordinate the work being done, and to assign new work. In Paraguay, I coordinated the Guaraní translations. In Bolivia, I worked with Quechua and Aymara. In Ecuador, I coordinated the work in Quichua. In Panama, I followed up on the Kuna translations. In Guatemala, I was not permitted to leave Guatemala City because of unrest in some of the outlying areas. So, all I could do was meet with the translation coordinator, José Obando, in Guatemala City about Cakchiquel, Quiché, Kekchí, and Mam. It was difficult to go to Guatemala and not be able to go to the Cakchiquel area to see the people I loved. In Mexico, I went to Merida to work on Mayan and explore needs for Tzotzil. A stop in Haiti was to coordinate work in Haitian-Creole.

We had three supervisors over the 60 languages. In October 1982, one of the supervisors, David Frischknecht, was promoted to manager and given responsibility over Samoan, Tongan, and Tahitian translation that had been recently moved to Salt Lake.

Another supervisor was reassigned. That left me alone to supervise 60 languages.

In December 1982, Eb Davis reorganized the Translation Division, and I began supervising all the phase 1, 2, and 3 languages in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. From February 8 to March 1, 1983, I traveled to Africa. Africa had 472 million people and was the fast-growing continent in the world. People in the 52 countries in Africa spoke 1,583 languages. There were two missions serving the continent. The Africa West Mission served the countries of Nigeria and Ghana, and the South Africa Johannesburg Mission served the countries of South Africa and Zimbabwe. The other 48 countries were under the jurisdiction of the International Mission. I went to Kenya to meet with translators and missionary couples there about translating a few basic materials into Swahili and Kisii. The Church was just getting established in Kenya and wasn't yet legally registered. I then flew to Johannesburg, South Africa. The Church had been there for 120 years. There were three thriving stakes, and a temple soon to begin construction. I met with Church employees and ecclesiastical leaders there to discuss priorities and concerns with the Afrikaans translations. I did some research on the music traditions among the blacks and identified the tonic solfa notation to be used in the hymnbooks. James Van Zyl, president of the Soweto Branch took me into Soweto for meetings with the Sotho South translators. I then flew to the coastal town of Durban to meet with the Zulu translators in the Kwa Mashu branch. I also took photographs of members to be used in the missionary flipcharts. I also met with the Xhosa translators in Durban. I then flew to Harare, Zimbabwe, to meet with Shona translators. There were political problems in the country. Many of the white leaders were leaving the country, but many blacks were being baptized. On the return trip, I stopped in New York City to tour the Jehovah's Witness Printing Facility in Brooklyn and learn more about their extensive translation efforts.

***INTERNATIONAL PUBLICATIONS (OCTOBER 1983–
AUGUST 1984)***

In October 1983, I was asked to be the manager of international production in the International Publications office. In this role, I was responsible for assigning and tracking 8,000 publications and audiovisual projects per year in 149 languages. I assigned the work (roughly 2,000 projects at any given time) by issuing Job Tickets to the offices in Salt Lake and 45 other translation, printing, and distribution centers throughout the world. We then monitored the work, reported progress to various levels of management, and kept historical records of what was done. During the translation and production processes, we acted as the clearinghouse for questions from the field. Our work directly affected the activities and workload of 750 employees. This was a temporary assignment, to last about a year. My task was to evaluate processes and determine what should continue as is, make changes where necessary, and computerize the entire operation.

I also supervised the Input Section, which consisted of six amazing typists who input written translations into word processors. Some of them could type languages they didn't know up to 90 words per minute. I was also responsible for the subscription campaigns for the International Magazines.

I maintained the Non-English Authorized List, which was a complete list of authorized materials in phase 3 languages. The list was a resource to the areas to manage inventories at distribution centers.

I developed a computer system, which we called the WIZARD, to automate the functions of assigning projects, controlling specifications, tracking progress, preparing management reports, and storing historical data.

I also made major reassignments in printing worldwide to decrease costs and increase quality. We identified a way to reduce the import tax on sending printing negatives from Salt Lake to the areas. We found a paper substitute called Transtar that could be used to directly burn the printing plates without

the need for negative films. Being a paper product, it could be imported without duties.

When I accepted the position, our staff consisted of myself, a supervisor of audiovisual, and five clerks. By computerizing and automating most of the clerical functions, we were able to reduce the five clerks to two and concentrate on higher-level activities.

May 7–24, 1984, I took a work trip through Central and South America for International Publications to coordinate the printing and distribution of Spanish materials that were translated and prepared in Salt Lake. We were able to identify many ways to increase the quality of work, decrease already reasonable costs, and improve service. We determined that by printing the hardbound Spanish books in Colombia rather than in Mexico, we could save over \$100,000 a year. We later identified other cost savings by shifting some of the printing from Peru to Colombia. I then travelled to Costa Rica and Guatemala to help coordinate the printing and distribution for Central America. While in Guatemala, I was able to attend a district conference in Patzicía and see many people I knew and loved from the Cakchiquel area. I noted good progress since I was last there four years previously. The economic situation had improved some. The people dressed better, were cleaner, and many had been able to make improvements to their homes. The membership was growing, and new leaders were developing. Two branches had been formed out of the previous one branch. Mauro Choc and Alejandro Choc were the branch presidents of the two Patzicía branches. I had a long talk with both. It was satisfying to see them as branch presidents. I had worked hard with them when I was a missionary, and they were teenagers. Now they were working with the teenagers to help them prepare for missions.

CURRICULUM DEPARTMENT

I had the privilege of working with the following Executive Directors in the Curriculum Department:

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- 2006–2007: Elder Jay E. Jensen. I also worked directly with Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi. Elders Russell M. Nelson and David A. Bednar were on the Priesthood Executive Council (PEC).
- 2008–2009: Elder Spencer J. Condie. I also worked directly with Elders Yoshihiko Kikuchi and Paul B. Pieper.
- 2010–2011: Elder Paul B. Pieper. Also worked with Elders Christoffel Golden, Yoshihiko Kikuchi, and Per G. Malm.

The following sections describe the work I did in the Curriculum Department.

INTERNATIONAL PUBLICATIONS (AUGUST 1984– SEPTEMBER 6, 2002)

In August 1984, the International Publications function was transferred to Publications Coordination in the Curriculum Department. I was the manager of International Production

November 5–20, 1984, I traveled to New Zealand, Samoa, Tonga, and Fiji for three weeks. I met in New Zealand to evaluate the Church printing center in Auckland, and refine procedures for coordinating schedules, quantities, printing, and shipping of materials to Samoa, Tonga, and Tahiti. We identified ways to save costs, while maintaining an acceptable standard of quality. I then went to Samoa and Tonga to work out details with the distribution centers and evaluate the printing of the Church magazines. I then went on to Fiji to meet with Church leaders and identify needs for Fijian and Hindi translations.

January 18 to February 7, 1990, I traveled through Latin America to evaluate the use of the curriculum materials and to review procedures relating to translation, production, printing, and distribution of printed and audiovisual materials. I visited eight cities in 16 days: Mexico City; Guatemala City; Bogota, Colombia; Quito, Ecuador; Santiago, Chile; Buenos Aires, Argentina; and Sao Paulo, Brazil.

In 1992, we completed the development and implementation of the custom FOCMAN project management system, using the FOCUS programming and reporting language to report on data in TRMS. We integrated other management systems into it to manage the thousands of non-English publications for the Church each year. We later named the evolved system TIMS (Tracking and Information Management System).

March 18–28, 1993, I traveled to Colombia and Guatemala. I attended a four-day training seminar held in Bogota, Colombia, for Materials Management personnel from the South America North area. I also reviewed the status of the printing of Spanish hardbound books. As a result of my trip to Colombia in 1985, it was determined to consolidate the printing of hardbound books for all Spanish-speaking countries. On June 26, 1998, Kris Christensen at the Salt Lake Distribution Center wrote the following memo to my manager: “At the request of five Distribution Center Managers in South America North Area, and Jose Jimenez, I have been asked to convey to you their feelings of appreciation for the service that Larry Richman provides for them. They’ve highlighted three separate people they feel they can call and get prompt response and resolutions to difficult problems. I believe 20 to 30 minutes were spent in praise of Larry at our Distribution seminar held in Quito, Ecuador. You should be aware of the feelings of those people.”

From May 23–28, 1993, I attended the FUSE 1993 Educational Conference and International Users Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia. I also gave a presentation titled “A FOCUSed Look at Dates.” I had been frustrated by the lack of documentation about how to use dates in the FOCUS programming language, so I researched how to use the various date formats and gave a presentation on my findings.

On April 26, 1994, I attended the All-Church Coordinating Council meeting with President Gordon B. Hinckley, President Thomas S. Monson, all 12 Apostles, and most of the Seventy. President Hinckley spoke about the finances of the Church and how he marvels at the way the Lord provides for the financial security of His Church. He compared the law of tithing with the

way the government collects taxes. The tax code is so complex that people devote their entire lives studying and applying it. In contrast, the Lord's code on tithing is very simple. It is found in seven verses of Doctrine and Covenants 119, and the entire code on the disposition of tithing is found in the one verse of Doctrine and Covenants 120. He mentioned that he was the oldest living Church employee, having been hired by the Church in 1935 upon returning from his mission. He compared the number of employees and the work of the Church from 1935 to 1994. In 1935, President Heber J. Grant personally dedicated the two new meetinghouses built that year. In 1994, there were requests for 498 new meetinghouses.

On December 1, 1995, I was offered the position of manager of international distribution, a new position created to coordinate distribution worldwide. Church headquarters was taking an increasing role in coordinating distribution internationally among the 45 Church distribution centers. The job would have meant a lot of travel, especially in the first year or two, as I would have had to travel to many of the 45 distribution centers. My job would be to establish a common inventory control system to be used by all the centers, develop ways to coordinate inventories within and among the centers to reduce inventory levels, streamline order processing between centers, reduce backorders, and ensure that customers get the materials they need on time. Many millions of dollars could be saved annually by consolidating inventories and making global decisions on printing and stocking inventories. Ultimately, I decided not to take the job.

From December 3–7, 1985, I traveled to Bogota, Colombia to make final arrangements for the printing of Spanish hardbound books for Latin America and determine how to establish a central stock of Spanish materials to serve the emergency needs of all Spanish distribution centers. We found ways to save on bulk mailing rates for the Church magazine and combine the printing for the five countries. I also evaluated several recording studios in Bogota and found talent and directors that could be used to produce audiovisual products in Bogota rather than in Salt Lake.

THE BLESSED LIFE OF AN ORDINARY MAN

Although these work trips were long, and I did not enjoy being away from my family, I was able to perform a good service for the Church and help get better quality materials to the Saints at a lower cost. Travel helped me keep current with what the areas needed from Salt Lake. It helped them gain new ideas as I cross-pollinated ideas and methods I had seen used successfully in other countries.

On July 21, 1994, my director, Kai Andersen, received the following letter from an employee of Mountain Fuel:

Dear Mr. Anderson:

I am writing to express my appreciation to your employee, Larry Richman. A few weeks ago, I was referred to Larry as a possible source for information as we look at coordinating a new referencing numbering system for our company. After returning from vacation, I finally met with Larry this morning and received an overview of the Production Coordination area.

I am amazed that your staff has such a comprehensive plan in place. Nearly every concern and possible challenge we face is already being addressed and clear directions are in place. Larry has shared many innovative ideas and insights that will help us as we begin developing our own system.

It is refreshing to find individuals such as Larry Richman who are capable and willing to help. Thank you for encouraging this attitude in your organization.

Sincerely,

Reggie Van Wagoner
Business Office Specialist
Mountain Fuel

Years before, I had worked with Lee Chambers in Correlation to develop a cataloging and numbering system to keep track of all the Church's publications, videos, websites, and information systems in all languages worldwide. Intelligence was built into the system to be able to sort and filter on the type of item, originating department, and language.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF LARRY RICHMAN

In a meeting on September 7, 1995, Elder Holland conveyed the following to Elder Jack H. Goaslind (our Executive Director) and Ron Knighton (our managing director):

- President Hinckley and President Packer both asked for an earnest effort to be made to redefine the phase lists on the Approved List to enable a more gradual, sequential approval process for authorizing items in approved languages. Elder Holland asked for a preliminary report before October Conference and a final report soon after conference. I responded that we were not working on anything further. Our final proposal had already been submitted.
- Elder Oaks gave commendation in the Council of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve to the Curriculum Department staff “for their superb efforts in organizing its analysis of its Approved List items” which he said, “is a double quantum leap ahead in providing clear understanding of the Approved List.” Elder Holland asked that all who have been a part of this work be highly commended for their efforts.

On January 30, 1996, along with other employees, I was recognized with a luncheon and a plaque that read as follows: “In recognition of Larry Richman for your extraordinary effort during 1995 for the Curriculum Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.” Signed by Jack H. Goaslind, Ronald L. Knight, and Kai A. Andersen. On the back, it read as follows: “Larry has recently worked in developing the recommendations for improving the phase lists. He worked closely with representatives from the Translation Department and the Correlation Department and pulled together the presentation that was enthusiastically received and approved by the Council of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve. This single improvement will save countless hours of precious translation and production time while helping local leaders and congregations to get only the materials they really need to bring the blessings of the gospel to their lives. He is also working on a plan to simplify the preparation of the annual translation packet, which emphasizes the leadership role of the

Area Presidencies in long range planning for translation needs. These accomplishments were done in addition to his constant work keeping our project tracking and information system operational, initiating job ticket instructions, and helping to coordinate Church publications worldwide.”

In 1999 and 2000, we developed the concept for a next-generation project management system to replace TIMS to track Church publications and audiovisual projects. It included adding all the existing products in the distribution center catalog, along with product descriptions and other information. We hired two programmers for two years to code it. We named this custom system PIN (Project Information Network).

In 2000, I helped establish the Church Internet Development Group to manage internet services provided to the Church by M-STAR.

October 27–November 7, 2001, Ron Schwendiman and I made a trip to Germany to implement the PIN system. We installed the program on their computers, provided training, and ensured that the processes were compatible with their local processes. November 29–December 16, 2001, Michael Berry and I traveled to the South Pacific (Sydney, Australia, and Suva, Fiji) to install the PIN system. In September 2002, Frank Armstrong and I traveled through Latin America (Colombia, Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico) to install the system. In November 2002, Frank Armstrong and Ron Schwendiman traveled to Germany, Japan, Taiwan, and the Philippines to install the system there.

In the summer of 2002, we vacated the 25th floor of the Church Office Building for a few months while they remodel the floor. We moved to the second floor of the west wing. It took us three full days to move our ten people, computers, office equipment, and 40 file cabinets. Since we then kept track of all the translation projects in the PIN system, we hired part-time workers (including my daughter Jamie) to scan all the Job Tickets from those file cabinets for historical purposes. There was a Job Ticket for each publication and audiovisual item that had been assigned for translation, including the languages and instructions for translation, printing, and distribution.

PROJECT COORDINATION (SEPTEMBER 6, 2002)

The Project Coordination division of the Curriculum Department was organized on September 5, 2002. I was named the director of this division, responsible to oversee projects from the mind of the originator to the hand of the user, through the stages of planning, approval, development, production, translation, printing/duplication, and distribution. The intent was to provide better long-range planning, careful coordination, and effective management of Church resources in the development of materials and programs for the Church, including printed, audiovisual, electronic, internet, software, and interactive media projects.

I was also responsible for improvement of the processes and workflows worldwide to increase efficiencies and support the implementation of new technologies used in production processes.

LDS.ORG AND INTERNET COORDINATION (JANUARY 1, 2003–DECEMBER 5, 2008)

On June 5, 2003, the Council of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve, decided that the Curriculum Department would “coordinate the internet activities for the Church.” I was assigned to help define the vision, principles, governance, and daily operation of the Church internet presence.

I later became the director of LDS.org and other Church web properties. I was responsible for roles, processes, and governance for the development and maintenance of the Church’s suite of websites, including hundreds of domain names, tens of thousands of pages, over a million unique visitors each month, and 10 million page views per month. From 2003–2006, I led the effort to rebuild Church internet sites from the ground up, including new servers, new programming languages, content management software, portal management software, new visual designs, restructured content with simplified navigation, new search tools, and a search engine optimization (SEO) strategy. Before this time, users could only

search content in the Gospel Library. With new search tools, users would be able to search across all Church sites. We defined guidelines for official country websites and by year end, we had 11 country sites online and another 70 under construction.

We proposed this project to the First Presidency (Presidents Gordon B. Hinckley, Thomas S. Monson, and James E. Faust) on June 11, 2004. I was given 3.5 minutes to give the presentation and I asked for \$3.5 million. It was approved.

We set up an Internet Content Providers Team with representatives from all Church departments to coordinate content, share best practices, and implement standards Church-wide.

In November 2003, the Council of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve established the Internet, Media, and Technology Coordination Committee (IMTCC), which reported the Priesthood Executive Council. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland was the advisor, Elder Monte J. Brough was the chair, Elder W. Rolfe Kerr also attended, and I served as the secretary. Attendees included key managing directors. Subcommittees included the Media Evaluation Committee (led by Correlation Evaluation) to review and evaluate new and existing media products and the Internet Content Providers Team (lead by me) to coordinate and integrate Church Internet content from all sites into a cohesive whole from the user point of view.

The first new site was JosephSmith.net, launched in 2004 to commemorate the 200th anniversary of his birth.

On April 12, 2005, I was a keynote speaker at the three-day DCI Conference on Content Management, Portal, and Collaboration. Ron Schwendiman and I were co-speakers on the topic "Is a Dynamic Multi-lingual Web Presence Possible?" In the presentation, we gave an overview of the scope of the Church's internet challenges.

On February 14, 2006, I demonstrated the redesigned LDS.org to the Quorum of the Twelve. Later that day, Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf sent me an email. He offered a few comments

about the site and then said, "Thank you again for a great product, you are 'awesome'!!! I am looking forward to trying out the beta version. As always, I love and admire you. Best wishes and blessings to you and your team in this difficult but most important task!"

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland also sent me an email and said the following: "Larry, my compliments on the excellent job you and David did in our meeting this morning. I could only hope to do so well when am up there." He then offered a few suggestions.

A beta version of the new site was released in March 2006 and the rebuilt and redesigned site was officially launched on January 30, 2007.

On March 25, 2007, the Provo newspaper Daily Herald published an article describing the updates to LDS.org.

One of the major efforts involved creating the Gospel Library with scriptures, magazines, curriculum manuals, and general conference back many years in English and in many languages. This meant doing the following: (1) reformat 80,000 pages in English magazines, manuals, other publications; (2) convert 800,000 pages in 41+ languages into a standard XML format; (3) build tools and transforms to convert XML scriptures, magazines, and curriculum manuals to seven formats for handheld reader devices, including Palm Reader, MS Reader, MarkMyScriptures, Yanceyware, Plucker, iSilo, and Mobipocket; (4) improve the user experience; and (5) link related content and provided additional formats on the menu bar.

We also initiated the official use of social media by the Church. I set up the first Church account on Facebook (Facebook.com/LDS) on April 24, 2008. We made the first post on the Twitter.com/ldschurch account on September 2, 2010. Fernando Camilo set up the Church Google+ page in January 2013 and the first post was on February 2, 2013. By October 2013, we had 28 Facebook pages with over 7.5 million fans. The typical market value of those fans, if the pages had been for commercial purposes, would have been over \$1.3 billion.

In 2008, it became obvious that I couldn't coordinate all the Church internet activity and lead the Publications and Media Project Office. We then created a separate position for a director of LDS.org and hired someone to fill that position, so I could focus all my time on the Project Office.

At that point, Church websites were visited by five million unique visitors a month, who returned on average twice a month (10 million visits) and read 50 million pages a month. We also had 62 functioning country websites.

INTEGRATED SERVICES (2004–2010)

In 2004, the managing directors of six departments began meeting to simplify and unify the processes and systems for creating print, media, and web projects. The managing directors from Audiovisual, Correlation, Curriculum, Information and Communications Services, Materials Management (translation, printing, distribution), and Physical Facilities (events) met weekly in an Integrated Services Meeting (ISM). I led a team of directors from those six departments to integrate the processes for planning, funding, producing, and implementing products and services. This included the processes for writing, editing, graphic design, translation, printing, distribution, audiovisual production, satellite broadcasting, software development, internet development (programming, infrastructure, information architecture, visual design), and events management (conferences, firesides, training meetings, temple square events, etc.). This team became known as the Integrated Coordination Group (ICG) and it oversaw the creation of common processes and common roles for all types of work, including internet, print, audiovisual, events, and information technology systems.

In January 2005, we added a Customer Relationship Management group to manage the relationships with Church departments.

In 2005, we began to develop standards, processes, and workflow for “single-source publishing”—the concept to author content in a single-source format that could be

automatically published in multiple channels. Content included graphics, text, audio, and video. Publishing channels included printed products, web, software, etc.

PUBLICATIONS AND MEDIA PROJECT OFFICE (2007– AUGUST 1, 2010)

One outcome of the Integrated Services effort described above was the creation in 2007 of a consolidated project office for Church publications, media, and web publishing. We brought together the program and project managers from the Audiovisual, Curriculum, and Materials Management departments. I co-led the Publications and Media Project Office with Jeff Isom (an Audiovisual Department employee). Later in 2007, we co-located the personnel on the 25th floor.

We managed over 8,000 projects (printed, audiovisual, websites, events, and worldwide satellite broadcasts) per year in up to 185 languages. We coordinated planning, approvals, prioritization, writing, creation, translation, production, printing, and international distribution in 105 offices worldwide. We helped ensure that approved materials were produced using Church production resources at a reasonable cost, on time, with appropriate standards of quality, and with an approved implementation plan. This work impacted nearly 1,000 employees in 95 offices worldwide. We developed and implemented computer-assisted project management systems.

To integrate better between the departments, I began attending the Audiovisual Directors' Council and Jeff Isom attended the Curriculum Directors' Council.

We moved the data from the PIN system to the Clarity system and in February we began using Clarity to manage publications projects.

The office was later renamed the Content and Media Project Office. ("Content" referred to both publications and websites.)

In 2008, I participated in the Talent Plus assessment through Human Resources. (See [Talent Plus Executive Profile](#).) It was a battery of tests and a series of interviews, including 360

evaluations designed to determine leadership strengths. It showed my greatest strengths to be the following:

1. Focus. Makes order out of chaos and drives a job to conclusion. Collaborates with others and creates buy-in.
2. Conceptualization. Strategic and systematic approaches to outcomes. Results oriented.
3. Leadership. Builds relationships and mentors others. Responsive to individual needs. Adapts to new ideas. His drive motivates others. Makes well-informed and complex decisions.

In August 2008, Elder Jay E. Jensen was called into the Presidency of the Seventy and was released as the Executive Director of the Curriculum Department. He sent me the following letter on August 4, 2008:

Dear Larry:

As I bring this chapter of my life to close, I look upon it with great fondness and heartfelt appreciation. You always demonstrated absolute loyalty to the Lord, His prophet leaders, and to me as the executive director.

It has been a singular blessing for me to work so closely with you in the last 5 years. I have been blessed and touched by your love, your loyalty and your support. The tasks, projects, and assignments given to you and returned to me (us) have been handled with vision, wisdom, and thoughtfulness, reflecting both the Spirit of the Lord and professional expertise.

Your impact on me and my associates of the Seventy has been uplifting and extremely helpful, resulting in cherished memories. Again, I express to you my love and appreciation. May you continue to be blessed and inspired in the sacred work to which you are assigned.

Kindest personal regards,

Jay E. Jensen

Sometime between February and July 2010, I attended a meeting of the Quorum of the Twelve and sat in the seats behind the Brethren as an employee gave a technical presentation about technology and the Gospel Library mobile app. I remember noticing how frail Elder Robert D. Hales was. For many years, he had experienced health problems. He attended the meeting in a wheelchair and used supplemental oxygen. During the discussion, he raised his hand and asked a question and suggested an adjustment in the proposed strategy which presupposed a deep understanding of technology and showed he completely understood the technology being discussed. The technology specialists in the room who had made the proposal immediately noted that his perspective was deeper and more technologically sound than the one they had proposed. I was grateful to have been there to witness an Apostle of the Lord receive revelation. As a man in his 80s and in poor physical health, I underestimated his understanding of both technology and what people in a modern world need. He knew what the Lord wanted.

PRODUCT AWARENESS AND EVALUATION (AUGUST 1, 2010–MARCH 27, 2012)

As the Director of Product Awareness and Evaluation, I was accountable for (1) improving the use of Church materials by increasing awareness of their availability and use, (2) evaluating the effectiveness of products in a timely and meaningful way, and (3) managing the Worldwide Plan for Church Materials.

I was a product marketer responsible for helping members and leaders become more aware of the availability and purpose of Church resources, including publications, audiovisual products, websites, and broadcasts. I helped with the announcement and promotion of new products and programs. I was also responsible to measure the awareness and use of existing products and determine ongoing needs for awareness and further implementation. I was responsible to develop systematic ways to regularly get product information to

individuals, families, teachers, and leaders worldwide. In addition to improving the traditional communication channels to leaders and members, my job was to develop creative ways to more effectively use social media to encourage the discovery and sharing of content.

We conducted formative evaluations during the development of new products and summative evaluations at periodic intervals for existing products to determine how well they were being used and how effective they were. This information helped determine when products should be revised or retired.

At the same time, I functioned as the director of the Worldwide Plan for Church Materials. I was responsible for refining the guidelines, reviewing and evaluating existing materials, and making recommendations for older items to be discontinued. I also evaluated all new items from Church departments for their proper placement on the phase lists. See the section “Major Projects” for a description of that work.

During this time, we worked on various content delivery strategies. For example, in 2011, we worked with Materials Management to create a road map to expand the use of print-on-demand. The idea was to reduce distribution center inventories of low-volume items. Rather than stock small quantities for long periods, they would maintain no stock and print materials one at a time as they were ordered. We set up the criteria and processes to make that happen.

We also spent significant efforts to begin publishing materials digitally in multiple formats before the materials appeared in print. We set up criteria to determine when to publish in print, digitally, or both.

PRIESTHOOD AND FAMILY DEPARTMENT

The following is a list of the Executive Directors of the Priesthood and Family Department:

- 2012: Elder Paul B. Pieper. (I also worked with Elder Christoffel Golden.)

- 2013: Elder Paul B. Pieper. (I also worked with Elders Christoffel Golden and Mervyn B. Arnold.)
- 2014: Elder Christoffel Golden. (I also worked with Elder Mervyn B. Arnold.)
- 2015–2016: Elder Christoffel Golden. (I also worked with Elder Randall K. Bennett.)
- 2017–2018: Elder Donald L. Hallstrom. (I also worked with Elders Randall K. Bennett and Erich W. Kopischke.)
- 2019–2022: Elder Michael T. Ringwood.

PRODUCT AWARENESS AND EVALUATION (MARCH 27, 2012–MAY 1, 2013)

On March 27, 2012, the Curriculum Department was consolidated into the Priesthood Department. The editing and design functions of the Curriculum Department were moved to a new Publishing Services Department. The Media Services (Audiovisual) Department and the Translation Division of the Materials Management Department were also consolidated into the Publishing Services Department.

In my role of directing the Product Awareness and Evaluation division, I was the product marketer responsible for helping members and leaders become more aware of the availability and purpose of Church materials (publications, media, websites, and broadcasts).

We assisted in the announcement and promotion of new products and programs. We measured the level of awareness and use of existing products and recommend additional awareness activities and further implementation. We developed systematic ways to regularly get product information to individuals, families, teachers, and leaders worldwide. In addition to improving the traditional communication channels to leaders and members, we developed additional ways to communicate to members and leaders, including using social media. We also ensured that letters and notices from headquarters were sent to unit leaders in a timely and efficient way.

I also directed the work of an evaluation manager who evaluated the effectiveness of PEC programs and materials in achieving their stated objectives. He conducted formative evaluations during the development of new products and summative evaluations at periodic intervals for existing products to determine their use and effectiveness. This information helped determine when products should be revised or retired.

INITIATIVE COORDINATION AND PRODUCT MANAGEMENT (MAY 1, 2013–AUGUST 17, 2015)

As the Director of Initiative Coordination and Product Management, I was accountable for (1) coordinating departmental efforts to ensure that work was efficiently aligned with initiatives, priorities, and the covenant path of deepening conversion, (2) improving the use of Church materials by increasing awareness of their availability and use, and (3) evaluating the effectiveness of Priesthood Executive Council (PEC) products and program in a timely and meaningful way.

Examples of the projects we assisted in promoting included the live Face to Face event with David Archuleta on June 24, 2014 (see pictures) and the November 2014, live Face to Face event with Lindsey Stirling.

On June 23, 2015, Elder Mervyn B. Arnold, Lee Gibbons, and I spent the day at the Harvard Business School in Boston with Clayton Christensen and his wife to discuss ways to encourage members to share the gospel. We wanted to learn from all the research, understanding, and experience that Clayton and his wife have in encouraging member missionary work. He wrote the book *Everyday Missionaries*. (See photo.)

PRIESTHOOD AND AUXILIARY DIVISION (AUGUST 17, 2015–JUNE 29, 2020)

As the Director of the Priesthood and Auxiliary Division, I was accountable for directing the Church-focused programs

and products in the Priesthood and Family Department, such as Sunday and weekday programs for adults, youth, and children as well as leader training and tools.

On August 19, 2015, the Priesthood Executive Council (PEC) was renamed the Priesthood and Family Executive Council (PFEC).

In September 2015, I began working with Elder Randall K. Bennett, one of the Executive Directors of the Priesthood and Family Department. We really clicked because we have similar management styles.

In November 2015, as part of my annual review with my managing director, I was asked to prayerfully reflect on my strengths and determine how to build on those strengths. The following is what I wrote:

On January 22, 2016, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland issued a letter stating that our managing director, David T. Warner, had been transferred out of our department to a new position to provide “consulting and creative services” to Church departments, Area Presidencies, and Church-affiliated organizations. David started the consulting firm WarnerBoothe with Ross Boothe. On February 24, 2016, Peter Evans became the managing director of the Priesthood and Family Department. The assignment letter stated that “Brother Evans has had significant leadership experience at the Church over the past eight years, most recently serving as the director of product management for the Self-Reliance Services Department. Prior to joining Church employment, Brother Evans was owner and president of Evans Communications, a company that specialized in publishing magazines and other collateral material for large corporate clients and professional associations.”

I managed several cross-departmental working groups on the following topics: abuse, corrections, disabilities, LGBT, mental health, pornography, safe media use, and suicide. (Also see “Life Help” in the “Major Projects” section.) Elder Randall K. Bennett was my advisor and I really enjoyed working with him. He and I had much the same management style and we complemented each other very well.

I was in awe at the scope of our work in the Priesthood and Family Department, but also took delight in it. I was grateful to be a part of it. Elders Dallin H. Oaks and Jeffrey R. Holland both commented about the scope of the work of the PFEC, saying that if it's not family history, missionary, or temple, it falls in the PFEC. The scope included some of the greatest challenges in the Church.

In a meeting with Elder Holland in August 2016, he recounted the advice that President Monson gave him when he called Elder Holland as a General Authority: "Be yourself—but be your best self—and give all the credit to God."

November 4, 2016 was to be a typical department devotional with our six Executive Directors (Elders Golden, Lawrence, Sitati, Bennett, Curtis, and Kopischke). Elder Kopischke was scheduled to speak, but at the last minute, the Apostles from the PFEC (Elders Holland, Christofferson, and Rasband) decided to come and give us a special message. They each spoke to us, and their messages were to genuinely thank us for all we do. Elder Holland, especially, was always so personable and loving. With tears in his eyes, and with a halting voice, he expressed his sincere love. For them to come at the last minute and stay the entire hour was special. Every minute of their days, nights, and weekends are tightly scheduled. At the end of the meeting, they asked for everyone to file by them for a handshake. Elder Holland gave me a hug and thanked me.

On January 25, 2017, Richard Heaton was named the managing director of the Priesthood and Family Department. For the previous 14 years, he was the administrative director of the Provo Missionary Training Center.

Elder Erich W. Kopischke was the advisor to our Priesthood and Auxiliary Division. We held weekly coordination meetings with Elder Kopischke and five other staff members to coordinate Aaronic Priesthood, Melchizedek Priesthood, and Relief Society work. Those coordination meetings were strategic meetings to identify the issues we needed to address and to plan the agendas of two key twice-monthly meetings. This kind of strategic planning with an executive subset of

participants was very helpful so that the larger meetings could be more focused and effective.

- The Priesthood and Auxiliary Advisory Committee consisted of the five General Auxiliary Presidencies (Relief Society, Primary, Young Women, Young Men, and Sunday School) and a few key staff. Its purpose was to better coordinate the work of the auxiliaries and help them better achieve their purposes
- The Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society Coordination Meeting addressed needs specific to elders quorums and Relief Societies, such as ministering.

On May 30, 2017, I attended the pre-PFEC meeting in Elder Holland's office, along with Elders Christofferson, Rasband, and Golden; Bishop Caussé; Sister Bingham; and others. We discussed last-minute plans for the presentation to the First Presidency Leadership Meeting (including the First Presidency, Quorum of the Twelve, Presidency of the Seventy, and the Presiding Bishopric) tomorrow. At the beginning of the meeting, Elder Holland offered the prayer. It was an amazing experience to be there as he thanked God in humility for the restored Gospel and for living in the greatest time in the history of the world. He prayed for inspiration and guidance in the matters we were about to discuss. I counted it a blessing and privilege to be involved in a small way in the great work that was going forward.

I walked back from the Church Administration Building to my office in the Church Office Building with an employee who was also in that meeting. He was new to the department, and said, "In all the years you've worked here, do you get to the point where you take it for granted that you just met with Apostles?" I responded, "No. If anything, I have a renewed appreciation for the marvelous opportunity it is. I hope I never get to the point where I take it for granted." I always got chills when I entered the Church Administration Building. It was holy ground.

On November 16, 2017, I was invited into a meeting of the Communications Services Committee (CSC) to make a presentation on overall messaging for the Church. The previous week, we had given a brief presentation to the Quorum of the Twelve regarding major initiatives from the Priesthood and Family Executive Council that were anticipated to be implemented or announced in the first half of 2018. We also recommended that a unifying messaging effort be considered to bring needed context to these initiatives so they could be seen by members and leaders as complementary to a spiritual purpose and not as disjointed programs. The unifying message was to center our lives on the Savior and His gospel by focusing on the essential.

At the beginning of the meeting, Elder David A. Bednar (the chairman of the CSC) paused and said, [paraphrased] “Now, Larry. We have been friends for a long time. We have worked together for years in the Priesthood Executive Council, and we can talk candidly with each other. The groundwork we lay here establishing a framework for basic messaging in the Church will affect the next three presidents of the Church. We need to make sure we do this right.”

That week, I had the privilege of being involved in five presentations either to individual members of the Quorum of the Twelve or to the full Quorum of the Twelve. Earlier that week, I had the thought that it had “been a week from hell” because of the quick pace of it, the back-to-back meeting schedule, and the quick turn-around of some of the assignments I had. However, as soon as I had the thought, I was immediately rebuked by the Spirit, with the thought “Don’t feel that way! You are blessed to be involved in so many important matters of the kingdom.” I immediately repented.

At that time, I had been involved in many projects that had an important impact on the Church. For example:

- Priests and Young Women participation in temple baptisms. Priests authorized to perform and witness baptisms for the dead and young women to record

baptisms and confirmations and assist in other tasks in the baptistry.

- *Come, Follow Me—for Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society.* Beginning in 2018, Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society meetings had a new focus. The first Sunday of each month was a council session about local responsibilities, opportunities, and challenges and making plans to act. The next two weeks focused on messages from general conference. The fourth Sunday was a study of a special topic chosen by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.
- Light the World Christmas Celebration for 2017.
- Changes in Missionary Work. A standard set of interview questions for prospective missionaries and a new process for members to submit referrals so that they can communicate with the missionaries and be involved in the contacting and teaching of their friends.
- Easter Initiative “Prince of Peace.”

The following was my journal entry on January 30, 2018:

I can’t believe how busy my day was today. At 8:00 a.m., we met with the Quorum of the Twelve for 45 minutes about the home and visiting teaching and Melchizedek Priesthood quorums project. We then scrambled to make updates to the presentation documents to review by our six Executive Directors at 10:00 a.m. From 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., our project team met to update the documents for Elder Hallstrom to review at 1:30 p.m., then another round of updates to get to members of the PFEC by end of day so they could review them and give us feedback at 10:00 a.m. tomorrow.

In the meeting with Elder Hallstrom at 1:30 p.m., Richard Heaton made a comment something like “when we met with the Quorum of the Twelve the other day...” When I mentioned that it had been just that morning, he exclaimed “I can’t believe that was just this morning!” My thoughts exactly. These weeks have been very busy, but also very

rewarding to work so closely with General Authorities on important work.

In the April 2018 general conference, President Russell M. Nelson said the following: “Our Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, will perform some of His mightiest works between now and when He comes again. We will see miraculous indications that God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, preside over this Church in majesty and glory.” (“Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives,” April 2018) I testify that it is His work and He influenced us as employees in the Priesthood and Family Department to do some of his work. And I had a front-row seat!

On November 27, 2018, at the request of Sister Sharon Eubank (counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency and director of Humanitarian Services), Elder Kopischke and I gave a skills presentation to key leaders in the welfare department on how to manage meetings. Sister Eubank had been impressed with how Elder Kopischke and I plan and run meetings, such as the Priesthood and Auxiliary Advisory Committee.

The following are some of the key points we made in that presentation. In meetings with General Authorities and General Auxiliary Presidencies, you must respect them and their time. (I attend 3.5 hours of meetings a week with Apostles and another four hours of meetings with General Authorities.) There is a fine balance in knowing how much to prepare for a structured meeting and how much to just let the Spirit guide. If you structure it too much, you may miss their direction as called and set-apart leaders. But you still must plan the meeting—in fact, you must prepare even more. Hence the *art* and *science* of leading meetings. The science involves carefully planning and scheduling agenda items in advance. A meeting without a plan—a specific purpose—can end in chaos. It can lead further away from the purpose rather than achieving your purpose. You must plan the purpose, but the caution is not to expect a particular outcome, because you want the Spirit to guide and direct the discussion.

It is important to anticipate when you need certain decisions and plan when you need to begin discussions—knowing that sometimes you may need several meetings with time in between for the participants to discuss with others, pray about it, and determine the appropriate course of action and then come back to make a decision. You cannot always expect a decision to be reached in a specific meeting—especially when you ask for strategic direction. So, have a master plan in place to know where you need to head and how early you need to begin specific discussions.

We met weekly with Elder Kopischke to plan the meetings with the General Auxiliary Presidencies. We talked about the agenda items and what we wanted to accomplish in each meeting. Then the staff came to the meetings prepared with well-crafted statements of the issues, as well as options. This helped get the discussion going.

We then followed typical meeting management protocols, with agendas sent to participants in advance of each meeting, a printed copy placed at each seat, and a person taking notes on the screen to help people track the meeting discussions and decisions. Then, we sent the notes or minutes from the meeting very soon after the meeting. The sooner participants could read the minutes and follow-up items, the more likely they were to read them and act. We wanted to keep the momentum of the current thought and spirit that was working on the participants.

The following are notes from Elder Kopischke's teachings:

- Create an agenda and set a time limit. Great meetings end on time, and they end with clarity. He quoted Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf: "Let's be honest; it's rather easy to be busy. We all can think up a list of tasks that will overwhelm our schedules. Some might even think that their self-worth depends on the length of their to-do list. They flood the open spaces in their time with lists of meetings and minutia—even during times of stress and fatigue. Because they unnecessarily complicate their lives, they often feel increased frustration, diminished joy, and too little sense of

meaning in their lives.” (“Of Things That Matter Most”)

- Allow open discussion. “Appoint among yourselves a teacher, and let not all be spokesmen at once; but let one speak at a time and let all listen unto his sayings, that when all have spoken that all may be edified of all, and that every man may have an equal privilege.” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:122) “Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.” (Proverbs 15:22) A key principle is that everyone speaks, and the most senior person speaks last.
- Transform ideas into tasks. What is to be done? Therefore, what? What are we learning?
- Assign work during the meeting and follow up. “One of the best ways to help people make and keep commitments is to extend an invitation. Extending and following up on invitations is vital. (*Preach My Gospel*, 196). “Extending an invitation without following up is like beginning a journey without finishing it or buying a ticket to a concert without going into the theater. Without the completed action, the commitment is hollow.” (*Preach My Gospel*, 200).

After the meeting, I received the following thank-you letter signed by each of the attendees.

Dear Larry,

As a Humanitarian and Emergency Response working group, we extend our collective gratitude for your willingness to share your time and experiences with us today. As we talked afterward, each of us took away concrete principles we can put into practice to be more effective in our councils and counzels [a German reference Elder Kopischke made]!

Your co-presentation with Elder Kopischke was a perfect demonstration of the collaboration you taught us about. The two of you masterfully demonstrated the five principles and inspired us to be better. You were both generous to accept

an invitation such as this and we appreciate your teaching and kindness. We feel a close collaboration with the Priesthood and Family Department and look forward to doing more together next year—with extremely productive meetings!

On January 29, 2019, I had my annual Accountability and Talent Improvement (ATI) review with Richard Heaton. Before Richard became the managing director of the Priesthood and Family Department, we had only interacted once or twice over the many years that he was the administrative director of the Missionary Training Center. Therefore, when he became our managing director, we had to develop a relationship. It did not take long because he was very easy to get along with. He facilitated but did not micromanage. He also respected my experience and was complementary of my work. He commented that he had never worked with anyone who had more connections and knew how to solve problems in the Church organization better than I did. He expressed his appreciation for how efficient and productive I was.

I also expressed how grateful I was for him. He gave me the freedom to get things done and got me the access I needed. Richard was productive, efficient, and very helpful to me to keep things moving and provide the support I needed. We made a wonderful team.

Our work with Elder Kopischke ended in June 2019, when he was assigned to the Europe Area Presidency. In our last formal meeting with Elder Kopischke and the Priesthood and Auxiliary Advisory Committee, I took the following the notes about the things that the General Auxiliary Presidencies said in complimenting Elder Kopischke:

- He showed us how to counsel together. At the end of counseling, we always came up with an action plan.
- He created an atmosphere where we could bring up any topic without fear. He helped us think outside the box and ask, “Why not?”
- He looked for the positive. His humor helped us see what was practical.

- We appreciated the German lessons. He brought his experiences and culture to the discussion.
- He always pointed us to the Savior (see Doctrine and Covenants 108:7).
- Revelation and inspiration superseded what we perceived as set in stone.
- We knew he had a relationship with us and that he cared about us.

After sending these notes to Elder Kopischke, he sent me the following email: “Larry, Thank you as always.... One thing is clear... none of these meetings would have been what they have been without your careful watching, supervising, and guiding the agenda. Thanks to you and the team of the Priesthood and Curriculum Divisions. With much love. Erich”

Elder Donald L. Hallstrom was released as our Executive Director and became an emeritus General Authority at the October general conference. In August 2019, Elder Michael T. Ringwood became our Executive Director.

On February 5, 2020, I enjoyed an amazing meeting of the Priesthood and Family Executive Council. A double quartet came in to sing five or six new hymns planned for the new hymnbook. One of them was the song “You Are Mine.” It was a touching song, both in melody and in the simplicity of the message. I was grateful to sit there and watch the tears well up in the eyes of the three Apostles in front of me as they listened to it for the first time.

In a meeting on March 13, 2020, with Richard Heaton and Elder Hallstrom, they discussed the upcoming general conference and the confidential events that would happen. When my name was brought up as one who perhaps could be brought into the circle of confidentiality, Elder Hallstrom said “I’d trust Larry Richman with my life.”

No visitors were allowed at general conference in October and conference was not broadcast to meetinghouses because of the coronavirus pandemic. Members participated via television, radio, the internet, and other technologies.

At the April general conference, President Russell M. Nelson announced a new symbol to represent the Church. This new symbol communicated to the world that this was the Savior's Church and that all we do centers on Him and His gospel. The new symbol and adjustment in the logotype of the name of the Church was a confidential project we had worked on for months.

Rather than a traditional priesthood session or Relief Society session, the Saturday evening session of general conference was a special session to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the events that began the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. (See "Restoration Commemoration 2020" in the section "Major Projects.") Invited were all holders of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood and all members of the Young Women and Relief Society.

A portion of the Sunday morning session of general conference on April 5, 2020, was a worldwide solemn assembly, including the Hosanna Shout. The Hosanna Shout was first performed as a ritual at the dedication of the Kirtland Temple and was a part of the Kirtland endowment ceremony. It was performed at the dedication of temples and only at a few other sacred times outside the temple. The last time it was performed outside the temple was 20 years ago at the dedication of the Conference Center. April 4, 2020 was the first time in history to have a "worldwide solemn assembly" with people participating worldwide at the same time.

President Nelson spoke about the challenges in the world today and commended us to continue forward. Regardless of world conditions, we can always have the power of God to bless us. During his talk, President Nelson read the proclamation, "The Restoration of the Fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ: A Bicentennial Proclamation to the World." It was in the form of a video that President Nelson recorded in the Sacred Grove.

I felt that we were really blessed to be alive during the last days. What a blessing to be permitted to witness events of the last days, such as the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, earthquakes, a general conference that was delivered only

digitally (with no in-person attendees), and many other things that would yet come to pass. We knew that many events before the Savior's Second Coming would be difficult. But what a privilege to be able to witness all this first-hand!

Over the last several years of my employment, I was given increasingly more high-profile assignments. Elder Michael T. Ringwood and Richard Heaton asked Elder Quentin L. Cook if I could be a regular participant in the department Executive Directors' Meetings (EDM) and in the Priesthood and Family Executive Council (PFEC) meetings. My purpose for being there was to understand better all the initiatives and projects so I could follow-up on next steps after the meetings. My role was to ensure that various people in the department—and in other departments—collaborated for a comprehensive solution. I took action notes and immediately sent emails to various people with follow-up assignments. Although I was not an "official" member of the EDM or the PFEC, they honestly sought my input and asked me to vote on every item.

- The Executive Directors' Meetings (EDM) were twice-weekly meetings with Elder Ringwood, the Assistant Executive Directors, and the presidents of the five General Organizations.
- The weekly pre-PFEC meetings were strategic meetings to identify the issues we needed to address in the PFEC meetings. We planned the PFEC agendas and had informal discussions to raise potential issues so that we were prepared for the formal discussions in the PFEC meetings. Attending were Elders Quentin L. Cook, Gerrit W. Gong, Ulisses Soares, and Elder Michael T. Ringwood; Bishop Gérald Caussé; Sister Jean B. Bingham, Richard Heaton, and Cory Maxwell (secretary to the PFEC).
- The Priesthood and Family Executive Council (PFEC) was a weekly Executive Council meeting. There are three Executive Councils in the Church that operate under the authority of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: the Priesthood and Family Executive Council, Missionary Executive Council, and

Temple and Family History Executive Council. Each Executive Council is led by two or three Apostles. The PFEC consisted of three Apostles (Elders Quentin L. Cook, Gerrit W. Gong, and Ulisses Soares), the Presiding Bishop (Bishop Gérald Caussé), a member of the Presidency of the Seventy (Elder Carl B. Cook), the Relief Society General President (Sister Jean B. Bingham), a counselor in the Young Women General Presidency (Sister Becky Craven), the Executive Director of the Priesthood and Family Department (Elder Michael T. Ringwood), and the managing director of the Priesthood and Family Department (Richard Heaton).

***COMMUNICATIONS AND MESSAGING (JUNE 29, 2020–
SEPTEMBER 28, 2021)***

On June 29, 2020, adjustments were announced to the Priesthood and Family Department's organizational structure. My new role was Director of Communications and Messaging. I wrote the job description for it about ten years prior to that and had been pressing the department in the direction of doing more with the announcement, implementation, and ongoing messaging of Church programs and products. The job was partly integrated with the Church Communication Department (CCD), such that I was a de facto director in that department as well. I attended the directors' meetings and Executive Director meetings in both departments.

On August 1, 2020, some General Authority assignments changed in the PFEC and among the Executive Directors in the department. Elders Quentin L. Cook, Gerrit W. Gong, and Ulisses Soares were assigned to the PFEC. On August 1, 2021, Elders Dieter F. Uchtdorf and Dale G. Renlund were assigned to the PFEC.

COMMUNICATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION

(SEPTEMBER 28, 2021–JUNE 2022)

On September 28, 2021, the Communications and Messaging Division was merged with the Covenant Path division in the Priesthood and Family Department. I was named as the director of the new Communications and Covenant Path division, with the purpose of integrating communications and implementation. The objective of the Covenant Path division was to identify ways to help members progress along the covenant path. It carefully monitored key metrics of member participation in each of the Church's areas. It also provided area support managers to work with Area Presidencies to adapt and implement programs and products in a way to better meet the needs of areas. Michael Magleby was named the manager of the Covenant Path group.

MAJOR PROJECTS

This section describes a few of the major project assignments I had as a Church employee. On April 30, 2020, I had a two-hour interview with Matt Heiss, a historian from the Church History Department. His purpose was to capture historical information about some of the recent changes that President Nelson had implemented during his time as President of the Church and my involvement in those efforts. It was an interesting chance to reflect on some of the amazing experiences I had to work with Church leaders on these important initiatives.

In recent years, the Church had done much to help strengthen faith in Heavenly Father and His Son Jesus Christ. In retrospect, I see the progression of various initiatives and how each one prepared us for the next. These were all carefully orchestrated by the Master in a logical progression. (See Interlocking Patterns, the article "Revelation Guided 'an Interlocking Pattern of Strength' That Now Sustains the Church during COVID-19, Elder Cook Says," and "Gather Together in One All Things in Christ," David A. Bednar, general conference October 2018.)

CHANGES ANNOUNCED IN 2018

Below is a list of the major changes in the Church announced in 2018 and implemented through 2019 that I had the privilege of helping with. I felt grateful to have a front-row seat to witness these steps in the continued restoration of the gospel.

- Ministering replacing home teaching and visiting teaching.
- Combining of high priests and elders into a single Melchizedek Priesthood quorum. Restructuring high priest groups in stakes.
- Discontinuing scouting and the introduction of a new program for children and youth. (Scouting for young men 14+ was discontinued in 2018 and all scouting was discontinued in 2019.)
- Hymnbook and the *Children's Songbook* to be revised.
- Changes in Sunday meeting schedule beginning in January 2019.
- Home-centered Church-supported gospel study (new *Come, Follow Me* curriculum in 2019).
- Refocus on the full the Name of the Church (including new guidelines on the use of the terms *Mormon* and *LDS*).
- Increased responsibilities of elders quorum and Relief Society presidencies.
- Age-group progression. Young men and young women began to progress as groups at the beginning of January in the year they turned 12, 14, and 16. Young men were eligible for ordination to the appropriate priesthood office in January of the year they turned 12, 14, and 16. Young women and ordained young men were eligible for limited-use temple recommends in January of the year they turned 12.

COMBATING PORNOGRAPHY COMMITTEE

On February 18, 2005, I received a letter from Elder Jeffrey R. Holland inviting me to serve on a task committee to consider “measures to combat the increasingly devastating challenge of

pornography in our communities and in the lives of some of our members.” The committee was directed by Elder Stephen B. Oveson, an Executive Director of the Priesthood Department. The chairman was Fred M. Riley, Commissioner of LDS Family Services. A key focus of the committee’s work was to recommend and prepare resources to help prevent the use of pornography and to overcome its negative effects on individuals and families wherever it had a beginning. The committee also produced materials for leaders and members and recommended ways to coordinate the efforts of Church departments with community organizations. We accomplished the following:

- Wrote a booklet for members and another for bishops. The first version of the booklet for members was not published by the Church but was offered to another organization to publish. It included practical ways to avoid and overcome pornography. The second version of the booklet was published in November 2005 as *Let Virtue Garnish Thy Thoughts*. The booklet for bishops, *Helping Those Who Struggle with Pornography, For Bishops*, had the same content, plus an introduction for bishops.
- Developed a training presentation for stake presidents and bishops.
- Prepared content for the CombatingPornography.org website. The site was updated in June 2013 and renamed Addressing Pornography.
- Coordinated with community organizations that shared similar values and concerns regarding pornography use.
- Identified places to address pornography in curriculum lessons and magazines.

I continued working on the committee and attending biweekly meetings through the end of 2008. (Also see the section “Life Help: Pornography.”)

COVID-19

Over the next several months, COVID-19 spread from China to most of the world. To slow the spread of the virus, countries closed their borders to outside travelers. Gatherings of people were limited, and we had to wear face masks and keep a physical distance from each other. Stores still had food, but popular items, such as bottled water, toilet paper, and disinfectants sold out quickly. Restaurants closed, and fast-food restaurants only served at drive-throughs. After being at all-time highs on February 19, the stock market crashed in March, and the economy was nearly in recession.

Medical workers and first responders put their own health at risk to help others. Schoolteachers Zoomed lessons into homes. School coaches lead virtual exercise sessions for families. Artists and musicians freely shared messages of hope, although their own careers had been upended. And neighbors even gave each other spare rolls of toilet paper.

Meetings. On March 11, 2020, the First Presidency announced that all large gatherings of Church members were suspended in areas where the coronavirus was a challenge, including Asia, Asia North, Europe, Europe East, and all areas in the United States and Canada. The Church eventually suspended all meetings worldwide and bishops authorized priesthood holders to administer the sacrament in their homes.

Over time, Area Presidencies began authorizing some meetings and activities to resume on a limited basis using a careful, phased approach. For a while, second-hour meetings were held virtually using Zoom. When Primary could not meet physically, some parents began to understand in a more complete way that parents have the responsibility to teach the gospel to their children.

Temples. Beginning March 16, 2020, the First Presidency announced temporary adjustments in temple work worldwide, limiting ordinances, limiting guests, and providing ordinances by appointment only. Later, all temples were closed. Many members responded to President Nelson's charge to gather Israel on both sides of the veil by stepping up the pace of

indexing and preparing temple names so that when temples reopened for proxy work, ordinances could be performed at an accelerated pace. In May 2020, the First Presidency began a phased reopening of temples for living ordinances.

Missionaries. Missionaries in many parts of the world were reassigned to other countries, released early and returned home, or self-quarantined in their apartments. It caused them to think and pray to find new, creative ways of doing missionary work—that, by the way, were remarkably successful.

Schools. Over the next many months, schools were closed, reopened, and closed again. Many students began learning at home or in online classes.

Businesses. Many businesses closed and either went out of business or learned to adapt—in many cases with employees working from home.

Health. People suffered when loved ones died from the effects of COVID. Others got sick but recovered completely. And others recovered but had lasting damage to their heart or lungs or had a long-term loss of the sense of smell or taste.

Communications. We were extremely busy at work tracking and communicating all the changes through letters, notices, emails, social media posts, and news articles. As the director of communications in the Priesthood and Family Department, I was involved in coordinating all these communications. I maintained an official list of changes, which grew to five pages. I constantly updated the list of frequently asked questions (sometimes, multiple times a day) and sent it to scores of key people in multiple departments to arm them with references to answer phone calls. The versions of my FAQ document numbered into the 30s.

I helped draft some of the official letters and documents, using various documents written by the First Presidency and members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. These documents outlined ways the Church would carry forward God's essential work when world conditions limit our ability to meet physically or when other functions are temporarily

limited because of earthquakes, wars, famine, pestilence, or plagues.

On March 14, 2020, President Russell M. Nelson published a special video message to reassure members. By then, most Church employees were working from home. Working from home continued for the next two years.

We had a team of people review our messages to be sure we appropriately addressed the emotional needs of members. We determined that the term “social distancing” was unintentionally sending the wrong message. We needed “physical distancing” but “social connection.” Messaging included how to minister while maintaining physical distance. Later research showed that the experiences during the pandemic helped elevate in members’ minds the importance of ministering.

See a summary of coronavirus events in this [Deseret News](#) story. See my article [“27 Ways the Church is Prepared for the COVID-19 Pandemic.”](#)

Earthquake. On top of the concern about the coronavirus, on March 18 at 7:09 a.m., a 5.7-magnitude earthquake hit the Salt Lake Valley. The epicenter was about 5.5 miles north of our home. Our house suffered no damage, except that some things fell off shelves and the large picture on the shelf above my desk fell and broke a few things on my desk. My daughter Hailee and her children Leo and Mila were spending the night with us, and they were scared. There were about 90 aftershocks during the day, which worried them. The electricity came back on about noon. It reminded us that man is nothing compared with the forces of nature. It reminded us that God is in control and that this life is the time to prepare to meet Him.

It made me think about the Guatemala earthquake of 1976. I was planning to go to work on March 18 but had not yet left the house when the earthquake hit. I texted David Frischknecht “Happy earthquake day!” (Every year on February 4, we exchanged “Happy Earthquake Day” texts or emails, in commemoration of the Guatemalan earthquake of 1976.) He texted back, “I was thinking about you as I crawled under my

desk, in following earthquake protocol. And since. Thanks for the note.” (Read about my experiences in the Guatemalan earthquake of 1976 at larryrichman.org/guatemala-earthquake-1976.)

On October 2, 2020, the President of the United States, Donald Trump, announced that he had contracted COVID-19 and went to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.

On November 15, 2020, I gave a talk in stake conference titled “What Will You Tell Your Grandchildren?” It summarized some of my perspectives about the pandemic.

On November 20, 2020, President Nelson issued to the world a special message, “The Healing Power of Gratitude.” See the section, “President Nelson’s Video ‘The Healing Power of Gratitude.’”

In March 2021, Teri and I received the COVID-19 vaccinations. Many people did not trust the vaccinations for the same reason that politics got in the way of wearing face masks. In June, we went back to full Church meetings in the two-hour block with social distancing. Meetings in our stake did not return to normal until 2022.

GENERAL HANDBOOK

On February 19, 2020, the First Presidency released a new *General Handbook*. It was the culmination of several years’ work, and a year of intensive work by our team working on adjustments to many policies and rewriting them all in a simpler and more Christlike voice.

Correlation led the effort to restructure the Church handbooks to change the tone and level of detail. The effort included a review of all the policies and procedures in the current *Handbook 1* and *Handbook 2*. Correlation requested feedback from General Authorities and many stake and ward leaders about things they found helpful and not helpful in the handbooks, including suggestions for changes in policies.

One of my employees, Jenifer Greenwood, was a major contributor on the team that rewrote *Handbook 1* and *Handbook*

2 to become the new *General Handbook* that was released on February 19, 2020. The rest of our team assisted in drafting many of the policies that were revised as part of the new handbook. Chapter 38, “Church Policies and Guidelines,” included policies and procedures on a variety of moral issues. Some policies were new, some were updated, and others were updated months later. These moral policies included abortion, abuse, artificial insemination, birth control, child pornography, incest, in vitro fertilization, same-sex marriages, sex education, sexual abuse, single expectant parents, sperm donation, suicide, surgical sterilization, surrogate motherhood, same-sex attraction, and a new entry on transgender.

The handbook was rewritten in a ministerial tone in the Savior’s voice. Terminology was changed to better reflect the intent of some Church actions. For example, *disciplinary councils* were changed to *membership councils*. The terms *disfellowshipment* and *excommunication* were reframed in terms of membership restrictions and withdrawal of membership.

GOSPEL TOPICS

The Gospel Topics were created as a comprehensive resource to provide doctrinal explanations about gospel-related topics. To provide concise information about basic gospel subjects, in 2005, we began creating the Gospel Topics section on LDS.org and later published it on the Gospel Library app. Its purpose was to help Church members and other truth seekers know what the Church taught about specific principles, Church history events, and social or moral issues. Each Gospel Topic included an overview and links to helpful learning resources. We translated the Gospel Topics into many languages, and it served as a core resource for personal study and was increasingly used for curriculum. As curriculum materials became more condensed, teaching guides directed teachers to find doctrinal explanations in general conference talks, magazine articles, and Gospel Topics. The Gospel Topics received full ecclesiastical review and were considered official statements on the topics.

A team led by Church History wrote 11 longer essays on sensitive topics that were included in Gospel Topics.

INTEGRATED SERVICES

Soon after the Translation Department was created from the Materials Management Department, the managing directors of several departments began meeting to coordinate issues, processes, and work associated with the Church publishing system. In 2002, we began developing common processes for printed, audiovisual, and information technology projects. In 2004, the Integrated Services Meeting (ISM) consisted of the managing directors of the following six departments: Audiovisual, Correlation, Curriculum, Information and Communications Services, Materials Management (translation, printing, distribution), and Physical Facilities (events).

I led a team of directors known as the Integrated Coordination Group (ICG) from those six departments to integrate the processes for planning, funding, producing, and implementing products and services. This included common processes for writing, editing, graphic design, translation, printing, distribution, audiovisual production, satellite broadcasting, software development, internet development (programming, infrastructure, information architecture, visual design), and events management (conferences, firesides, training meetings, temple square events, etc.).

In 2005, we began to develop standards, processes, and workflows for *single-source publishing*—the concept to author content in a single-source format that could be automatically published in multiple channels. Content included graphics, text, audio, video, and composed documents. Publishing channels included printed products, web, software, etc.

LEADER COMMUNICATIONS

Official letters and notices. For most of the time I worked for the Curriculum and the Priesthood and Family Departments, I was responsible for coordinating the official letters and notices

sent from headquarters to stake and ward leaders. That included the following:

- The process of sending the following to stake and ward leaders: (1) official letters from the First Presidency, Quorum of the Twelve, and the Presiding Bishopric, and (2) notices from headquarters departments. This included ensuring that the 200–225 official letters and notices per year were properly approved, assigned for translation into 50 languages, formatted in each language, and sent to stake and ward leaders in a timely manner.
- In about 2004, we implemented a system to send the letters and notices to leaders by email, in addition to sending printed letters and notices by postal mail.
- We created the Official Communication Library (OCL), which was an archive of the official letters and notices sent from headquarters to Church leaders and the system that sent email notifications to leaders when there was a new letter or notice posted in the library.
- In early 2017, we discontinued sending printed letters and notices by postal mail. This reduced delivery time worldwide from 8 weeks to 1 day and saved the cost of printing and mailing.
- On February 17, 2021, we launched a major upgrade of the system, including a new database and new email servers. It also automated the formatting of letters, notices, and enclosures, eliminating the need to create InDesign templates and manually format every language translation using InDesign. The system automatically generated XML text strings and routed them to translation. The translations were automatically formatted as a PDF and translators were able to review and approve the formatting. This reduced manual processes, ensured consistent formatting, and reduced the turn-around time for preparing letters and notices in languages. It enabled us to initiate a new policy to send English and languages at the same time so that

leaders worldwide would receive the communications simultaneously.

- For years, I reviewed and made suggestions on letters and notices before they were formally reviewed and approved by the Communications Review Committee (CRC). In about August 2020, I became a formal member of the CRC to review letters, notices, newsletters, emails, and other communications from headquarters.

Church News and Events. This section of LDS.org provided about 900 news articles a year for members. (This was separate from the *Church News* published by the Deseret News.) It also included the events section with pages for each major event and event entries on the worldwide calendar at calendar.LDS.org (which later became calendar.ChurchofJesusChrist.org). In 2020, we consolidated news on newsroom.ChurchofJesusChrist.org and discontinued the Church News and Events site.

Prophets and Apostles Speak Today. This section of the Church website provided biographies of General Authorities and General Officers along with news reports about the ministry of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. It published talks by Church leaders in venues outside of general conference. When CCD and *Church News* began reporting more of the ministry of Church leaders, there was less need for the separate Prophets and Apostles section, so we moved the official biographies to the Newsroom site and deprecated the Prophets and Apostles Speak Today site in 2021.

LEADER TRAINING AND SUPPORT

I directed the Priesthood and Auxiliary Division, which was responsible for the development of training resources and tools for stake and ward leaders. Since local leaders turn over frequently, ongoing training was critical to helping them understand their responsibilities and function in a worldwide Church. (Also see “My Calling” in this section.)

LIFE HELP (2016–2022)

For several years, I coordinated Church efforts to address issues that members face for which there was a chronic need that requires acute attention. The efforts were referred to as Special Topics, and then later Life Help. It included topics such as abuse, pornography, same-sex attraction, transgender, mental and emotional health, suicide, safe media use, disabilities, and correctional services (later renamed prison ministry). The objective was to consider Church policies, guidelines, content, messaging plans, and other resources in a right-sized approach for what the Church could and should do for each issue. Our task was to ensure that all Church departments delivered a unified message on each topic. Our objective was that members who faced these challenges would feel included in the Church community, discover God's plan for them, and feel inspired to grow in the gospel.

We put in place structure to address each of these topics, including the following:

- A Special Topics Steering Committee made up of the General Officers (the general presidents of the Relief Society, Primary, Young Women, Young Men, and Sunday School) and the managing directors of most Church departments.
- Nine cross-departmental working groups were formed to identify needs and develop plans and resources for each topic, including policies, guidelines, content, and messaging plans. Audiences included (1) individuals who experience these life challenges; (2) parents, families, and friends; and (3) Church leaders. I lead most of the working groups until May 4, 2019, when we hired Sheldon Martin to manage these efforts.

Sheldon was uniquely qualified to lead this effort. I had a lot of respect for him because of his preparation (institute teacher, Ph.D. in behavioral psychology, and licensed therapist), but also because of the humble and open way he approached the work. In an email to me October 11, 2019, about some routine matters, Sheldon said the following, "I truly love working for

you. I have never been more professionally fulfilled in all my life. I have never enjoyed working for someone more than I enjoy working for you. Thanks, Larry.”

With the reorganization of the Priesthood and Family Department in June 2020, I no longer was directly responsible for the Life Help topics but was still involved in communicating the messages from that team.

Abuse

We updated resources (some of which were more than 20 years old), working with Welfare Services, Church Communication Department, Risk Management, and the Office of General Counsel. We published consolidated resources on a website at

abuse.ChurchofJesusChrist.org, and expanded the scope to address spouse abuse and elderly abuse. In August 2019, we developed “Protecting Children and Youth” training for leaders who work with youth and children. This was the first leader training in the Church that was mandatory. We set up a system to track whether individuals in callings with youth and children had taken the training and provided reports to bishops so they could follow up. We also updated the guidelines for interviewing youth and updated policies in the *General Handbook*.

Disabilities

For many years, I directed the work of the disabilities office. A staff of 2–4 people created resources and provided support and subject matter expertise to bless members with disabilities. Over the years, we revised many policies in the *General Handbook* to make Church programs and ordinances more accessible to members with disabilities. We published information about systems and equipment in meetinghouses and temples to assist those who are hard of hearing. In March 2020, we published guidelines for safely administering the sacrament to avoid cross-contamination for people with food

allergies and gluten intolerances. It was opportune to have that policy in place before the COVID-19 pandemic hit. In 2020, we developed a policy about the use of service animals and comfort pets in Church facilities. We also developed guidelines for activity programs for members with disabilities.

People with disabilities hold a special place in my heart. The following is from my journal dated September 25, 2016:

Today, we attended the Riverton 6th Ward, where my son's children participated in the annual children's sacrament meeting program. In addition to enjoying them participate so energetically, I witnessed a quiet and sacred experience. One of the members of the congregation (probably in his mid-twenties) was confined to a wheelchair. A neuro-muscular disease had robbed him nearly completely of the control of his body. He could only communicate with groans and sounds.

His father assisted him in passing the sacrament. I watched this father's every movement, as he pushed his son's wheelchair to the sacrament table and then stood by his side, reverently and resolutely. He took the tray from the priest's hand and set it on his son's lap, and then waited patiently as his son struggled to wrap his hand around the handle of the tray. The father then unassumingly walked his son's wheelchair to a row, took the tray from his son, and handed it to the first person on the row. When the tray returned, he again placed it in his son's lap, and he waited patiently for his son to grasp the handle. He then pushed this son to the aisle and waited for the other deacons to line up as they finished one by one.

As I watched the father, I was struck by the honor he felt to assist his son in fulfilling his priesthood duty. As the father waited in line, more than once he wiped tears from his eyes. No doubt, he felt love for his son, respect for the priesthood, the warmth of the Holy Ghost in the moment, and even the love of a Father in Heaven who witnessed such a sacred event. As I glanced at the bishop and stake president on the stand, tears welled up in their eyes as they, too,

witnessed this consecrated event. To other members in the ward, it was most likely a common occurrence. But to me, it was a profound moment.

This also makes me think of another example of how local leaders made accommodations so that a young man with a disability could participate in the sacrament. Years ago, I attended a ward in New York City. One of the priests had a severe speech impediment that made it difficult for him to speak. However, the bishop found a way for him to administer the sacrament and, at the same time, fulfill the need for the sacrament prayer to be pronounced word for word. The priest who assisted would say a phrase of the prayer, and then the priest with the speech difficulty repeated that phrase (sometime nearly indecipherably). Thus, they proceeded through the prayer. The prayer was provided in accordance with policy and the dear young man was also able to assist in voicing the prayer.

Mental and Emotional Health

On June 20, 2016, we published the web page MentalHealth.lds.org to coincide with the release of the video “Like a Broken Vessel” and an associated social media post from Elder Jeffrey R. Holland. The video reached one million views within 32 hours. The web page received more than 16,000 unique visitors in the first three days.

We developed training for seminary and institute personnel, a Gospel Topic on mental health, and many magazine articles over the years, especially in September of each year during the national suicide prevention awareness month. We published updates to the website in February 2020, including videos with Elder Dale G. Renlund that addressed mental health and suicide much more directly than ever before.

Pornography

The Combatting Pornography website was launched in April 2010 and was renamed Overcoming Pornography in June 2013. We updated the website with unique sections for individuals, spouses, parents, and leaders and renamed the site

Addressing Pornography and also published it on the Gospel Library app. A First Presidency letter on January 29, 2020, "Protecting Children from the Effects of Pornography," encouraged parents to have family discussions and develop family guidelines about how to use media and technology in positive and safe ways. (Also see the section "Combating Pornography Committee.")

Prison Ministries (Correctional Services)

For years, I directed the cross-departmental efforts to address the unique life challenges of members who were incarcerated and their families. We provided a gospel study correspondence course for incarcerated members. A small team of Church service missionaries responded to letters and emails from leaders, members, and families. We prepared a website of guidelines and leader training resources. We also formulated plans to provide the Gospel Library app and other gospel resources on tablets available to inmates.

Safe Media Use

A cross-departmental working group was formed in 2019 to create principles and resources to help parents and families use media safely. We published "Media Safety" as a section of Life Help online and on the Gospel Library app.

Same-Sex Attraction

The first iteration of the Church website about same-sex attraction was launched in December 2012 under the title "Mormons and Gays." It was produced by the Public Affairs Department and later transferred to the Priesthood and Family Department.

Beginning in January 2016, I chaired a working group that coordinated the work of multiple departments on messaging and products about same-sex attraction. For many months, we worked on a major update to the website and other resources on same-sex attraction. The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve were involved in reading and refining the resources. On May 13, 2016, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland sent the following email: "Dear Friends, Having just driven in from the airport in São

Paulo, I have been sitting in a hotel room for the past two hours reading—and weeping—over the ‘Stories’ section of the proposed 2.0 version of the website. I don’t know how you found all these stories or got the people to share them, but they are magnificent. As savvy as I would like to think I am trying to become on this subject, I confess I was newly moved and enlightened as to how much more I/we can do to get this difficult subject into a gospel context and into more profitable discourse. Your website is going to help us do that....” He then gave a few suggestions and concluded by saying that many of the stories “are so hopeful and virtually all of them make the one point I pray we will always make—that one can and must stay in the Church (‘stay in the light’) to find both salvation in and ultimate strength for this battle. So many of these testimonials make that point powerfully and repeatedly....” His P.P.S. read, “Excellent material on this subject is available in the revised Gospel Topics essay, as well as the question-and-answer material you shared with us. Good work to everyone who helped produce these, including Larry Richman.”

On October 25, 2016, we published the updated website, including changing the name from “Mormons and Gays” to “Mormon and Gay.” It was a subtle, but important difference that helped those who experience same-sex attraction feel more included. We also published additional video vignettes on the website showing a variety of member experiences. We published the “Same-Sex Attraction” entry in Gospel Topics and updated helps for leaders in the Counseling Resources. We sent a notice to stake and ward leaders in 38 languages, including three attachments: the Gospel Topic, a page of teachings from the website, and a set of frequently asked questions.

Media coverage of the site came from the Washington Post “‘Mormon and Gay’? The church’s new message is that you can be both,” CNN “‘Mormon and gay: Church says that’s no contradiction,” Associated Press “‘Mormons Preach Love for LGBT members, but no doctrinal shift,” Salt Lake Tribune “‘LDS Church’s new “Mormon and gay” website wins cheers and some jeers for ignoring controversial policy,” Deseret News

"Mormon and Gay: LDS Church launches page on official website to help members, leaders," KUTV 2 New 'Mormon and Gay' website aims to reach out to gay members, families," and others.

On October 31, 2016, we received the following feedback message: "I have struggled with same-gender attraction for at least 50 years. I always felt so alone and ashamed of what and who I am. Obviously I have never told people about what I feel. I have always been temple worthy since my young years, but it was difficult to find value in my life when I knew what I felt. May I add that I am married to a wonderful woman and am the father of 10 children. I have always been taught that whatever spirit possessed our bodies when we left this world would have control of us after our death. That scared me to death. I was at the point of deciding many times that I may as well kill myself and go to Hell since that is where I would end up anyway. In this material, I read the statement, 'Help the member recognize that same-gender attraction may be one aspect of his or her mortal experience but is not an eternal identity.' That was the first time I felt excited about the fact that the next life might be more favorable for me. I was truly relieved and happy to find this site and I pray that many others who have struggled will find comfort in reading the words of the Lord in the site. I have always been taught that Heavenly Father loves his children, and I knew that that applied to his 'worthy' children. Now I know that he really loves me as well. That may be strange to some people to know that we can feel so disconnected from our Heavenly Father and our Savior Jesus Christ, but I am confident that there are others who have quietly struggled that have had similar feelings and thoughts. Thanks so much for this divinely inspired and wonderful website that gives so much hope in so few words. I can now join the family of Heavenly Father with faith and hope and not hide in the background. This is truly a miracle for me in my life. Please pass on my love and gratitude to all who are responsible for this site—clear up to the Prophet and Savior Jesus Christ. This has been truly life changing!"

With the launch of this site, I reflected on the 17 years I served in leadership roles with Evergreen International. (See

the chapter “Community Service,” section “Evergreen International.”) Over those years, we held many meetings with Church leaders working toward providing more information to members and leaders. These Church resources are an answer to prayers we had for years. They are truly remarkable.

Some of the content in the site was intentionally vague and we knew that the site did not answer all the questions people had. Some things we do not know for sure, and we could only publish content where there was complete agreement among the Brethren. As staff, we always had to be careful not to take quotes from an interview or a statement by one leader and write it as though it were doctrine. Naturally, we wanted to provide complete answers to difficult questions. But there are some questions for which we did not have clear, revealed answers. And there were questions for which there was not a single answer that applied to all people. Some of those questions were the following:

- What is my role as an unmarried gay person in a family-centered church, and what meaningful, compelling things can I prepare for and look forward to?
- What are the guidelines for unmarried gay people for their social and emotional lives? Is there a place for celibate partnerships?
- What is the appropriate and healthy balance in sharing life’s challenges with others? There is a deep cultural expectation in the Church for gay people to hide their same-sex attraction. In contrast, outside the Church there is a deep cultural expectation that a person “come out” and declare their LGBT status to everyone.
- How do I find hope in being told that I will not be fully myself in the next life? If I am not gay—which is connected to so much of who I am, not just who I am sexually attracted to—then who am I eternally?
- How do I find fulfillment, peace, and purpose in this life rather than just enduring until the next life? (It does

not feel like a healthy option to place all my hope and faith in the next life.)

In connection with the new *General Handbook* that was published on February 19, 2020, we restructured the content on the Mormon and Gay website from narrative text to a question-and-answer format and moved it to the new Life Help section online and on the Gospel Library app under the heading “Same-Sex Attraction: Kindness, Inclusion, and Respect for Gay Members.” Various magazine articles were also published in 2020 that referenced same-sex attraction.

Suicide

On September 8, 2016, we published the web page PreventingSuicide.lds.org. (See article in the Church News.) We coordinated a messaging plan with Public Affairs and magazines for the National Suicide Awareness Month and Worldwide Suicide Prevention Day, on September 10. A notice to stake and ward leaders encouraged them to actively support individuals who are affected by suicide and make members aware of the following new and updated resources: the new Preventing Suicide website that provided information on how to help someone who may be contemplating suicide, the updated “Suicide” entry in Gospel Topics, the updated Ministering Resource on suicide, the article, “Choosing to Live: Overcoming Suicidal Thoughts,” and other articles about suicide and depression in the September and October 2016 issues of the Church magazines.

Transgender

The Church published policies about transgender in the new *General Handbook* on February 19, 2020. These policies were extensively researched, reviewed, and approved at all levels by the Senior Brethren over the course of several months. It was amazing to see the love and care that was expressed as these policies were developed. The policies included a process for stake presidents to consult with Area Presidencies on transgender issues to ensure that individual decisions were appropriate for individual circumstances. Our team developed

training that was provided to General Authorities and General Officers in October 2019 in advance of publishing the policies.

On February 19, 2020, we also published a transgender website as part of the Life Help site online and on the Gospel Library app that provided a gospel context for understanding transgender matters. It included information for individuals and helps for families and leaders.

The new policies received media attention and some negative comments. A team member shared with me the following about a friend of hers who was a transgender woman: “She has tried her best to remain active in the last few years since transitioning, despite some questionable membership restrictions placed upon her. She texted me this afternoon and said: ‘As I read the policy, I could actually feel the Lord’s love for me... I do want to help my community realize that this policy is so good for us and that the leaders do love us and have agonized over how to help us. I’m trying to stay off social media for today. But I’m going to pray and ask the Lord’s help with what I can say to my community.’”

Other

In 2020, we added content to the Life Help section about divorce, education, adoption, employment, family, finances, grief, physical health, single-parent families, and using media safely. All content online was also published to the Life Help section on the Gospel Library app.

MEET THE MORMONS MOVIE

In 2014, I was part of the marketing team to promote the Church movie *Meet the Mormons*, a 78-minute documentary-style film. Rather than highlighting Latter-day Saint celebrities, *Meet the Mormons* told the stories of six diverse Mormon families from around the world. The members were from Nepal, Costa Rica, Germany, South Africa, and various places in the United States. They were Jermaine Sullivan, an African American bishop in Atlanta; Ken Niumatalolo, head football coach at the Naval Academy; Carolina Muñoz Marin, a Costa Rican kickboxer; Bishnu Adhikari, an engineer who organized

humanitarian projects in the Himalayas; Dawn Armstrong, a missionary mother in Utah who struggled as a homeless single parent; and Gail Halvorsen, the legendary “candy bomber” during the Berlin airlift the followed World War II. This provided an around-the-world look at Latter-day Saint families who met their daily challenges with faith in Jesus Christ. (See [movie poster](#).)

The movie was originally made under the assumption that it would play for three to five years at the Legacy Theater at Temple Square and at a few dozen other visitor centers. But positive feedback from pre-screenings encouraged us to pursue ways to distribute it more broadly. Rather than expecting visitors to come to a visitors’ center, the idea was to take it to them in theaters and on digital channels, such as social media, internet, cable television, Netflix, DVD, and mobile apps.

Although the Church had produced and distributed hundreds of movies internally, *Meet the Mormons* was the first Church motion picture to be released in public theaters. We knew we were against all odds in competing with major motion picture studios to get lots of people to see the movie. We had a modest marketing budget, and we were novices in marketing a movie. (See [photo of the marketing team](#).)

Elder Holland video to leaders

Because the Church had never released a commercial film, it was important to make sure that local leaders knew that the movie was produced by the Church. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, explained in a [YouTube video](#) that the movie was informational, and not a proselyting effort. In fact, missionaries would not be at or near theaters. He encouraged members to share the [trailer](#), like the [Meet the Mormons Facebook page](#), and invite their friends to see the movie, and attend the movie themselves on opening weekend, October 10, 2014.

We used innovative methods to promote the film. We had to do well in the box office so we could then get the movie on Netflix and the DVD into major retail stores so we could reach as many people as possible. Rather than spend money on television and magazine ads, we used social media, word of

mouth, and premieres to build excitement for the movie. We also promoted the fact that although the film was financed by the Church, all net proceeds from the theatrical release were donated to charity (the American Red Cross). The Church did not even recoup its costs.

Prior to the premier, we released a music video of the song “Glorious,” which was written by Stephanie Mabey and sung by David Archuleta for the soundtrack of the movie. (David was not in the movie, but the song was featured in the movie.) We provided a [free MP3 download](#) of the song to build excitement for the movie. Read the Huffington Post article [“American Idol Star David Archuleta Is Back From Mormon Missions With A ‘Glorious’ New Single.”](#) (See [image](#).)

By October 10, just seven days after its release, the music video “Glorious” had been watched over one million times and the MP3 song had been downloaded over a quarter of a million times. Followers and fans of *Meet the Mormons* and of David Archuleta were quite enthusiastic.

We also invited people to record themselves singing their own version of the song “Glorious” and submit their recording to win prizes and even be included in a supercut video featuring David Archuleta and people from all over the world. We got David to promote the contest to his 3.5 million fans on Facebook. Over 420 people posted their versions, which were watched collectively about 750,000 times.

Premier

On October 8, we held a premiere with about 500 prominent people, such as Elders Jeffrey R. Holland and David A. Bednar, Mitt Romney, Governor Gary Herbert, David Archuleta, Marie Osmond, David Osmond, Jimmy Osmond, ShayCarl, Stuart Edge, Stephanie A. Nielson, Shawn Bradley, Danny Ainge, Sheri Dew, LaVell Edwards, Michael Ballam, Connor Boyack, the Kid History guys, and the cast members from the movie. (See photos at the premier [photo](#); [David Archuleta, David Osmond, and Marie Osmond](#); Richmans with Elder Holland [photo 1](#) and [photo 2](#); [Richman, Archuleta, Anthony Armstrong,](#)

Lupe Mayorga (David's Mom); Stuart Edge and Richman, Mitt Romney, and more pictures of the premier.

The excitement about the movie was palpable. Before we showed the movie, Elders Holland and Bednar talked about the effect this movie could have on the world. More people needed to get to know members of the Church and appreciate the benefits of living the gospel. The movie was not about the Church as an institution, but about its members and how their faith inspires them to live Christian lives. The purpose of this movie was not a proselytizing effort, but an attempt to help people understand members of the Church. Other premieres were held in cities across the country.

Distribution

Meet the Mormons opened on 317 screens across the USA. MeetTheMormons.com listed the cities and theaters and let people request the movie in additional cities. By opening weekend, the film was scheduled for twice as many screens as initially planned because of the demand driven by word-of-mouth and social media.

Purdie Distribution pursued normal distribution arrangements where theater owners get a portion of the ticket sales, as opposed to so-called “four-wall” deals where theaters are simply rented out to filmmakers. Although some members bought out entire theaters, all the bookings were traditional distribution deals. Excel Entertainment Group, a unit of Deseret Book Co., owned by the Church, distributed the DVD.

Opening Weekend

The long-term success of the film in theaters depended on how well the film was attended on opening weekend, beginning October 10. The initial push was to get members to see the movie, so they could then recommend it to their nonmember friends. This made opening weekend tricky because Latter-day Saints were not expected to attend the movie on Sunday because of the Church's emphasis on Sabbath observance. This meant that the movie had two days instead of three to get its main audience to attend.

Opening day, October 10, 2014, exceeded our expectations. It was the number one film in 100 of the 317 total locations on opening day, with sold-out showings reported across the country, including New York City, Detroit, Miami, Salt Lake City, Las Vegas, Dallas, Phoenix, and various locations in California. In the opening 24 hours, the movie ranked #10 nationwide in total box office sales and was #11 for the weekend. It earned \$2.5 million during the opening weekend, and through 2015 had earned over \$6 million, making it the 34th biggest documentary of all time. The net proceeds were donated to the American Red Cross.

On January 2, 2015, *Meet the Mormons* began playing at the Legacy Theater on Temple Square and in theaters in all Church visitors' centers and historic sites. In February, the movie became available to more than 100 million homes through the major video-on-demand services. Also, in February 2015, *Meet the Mormons* was released in Spanish and began playing in theaters in several countries in Latin America.

Rather than just releasing the DVD through Church distribution centers, we wanted to get it in mainstream retail stores to get it into the hands of more people, especially nonmembers. Getting into the big stores was difficult for any filmmaker—let alone a Church who had never released a major film. But we got the DVD and Blu-ray into Walmart, BestBuy, Amazon, Deseret Book, LDS Bookstore, and others. In November 2015, we released it on YouTube in 28 languages.

Since we did not have a big marketing budget, we relied heavily on grass-roots efforts of social media and word of mouth to promote the film, along with billboard, TV, and radio ads primarily along the Wasatch Front. One way we engaged followers was with a photo challenge encouraging people to take pictures and tag them with attributes shown by each of the movie's characters, such as #teamwork, #unity and #service, along with #MeeetTheMormons.

In July of 2016, we released an update of the movie with new stories: The Artist (Giovanna Nezhati), The Horseman (Wadman), and The Entertainers (Bless4).

MINISTERING AND MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD QUORUMS

For years, the Brethren had been concerned about the effectiveness of home and visiting teaching and considered the right timing for the next step. Some things can be improved over time by training and continual emphasis. Sometimes, the Lord makes an abrupt change just to wake us up.

On October 1, 2016, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland gave the talk, “Emissaries to the Church,” in the priesthood session of general conference where he described an elevated vision of home and visiting teaching. This was an outcome of various discussions in Priesthood and Family Executive Council (PFEC) about revitalizing home and visiting teaching. Elder Holland had written a document outlining the key elements to be revitalized and many of those elements were expressed in his conference talk.

We worked for several months with the Executive Directors, the three Apostles in the PFEC, the Presiding Bishop, and the General Relief Society President to develop recommendations on ways to reinvigorate home and visiting teaching in the Church. We discussed how to better teach and encourage home and visiting teachers to minister to members and ensure their wellbeing. We discussed the current structure in the handbook about how to assign and report on home teaching.

On December 13, 2016, I had the privilege of attending a meeting of the Quorum of the Twelve and the Presidency of the Seventy to discuss recommendations on home and visiting teaching in the Church. As we discussed what changes to make worldwide, Elder Oaks mentioned, “This is immensely difficult because it’s immensely important. There isn’t much more important that we could discuss.” I saw revelation happen as those 19 men counseled together and shared their insight and experience. Together, they changed the recommendations to something much bigger and better than what we presented in the meeting. I am always in awe when I meet with these wise and inspired men and discuss matters important to the Church.

Further discussions about revitalizing home and visiting teaching transpired over the coming months, culminating in the

announcement of ministering at the April 2018 general conference. The more it was discussed, the more the Brethren saw a benefit to making a simultaneous change in Melchizedek Priesthood quorums by merging the elders quorum and high priest group into a single quorum.

I co-lead the team responsible for the implementation of ministering and the consolidation of Melchizedek Priesthood quorums. We researched options, and proposed policies and procedures. Because of the level of confidentiality of this project, we had to keep a very small team. We were able to bring in Tracy Skousen from Partners in Leadership to advise us on best practices for implementing cultural change in the Church related to ministering and priesthood quorums.

On March 21, 2017, I met again with the Quorum of the Twelve for a discussion on ways to improve home and visiting teaching in the Church. They were very grateful for the presentation. Russell M. Nelson was the president of the Quorum of the Twelve, and his exact comment was, “hallelujah.”

Our team created announcement plans and a long-term messaging plan to help change the culture from the old notions of home and visiting teaching to the “higher and holier” concept of ministering. The intent was to change the “checklist” mindset. Many members felt they had “done their home/visiting teaching” if they showed up in a member’s home and gave a lesson, followed by a cursory comment like “let us know if there is ever anything we can do for you” as they walked out the door. The objective was to dismantle the formulaic approach because sitting in members’ living rooms did not mean that you were meeting their needs. It was decided that to make such a cultural change, we needed to “discontinue” the old way and announce a new way, including a new name for it. We spent several months researching and proposing a new name. We also researched translations of various name options to see how they would play out worldwide. The Quorum of the Twelve discussed various options. President Nelson had specific revelation on it.

We also had to solve some of the structural logistical issues. The Relief Society was responsible for all the women in the ward, an elders quorum was responsible for some of the men, and a high priests group was responsible for the rest of the men. Since these three had to involve the bishop and the ward council, it was difficult for the various entities to manage the assignments and reporting. Simplifying the structure was one of the reasons for merging the elders quorum and high priests group at the same time that ministering was implemented. This allowed a one-to-one relationship between the elders quorum and the Relief Society.

Another reason for merging the elders quorum and the high priests group was that there was an imbalance in age and experience. Typically, a high priests group consisted of long-time members who had held many leadership callings. Often, they were older and felt a little like they had been “put out to pasture.” On the other hand, members of elders quorums were typically younger men with less leadership experience. In addition, they typically had many prospective elders on the rolls who were less active or completely inactive—and some of whom had been for most of their life. Therefore, the high priests group was full of active people who were happy to home teach and to be home taught. The more experienced people had the easier load. The elders quorum had the less experienced people with not only a harder load, but oftentimes twice or three times as many people on their rolls. A merger could solve the imbalance, but it would have to be done right. We did not want to “demote” current elders quorum presidencies and have the high priest group leaders take over leadership of the new quorum. There needed to be a mixture in the new presidencies and in the ministering assignments in terms of age and experience. We did not want the result to be that all the old high priests were assigned to all the high priests again. The objective was a complete merger and formation of a new quorum.

On March 30, 2018, I had the privilege of watching the General Conference Leadership Meeting and hear the instructions that the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve gave to the General Authorities and Area Seventies.

Staff was usually not invited to these meetings, but our small team responsible for the implementation of the changes in ministering and Melchizedek Priesthood quorums was permitted to watch the meeting. Immediately after the meeting, we began preparing video clips of key parts of the talks to provide them to stake and ward leaders for teaching about ministering and the new Melchizedek Priesthood quorum. The last hour of the General Conference Leadership Meeting was an open time for members of the Twelve and the First Presidency, unscripted, to comment about the instructions that had been given and to bear testimony. It was a touching experience to hear them talk about their feelings for each other and their love for the Lord, and to hear them bear testimony in a more direct and personal way than they do in general conference.

On March 31, 2018, in the Saturday evening priesthood session of general conference, the following was announced in short remarks from President Nelson and in an address by Elder Christofferson:

- Combined Melchizedek Priesthood quorum at the ward level. Members of the former high priests groups were combined with members of elders quorums to unify priesthood holders to accomplish all aspects of the work of salvation, strengthen the ability to minister, and provide more support to the bishop.
- The high priests quorum was redefined at the stake level to include those currently in presiding roles.

At the conclusion of the priesthood session, a maintenance update window appeared on the Leader and Clerk Resources (LCR) screens as the system began to merge records of high priests and elders into a single quorum. About an hour later, a screen then appeared stating that the quorums had been merged and reminded leaders to record the new elders quorum presidency when they were sustained. Planning and executing that effort was a small miracle. We felt it was important right at the announcement to merge the records. If it had been announced, and then changes made weeks later, it would have lost a lot of the momentum and the excitement that was present

at the announcement. Having the changes happen right in the moment was important to get the message across.

On April 1, 2018, in the Sunday afternoon session of general conference, President Nelson announced a “higher and holier” approach to caring for members, to be known as “ministering,” replacing home and visiting teaching. Further information was provided in addresses by Elder Holland and Sister Bingham.

At the conclusion of the conference, the website ministering.lds.org was published and a First Presidency letter, “Ministering with Strengthened Melchizedek Priesthood Quorums and Relief Societies” was immediately emailed to all members. An enclosure to the letter gave specifics about the changes. (The letter was dated April 2 but was sent April 1.)

The changes to home and visiting teaching, as well as the Melchizedek Priesthood quorums had been considered by the Priesthood and Family Executive Council and the Council of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve for about 10 years. It was the right time to implement it when all the pieces came together at the same time (changes to ministering, including young women in ministering assignments, and the merger of the Melchizedek Priesthood quorums). Individually, some of these pieces made sense, and we often wondered why they were not approved, but the Lord knew they needed to be combined to be powerful enough to make a difference. All the elements came line upon line and were considered month after month and refined until all 15 members of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve were united.

Doctrine and Covenants 9:8–9 states, “But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right. But if it be not right you shall have no such feelings, but you shall have a stupor of thought that shall cause you to forget the thing which is wrong...”

To coordinate all these announcements at conference, I worked with the Church Communication Department (CCD) and other departments to create a minute-by-minute plan from

the beginning of the first conference session to the end of the final session. The plan showed what was to be published on the home page, Newsroom, and social media as the conference progressed. For example, as soon as new General Authorities and General Officers were sustained, the Newsroom story was published, the biographies on the leader pages were updated, and posts were made to Facebook and Twitter. When other announcements were made in talks, news stories were published. As soon as the announcement was made in the priesthood session about a single elders quorum in wards, the membership systems began updating. At the end of the session where ministering was announced, a First Presidency letter and enclosure was emailed to leaders and members with a link to the new web page ministering.lds.org.

Employees in the Church Communication Department saw the value of such a communication plan for general conferences and agreed to take responsibility for creating and managing these plans in the future. I turned over to them the job I had done for several previous conferences to coordinate the minute-by-minute plans for announcements.

Drawing on the training provided to General Authorities in the General Conference Leadership Meetings prior to conference, subsequent training was provided to local leaders in area and coordinating councils, stake and ward councils, and directly to members via presentations, training videos, magazines, social media, My Calling emails, FAQs, handbook changes, and in Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society fourth-Sunday topics July through December.

One important training topic was the ministering interview. In the past, a home or visiting teaching interview often happened when your leader stopped you in the hall and asked, "Did you do your home teaching this month?" And you said "yes" or "no" for each assigned family, and the leader would check a box, and you were done. As the leader walked away, he might have said, "They're doing all right, aren't they?" And you would say, "Yes, they're all fine." And he would say, "Well, let me know if there is anything I can do."

The brethren knew that the success or failure of the new ministering program hinged on the effectiveness of the ministering interviews—not only to gather information about the welfare of families, but also to motivate the ministering brothers and sisters. We prepared several video scenarios to model what an interview should look like. We made it light-hearted to make a point. And over a series of several interviews, we showed how the leader and the ministering brother progressed from the old way to the new way. Training also involved magazine articles, talks, and other messages.

Another aspect of change in ministering was to involve the young women beginning at age 14, so they could have the same kind of experiences ministering with their mothers as the young men had in ministering with their fathers. Another option was that married couples in a ward could be assigned as ministering companions where it made sense to a family's situation.

The topic for the next stake conferences after April conference was “Ministering with Strengthened Melchizedek Priesthood Quorums and Relief Societies,” to be discussed in ward and stake council leadership meetings and the Saturday night adult sessions. That theme was later extended for the remainder of 2018 and through 2019 for the stake conferences at which a General Authority or an Area Seventy presided.

On Wednesday, April 4, 2018, the Priesthood and Family Executive Council (PFEC) invited members of the implementation team to their meeting to thank us for our work on Ministering with Strengthened Melchizedek Priesthood Quorums and Relief Societies. Elder Ronald A. Rasband was one of the Apostles on the PFEC. He had run several companies, including president of Huntsman Chemical. He said that he had launched many products before but had never seen one done better than these efforts. He got emotional as he talked about how this was the Lord's will and how he felt privileged to be involved in it. That was the first time I had ever seen Elder Rasband cry.

April 6, 2018 was a busy day. At 8:00 a.m., I attended the meeting of the Quorum of the Twelve for 45 minutes. I then

spent an hour scrambling to get documents updated based on feedback they gave us. Then I met with our Executive Directors for almost an hour to discuss and align a proposal according to the direction from the Twelve. From 10:00–11:00 a.m., we meet with our team and worked on the project and then meet with Elder Hallstrom at 1:00 p.m. and reviewed documents with him so he could get them to Elder Holland at 2:30 p.m. We met with Elder Hallstrom again at 3:00 p.m. to review the documents for another round of updates. As we sat for a moment waiting for Elder Holland to be available, we reflected on the events of the day and how blessed we had been for so much interaction with the Brethren in such important work.

On April 25, 2018, Tracy Skousen from Partners in Leadership returned to talk to us about further ideas on helping the cultural change in the Church related to ministering. The following are a few of his comments about the initial launch of ministering: “In my professional opinion, it was masterful!” “You addressed everything we talked about with your team.” “The reception was tremendous, and the clarity was amazing!”

On August 12, 2018, a report was given to the Quorum of the Twelve about the changes in Melchizedek Priesthood quorums that were announced at April conference. The research reported with confidence that the adjustments throughout the Church had been completed in a proper manner. “Considering the significant change in Melchizedek Priesthood quorum organization these adjustments represented in every stake and ward, this was a remarkable accomplishment for the Church and will greatly bless the work moving forward.”

A report was also provided about the implementation of ministering. The report stated, “For a change that affects every Church unit (and every member), it has been quite remarkable that this initiative has been so universally accepted and quickly implemented. This was possible because the leaders and members of the Church felt it was from the Lord, through the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve.”

A Correlation Research Division study a year later (in August 2019) confirmed that this was the most successful

implementation that the researcher had seen at the Church in his seven years.

On August 20, 2018, Elder Neil L. Andersen shared on Facebook the following insights into President Russell M. Nelson's transition from Apostle to Prophet.

After returning to Salt Lake City late last night, Kathy and I have continued to think about and talk about the experiences of the past few days with deep appreciation for the unparalleled experience of being with President and Sister Nelson. Listening to Sister Wendy Nelson bear testimony of President Nelson's prophetic calling and having her give a glimpse into what it has been like in their home since he became the Lord's prophet, strengthened the faith of those who listened. Sister Nelson spoke of her own witness of President Nelson's prophetic calling.

She said, "Two days after President Monson departed the Lord gave me a singular, most distinct experience with my husband. So distinct, so vivid, so clear. Every detail of that experience is seared in my mind and heart forever. Two days later it happened again exact same experience again" (to her alone).

She said that it was "too sacred to share over the pulpit," but that "because of that I can take any witness stand and testify that Russell Marion Nelson is the Prophet of the Lord. Russell Marion Nelson is the living prophet of the living Lord."

For Kathy, for me and for many other saints, her comments about revelation were powerful and reinforced our belief, "whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants it is the same."

Sister Nelson explained that in their 12 years of marriage, she had watched the process of revelation and inspiration upon her husband but that since becoming the president of the Church, those revelations have "expanded exponentially."

She explained, "He keeps a lined yellow pad of paper beside his bed." Then she declared, "In the morning he holds up a half page to one and a half pages of notes with joy."

Although she said that sometimes she remains close to him when this process is happening, sometimes she does not. She recounted a night in January when "I got the prompting, 'move out of bed now.'"

"Two hours later he emerged from the room. 'Wendy, you won't believe what's been happening. The Lord has given me detailed instruction on what I am to do.'"

Sister Nelson said that during the "last eight months it has been an experience to send my husband off to work. He comes back, different than when I sent him off in the morning. I have seen him change at the pulpit. I have heard him use phrases he hasn't used before. I've seen him make changes at the pulpit."

She said that just a few weeks ago speaking to young adults in a sacrament meeting, "I saw 30 years fall away."

I, too, would add that it was amazing to me that a man fewer than three weeks away from being 94 years old could go to the pulpit last night in Toronto with no notes, never repeating himself and speaking for 45 minutes, with the audience of 8,000 riveted on him and his message. When I commented on this after the meeting, President Nelson said, "Well, these people have come from a long way. They come prayerfully. The last thing they want me to do is come to the pulpit and read them a talk." It was an experience of revelation.

In the course of my work on the change from home and visiting teaching to ministering, I had the privilege of seeing one of those pages of notes that President Nelson wrote in the middle of the night. It was truly inspired and gave specific direction about how to implement ministering in the Church.

MY CALLING

This effort was to simplify and consolidate the leader training resources online and on the Gospel Library. By 2019, it provided simplified training for leaders who served in ward and stake councils.

NAME OF THE CHURCH

On August 16, 2018, President Nelson stated, “The Lord has impressed upon my mind the importance of the name He has revealed for His Church, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We have work before us to bring ourselves in harmony with His will. In recent weeks, various Church leaders and departments have initiated the necessary steps to do so. Additional information about this important matter will be made available in the coming months.” (“The Name of the Church,” official statement, Aug. 16, 2018, newsroom. ChurchofJesusChrist.org)

A Church Name committee was formed to review the names of all the organizations, brands, programs, and products of the Church to determine which names should change. I was the representative for the Priesthood and Family Department on a cross-departmental, director-level team that did the staff work and developed recommendations for the Church Name committee. We also recommended guidelines on the use of the terms *Mormon* and *LDS*.

At the April 2020 general conference, President Russell M. Nelson announced a new symbol to represent the Church. This new symbol communicated to the world that this was the Savior’s Church and that all we do centers on Him and His gospel. The new symbol and adjustment in the logotype of the name of the Church was a confidential project we had worked on for months. For many months after that, we worked on projects to update the symbol on websites and publications.

PICTURES IN MEETINGHOUSE LIBRARIES

In May 2012, the Priesthood and Family Department Executive Directors determined to discontinue printing the 11”

x 17" pictures that had previously been provided to meetinghouse libraries. Most libraries had hundreds of such pictures along a wall of the library. Instead, teachers would use the 8.5" x 11" spiral-bound *Gospel Art Book* and digital pictures available online and on the Gospel Library app. Beginning in December 2013, the 11" x 17" pictures were dropped from the Library Start-up Kit provided to newly constructed meetinghouses. Instead, they received 10 copies of the *Gospel Art Book*. Meetinghouse Facilities discontinued building the vertical shelves for printed pictures in libraries.

QUORUMS AND RELIEF SOCIETY

This effort was to bring greater power to priesthood quorums and Relief Societies by improving members' experiences in Sunday quorum and Relief Society meetings. We considered new discussion materials and teaching and learning approaches for these meetings.

On March 1, 2017, I, along with a few other employees, were invited into the Priesthood and Family Executive Council (PFEC) meeting because they wanted to thank us for the Sunday Third Hour project we had worked on for several months. (See the section "Sunday Meeting Adjustments.") The objective of that project was to strengthening quorums and Relief Societies by implementing a new curriculum for adults beginning in 2018 based on general conference rather than *Teachings of the Presidents of the Church* manuals. Elder Holland said, "Yesterday, we had one of the great days with the Quorum of the Twelve, and largely because of you and the inspired work you have done on the Sunday Third Hour." After a few more comments about it, they all then applauded us—they actually clapped. That was the first time I had been applauded by three Apostles, as well as the Bishop and Sister Burton!

Further efforts to strengthen the role of the elders quorum presidency and the Relief Society presidency included the transition of some responsibilities from the bishop to the elders quorum and Relief Society, including engaging the elders quorum and Relief Society more in the work of salvation,

specifically missionary work and temple and family history work. A letter dated May 26, 2020, “Strengthening Missionary and Temple and Family History Work in Stakes and Wards,” from President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve, clarified some of those responsibilities.

Over the next several years, the roles of the elders quorum and Relief Society presidencies were strengthened. They began to shoulder more of the responsibilities that were previously handled only by the bishopric.

PRESIDENT NELSON’S VIDEO “THE HEALING POWER OF GRATITUDE”

In October 2020, I was asked to serve on a committee to produce a video for President Russell M. Nelson. I was on the messaging team to help craft the messaging leading up to the live event and afterwards to continue communicating the key messages it contained.

In the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, President Nelson had been awakened at night with a strong impression that he should issue a message to the world about hope and healing and in giving thanks. He wrote down the key messages and made a list of what the Lord wanted to be accomplished with the video. He was given the date and time it was to be released—November 20 at 11:00 a.m.—and it was to be 11 minutes long. President Nelson recorded the video message in one take.

It was released with 31 languages dubbed and another dozen subtitled. Church departments united in awareness activities to amplify this great message from the Prophet. See ChurchofJesusChrist.org/givethanks. On December 11, 2020, the First Presidency sent the following letter to the team members along with a crystal plaque:

Dear #GiveThanks Team:

We express appreciation to all who played a part in the recent message on the healing power of gratitude. The Lord is pleased with your considerable efforts that made it

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possible to share this message with God's children worldwide. It is a delight to feel the wave of gratitude that continues to flow from all comers of the earth. The response has been humbling and will be remembered for years to come.

May the Lord continue to bless you and your loved ones with peace and joy during this Christmas season.

Sincerely yours,

Russell M. Nelson

Dallin H. Oaks

Henry B. Eyring

RESTORATION COMMEMORATION 2020

On May 10, 2019, Elder Donald L. Hallstrom wrote the following email to Elder Neil L. Andersen and Elder Dale G. Renlund: "Thank you for meeting with me this afternoon. I met with Richard Heaton, and we recommend Larry Richman to be the 'project manager' for the assignment we discussed. Larry is one of our senior directors and has extensive experience, excellent judgment, and gets things done. If this recommendation is acceptable, Larry and I are available to meet with you whenever you desire. Don" The assignment was to lead a team to plan and implement commemoration activities in 2020 for the 200th anniversary of the First Vision.

On June 22, 2019, I met with Elders Andersen and Renlund to receive direction about what the Quorum of the Twelve wanted to have done for the commemoration. I organized a cross-departmental team of staff from about ten departments. We developed objectives, a scope statement, key messages, and potential ideas and activities. We also compiled an extensive inventory of existing resources about the First Vision, Joseph Smith, and the Restoration that could be referenced or repurposed. The Church magazines also developed a plan for publishing articles during 2020.

In June 2019, Elder Hallstrom was released as our Executive Director. (He was released as a General Authority at the

October 2019 general conference.) On June 28, 2019, Elder Hallstrom was named the chairman of the Bicentennial of the Restoration Steering Committee. I sent to Elder Hallstrom a copy of the work our team had done and offered my help. After that, I was involved in a minor way in a few areas, but his committee did most of the work. A key outcome of the bicentennial commemoration was the publication of "The Restoration of the Fulness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ: A Bicentennial Proclamation to the World."

SCOUTING

The Church's disengagement from the Boy Scouts of America happened in stages. The first step was in May 2017 to disengage Varsity and Venture Scouts (ages 14+). That helped prepare the U.S. Church, but it also really helped the international Church because until that time, there was no program for this age group. My team helped write structured activities for young men ages 14+.

On May 8, 2018, the Church announced a new activity program for children and youth and that the Church was separating from the Boy Scouts of America. On May 10, 2018, the Public Affairs Committee invited me and others to attend the end of their meeting to thank us for our help with the announcement made that week. Elder Ronald A. Rasband was the chairman of the Public Affairs Committee, was on the Priesthood and Family Executive Council, and was the Church liaison with Boy Scouts of America. He thanked us for our work in writing the First Presidency announcement letter, the press release, the website, and the frequently asked questions. He explained that he was an Eagle Scout and had been involved for years in various positions with Scouting and he appreciated all that Scouting had done. But he also recognized that then was the right time for the Church to separate from Scouting. He led the unwinding of the connections between the two organizations that took place from then until December 31, 2019, when the church officially separated from Boy Scouts.

The Children and Youth program replaced Scouting, Duty to God, Personal Progress (for the young women), and Faith in God (for boys and girls ages 8–11).

SIMPLIFICATION AND REDUCTION

The processes and structure of organizations become more complex over time unless the organization consciously focuses on simplification. For years, Church leaders had recognized this, and counseled us to find ways to simplify and reduce.

On May 1, 1979, a year before I was hired as a full-time employee, the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy issued a letter to Church departments to review existing publications and determine whether essential items could be simplified or reduced. That focus on simplifying and reducing continued through my 42 years of employment.

Below is a list of some steps taken from approximately 1970 to 2005:

1970s

- Computerized system for recording and reporting Church contributions.
- Monday evening designated as Churchwide family home evening.
- Ensign, New Era, and Friend began; Liahona followed as the international magazine.
- Stake presidents to set apart full-time missionaries (1970) and ordain bishops (1975).
- Correlated teacher development program.
- Relief Society dues eliminated: all adult women automatic members of Relief Society.
- 63 area conferences held during this decade.
- Church Office Building built, dedicated, and put into use.
- Welfare Services Department created to coordinate welfare activities.
- New missionary discussions in 1973 (the first since 1961).

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- Consistent naming of wards, stakes, and missions.
- Hospitals sold.
- Church College of Hawaii becomes branch of BYU.
- Auxiliary conferences eliminated.
- First Quorum of the Seventy reconstituted.
- Quorum of the Twelve oversee ecclesiastical matters and Presiding Bishopric oversees temporal issues.
- Semiannual rather than quarterly stake conferences.
- Four-generation family history program instituted to form the basis for the Ancestral File.
- LDS King James Version of the Bible produced.
- Simplified Reporting System implemented worldwide
- Reduction of Church travel (in part due to energy crisis, in part due to reduction efforts).
- Instructional Development instituted in Curriculum Department as the source for writing manuals (rather than the auxiliaries).
- Governing councils created: Correlation Executive Committee, Missionary Executive Committee, Priesthood Executive Council, and Temple and Genealogical Executive Council (later Temple and Family History Executive Council).
- Introduction of temporary meetinghouses in developing areas.
- Church style guide produced for standardization of Church publications.
- In 1979, 7,000 pages of requested material eliminated from Authorized List.
- Simplified guidebooks created for branches and families.
- Instructions on Curriculum provided for local leaders.

1980s

- Consolidated meeting schedule (three-hour block).
- LDS study aids printed in triple combination to accompany LDS edition of King James Version of the Bible.
- Smaller meetinghouses (Sage Plan) implemented.

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- 500 satellite dishes installed at stake centers outside Utah to reduce travel through broadcasts.
- Cost of building meetinghouses shifted to general Church funds.
- In 1981, smaller temples instituted. In 1997, President Hinckley announced yet smaller temples.
- Area Presidencies instituted.
- Family History Department creates Personal Ancestral File (PAF) software.
- Stake presidents can ordain patriarchs.
- In 1986, new missionary discussions.
- Seventies quorums in stakes discontinued.
- Second Quorum of the Seventy created.
- Local Unit Budget Allowance (LUBA) program.
- Curriculum begins recycling lessons for auxiliaries rather than creating new manuals annually.
- Copyright procedures improved and standardized.

1990s

- Fewer manuals.
- Non-English triple combination to contain Guide to the Scriptures (1,200 pages of study aids reduced to 200+ pages).
- FamilySearch and TempleReady programs created for simplified research and temple work.
- Families rather than temples responsible to hold family files.
- Missionary support funds equalized.
- Membership records computerized worldwide.
- Area Authority Seventy position announced.
- General Authorities no longer on business boards of directors.
- LDS Charities founded to provide worldwide humanitarian aid.
- Regional Representative position eliminated.
- Third, Fourth, and Fifth Quorums of the Seventy announced.

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- Handbook of Instructions simplified.
- Regional MTCs built and implemented.
- Leadership Training Emphasis.
- Members responsible for cleaning meetinghouses.
- Church logo changed to show emphasis on Jesus Christ.
- Priesthood and Relief Society study same material: Teachings of Presidents of the Church.
- Bishop's counselors can interview to renew temple recommends.
- Consolidation of audiovisual efforts into new Audiovisual Department.
- FamilySearch Internet Genealogy Service launched.
- In 1997, small temples announced.

2000s

- Conference center dedicated and put into use.
- Internet simplified availability of materials.
- Ricks College becomes a branch of BYU.
- Temple recommends valid for two years.
- Concurrent content in magazines across languages.
- Teachings for Our Time change (October 2004).
- Curriculum Planning Chart simplified.
- CES consolidation of functions at headquarters.
- Conversion of individual videos to DVD collections.
- Regional broadcasts of stake conferences.
- Worldwide training broadcasts.
- Preach My Gospel and standardizing missionary reporting worldwide.
- Local mission responsibility shifted from stakes to wards.
- Activity fees for institute eliminated.
- Multiple use of buildings.
- Annual CES conference cancelled.

These efforts led to much good work in improving our product management, such as simplifying and reducing the number of products, improving product lifecycle management,

and increasing our efforts to measure and report on the use and effectiveness of our products and programs. In early 2015, my thinking began to evolve beyond *product* management to *content* management—considering all our content and messages, whether or not they were contained within a product. Since many of the efforts of the Priesthood Department did not end up in a product, these efforts were often not reported or measured, and we did not hold ourselves accountable for them. Reducing the number of products had been useful, but it could only take us so far. Still, members and leaders were bombarded with so many messages that they struggled to consume and internalize them. Somehow, we needed to prioritize and control the volume of messages—*content*, not just *products*.

Over the years, the delivery of Church messages and materials had trended away from physical media (books and DVDs) toward digital delivery (websites and mobile apps). This had saved the Church millions of dollars and provided a quick way to deliver and update content. More importantly, digital technology allowed for enriched study and interactive experiences. However, we still had a lot of printed materials, and only about half of our members had affordable internet access and fewer still had access to a mobile device. There was a divide between those who (1) could afford the devices and were tech savvy and (2) those who could not afford devices or were not tech savvy. To address this problem, in March 2015, I developed a proposal to provide digital access to Church resources for all members. My proposal was to make inexpensive tablets available to all members. The government of India had provided inexpensive tablets to millions of public-school students. They purchased the tablets for \$40, subsidized them 50%, and made them available to students to purchase for \$20. My proposal was for the Church to provide inexpensive tablets to members through Distribution Services. The tablets would be pre-configured with Church apps and pre-loaded with basic Church materials. The tablet would be configured to connect with the Wi-Fi in meetinghouses so that when members entered the buildings on Sundays, it automatically downloaded the latest Church publications, videos, magazines, and news.

Every week, members would have access to the latest materials with no delays associated with printing and shipping.

I felt this would have been a low-cost way to help members in less-developed countries have access to the same digital resources that members in developed countries enjoy. The Church could have applied a small subsidy to the tablets from the millions of dollars in savings by further reducing printing, warehousing, and distribution of physical materials. The proposal did not get much interest, so I did not pursue it. (In retrospect, by the time it would have been implemented worldwide, inexpensive cell phones had become widely available, along with the Gospel Library app. My proposal in 2015 was a good idea, but the Lord knew the future and knew that something better would soon come along to fill the need.)

In 2016, we made a serious evaluation of the products our department sponsored. 268 products were approved to be discontinued. Another 524 were identified to evaluate further for possible reduction, simplification, or combination into other existing products.

From 2017–2000, the Lord directed His servants to focus efforts on the essential work of salvation and exaltation by simplifying and reducing programs, policies, and responsibilities of local leaders and families. The following is a list of a few changes that reduced and simplified the load placed upon bishops and families.

- **2-hour Sunday Meetings.** Increased the focus on the sacrament. Simplified the focus for Primary singing time and *Come, Follow Me*. Meant one less hour in meetings. Increased the focus on Sabbath worship at home and at church. Encouraged home-centered gospel learning and discussions. More time for families to worship and serve together.
- **Come, Follow Me.** Focused and simplified class teaching within the ward. Simplified scripture study resource, home evening activities and service ideas. Reduction of 33 existing manuals.

- **Ministering.** More focus on individual needs within ward councils. Elders quorum and Relief Society focused on ministering interviews and meeting the needs of families.
- **Children and Youth.** One simplified, focused effort to help children and youth in their personal development, personal revelation, service, activities, and relationships. Home-centered focus empowered parents and families to work together on areas of interest. Significant simplification of administration of children and youth programs. Removed the requirement for parents and leaders to track progress for over 590 requirements in a family with one boy and one girl. One program for ages 8–18 replaced several programs. Reduction of manuals, awards, requirements, and training for the following programs: Personal Progress, Duty to God, Faith in God, Scouting, and Cub Scouting.
- **Age-group progression.** Beginning of year transition simplified on-time ordinations for bishops and allowed for more individual attention throughout the year.
- **Seminary curriculum adopted Come, Follow Me.** Aligned Sunday Church instruction with seminary weekday instruction. Simplified the focus on scriptures at church, home, and seminary. Made it easier for parents to support both family and seminary study, providing more opportunities for gospel discussion in the home.
- **One Melchizedek Priesthood Quorum.** Simplified ministering assignments and enhanced collaboration between the elders quorum and Relief Society. All families were unified into one quorum. Allowed for better match of assignments to needs of individuals and families.
- **Role of Elders Quorum and Relief Society.** Allowed bishops to delegate and shift responsibilities for temporal welfare, self-reliance, financial counseling, and ministering to the elders and Relief Society.

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Empowered elders quorum and Relief Society to be more aware of and connected to supporting families.

- ***Aaronic Priesthood and Young Women Organizations.*** More direct focus on mentoring quorum and class presidencies.
- ***Ward and Stake Missionary Work.*** Moved responsibility to elders quorum and Relief Society. Training shifted from bishoprics to the stake presidency and stake Relief Society presidency.
- ***Ward and Stake Temple and Family History.*** Moved responsibility to elders quorum and Relief Society. Training shifted from bishoprics to the stake presidency and stake Relief Society presidency.
- ***Bishop's Focus.*** Focused on children and youth. Moved missionary, temple, family history, and ministering to elders quorum and Relief Society. Bishopric more focused on helping parents with the rising generation.
- ***For Strength of Youth Conferences.*** Provided a week-long spiritual experience every other year at minimal cost. Reduced the load of bishops to plan ward and stake youth conferences the year when FSJ conferences were provided by the Church.
- ***Simplified Handbook.*** Updated and simplified instructions. Reduced to one handbook. Allowed all families access to the handbook. Reduced two handbooks to one handbook.

SUNDAY MEETING ADJUSTMENTS

The Brethren had been actively considering ways that the Church could simplify to help members focus on the things that matter most. An emphasis on the Sabbath day had been a part of recurring training in stake conferences and leadership meetings for several years. In June 2018, I was assigned to lead a project to implement a decision to reduce the Sunday meeting schedule from three hours to two hours, essentially moving the third hour of Church on Sunday from the meetinghouse to the home. It was not about making church shorter; it was about a

better balance between gospel study at home and gospel study at church.

Because of the high confidentiality of this project, very few people were informed about it until just before the announcement. Beyond the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve, the only people who worked on it for several weeks were Elder Donald L. Hallstrom, Richard Heaton, and me. Later, we received permission to bring into the loop a few other employees to help with planning and implementation.

We prepared various presentations for the Quorum of the Twelve about details of how Church meetings and programs would function. We recognized that these changes would have significant impact on the Church, like the changes the previous April about ministering and Melchizedek Priesthood quorums and Relief Societies.

We wished we could have consulted with other departments about the impact of the changes, but the need for confidentiality was greater than the need for collaboration. For example, rather than talking with people in Meetinghouse Facilities about the impact on buildings, I had to research and consider the logistics of the schedule changes and their impact on classrooms, hallways, and parking lots. I developed the schedules of how to hold meetings in buildings with one, two, three, four, and more wards. We had to consider issues with the alternating weeks between Sunday School and Relief Society and elders quorum. We considered the impact on the number of hymns sung in Sunday meetings, the number of minutes for classroom time, and the number of minutes available for members to associate with each other in the halls. All those things were important in the Sunday experience, and the Brethren were concerned that this be an enhancement of the Sunday experience, and not have many drawbacks.

Just a few days before the announcement, we were allowed to bring in another few people who needed to publish an article in the Newsroom and send the First Presidency letter to members as soon as the announcement was made. Nothing was given to translation beforehand.

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On October 6, 2018, in general conference, President Nelson and Elder Cook announced the changes regarding “A New Balance between Gospel Instruction in the Home and at Church.” The announcement included the implementation of home-centered, church-supported curriculum for individuals and families, Sunday School, and Primary. This curriculum made possible the shortening of the Sunday meeting schedule by providing additional gospel study resources for the home.

In April 2015, President Russell M. Nelson had given a talk, “The Sabbath is a Delight.” In some ways, this was the beginning of the refocus on the Sabbath. In 2018, as the Prophet, he made this important announcement to help members focus on the Sabbath even more.

In a video interview in October, President Russell M. Nelson said, “We’re witnesses to a process of restoration.” He continued, “If you think the Church has been fully restored, you’re just seeing the beginning. There is much more to come. ... Wait till next year. And then the next year. Eat your vitamin pills. Get your rest. It’s going to be exciting.” (Church Newsroom, October 30, 2018)

On Monday morning after conference, we held meetings with several other departments that we would have otherwise worked with, were it not for the tight confidentiality that was in place while planning the change. Surprisingly, there was not much that needed to be adjusted once these departments were able to fully consider the impact of the announced changes.

On November 6, 2018, the Priesthood and Family Executive Council (PFEC) invited several employees in to their pre-PFEC meeting to thank us for our work on ministering (announced at the previous April conference) and the new balance between gospel instruction in the home and in the Church (announced at October conference). They expressed their sincere thanks and provided us each a personalized, signed letter.

November 6, 2018

Dear Brother Richman,

THE BLESSED LIFE OF AN ORDINARY MAN

We express our deep appreciation for the work you have done in recent months relating to ministering and the new balance between gospel instruction in the home and in the Church, which were announced during the April and October 2018 general conferences.

We are aware that you have devoted countless hours to this effort. We are grateful for your thoughtful and prayerful attention to the many issues relating to the changes and for your clear desire to support the leadership of the Church. Thank you for understanding the sensitivity and importance of the work in which you were involved.

Your professional talents—as well as your sacrifices—have not gone unnoticed. The good work that has been done will help Latter-day Saints deepen their conversion to Heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus Christ and strengthen their faith in Them.

With warmest regards,

Quentin L. Cook

Ronald A. Rasband

Gerrit W. Gong

WORLDWIDE PLAN FOR CHURCH MATERIALS

A phased approach to the translation of Church materials was implemented in the 1970s. It was originally called the Approved List, which began to inventory and categorize Church materials. It evolved into the Translation Phase Program, which defined the materials needed by members in developing and established areas of the world and gave priority and order to the translation of these materials into languages. Early versions were developed by Kai Andersen in the Publications Coordination office. I began managing it shortly after I transferred into the Publications Coordination office in the early 1980s.

In response to an assignment from the First Presidency in 2002, the Priesthood Executive Council was asked to refine and better implement the translation phase program of the Church,

looking forward to the needs of emerging countries where this program was yet to be applied—mostly in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.

Under the direction of Elder Stephen A. West, I led a multi-department task force to review the existing translation program and enhance it into a Worldwide Plan for Church Materials. The focus was to identify, classify, and manage *all* Church materials—not just provide a plan for translation. Two key elements of this plan were the following:

1. Identification of the key materials of the Church, and their division into four specific lists: introductory phase materials (for introducing the Church), phase 1 materials (for establishing the Church), phase 2 materials (for sustaining the Church), and phase 3 materials (additional materials).
2. Criteria for approving languages for one of these four phases. These criteria included the number of active local members who spoke a language in the home, the maturity of the Church in the language area, the number of materials from previous phases completed and in use, and whether there was a second language that could be used effectively. This assisted Area Presidencies in making translation requests and provided a consistent basis for council approval of such requests.

At that time, some items were moved from one phase to another to allow languages to operate in Phase 2 for a longer period. The philosophy was that languages would not be approved for Phase 3 until after members had used previous phase materials for 20–25 years and until there were at least 10,000 active members in fully organized stakes or districts for which the translated language was the language of the home.

This plan and the specific items on the phase lists were reviewed by all the originating organizations of the Church. The plan was then approved by the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve on December 4, 2002.

In 2009–2010, the Priesthood Executive Council reconvened the task force that revised the plan in 2002, under the direction of Elders Spencer J. Condie and Yoshihiko Kikuchi. I again led a cross-departmental team and we proposed several adjustments to the plan. On June 10, 2010, the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve approved the recommendations.

From August 2010 to April 18, 2012, I served as the director of the Worldwide Plan for Church Materials. In that capacity, I worked across multiple departments to implement the Worldwide Plan for Church Materials.

In 2011, Elder Per G. Malm, an Assistant Executive Director in the Curriculum Department, was assigned to advise the Worldwide Plan for Church Materials. He began working with me and a cross-departmental team to further analyze and report on the materials on the Worldwide Plan for Church Materials.

On March 27, 2012, the Curriculum Department was consolidated into the Priesthood Department and on April 18, 2012, the responsibility for administering the Worldwide Plan for Church Materials was moved from the Curriculum Department (under the direction of the Priesthood Executive Council) to the Correlation Department (under the direction of the Correlation Executive Committee).

I was sad to see it transferred to the Correlation Department because I had been the keeper of the Church's plan for translating Church materials since the early 1980s and I had a deep concern for making sure that Church resources are translated and available to the Saints worldwide.

YOUTH

Annually, the First Presidency issued a letter on "Safety in Church Activities."

On May 24, 2017, I presented in the Priesthood and Family Executive Council (PFEC) on the "Strengthening the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood" effort. At the end of the meeting, Elder Holland thanked those in attendance, and as he gave us our assignments, he said "Don't feel any pressure here. If all

this gets approved, it will just be the most important thing we've done in this half of the dispensation to move the Church forward." (Elder Holland was prone to hyperbolize, but it denoted his feelings about the importance of the matter we were dealing with.)

Extending through the end of 2017, we worked with the PFEC, the Quorum of the Twelve, and the First Presidency on several matters to strengthen the youth of the Church, such as the following:

- Reinforcing that the bishop is the president of the Young Men and that the youth are his primary responsibility. The ward Young Men presidency was dissolved and replaced by Aaronic Priesthood advisors and specialists.
- Youth progressing together in January of each year in changing Primary and youth classes, and young men receiving priesthood ordinations in January of each year. Previously, youth moved to the next class on their birthday throughout the year, causing disruption in classes. By the end of the year, there might be just one or two youth left in a class with a teacher.
- Priests and Young Women participation in temple baptisms. Priests authorized to perform and witness baptisms for the dead and young women to record baptisms and confirmations and assist in other tasks in the baptistry. (See First Presidency letter dated December 14, 2017, "Youth Participation in the Baptistry and Preparing Children for Priesthood and Temple Service.")

On June 20, 2018, the First Presidency letter was released with the updated guidelines on interviewing youth. We had worked on it for months, including compiling suggestions from about 75 reviewers—the First Presidency, Quorum of the Twelve, various General Authorities, General Auxiliary Presidencies, professionals, department personnel, the Office of General Counsel, Kirton McConkie, Risk Management, and others.

In August 2019, we launched “Protecting Children and Youth” training for leaders who work with youth and children. This was the first leader training in the Church that was mandatory. We set up a system to track whether individuals in callings with youth and children had taken the training and provide reports to bishops so they could follow up.

I also assisted in small ways with the disengagement from Boy Scouts and the implementation of the new Children and Youth program that began in January 2020. My team’s efforts supported the guidelines, notices, statements about accessibility, and support in writing activities for youth and children.

SUMMARY OF CHURCH EMPLOYMENT

I’ve held many positions in working for the Church over 40 years, but mostly they have involved developing and implementing Church resources and making sure they are translated and available to the Saints worldwide. For most of my career, I managed the Worldwide Plan for Church Materials. Other assignments included both project management and product management for resources such as leader training, Sunday programs, curriculum for the home and church, scriptures, magazines, and other materials used in the home. For most of my career, I also coordinated the official letters and notices sent from headquarters to stake and ward leaders. My final position was the director of communications and messaging, helping improve messaging to members and leaders.

My offices have been on the following floors of the Church Office Building: 21, 23, 24, and 25, and short time on the second floor of the west wing.

“Wherefore, as ye are agents, ye are on the Lord’s errand; and whatever ye do according to the will of the Lord is the Lord’s business” (Doctrine and Covenants 64:29). Sometimes when working on an assignment or walking from the Church Office Building to the Church Administration Building, I would

sense a feeling of importance—not of myself, but of the important work I had been tasked to do.

I had the privilege of a front-row seat to many important efforts. I met with the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, General Authorities, and General Officers to discuss important issues, create documents and plans, and make presentations to help Church leaders make decisions. It was an amazing blessing.

I considered my job almost a calling. Over the years, I often felt the tug of entrepreneurship—and I had small opportunities to be involved in some outside efforts along with my employment with the Church—but I felt impressed to continue my career at the Church.

WHAT I’VE LEARNED FROM BEING A CHURCH EMPLOYEE

THE BRETHREN

The following is from the *Church News* article, “President Oaks talks Church history, LGBT issues, mental illness,” dated August 28, 2018:

President Oaks said some people wonder whether the leadership of the Church know what is going on in the lives of members much younger than they and in conditions much different than those in which they live.

“Brothers and sisters, we know much more than you suppose,” he said. “You know we are constantly traveling to be with our members all over the world. What you may not know is that every week we receive reports from the most knowledgeable professionals in every field of concern in a worldwide Church — economics, politics, social sciences, legal requirements, diplomacy, the latest thinking on social issues, etc.”

The Brethren are informed “about the world in which we live,” but “we are even more intensely informed about our own members — the challenges they face in medical care,

mental health, public schools, higher education, employment, the market place, retirement, and in their personal relations such as marriage, childbearing, adoption, child-rearing, challenges to faith such as questions about Church history, same-gender attraction, transgender issues, etc.," he said.

As a Church employee who had the privilege of working with many of the Brethren, I can attest that they are very much in tune with the needs of members, both spiritually and temporally. Members of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles spend many hours each week in meetings where presentations are given by experts in many fields, and they discuss how these issues impact the worldwide Church. Individually, many of them are voracious readers and keep up on current events. They want to understand all the issues and then they seek the Lord's direction for His church.

"We have spent many hours talking about how we can simplify our Church programs to perform their essential function for a wide variety of family circumstances...", said President Oaks in the article referenced above. "Now, I am pleased to tell you that some help is on the way and more is under discussion." The Brethren had been actively considering ways that the Church could simplify to help members focus on the things that matter most. One issue President Oaks was likely referring to when he said that "some help is on the way and more is under discussion" was the announcement at the October 2018 general conference about the changes in the Sunday meeting schedule. (See the section "Sunday Meeting Adjustments" in "Major Projects.")

IT'S NOT ABOUT US

As a Church employee, it was important to remember that it was not about me or about my competence. It was God's work and things were done in His way and in His time and by His Spirit.

IS IT KIND AND IS IT TRUE?

I learned this lesson early in my career. I was on the phone in a three-way conversation, and someone approached me with a question. I covered the phone's receiver with my hand and had a side conversation, which happened to mention the person who was currently in the phone conversation. Although I thought he could not hear me, he did. After the phone conversation was over, he told me that he was able to hear my side conversation and some of the things I said about him were not kind. I learned from that experience that I should never say anything about another person that was not kind or that I could not verify as true.

To help me guard against that, I formed a personal rule that whenever I mentioned another person in a conversation, I pretended that the person was standing around the corner from me and was able to overhear my conversation. It helped me make sure that (1) whatever I said could be verified as true and (2) whatever I said was kind. That did not mean that I avoided hard conversations or the truth. It just meant that I did it kindly and accurately.

I also had a corollary to that rule: Do not put anything in an email that you would not want forwarded to someone else. Whenever I wrote an email, I assumed that it would be forwarded to others, including the people mentioned in the email. Again, I tried to be both true and kind.

RECOGNITION FROM COWORKERS

Below are some of the compliments I received from coworkers that I recorded in my journal. I share them here not to boast, but to remind myself of cherished associations with amazing people. My coworker and friend Sheldon Martin (a Ph.D. in behavioral health) reminded me that it is OK to want someone to compliment you—it is only unhealthy when you must have it. I also think it's important for my descendants to know who I was.

In my year-end employee evaluation in 2007, David Frischknecht wrote the following: "Larry has a high capacity for work, devotion to the Church, passion for completing assignments well, and initiative and energy for making improvements. He is a perpetual learner, constantly re-equipping himself with knowledge on a variety of subjects. Key leadership competencies include executing for results, developing personal capability, and leading change."

On May 4, 2009, a coworker, Michael Eckerdt, posted the following recommendation on LinkedIn: "Larry is one of the most open-minded and forward-thinking people I know. Through his vision, energy, and hard work, great improvements in product development and project management are taking place. I'm grateful and privileged to work with someone like Larry."

From April 26, 2011, from Lee Gibbons, who took over as the director of LDS.org after me in 2008: "Bless you for this, Larry. A great example of where you leap tall buildings (including this one) in a single bound by way of your remarkably valuable institutional knowledge. I am continually grateful for your unselfish leadership and wanted to acknowledge you for it again in this instance."

On November 1, 2011, Elder Paul B. Pieper was the Executive Director of the Curriculum Department. After I responded to a request from an Area Presidency, Elder Pieper sent the following email to me and Elder Christoffel Golden: "You guys are very good! And responsive. It makes me want to be in an Area Presidency so that I can be the beneficiary of such great service. Larry, thank you for helping to build a spirit of service and responsiveness in the department. It is wonderful to be part of this great team."

On April 1, 2016, I received the following letter from the outgoing Primary General Presidency:

Dear Larry,

As we come to the end of our service as the Primary general presidency, we are filled with feelings of gratitude

for the opportunities we have had. How does one describe the joy of hugging thousands of women around the world and feeling their wet tears on our cheeks? How does one describe the many faces of the children we have met—each one, a precious son or daughter of God, openly trusting in His love?

With “all our hearts” we express our appreciation for the opportunity to have served with and learned from you. You are such a warm welcoming person. We have been impressed with your exactness in your organization skills and follow-through which continues to move the work forward. We have truly felt your support in all we have been involved in.

Your dedication to our Heavenly Father and the Savior has inspired us. Our commitment for this gospel of Jesus Christ is anchored in our love for Them. Now our children and grandchildren will be the audience for our stories and our testimony. Hopefully they will also feel a portion of what we have experienced ... pure joy!

Gratefully yours,

Rosemary M. Wixom

Cheryl A. Esplin

Mary R. Durham

After working with Ally Isom on the Mormon and Gay website and the Ministering Resource on same-sex attraction, Ally sent me the following email on November 6, 2016: “Again, thank you for your diligent efforts and commitment to this important front. We truly value you and your expertise as a key strategic partner in this process, Larry. I cannot sufficiently express the professional regard we have for you. All my best, Ally.”

From David Clare (a director in the Priesthood and Family Department) on September 9, 2016, in response to publishing resources on preventing suicide: “Larry it has been a joy working with you on this and see how you have organized and pulled in all the pieces and the various departments to

participate and bring this forward...well done... I know it took a team effort, but your leadership and vision has been wonderful to watch...thank you for all you do!...dc"

From John Dye, December 26, 2016, after wishing him a happy birthday: "Larry, you're a man I look up to and respect highly. Thanks for dedicating your time to doing good in the world." John worked for years with Boncom (Bonneville Communications) and worked on projects for the Church Missionary Department. A lot of John's work was in building relationships with influencers in entertainment, music, and social media. In 2017, after answering a question from a coworker, he wrote back the following: "Larry, is there nothing you don't know? You've always got a great answer for everything. Keep up the good work."

On April 24, 2017, Richard Heaton commented, "The more I get to know you and see the work you do, the more amazed I am. Why aren't you the managing director instead of me? I'm constantly impressed. Please help me. Give me any suggestions."

On April 26, 2017, David Clare sent the following email to Richard Heaton about the product plan for Member Missionary work: "Richard, Larry is exceptional. He has edited and added a refinement to this plan that are remarkable. If you don't believe me, look at v3 with the amazing edits and refinements!" David also responded to me with the following: "I truly appreciate your wisdom in many, many ways more than my own...so keep coaching me and pushing me... you are simply remarkable in so many ways and I value your feedback and insights.... Truly... dc"

On July 10, 2017, our Executive Director, Elder Christoffel Golden, sent me the following letter:

Dear Larry,

This is just a short note to thank you for the service you have given to the Priesthood and Family Department. I am so very grateful for your contribution to its vital work!

Your labors in so many projects over the years have deeply impacted the work of the Lord. In particular, your

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF LARRY RICHMAN

work with sensitive issues has and will continue to bless many in the Church at this time. You are truly a gifted administrator.

Elders Bennett, Curtis, Kopischke, Lawrence, and Sitati, join me in extending our gratitude and thanks for your efforts. May the Lord's richest blessings ever be with you and your family.

With warm regards and deep respect,
Christoffel Golden

On September 21, 2017, Richard Heaton, my managing director, made the following comment as part of an email to me: "Larry, Thank you for your excellent leadership on this and so many other things. You have impressive bandwidth!"

On October 23, 2017, I received the following email from Jason Mitchell, a new director in the Missionary Department with the subject: Mentoring. "Larry, Richard Heaton tells me that you know how to get things through the 'system' better than anyone he has ever met in the Church. Would you be willing to spend an hour with me to teach me how you manage your PFEC agendas, track approvals, and coordinate work with the service departments? I would love to buy you lunch and learn everything I can from you. May I schedule some time with you? Jason"

On November 10, 2017, Kelly Haws, head of Correlation Evaluation, sent the following email to Richard Heaton: "It must seem as if the only emails you get include either a problem or an action item. This is a quick note to let you know we met with Larry Richman and David Marsh yesterday regarding the Gospel Topics and they simply couldn't have been any better. They were prepared. They were insightful. They were professional. And they were willing. And I just wanted to take a quick moment this afternoon and express my gratitude. It's a pleasure to work with such people."

In August 2019, a coworker, Garin Granata, sent me the following note: "Congrats on your work anniversary! You are legend here, Larry. Thanks for all you do!"

On October 11, 2019, two of my employees posted the following messages to each other (and copied me) after reading my entry on Wikipedia:

Katie Steed: We really have an amazing boss. I might recommend an update on the photo.

Sheldon Martin: He seriously is a good boss. You know what I love best about him? When you read what he has been involved in, it amazes me that he often has more background than anyone in the room and defers constantly. If I even have half an idea, I share it openly.

In an email to me October 11, 2019, about some routine matters, Sheldon Martin said the following, "I truly love working for you. I have never been more professionally fulfilled in all my life. I have never enjoyed working for someone more than I enjoy working for you. Thanks Larry."

On December 13, 2019, one of my employees, Tony Nisse, posted the following on Facebook: "A quick tribute to my leader in the professional world, Larry Richman. I have long sought for a leader who gets my style, understands how to multiply positive strengths in those they lead, and brings joy to the daily work. Perhaps the best thing I could say is that if I was a bodyguard, I'd take a bullet for Larry (I'd take one anyway, even though I'm nowhere near bodyguard quality)! #bestbossever.

On January 29, 2020, Sheldon Martin sent me the humorous email shown below. We were both in a Priesthood and Family Executive Council (PFEC) meeting. When his agenda item concluded, he left the meeting. I stayed in the room for another 10–15 minutes until the meeting concluded. Sheldon was anxious to follow up effectively and quickly on all the decisions made in the PFEC meeting.

Larry,

There I was diligently responding to prophetic guidance and counsel. "This is why they hired me," I thought. I rushed out of the Administration Building with a spring in my step. I coordinated quickly with Rob Jex to address Life Help in

the app. I invited Rob Smith and Howard Bangerter to join our ongoing meeting invitation. We are now in a place to have a measure and effective approach.

I then dutifully went to follow up on the second item from Bishop Caussé. I rushed to the 19th floor swerving in and out of cubicles, mine was victory to be had. I approached Rob Smith on a prophetic invitation, the Presiding Bishop was my collaborative clarifying call. This was it!!!! I was going to be proactive, responsive, and engaged. Larry will be proud of my timely follow up. "This is the collaboration we seek in restructure. This is it, Sheldon" my mind continued to race.

Like Esther of old "who knoweth whether I have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" The words left my mouth with energy and power, "Rob, can we add a transgender section to Counseling Resources and link to the site?" Here it was. My moment. I stood proudly on prophetic errand. He responded, "Ya, Larry just told me". Ha Ha. I am inspired by your work ethic. I just want half credit for quick follow up.

On March 11, 2020, I got a friend request on Facebook from Nicole Martin, Sheldon Martin's wife. When I accepted her request, I invited her to follow LDS365. She replied, "Thanks so much Larry. Sheldon has already introduced me to LDS365. By the way, he talks about you all the time and loves working for you."

On March 19, 2020, Sheldon reported back on an experience in working with another department where he was able to exert some very helpful influence. At the end of his report to me, he said the following: "Thank you for hiring me. I am not happy that this is during a crisis [COVID-19], but it feels rare to have an experience so specifically apply to my doctorate research. Thanks Larry. Thanks. Thanks for mentoring and helping me. Please let me know if I ever overstep in excitement.... This feels so validating." The Lord certainly was orchestrating many things to bless His children! And I was grateful that Sheldon was here to help make it happen.

In mid-April, Rob Jex (a Priesthood and Family Department employee that I hired years ago, who now was the product manager for the Book of Mormon Video Library) sent a quarterly status report on the video project. I replied with the following: "Thanks for this great update. This BMVL is SO much better because of your amazing direction. I hope you feel a great sense of accomplishment with it. It's an amazing career accomplishment. Keep up the great work." He replied with "Larry, coming from my first and most consistent mentor over the past two decades that means a lot! Thank you! If we pull off this pinnacle filming season [of 3 Nephi] in a way acceptable to President Nelson, Mormon, and the Savior Himself, then YES, I will feel that great sense of 'an amazing career accomplishment.' If we blow it, well then, I'm going to just opt out and go back to my real estate investing hobby."

In April 2020, I took the Clifton Strengths Finder that evaluated my management style. When I reviewed those results with Sheldon Martin, he made the following comments: "You have the best ability to communicate clearly—not intense—that I've ever seen." "Your expertise comes not from osmosis. You consciously acquire it."

On April 20, 2020, one of my employees got a promotion to be the manager of product management in our department. I sent him this congratulatory note: "Congratulations, Rick [Partridge]. So proud of you for what you do and for who you are. Now, you can only accept the job if you assign yourself to all my products." He sent back this note: "Larry, you are the kindest, most genuine boss I've ever had! Your words mean a lot to me. Thank you! Your products certainly are the best the Church has, and I love working with them!"

On July 10, 2020, my coworkers gave me a birthday card. The following were some of the comments on the card:

Larry, thank you so much for your leadership and mentorship. You impact all those with whom you work. The impact you have on other people is immeasurable. Your ability to keep track of so many

moving parts and diligence are beyond impressive.

Thank you for everything, Sheldon Martin

Larry, it's been so great working closely with you. You are absolutely one of the greatest managers because you communicate clearly and frequently with us! Thank you for taking the time to do that. Looking forward to our next adventures together. Rick Partridge

Larry, I'm already looking for ways to get back on your team! Best time of my professional career working with and learning from you. I am honored to call you my friend! Tony Nisse

On August 3, 2020, I posted a "happy birthday" message on Sheldon Martin's Facebook page. He responded with "Thanks, Larry. Getting to know you this last year has been one of the professional highlights of my career. Thanks for everything." The following year, after wishing him happy birthday in an email, he responded with the following: Thanks, Larry. I have thanked our Father in Heaven dozens of times that you had patience and faith to hire me. Indeed, I don't think I will ever be able to thank you enough. I learn from you every time I interact with you. Thank you for being a mentor and friend."

ENTREPRENEURIAL VENTURES

I have always had an entrepreneurial spirit. So, despite working for the Church my whole career, I found opportunities to learn and practice in several disciplines. I consider myself fairly accomplished in the following fields: translator, project manager, product manager, social media and internet strategist, and writer.

SEMINARS

In school, they never teach you *how* to learn or *how* to study. I believed that college students could be much more successful if they learned some basic skills. So, on November 17, 1983, I presented a two-hour seminar on how to be an effective student. It covered study techniques, notetaking, and how to study for and take tests. I advertised it by handing out about 5,000 fliers to college students on the streets and putting them on cars. I rented a room at Provo High School. Only a dozen people attended. I tried the seminar again on March 6, 1984, this time with an ad in the BYU newspaper, but again only a few people showed up. The ideas would have helped students be successful, but as a seminar, it was not successful.

RICHMAN ENTERPRISES AND TRANSCORP

By March 1981, I had set up two businesses, Richman Enterprises and TransCorp. Richman Enterprises was an umbrella for various ideas I had for businesses. TransCorp was to provide translation, transculturalization, and computer transfer services. These were gateway businesses that got me into Richman Communications, Richman Publishing, and Century Publishing.

RICHMAN COMMUNICATIONS

On October 15, 1981, I attended a pre-business workshop sponsored by the Small Business Administration in preparation for starting part-time business ventures.

I tried my hand at selling computers, computer accessories, and supplies. I set up dealer accounts with distributors in California, Oregon, and back east to get the best price on any given product. I sold only a few floppy disks.

I had received mailings from various publishers soliciting biographical information to publish my name in books such as *Who's Who in the West* and *Outstanding Young Men of America*. They offered to publish my entry in the biography and then encouraged me to buy their overpriced hardbound book with

my name in it. My biographical entry was published in *Who's Who in the West* (19th, 21st, and 22nd editions), *Who's Who of Emerging Leaders in America* (2nd, 3rd, and 4th editions), *Outstanding Young Men of America* 1983, and *Dictionary of International Biography* (volume XIX). (See Who's Who entries.)

So, I thought, "I can play this game as well." I talked with the director of the Provo Chamber of Commerce, the assistant to the mayor, and others about my plans for a book about who's who in Provo, *Prominent Men and Women of Provo 1983*. By February 1982, I had compiled a mailing list of 5,600 names of prominent people in the community. I printed letters, brochures, and biography forms to mail to them. I hired Teri Jackman (a girl in our ward) to type addresses on the envelopes. I needed help, but I also wanted to have more chances to interact with her. When people returned their biography forms, I entered the information into my Apple II+ computer, sorted the entries, and prepared the press-ready copy. I did not make as much money on the project as I thought I would, but it was a good learning experience.

I also developed an educational game *Book of Mormon Quiz Game*. It was a set cards with questions and an answer sheet in a box. Bookcraft had agreed to distribute it, but backed out of the arrangement, I did the distribution and sold it through Deseret Book, BYU Bookstore, Timp Mission Bookstore, and other stores beginning with the 1982 Christmas season.

CENTURY PUBLISHING (1981–PRESENT)

I founded Century Publishing in July 1981 and operated it under the names Richman Communications and Richman Publishing until March 15, 1995, when I changed the name to Century Publishing. Century Media was the name for the media arm of the company. I used the company to publish some of my own materials, but also to help other authors publish books and other products in niche markets.

The company provided writing, editing, translation, graphic design, printing, and distribution services. I provided these

services myself or contracted them out to others. See centurypubl.com.

PUBLICATIONS

The company published books, booklets, and educational games on a variety of topics, including religion, social issues, business, project management, culture, linguistics, and biographies. (See a complete list of titles that I have authored at LarryRichman.org/author.) The following are the books the company published:

English Titles

- *101 Ways to Hasten the Work Online* by Larry Richman (5,000 copies)
- *A Place in the Kingdom: Spiritual Insights from Latter-day Saints about Same-Sex Attraction* edited by Garrick Hyde and Ginger Hyde (1,000 copies)
- *Book of Mormon Quiz Game* by Larry Richman
- *Helping LDS Men Resolve their Homosexual Problems: A Guide for Family, Friends, and Church Leaders* by Jason Park (3,299)
- *Learning Through Life's Trials* by Larry Richman (1,040)
- *My Son Is Gay: An LDS Father's Journey Into Love and Faith* by Tony Clarke
- *Project Management: A Strategic Approach* by Larry Richman (60 copies)
- *Project Management Step-by-Step Instructor Guide* by Larry Richman (3 copies)
- *Prominent Men and Women of Provo 1983* by Larry Richman
- *Resolving Homosexual Problems: A Guide for LDS Men* by Jason Park (6,377)

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF LARRY RICHMAN

- *Tales of the Cakchiquels: Trilingual Collection of Folklore from the Cakchiquel Indians of Guatemala* by Larry Richman (47 copies)
- *Talk About Saving Money: How to Save on Food, Utilities, Car Expenses, Mortgage, and Health Care* by Larry Richman (2,000 copies)
- *The Seventeenth Conviction* by Dierdre Joy (500 copies)
- *Understanding Male Homosexual Problems: An Introduction for Latter-day Saints* by Jason Park (10,190 copies)

Spanish Titles

- *Cómo ayudar a los hombres Santos de los Últimos Días a resolver sus problemas homosexuales: Una guía para la familia, amigos y líderes de la Iglesia* by Jason Park (642 copies)
- *Cómo comprender problemas homosexuales de los hombres: Una introducción para los Santos de los Últimos Días* by Jason Park (3,341 copies)
- *Cómo resolver los problemas homosexuales: Una guía para hombres Santos de los Últimos Días* by Jason Park (603 copies)
- *Cuentos de los cakchiqueles: Recopilación trilingüe de cuentos populares de los indígenas cakchiqueles de Guatemala* by Larry Richman (see above)

WEBSITES

I also helped various nonprofit organizations set up and run websites. Examples include Northern Neck Humane Society, Equality and Justice, Evergreen International, Same-Sex Attraction, and Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays and Gays.

I created the website SameSexAttraction.org in January 2008 to provide an understanding of same-sex attraction from a Christian perspective. I worked with several authors to provide

practical ideas on how LGBT Christians could make behavioral life choices in alignment with their religious values. The site was retired October 5, 2016. During that time, it was visited over one million times.

RICHMAN INVESTMENTS RESIDENTIAL HOUSING

For several years, I participated in an investment group that bought and leased residential rental properties. We were organized as Lowry Investors, Inc, a Utah Corporation, and I was a director and the corporate secretary. I never really made money from it, but I learned a lot.

After that, Teri and I bought single-family houses and duplexes. At one point we owned eight properties: five single-family homes (on Green Street, Park Street, Edith Avenue, Glenmare Street, and West Temple) and three duplexes (on Park Street, Emery Street, and West Temple). They were mostly break-even in cash flow, but we saved some money in taxes with write-offs.

After a few years, they were too much to handle with a full-time job, family, and Church callings, so we began to sell them. One event finally convinced me to sell them—in the middle of the night, I had to wade through two feet of water in the living room of the apartment on Emery Street to shut off the water main that had frozen and burst.

A few of the buyers defaulted and we were left at risk for the mortgages, which caused us to declare bankruptcy to release the liability for the mortgages. After we sold the final house, calculations showed that all our profits from the sales went to taxes and we were none the richer for the thousands of hours we put into maintaining the properties, collecting rents, and taking defaulting renters to small claims court. It was a time-consuming, non-rewarding effort.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN RECOVERY

This was a business I tried for a few years on the side. I manufactured key tags that provided a way for lost keys to be

returned to their owner. The tags were encoded with a serial number that identified the person who bought the tag. If the keys were ever lost, the tag instructed the finder to drop them in any mailbox and they would be sent to Rocky Mountain Recovery, and we would return the keys to the owner.

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIST

SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER, SPEAKER, AND AUTHOR

I have been an active user and strategist of social media since the early 2000s. I've been active in coalitions of social media influencers.

- On April 24, 2008, I set up facebook.com/lds, the Church's first social media effort.
- In a post on LinkedIn on April 27, 2016, Cody Loveland (speaker, leader, and social strategist) included me on his list of the top 20 disruptive innovators who had helped him do extra ordinary things.
- One prominent influencer posted the following in a Facebook group of social media influencers: "I think that every Latter-day Saint on the planet is no more than 2 degrees of separation from either Larry Richman or R. Dale Jeffrey. They know everybody!" I responded in jest saying, "Some app developer should create an LDS version of the Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon or the Oracle of Bacon." She responded, "Larry that would be cool! And yes, it perhaps was hyperbole to say 2 degrees, but I'll say 3 degrees and stick to it. If Kevin is 6 degrees with the movie world, and we're all 6

degrees from the whole world, then Larry and/or Dale are 3 degrees with the whole LDS world.”

- Facebook created an algorithm to calculate degrees of separation of people on Facebook. I ran my score, and it showed that I was better-connected on Facebook than Mark Zuckerberg was! My average degrees of separation from other Facebook users was 2.97. Mark Zuckerberg was 3.17 and Sheryl Sandberg (Facebook’s Chief Operating Officer) was 2.92.
- One Facebook influencer made this comment one day: “Larry Richman knows everything or knows who will know.”

I spoke at the Mormon Media Studies Symposium, “Across Time, Cyberspace, and Blogging Disciplines,” held November 11–12, 2010, at BYU. I participated on a panel of Latter-day Saint bloggers who discussed how and why the blogging medium was a viable and valuable LDS media outlet and illustrated how blogging enhances conversation. I wrote and delivered a “live blog” during the panel about how members can use blogs and other social media to build community and spread the gospel. (See a summary I wrote for Mormon Times February 2011.) A student approached me afterward and said “I came to this conference just to listen to you. You’re like a rock star!” On February 26, 2011, the *Mormon Times* published a report from the panel. (See *Mormon Times* article, pages 1, 2, 3, and 4. Also see photo of the panel.)

On March 26, 2011, speaking about Mark Zuckerberg’s speech at BYU, the author of MormonDaddyBlogs.com said, “There have been many reports about Zuckerberg’s visit in the media, but I was most interested to read about Zuckerberg’s remarks in Larry Richman’s blog. Officially, Larry is the Director of Product Awareness for curriculum materials for the Church. But unofficially, he is what may be the Church’s top social media evangelist.”

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF LARRY RICHMAN

On April 6, 2011, I published an article, "Facebook is fundamental shift in communication," in the *Deseret News* about recent technology at a forum at BYU featuring Mark Zuckerberg, the CEO of Facebook, and Utah Senator Orrin Hatch.

On October 3, 2013, I was quoted in the article "LDS conference abuzz with Twitter activity" in the *Salt Lake Tribune* about tweeting during general conference.

In March 2016, I invited Seth Adam Smith and Ganel-Lyn Condie to meet with members of the suicide prevention working group that I chaired. (See photo.) Seth and Ganel-Lyn were both well-known authors and speakers about suicide prevention. After the meeting, Seth posted the following on Facebook: "You guys! I met Larry Richman! He's real!!! Had a great time the other day, Larry. So good to finally meet you!" His reference about being real was because even though I was very active on social media, I did not do much in person. I tried to stay in the background and let others be more front-and-center.

On March 31, 2014, I gave a presentation titled "Easy Ways to Share the Gospel Online" at the LDS Share Expo at the BYU Wilkinson Center, sponsored by the More Good Foundation. I talked about how to share the gospel online. (See script.)

In September 2014, I published my book 101 Ways to Hasten the Work Online. (See photo.) I approached Deseret Book with the book proposal. They wanted eight months to publish it. Since it was a current, hot topic, I was anxious to get it published. I countered with a proposal that I publish and print it in two months and provide them printed copies to sell through Deseret Book stores. They accepted that offer. I printed and distributed 5,000 copies. See displays at Deseret Book store 1 and 2, mention on LDS Living, and article in Mormon Times.

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO)

Over the years, I was involved in a lot of efforts to provide more credible information about the Church online to counter the inaccurate information that was available online.

In July 2008, while I was the director of LDS.org and Internet Coordination, Jeremy Votaw, a young entrepreneur visited with me about ideas he had to publish information online in support of the Church. Afterward, Jeremy reported the following, "I have been getting in touch with many people throughout the LDS community for the past couple of months. Yesterday, I met Larry Richman—pretty much the head honcho (aside from the Brethren) when it comes to the Mormon Church and the internet. First let me say how impressed I was with him. Most large organizations have people in his position that just aren't with the times. (It's a sad truth.) Larry however was really on top of it.... He knew exactly where the church needs to go. He really got it. I am really looking forward to working with him more on this project."

One of our efforts was to put the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* online because it addressed many topics that we did not officially address on LDS.org. We worked with Jack Welsh at BYU and published it on byu.edu. That project was completed in July 2008.

On November 19, 2010, the *National Catholic Register* published the article "[Hi, I'm Joy...and I'm a Mormon.](#)" The following are the opening two paragraphs, "I recently posted on how Catholics are [losing the Search Engine Wars](#). One of the groups we are losing to is the Mormons. I find it fascinating how much active marketing/branding/PR the Mormon church does online. Whatever they lack in theology/history/etc. they seem to do well making up for it in other ways. And that's probably why they continue to be one of the fastest growing religions. Maybe we Catholics can learn something from that. I'm not saying we need to start going door to door or that we should mimic what they are doing here. But Mormons are doing an impressive job using New Media to reach people and connect with individuals in a way that...works for them."

On April 24, 2015, *Forbes* magazine published the article, "How Mormons Use The Internet To Spread The Good Word" (see [PDF](#)). It complimented the Church's SEO (search engine optimization) strategy, referencing a previous analysis, "Breaking Down the Mormon SEO Strategy," that referenced our team working on SEO. The article said that the Church's strategy "is much more forward thinking than many organizations and companies."

The *Forbes* article explained that it is important to share the vision and *why* behind the *how* to encourage employees and members to be active technology users. "This can lead to employees and customers creating their own resources to further motivate their peers, as LDS Church member Larry Richman has done with his blog LDS Media Talk and book *101 Ways to Hasten the Work Online*." The article also praised the Church's efforts at content marketing by distributing content on multiple channels and in innovative ways.

On October 19, 2010, Avinash Kaushik (a noted SEO guru and The Digital Marketing Evangelist for Google) was the keynote speaker at the SES Chicago 2010 conference. He was interviewed and explained why he cited the Church as an organization that does very well at SEO. He said that the Church ranks in the top three on Google for the term "church." Avinash says search marketers can learn a lot from the SEO work done by the Church. It was quite a compliment to the work we were doing on LDS.org.

On December 29, 2010, Justin Briggs published an article, "Breaking Down the Mormon SEO Strategy" (see [PDF](#)). that complimented the Church's SEO strategy. It stated that the Church's strategy "is much more forward thinking than many organizations and companies."

On November 28, 2011, the article "Marketing Religion Online: The LDS Church's SEO Efforts" (see [PDF](#)) examined how the Church employed SEO techniques to improve online search results. It mentioned our SEO team and my work with LDS Media Talk.

LDSMEDIATALK.COM AND LDS365.COM

As an extension of my work at the Church to help members and leaders become aware of Church resources, I networked with third-party media outlets and Latter-day Saint influencers to find additional ways to spread awareness of Church resources. Outside of work time, I used LDSMediaTalk.com and, later, LDS365.com, as a personal project to disseminate information. I published an article on the site every weekday (on average) from 2006 to 2022. The reach was nearly 100,000.

On July 5, 2006, I began a blog, ldsWebguy.com, and began posting tips on how to use social media, how to create LDS websites and blogs, how to keep your family safe on the internet, and how to use media in productive ways. (I have no affiliation with the web page now found at ldsWebguy.com.)

On June 10, 2008, I renamed the site LDSMediaTalk.com with a focus on helping members and leaders become more aware of the availability and purpose of Church resources. The site had a total reach of 75,000 from 168 countries.

On June 25, 2008, the *Mormon Times* published the story “Church official blogs about media projects,” about the launch of LDSMediaTalk.com. It was republished in the *Deseret News* the following day. The article explained how several managing directors participated in the decision to have me begin LDSMediaTalk.com. Several years later, Michael Otterson (Managing Director of Public Affairs) was asked about his level of concern over having me write publicly. He said that the LDS Media Talk blog was “squeaky clean.”

On March 29, 2012, the *Deseret News* published an article about people sharing messages about general conference using social media. I was not quoted in the article, but LDS Media Talk was pictured.

On October 31, 2013, the article “Entering the world of LDS blogging” (see PDF) in the *Deseret News* included a description of LDS Media Talk and included my advice about sharing the gospel online.

On April 3, 2014, *LDS Living* magazine published an article, "19 Must-follow LDSConf Social Accounts & Trends." In their list, number one was, obviously, the Church's website. Number two was, obviously, *LDS Living*. Number three was the hashtag #LDSconf. And number four was "LDS Media Talk, managed by Larry Richman who works in the Priesthood Department at the Church. LDSMediaTalk.com offers 'Ideas for using new technology and media to build families, strengthen faith in Jesus Christ, and share the message of His restored gospel.' They also provide some fantastic content during conference."

The following was from Rob Jex to his coworkers on July 5, 2016, referencing the 10th anniversary of LDS Media Talk: "Well done Larry. Peter, David, and John, in case you weren't 'aware' due to Larry's humble ways, we are celebrating today an awareness milestone of a decade of media/messaging promotion of goodness about the Church and its members. In addition to the great content on the individual posts, the various index pages are also extremely valuable resources. Rob"

The following email was from David DeBry in Church Human Resources, February 9, 2017: "I want to thank you for all the great postings you put out on Yammer, LDSMediatalk.com, and anywhere else I have seen your stuff. Your posts help me in my work, understand what is going on in the Church, and we even go through stuff at home with my children (like the videos...loved the last one on HT). Thanks! David"

On July 5, 2018 (the 12th anniversary), I renamed the site LDS365.com.

Maurine Proctor, the Editor-in-Chief and co-founder of Meridian Magazine, sent me the following email on July 19, 2018: "We love your work and appreciate so much all that you do." I was a contributing author to Meridian Magazine for years. I gave them unlimited rights to repost on Meridian anything they want to from LDS Media Talk and from LDS365.

ONLINE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

I worked with the More Good Foundation for years to help improve the online reputation of the Church. (See the section “Search Engine Optimization” above.) I also led teams at the Church to do the same.

I have done reputation management for high profile individuals. For example, I did some work for a billionaire (the namesake of a fortune 50 company). He called me one day out of the blue because of my reputation in LDS social media circles. He wanted some personal advice and asked me to help him with a reputation management issue he had. I accomplished what he requested and called him back to report it completed and he thanked me.

AUTHOR AND SPEAKER

At heart, I consider myself a writer. See a list of my published books, articles, translations, at LarryRichman.org/author.)

BOOKS

I've authored over a dozen books. (See my [author page on Amazon](#).) I was also the ghost writer of other books that sold over 25,000 copies internationally in English and Spanish.

I published my first book in 1983 as an entrepreneurial effort. Then, in 2002, I was able to break into the New York publishing market when most major publishing houses only considered manuscripts from authors represented by an agent. That book, *Project Management Step-by-Step*, was published by the #1 publisher of business books—the American Management Association. They were so happy with it that they asked me to write two other books for them, and later to write updated editions of each. I found the people to be enjoyable to work with, but their methods were antiquated (paper and red pencil), and the process of peer reviews and proofing were laborious. In my

experience with publishing at the Church, we had found ways to streamline the writing, translation, graphic design, and typesetting of books and manuals. Therefore, I set up my own publishing company, Century Publishing, to publish all the subsequent books I wrote. After I had written *101 Ways to Hasten the Work Online*, I approached Deseret Book to publish it. They were willing but needed 8 months to publish it. Instead, we agreed that I would publish and print it in two months, and they would sell it.

ARTICLES

I have written over 150 articles in the *Church News*, *Deseret News*, *Meridian magazine*, *LDS Living*, Mormon Times.com, Newsroom.ChurchofJesusChrist.org, *Ensign*, and *Liahona*.

I have published over 4,000 articles on LDSMediaTalk.com (and later LDS365.com)—one every weekday (on average) from 2006 to September 2020.

SPEAKER

Over the years, I have spoken at numerous work-related events, taught classes, and given hundreds of talks in ward and stake meetings.

On April 12, 2005, I was a keynote speaker at the three-day DCI Conference on Content Management, Portal, and Collaboration. Ron Schwendiman and I were co-speakers on the topic “Is a Dynamic Multi-lingual Web Presence Possible?” In the presentation, we gave an overview of the scope of the Church’s internet challenges. (See DCI Speakers, DCI Event, conference presentation, speaking notes, and overview of Church sites presentation.)

On October 30, 2007, I was the speaker at a student devotional at BYU-Idaho in Rexburg, Idaho (see photo). Before the devotional, my family and I were invited to a luncheon with the university president, Kim B. and Sister Sue Clark. I wrote an article that summarized the talk for the March 2010 issue of the *Ensign* magazine. (See “Learning Through Life’s

Trials,” *Ensign*, March 2010, pp. 27–31. Read the [text](#), download a [PDF](#), or listen to an [audio recording](#) of the article.) I also published a booklet *Learning Through Life’s Trials*, that was a longer version of the BYU devotional talk.

On October 3, 2021, my managing director, Richard Heaton, sent me the following email: “On my run Friday morning, I enjoyed listening to your talk [at BYU-Idaho]. I had no idea you had done this. It made me wonder what trials you have survived to teach you these important lessons. We always talk about the work of the present, but it would be instructive to talk about the lessons we have learned that shape our responses to the present. You are a unique instrument in the Lord’s hands. I have learned much from you and pray for the Lord’s blessings to continue with you.”

ACTOR

See photos on the “[Actor](#)” page on LarryRichman.org

STAGE ACTING

My acting debut was in September 1961, at age 6. I was in the play production of *Promised Valley* at the Box Elder High School for Peach Days. I played the part of the youngest brother and I sang and danced. After the show was over, I was supposed to come out on stage and give a gift and a little speech to the director. The gift got stuck in my pocket, and I had a hard time getting it out. I was the youngest member of the cast. (See the [program for the play Promised Valley](#).)

In 1970, I was in the Boise 19th Ward’s Christmas play “The Rented Christmas” by Norman C. Ahern, Jr. I played the character Tom and was one of the orphans and a caroler. I also helped with publicity and sound effects.

In April 1971, I was in my first roadshow, “Sewing Basket Blues.” It was written and directed by Nancy Taylor in the 19th

Ward. It was about a pair of scissors who couldn't get along. I was one blade of the scissors and Tammy Hulet was the other blade. We won second place in the stake (of ten shows).

In 1971, I was also in the stake play "And Suddenly You're Older." I danced the Charleston. I was touched by some of the scenes in the play which showed how people grow older, how things change, and how we must accept those changes. It has always been hard for me to accept changes.

In March 1972, I was in my second roadshow. I was one of four dancers and sat on stage on a milk stool until our cue.

MY 10 MINUTES OF FAME, 1987-1992

Towards the end of 1986, I became interested in doing work for television and film. I took acting lessons in 1986 and 1987. In January 1987, I signed with CTA (Casting Talent Agency) for them to represent me for radio, television, and film. I continued in the business for about five years, doing mostly industrials (training films) and other small jobs.

"In this business, you are only as good as the other fellow thinks you are." — Jimmy Cagney

ACTING RESUMÉ

Training Films/Industrials

- *Network Organization*, training film for Novell, Inc., narrator, segment on Drive Pointers, January 1992
- *Incoming Tele-tips*, national sales training film for Subaru, narrator, October 1990
- *Outgoing Tele-tips*, national sales training film for Subaru, narrator, September 1990
- *Putting the Melchizedek Priesthood to Work*, world-wide training film for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, cast, February 1989

Feature Movies

THE BLESSED LIFE OF AN ORDINARY MAN

- *Halloween IV: The Return of Michael Myers*, extra, April 1988

Television Mini-Series

- *Hemmingway*, speaking day player, September 1987

Television Commercials

- *KLCY Radio*, featured extra, January 1988
- *Jerry Seiner Buick*, extra, April 1987
- *Deseret News*, extra, January 1987

Television Movies/Videos

- *Stranger on My Land*, featured extra, September 1987 (Tommy Lee Jones, Dee Wallace, Terry O'Quinn, Pat Hingle, Barry Corbin). The working title was *Eminent Domain*.
- *Mirrors*, extra, April 1988

Television Series

- *Werewolf*, extra, December 1987

Print Advertisements

- Dan's Food Stores, Deseret News & Salt Lake Tribune, December 4, 1988

Stage Acting

- Promised Valley, play, Box Elder High School, Brigham City, Utah, September 8, 1961, principal character (singing and dancing). See [program](#).
- The Rented Christmas, play, Boise, Idaho, 1970, principal character and two extras Sewing Basket Blues, roadshow, Boise, Idaho, 1971, lead character (singing)
- And Suddenly You're Older, play, Boise, Idaho, 1971, dancer
- Roadshow, Boise, Idaho, 1972, dancer

REFLECTIONS ABOUT ACTING, 1987-1992

I took acting lessons from Anthony Leger from November 1986 to February 1987.

In January 1987, I signed with CTA (Casting Talent Agency) for them to represent me for radio, television, and film. Debra Miller owned the agency and Sallie was the talent director. Sal really liked me and sent me to lots of auditions. In 1987, I traveled 1,245 miles running to auditions and classes. Although I didn't land any big parts in 1987, I worked some and learned a lot.

On January 22, 1987, I was an extra in a television commercial for the Deseret News. Scott Featherstone of Evans Advertising directed the shooting in the plaza at Exchange Place.

On April 15, 1987, I was an extra in another television commercial for the Jerry Seiner Buick dealership.

On April 21, 1987, I auditioned for a part in the television movie "Hobo's Christmas." It was cast by Ross Brown and Mary West Casting from Los Angeles. A dozen people at a time were in the room auditioning. Ross spent time talking with each of us as he tried to get to know us. He said he was looking for "dignity." He said that however we chose to play the part, we must like it and stand behind it. If we didn't like our character, how dare we ask the audience to like him! I learned a lot from Ross Brown. Of about twenty men to try out for the part of the priest, six of us made the call-back. Mike Flynn got the part.

My first photoplay was a period piece entitled "Hemingway." It was produced as a joint venture with Daniel Wilson Productions from New York and Alcor, a German company. Wolfgang directed the six-hour syndicated miniseries that aired on television the week of April 23, 1988 and starred Stacy Keach and Rex Bernhard. Cate Praggastis cast me as an employee of the publisher Charles Scribner, and I was seen on the screen briefly adlibbing one line as I exited an elevator as Hemingway entered the building. The setting was 1925, and there was much attention to detail on the set and in

our wardrobe. They filmed it at the Boston Building on Exchange Place in Salt Lake City—a perfect throwback to the 1920s. Helen Butler did a superb job outfitting us, and they flew Gary in to cut our hair. There were only two of us who needed haircuts that day, so the thousand dollars a day they paid him made it my most expensive haircut ever. We filmed the scene on September 5, 1987. It was good learning experience. One scene we filmed was in an office, and since the timeframe depicted was in the 1920s and 1930s, they staged several people sitting at desks smoking cigars. I remember one of the men telling me afterwards that he hoped his bishop would understand why he had to smoke a cigar. I thought to myself that no acting wage would be worth compromising my principles by smoking a cigar.

Two weeks later, Cate Praggastis cast me in a television movie with the working title "Eminent Domain." When it aired on ABC January 17, 1988, it was entitled "Stranger On My Land." It starred Tommy Lee Jones, Dee Wallace Stone, Barry Corbin, Richard Anderson, Ben Johnson, and Pat Hingle, and was directed by Larry Elikann. I auditioned for the part of Chris Dominik, and made the call-back, but didn't get the part. Cate then cast me as a featured extra—a postal worker who was deputized to evict Tommy Lee Jones from his ranch. I had no lines, but lots of camera time. We shot three days (September 18, 19, 21) at a ranch outside of Oakley, Utah, and another day (September 29) in Morgan, Utah.

Two weeks after that, I auditioned with Cate for another "movie of the week" entitled "Evil in Clear River." At the call-back, I found that they would be shooting in November when Teri and I were to be in Hawaii, so I declined. It aired on ABC in January 1988, and starred Lindsay Wagner, Randy Quaid, and Michael Flynn.

After returning from Hawaii, I learned that Salle had quit CTA. I didn't get a single call from CTA in December 1987, a typically busy month for television and radio commercials.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF LARRY RICHMAN

I got a call from Cate Praggastis in December 1987 to work one afternoon on the set of the television series "Werewolf." The FOX network shot nine episodes in Salt Lake. I was in a scene shot at the Deverau House at the Triad Center on December 10, 1987. I was in the final scene of an episode that aired in February 1988.

I auditioned at Telescene as a featured extra in a television commercial for KLCY Radio. I was awarded the part and we shot it on January 20, 1988, at Pheasant Hollow Ranch (9800 S. 575 W.). It took 75 takes to get the camera angles right with the steadycam. It aired on television beginning the second week in April.

CTA went through a difficult time in 1988. Debra hired replacements for Salle who didn't know the business, and I was called to very few auditions. Debra finally brought her mother Maralyn into the office in mid-1988. However, since I became increasingly busy with my rental properties and other businesses, I began to limit myself to speaking parts in television or film.

On April 17, 1988, Cate Praggastis called me to be an extra in a movie the Keebler Company was producing for the Parent Teacher Association. "Mirrors" warned parents about the subtle ways they can discourage children by comments and actions. It was filmed by Bonneville International and the BYU Motion Picture Studio.

On April 18, 1988 I shot one day as an extra in the feature movie *Halloween IV*. The scene was shot at Douglas Elementary in Salt Lake. I was a schoolteacher. I didn't know the movie would be rated R until after the movie was shot and rated by the Motion Picture Association.

In February 1989, the Church asked me to be in a training film they produced entitled *Putting the Melchizedek Priesthood to Work*. I shot a few scenes on each of two days with Merrill Dimik directing.

I didn't get called to very many auditions in 1989, and I was so busy that I didn't push for them. I auditioned for parts in two

movies but didn't get them. I received a call from Catrine McGregor in October to do six days of featured extra work in a movie called *DMZ* (Demilitarized zone), but I turned it down because of other commitments. There were over 20 films done in Utah in 1989, and I didn't appear in any of them.

On September 18th and October 4-5, 1990, I filmed three days as the narrator of two training films for Subaru salesmen. It was a SAG (Screen Actors Guild) job, which qualified me for membership in the union. (See the [letter](#) and [letter](#).) It was my first big job, and I got it purely on my audition. The national director of sales and training for Subaru was there to oversee the shooting. He was very impressed with my performance. Seldom did we do more than one or two takes before I had the lines just as they wanted them. Several times he commented "Superb performance!" and "Absolutely first-class!" Once he said "You're a natural. You have an honest face. I'd buy a car from you!"

At the end of the day, they had me record a 40-second voice-over narration for a TV car ad (see it [here beginning at 9:30](#)). Part way into the narration, the teleprompter operator got lost and I had to go from memory until he finally found his place. Surprisingly, I didn't mess it up and we did it in one take. The director watched it back, and said, "perfect." After that, they called me "One-take Richman."

PROJECT MANAGER

My knack for organization, planning, sequencing, and scheduling led me to an interest in the field of project management. I learned techniques through experience, read books, and over the years, I went to many classes and seminars.

In 1986, I was asked by the Church Human Resources department to teach classes on project management skills to Church employees. From August 1986 to December 1997, I taught 155 hours of classes to over 400 employees. I provided

on-site training to Physical Facilities staff in Boise (June 4–5, 1996) and to the North America Southeast project management office in Atlanta, Georgia; Jackson, Mississippi; Charlotte (November 17–19, 1997), North Carolina; and West Palm Beach, Florida (November 19–21, 1997).

On March 30, 1987, I received a Certificate for Project Management Proficiency from the American Management Association in New York City. The American Management Association later tried me as an instructor for their courses on project management—although I never ended up teaching for them.

I compiled all my teaching notes and wrote a book as an introduction to project management. In May 2000, I flew to New York City to meet with potential publishers. I quickly discovered that it's almost impossible to break into the New York publishing market without an agent. I luckily found two publishers who were interested—AMACOM (the book publishing division of the American Management Association) and the Project Management Institute (PMI). Both AMACOM and PMI are surprisingly large book publishers. In fact, AMACOM publishes more business books than any other publisher. AMACOM accepted my proposal in September 2001 and published it as *Project Management Step-by-Step*. The book was used in project management classes at several universities. The book went to print-on-demand in February 2006. Prentice Hall of India published an economy edition in September 2008 for use in India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. Up to December 2015, I was paid \$20,500 in royalties. To December 2020, it had sold 6,465 copies. Later, AMACOM sold the rights to the book to Harper Collins, who continued to distribute the book.

AMACOM was so happy with my book that they asked me to write two more books for them:

- *Improving Your Project Management Skills* (both the first and second editions). I wrote the first edition as a work-for-hire for \$4,500. It was published in

June 2005 and sold over 10,000 copies. I updated it for the second edition as a work-for-hire for \$5,000.

- *Successful Project Management* (both second and third editions). It was a college-level self-study course that sold for \$159. The second edition was published in December 2004. I was paid an advance of \$2,500 to write it, plus royalties (which were \$17,452 through December 2015. 2,125 copies were sold to June 2009. I updated it for the third edition for \$5,000, plus royalties. The third edition was published in February 2011.

I also published the following books through my company Century Publishing: *Project Management: A Strategic Approach* and *Project Management Step-by-Step Instructor Guide*.

I found the people at AMACOM to be enjoyable to work with, but their methods were antiquated. They still used paper and red pencil, with numerous rounds of proofing as the books were sent to content experts for peer review and as copy editors reviewed the manuscripts. That experience helped me focus on process improvements we could make in publishing Church publications.

I also wrote the following articles:

- “Making Team Decisions Wisely,” published in *Today’s Engineer* magazine.
- Bob Weinstein interviewed me and quoted me in his article “Six Reasons to Kill a Project,” published in *Builder* magazine.
- In June, an excerpt from my book was published in *USA Today*, “Strategies for Managing Conflict Between Workers.”

In 1998, I spoke with the American Management Association (AMA) about teaching their Basic Project Management 6503 course. I audited the course in June. Then from July 17–22, I attended a professional development seminar for AMA speakers titled “Teaching Techniques for Accelerated Learning.”

The teaching roster was full in 1998 and there was a mix-up in 1999 in that my name did not get added to the roster. After that, I did not pursue it.

On July 22, 2001, I sat for the Project Management Professional (PMP)® test administered by the Project Management Institute (PMI). PMI was the only professional association that certified project managers—similar to how the CPA exam was a professional accreditation of public accountants. It was a grueling multi-hour test. In fact, in 2001, the PMP® exam had a higher failure rate than the CPA exam. I passed the test and became a certified PMP®.

I published the website projectman.org from 2002 to 2015. I originally created it to promote the book *Project Management Step-by-Step*, but I expanded it to be a project management portal with information and resources on various aspects of project management.

On December 27, 2016, the Houston Chronicle published an article, "The Best Practices in Picking a Project Manager" (see [PDF](#)), that referenced me and summarized some material from one of my books.

PRODUCT MANAGER

Several of my positions in Church employment included product management, which is the process of creating and managing products, including development, business justification, planning, verification, forecasting, pricing, product launch, and marketing of a product or products at all stages of the product lifecycle. Over the years, I went to several classes and seminars. On July 9, 2008, I sat for and passed the following accreditation exams from the Association of International Product Marketing and Management (AIPMM): Certified Product Manager and Certified Product Marketing Manager.

I was one of the founding members of the Church Product Management Association (CPMA), and internal office of best practices among Church employees. It began within Information and Communication Services (ICS), and in late 2007, we extended invitations to product managers in all departments. Because of other heavy assignments, I withdrew from the CPMA at the end of 2008.

SPRINGS LEADERSHIP (1990–1995)

A coworker at the Church (Gregg Johnson from the Church Educational System) worked part-time for Rue Lawrence, president of Springs Development Systems, Inc. He introduced me to Rue, on Monday, July 16, 1990. I worked part-time for Springs until 1995 in the following two positions:

- Director of product development. I managed the editing, design, and printing of brochures, manuals, marketing materials, business cards, and letterhead. I developed a company logo and visual identity plan.
- Executive coach and leadership trainer. I consulted with CEOs, vice-presidents, and managers at several companies on leadership and management, including First Security Information Technology, Inc.; King Bee, Inc.; and Corporation of the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

VOLUNTEERING AND GIVING

My mantra is to donate 10% of my time and money to my church. Also, to donate 10% of my time to community service, which I have done with Scouting, Evergreen, More Good, and other worthwhile causes. I've consulted with several organizations and individuals to help them get their causes established.

My focus professionally was to help build the Kingdom of God (full-time work, efforts in social media, authoring books, etc.). Given the time, I would love to help build my country by running a conservative think tank or a political organization to preserve our freedoms and the constitution. I had a short-lived campaign for President of the United States, but I backed out of the race to spend more time with my family.

BOY SCOUTS

I served for 21 years in various volunteer positions with the Boy Scouts of America.

EVERGREEN INTERNATIONAL (AUGUST 1993– DECEMBER 2010)

I volunteered for 17 years as a member of the board of trustees, chairman of the board of trustees, and CEO of Evergreen International, Inc., a non-profit community organization that provided education, guidance, and support to individuals who experienced same-sex attraction. I was the organization's liaison with Church leadership.

BACKGROUND

Evergreen was a non-profit organization that sponsored support groups and education for people (primarily men) who experienced same-sex attraction and wanted to live their lives in harmony with gospel principles.

Evergreen was established on July 12, 1989, as a grassroots support group by eleven Latter-day Saint men in Salt Lake City who experienced same-sex attraction. They believed that homosexual behavior was not in keeping with the gospel of Christ. They were not satisfied with either of the two choices that presented themselves: (1) setting aside their spiritual beliefs and living a gay lifestyle or (2) suppressing their sexual feelings and living a straight lifestyle. As they searched for answers, they were intrigued by the early success of Frank Worthen and other Christians who had formed successful

support groups. (For a history of Evergreen, see [Evergreen History 20th Anniversary](#).)

The Evergreen group quickly caught the attention of senior Church leaders as the only Latter-day Saint group that was fully in line with Church doctrines and practices. Early contacts with Church leaders lead to having emeritus General Authorities on the Board of Trustees and having a General Authority speaker at each annual conference. It was an arms-length arrangement with the Church. Evergreen was an independent non-profit organization that provided a second voice in support of gospel teachings about morality and personal agency regarding behavioral choices.

Evergreen received 3,600 phone calls a year and responded to requests by e-mail in English and Spanish. It developed the country's largest database of trained therapists, resources, and support groups that upheld gospel standards.

It held annual conferences attended by 300–400 from many states and countries. The 19 conferences from 1989 to 2009 were attended by about 7,000 people and included major addresses by 14 General Authorities, numerous world-renowned speakers, and hundreds of workshops. General Authority speakers included the following: Bishop Keith B. McMullin in 2010, Elder Bruce C. Hafen in 2009, Elder William R. Walker in 2008, Elder Douglas L. Callister in 2007, Elder Rex D. Pinegar in 2006, Elder James O. Mason in 2005, Elder Merrill J. Bateman in 2004, Elder Robert S. Wood in 2003, Elder Bruce D. Porter in 2002, Sister Sharon Green Larsen in 2001, Elder Alexander B. Morrison in 2000, Elder Cecil O. Samuelson in 1999, Bishop Keith McMullin in 1998, Elder Jay E. Jensen in 1997, and Elder Marlin K. Jensen in 1996.

Evergreen encouraged the development of support groups. In 2011, there were 32 groups that were supported by local priesthood leader direction.

The website EvergreenInternational.org had 600 pages of information in English, a few hundred pages in Spanish, and limited information in 31 other languages. Over 10 years, it was

visited over one million times and visitors read over 3.5 million pages.

Evergreen developed relationships with national religious, research, and educational organizations with similar goals.

MY INVOLVEMENT WITH EVERGREEN INTERNATIONAL

I spent 17 years on the Board of Trustees of Evergreen International, Inc. as a trustee or as the CEO and Chairman of the Board. The following is the detail of my service: Board of Trustees September 1991 to October 1993; Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer from October 1993 to October 3, 1995; member of the Advisory Board in 1997; and Chairman of the Advisory Board from January 1998 to June 6, 2000. At that time, I was recruited back to the board of trustees to help them reestablish a vision and set an organizational roadmap. We dissolved the Advisory Board, reorganized the Board of Trustees, recruited new Trustees, developed a strategic plan, reorganized the staffing structure, and revitalized financial management and fundraising. I served as Chairman of the Board of Trustees and Chief Executive Officer from June 6, 2000, to December 2010. I then resigned after stabilizing the organization and raising hundreds of thousands of dollars in donations.

My time serving there was meaningful. When I first became involved, it was a small group that met in the basement of an office building. Over the time I was with the organization, the numbers grew, we incorporated the organization, obtained tax-exempt status, established a professional board of trustees, established operating policies and a solid mission statement, and produced publications. I helped it grow into an international organization that blessed the lives of many thousands of men, women, families, and church leaders. We raised sufficient funds to hire a full-time administrator and office staff. We set up 14 chapters in the United States, Canada, and Australia. We held annual conferences that were attended by hundreds of people each year. Two emeritus General Authorities served on the Board of Trustees and the Church

assigned General Authority speakers at our annual conferences. We had a bi-monthly newsletter and published resource lists.

Why did I donate 17 years to help Evergreen? My heart goes out to those who experience same-sex attraction, not only because it is a very difficult challenge, but also because it is a challenge where it is difficult to find answers that are helpful. At that time, Latter-day Saints, parents, and Church leaders had very little understanding about same-sex attraction. There were very few Christian organizations and books that explained homosexuality from a gospel perspective. Gay men went to their bishops seeking help, but the bishops did not understand the feelings and emotions and did not know how to help. All they could tell them was to be faithful and manage their behaviors. "Just keep the law of chastity." But for many gay members, that was easier said than done.

Some men attended support groups for the rest of their lives to keep their behaviors in check. The support of others helped them be accountable. Many experienced a variety of issues that fueled their same-sex attractions. Although the Gospel of Jesus Christ was the answer, the solutions to their problems were complex. Working on spiritual components such as fasting, prayer, and scripture study were not sufficient. They also had to work on emotional, relational, and identity issues at the same time to find success. Same-sex attraction is both a spiritual and a psychological issue that almost always requires professional help for a person to understand well and find stability in a path that is consistent with gospel behavioral standards. Without substantial psychological intervention, few were able to stay the gospel course.

Many were frustrated and lost hope in the ability to manage their behaviors. They lost hope in God's eternal Plan of Salvation. They left the Church and sought happiness as the world defined it. Others trusted in God's plan for them. They kept the faith and pressed forward, not knowing where their life path would lead. Were they consigned to a solitary life, not being able to marry? Or would they reach the point of being able to marry the opposite sex and have a traditional family?

For men who were already married, could their marriage to a woman be fulfilling? About half of the men who were involved in Evergreen through the years were married and the other half were single. Some were able to resolve inner conflicts to the point that they could continue in a healthy marriage with a woman. Others gained enough opposite-sex attraction that they married women and had successful marriages. Others remained single.

Many found success in addressing their same-sex attractions. They found hope, answers, and practical help. It was rewarding to be involved in creating informational resources and support groups that helped men along this journey. Over time, more and more professional therapists found ways to help men resolve their inner conflicts and live lives compatible with gospel happiness.

On April 25, 1999, I met with my stake president, Richard Summers, to bring him up to date on my activities with Evergreen. I explained that I felt that I should be doing more to serve as a resource to members of the stake and the Church to help them understand same-sex attraction. We discussed the importance of the pioneering efforts being made within the Church and by organizations such as Evergreen. I explained that I was spending 10–20 hours a week in activities such as the following: providing training to LDS Social Services personnel, therapists at the BYU Counseling Center, and to groups of social work students at BYU; serving in leadership positions with Evergreen; speaking with General Authorities and other Church leaders; speaking as requested by stake and area leaders at regional welfare meetings and other leadership meetings; and helping various Latter-day Saint authors publish books about how to positively address same-sex attraction.

He strongly encouraged me to continue and even increase these efforts. I explained that with my demanding work schedule, family, and calling in the bishopric, I had no available time to increase those efforts. He suggested that perhaps I should be released from the bishopric and my calling should be a stake welfare specialist to perform these activities. He later

talked with the Area President, Elder Alexander B. Morrison, about the possibility of me doing this full time, either as a missionary or as an employee.

In sacrament meeting on June 20, 1999, I was released as first counselor in the bishopric. President Summers explained to the ward that I was released so I could be a resource to the bishops and the stake president and to other stakes in the Church about same-sex attraction. I was given a few minutes at the end of the meeting, and I explained that I would be working in a general advisory capacity with Evergreen International, LDS Social Services, and getting materials published and translated. After the meeting, two people approached me to say that they wanted to talk with me further because they had family members who experienced same-sex attraction. I had really enjoyed working with Bishop Randy Sylvester and the counselor, Neal Peterson. For years, Bishop Sylvester was my home teacher, and I was his home teacher.

I shared this in a letter to Elder H. Burke Peterson and a few others who were serving on the Evergreen board. He responded with a voice message saying the following: "I just read your letter 'to your dear friends.' I appreciate being included and am in total agreement with your priesthood leaders who have placed an unusual value on contribution to this work that we're engaged in. Anyway, congratulations to you and Lord bless you as you continue to make an impact not just locally but over the Church—and in fact, I guess, the whole world—on this vital issue that we are involved in with Evergreen. Thank you for including me, Larry."

At the end of 2013, Evergreen merged with North Star (see NorthStarLDS.org) to form a single faith-based organization for Latter-day Saints.

Over those 17 years, I had met with General Authorities to offer help. Later, during the last five years as a Church employee, my assignment put me in the position to direct the cross-departmental working group that coordinated Church efforts on LGBT issues. We had input on the content of the 2012 version of the Mormons and Gays website, its update to the

Mormon and Gay website in 2016, and the publication of the same-sex attraction and transgender sections of the Life Help section of ChurchofJesusChrist.org in 2020. I met many times with our Executive Directors and with the Priesthood and Family Executive Council about LGBT issues. For years, I had worked from the nonprofit Evergreen perspective to get information to leaders to help them be better prepared to help individuals and families. Later, I was in the position to help develop resources and leader training from the Church perspective. See the chapter “Church Employee,” section “Same-Sex Attraction.”

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Over the years, I was a member of the following professional associations:

- National Honor Society
- Delta Sigma Pi National Spanish Honor Society
- American Translators Association, member
- Deseret Language and Linguistic Society, former secretary/treasurer
- American Management Association (AMA), member beginning 1981. In 1998, I attended AMA’s Professional Development Seminar to prepare me as a trainer for their seminars. I had planned to teach their project management seminars but did not.
- Project Management Institute, member beginning 1996. Founding member in 1997 of the Northern Utah Chapter.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND INVESTING

In college, I received a few small scholarships and help from my parents to pay for some of my housing. Other than that, I put myself through college by working. Even during graduate school, I worked 20–30 or more hours a week. When I got married, I had \$30,000 in investments and no debt. (See chapter “School,” section “Financing School.”)

My salary at my first full-time job with the Church in 1980 was \$19,200 a year. I always felt the need to save money and taught myself how to invest in stocks and bonds. For years, I listened to several finance shows daily to learn from knowledgeable people. I occasionally had courtesy portfolio reviews by companies who wanted me to use them as advisors. At each review, they were impressed with my investments and the returns I experienced.

In 2017, I began managing Dad’s investments for him in a well-balanced, diversified, conservative portfolio including some high-growth stocks. For example, in 2017, the portfolio grew 24%. In January and February of 2018, when the stock market corrected 10%, the portfolio was only down 3.5% and by the end of February, it had recovered completely. With the market decline in early 2020 because the coronavirus pandemic, the portfolio declined about half of what the market went down, and we had recovered all the losses by mid-year.

I was a millionaire about five years before I retired and had a net worth of two million by the time I retired. By then, I had transferred everything to Roth accounts, so everything we spent in retirement or left to our children as an inheritance was tax-free money.

FUN AND WEIRD THINGS I'VE DONE

- In the Middle East, I “did the Med, Dead, and Red” in one week. (Swam in the Mediterranean Sea, Dead Sea, and Red Sea.)
- I climbed the pyramids in Egypt.
- I stood at the Western Wall in Jerusalem.
- I went on an animal safari in Kenya.
- I visited a rose farm in Zimbabwe.
- I speak fluent Cakchiquel.
- I showered in a torrential rain in Guatemala.
- While snorkeling in Mexico, I got caught in a current and was carried into barracuda who were guarding their territory.
- I slept overnight on a beach on Isla Mujeres.
- I toured ancient ruins at Palenque in Mexico with a team of linguists and anthropologists.
- In Fiji, I took a wave runner to a reef offshore and went scuba diving off the wave runner.
- I stood inside the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem and marveled about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The sign on the door proudly states, “He is not here. He is risen.”
- I was buried in rubble in the Guatemala earthquake in 1976. I was the only American in a town of 25,000 people. 3,200 to 3,500 died in that town that night. For the next two months, I lived in a tent and help people shovel away the debris left from the fallen adobe houses.
- After a missionary companion died in the mission field, I rode with his body in the back of a truck to tell his father. I then helped the mission president and his father prepare his body for burial.
- I earned my Eagle Scout rank at the age of 13.
- I spent a summer in Guatemala with one of my missionary companions translating the Book of Mormon into the

Cakchiquel language. I later translated hymns, temple ceremonies, and many other Church resources.

- I spent a summer in Guatemala with BYU linguistics students preparing dictionaries of various Mayan languages.
- I spoke at a devotional for all students at BYU in Rexburg, Idaho.
- I wrote over a dozen books, numerous book translations (in English, Spanish, and Cakchiquel), and thousands of articles in professional magazines, journals, newspapers, and websites.
- I drove a car over 100 mph on the autobahn in Germany.
- I owned eight rental properties at one time. Once in the middle of the night, I had to wade through two feet of water in the living room of one apartment to shut off the water main that had frozen and burst. That night, I decide to sell all the properties.
- One summer, my father and I submitted over 2,000 names for temple ordinances. That was before FamilySearch, when we had to find names on microfiche and type up submittal forms with all the information.
- At the age of 17, I was called as a Genealogy Research Specialist in my ward. (That was when it was unusual for youth to serve in that calling.)
- I was a Staff Sargent in the Army Reserve Officer Training Corps in high school and turned down a full scholarship to earn a pilot's license.
- I have visuospatial dyslexia.
- I had a following of over 100,000 people on LDS365.com and social media.
- I have been on three three-week unlimited mileage airline trips.
- I gained a testimony of my Savior Jesus Christ and His Restored Gospel in a green Ford Galaxy 500. Before my mission, during my lunch hours from work, I would sit in the car and eat peanut butter sandwiches and grape soda while reading all four standard works from cover to cover.

- I took a trip-of-a-lifetime with my wife and a hundred seminary and institute teachers to Israel, Jordan, Egypt, and Italy.
- I was an actor and appeared in movies, a mini-series, television shows, commercials, print advertisements, training films, and on stage.
- I have impersonated Mr. Bean. (See photo.)
- I stood in the room in the Salt Lake Temple where James E. Talmage wrote the book *Jesus the Christ*.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

Was once pursued by the police to recover drug money. (True.) When on a trip to Isla Mujeres, Mexico, with one of my college roommates, we found drug money on the beach one morning. It was ten 1,000-peso bills, which at the time was worth US \$435. No one was around and we did not know who to return it to. We asked the man at the hotel desk if anyone had reported losing money. Later, the police came after us trying to get the money “to return it to its rightful owners.” We avoided the police the rest of that trip.

When I regained consciousness, I was completely naked, leaning against the wall, lying in a pool of my own blood. (True.) Enough said.

Almost published a personal comment in the Book of Mormon. (True.) After David Frischknecht and I translated the Book of Mormon into Cakchiquel, our typist inserted the phrase (Hey, I have an aunt named Alma!) into the text after the first time she came across the name Alma. At each proofreading, we deleted the phrase, but for some uncanny reason, at each pass it did not get deleted in the electronic database. Even on the final proofs, the phrase was still there—but, fortunately, was deleted just before the book got printed.

I am Elder Jeffrey R. Holland’s “buddy.” (True. But he calls a lot of people his “buddy.”) In my assignments as a Church employee, I had the privilege of being in meetings with Elder Holland scores of times. I have talked with him personally on several occasions. On one occasion, I was delivering a report to

his office, and as I handed it to his secretary, he heard me through the open door, and said “Larry, buddy, come on in.” He is always warm and friendly. Everyone is his “buddy.”

TURNS OUT I AM NOT WEIRD

Do you ever have those times in your life when you think you are weird? I have had times like that, but it turns out that I am not weird.

- When I blew my nose, it honked. My dad also honked when he blew his nose. I thought I was just musically talented, but then I found out that it was because of a deviated septum. And it was genetic. It was like blowing into a trombone. The air passed from one nostril to the other, turned around and came back around in full force and let out a blow—like a trombone.
- For about two years, I thought I was 57. Then one day, my wife said, “you’re not 57—you’re only 56.” So, it turned out that I never got to live being 56. I soon became 57—for the second time—and I missed living 56 altogether.
- When I started getting older, I had to get serious about losing weight. I read up on all kinds of diets. I drank diet shakes. And I ate diet bars like there was no tomorrow. Diet ice cream. I ate everything I could find that said “diet” on it. And the more I ate, the fatter I got. It turns out that with this diet stuff you cannot just eat all you want. So, it turns out that I did not have a weird weight-gaining thing—I just had to back off on what I ate.
- Then I really started working out and one of the things on my bucket list was that I wanted to run and participate in races. I thought a 5k would be fun. But then I realized that there was no way I could run 5,000 miles. That was ridiculous—who can run 5,000 miles? But then I investigated further and discovered that a 5k is only a little over three miles. So, I thought “Anybody

could run three miles.” So, I ran a 5k. Well, I signed up for a 5k. Well, I thought about signing up for a 5k.

- Bucket list: Write a dozen books. Check. Participate in politics. Check. (I was a candidate for President of the United States in 2016 but withdrew when Donald Trump ran. More people knew him than knew me.)
- There was a time in my life when I thought I was a superhero. All my life I *thought* I was a superhero. And I thought that was kind of weird. But then I discovered that I *actually was* a superhero. (See my suit, my car, another car, and my cape.) I’m not saying that I’m superman; I’m just saying that no one has ever seen me and Superman in the same room. I’ve also been confused with Captain America.
- I used to be dork but then I turned out OK.

INTERACTIONS WITH FAMOUS PEOPLE

I’ve never had a formal meeting with a sitting president of United States, but more importantly, I once made a presentation to the First Presidency (Presidents Gordon B. Hinckley, Thomas S. Monson, and James E. Faust) on June 11, 2004. It was a proposal for a major upgrade of LDS.org. The presentation was 3.5 minutes and I asked for \$3.5 million. Approved.

On scores of occasions, I have attended meetings of the Quorum of the Twelve and have met with many of them one-on-one in their offices. For several years, I attended every meeting of the Priesthood and Family Department Executive Directors’ Meeting (EDM), the Priesthood and Family Executive Council, and the Church Communication Committee EDM. I regularly worked with many General Authorities and General Officers of the Church. I was regularly in committee meetings discussing issues and developing policy recommendations for consideration by the Quorum of the Twelve and the First Presidency.

The following is an entry from my journal, dated March 15, 2006:

In the past 24 hours, I have spoken to or been with nearly every person in the First Presidency, Quorum of the Twelve, Presidency of the Seventy, and Presiding Bishopric. It started Tuesday afternoon (March 14, 2006). I was talking on the phone with Dad as I left the Church Office Building and walked over to the Church Administration Building to pick up something. As I waited for the elevator, it opened, and President Hinckley walked out. I said "Hello, President" and he said, "Cell phone, huh?" President Hinckley had just returned from rededicating the temple in Santiago, Chile. He is amazing. At 95 years old, he had surgery for colon cancer (January 24), spent only a week in the hospital, then six weeks later (March 17), he took a trip to Chile to rededicate a temple. He was thinner by about 20 pounds but looked healthy and well.

The next morning, I attended the Priesthood Executive Committee (PEC) meeting to make a presentation with Elder Jay E. Jensen about Church internet activities. Bishop Burton and Elders Oaks, Holland, and Bednar were there. As I left the meeting, President Faust was standing in the foyer. Then that afternoon, I helped Elder Jensen with the same presentation in the Area Committee meeting, which is made up of the Quorum of the Twelve, the Presidency of the Seventy, and the Presiding Bishopric. They were all in attendance except Elder Scott, Elder Uchtdorf, and Bishop McMullin. It was a very unusual and inspiring 24 hours.

The presentation to the PEC and Area Committee was a brief status report on Country websites and the redesign of LDS.org, then a discussion about answering questions about the Church online. We reviewed how easy it is for people to find misinformation about the Church on the internet, and we reviewed ways to present answers to more questions on Church websites. The Area Committee is a great forum for discussion. Rather than a typical agenda-filled meeting, these meetings are usually discussions on thought-provoking topics where a presentation is made, and the Brethren take time to discuss it. Elder Packer commented that the internet is an area we really need to get our arms

around. He said this is has a great potential for good in the Church and we need to pursue it.

The following is my journal entry from September 3, 2011: "I had a brief, but pleasant chat with President Hinckley last night. He was in our neighborhood and walked past my house as I was stringing Christmas lights. He commented to me how he liked Christmas lights and, in fact, had just put a string of lights around the front door of his apartment. He said he wished he had more room for lights and would like to put up more. I said 'Well, you do put up quite a few lights on Temple Square.' 'Yes, I guess I do,' he said with a chuckle as he walked off down the street. So much for dreams."

On Memorial Day 2017, we had a BBQ at our house and Jason and I were talking when I got a phone call from Elder D. Todd Christofferson about a presentation I had helped him prepare for a meeting of the Quorum of the Twelve. As I left the room to take the call, I said, "Hello, Elder Christofferson." After I finished the call and returned to the room, Jason said, "You just got a call from an Apostle, didn't you?" I felt privileged and in awe every time I think about the marvelous opportunities I have had to work with the Brethren weekly on things that are important to the Kingdom.

MY PHILOSOPHY ON LIFE

I resonate with the following quotes:

"Though I am not what I ought to be, nor what I wish to be, nor what I hope to be, I can truly say, I am not what I once was."
— John Newton (the man who wrote the hymn "Amazing Grace")

"It's remarkable how much long-term advantage people like us have gotten by trying to be consistently not stupid, instead of trying to be very intelligent." Charlie Munger (billionaire)

investor and vice chairman of Berkshire Hathaway, the conglomerate controlled by Warren Buffett)

Activity and Accomplishment. I often focused too much on activity and accomplishment. With my background in project management, it felt natural to me to follow up, check things off, and get things done. The world is interested in results. But in the gospel, sometimes the *process* is more important than the *end results*. What really matters is what we learn along the way and what we become as a result. An important reason to read the scriptures is to gain knowledge. But another key reason to read the scriptures is to invite the Holy Ghost into our lives. In Elder Dallin H. Oaks' general conference talk "The Challenge to Become" (October 2000) he says, "In contrast to the institutions of the world, which teach us to know something, the gospel of Jesus Christ challenges us to become something." Elder Oaks said that to follow Christ, the "process requires far more than acquiring knowledge. It is not even enough for us to be convinced of the gospel; we must act and think so that we are converted by it." He explained, "Many Bible and modern scriptures speak of a final judgment at which all persons will be rewarded according to their deeds or works or the desires of their hearts. But other scriptures enlarge upon this by referring to our being judged by the condition we have achieved." He concluded, "I hope the importance of conversion and becoming will cause our local leaders to reduce their concentration on statistical measures of actions and to focus more on what our brothers and sisters are and what they are striving to become."

I used to think that what I *did* was important. But I've come to realize that who you *are* is more important than what you *do*.

President Gordon B. Hinckley said, "You are good. But it is not enough just to be good. You must be good for something" ("Stand Up for Truth," BYU Devotional Sept 1996). If exaltation is our goal, we must follow the path that leads to exaltation. The quality of goodness is an essential step along that path, but it is not the only one.

Becoming. This life is not about *accomplishing* something, it's about *becoming* something. It takes time—it takes a whole life.

Although the people who heard King Benjamin's preaching (see Mosiah 5:2) experienced "a mighty change in us, or in our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually," most people change little by little. For most people, being born again is more a process than an event. And engaging in that process is the central purpose of mortality.

Callings. Coming to know the Savior and seeing His face has nothing to do with your calling—whether you are an Apostle or have no calling in the Church—and everything to do with being His child and seeking to be close to Him. The experience at the veil in the temple is not just about what will happen at the end of your life. It is about what we should be constantly doing during our life in approaching and connecting with our Heavenly Father.

Charitable Giving. I posted the following on my light-hearted blog, Richman Ramblings, on July 22, 2019:

Larry Richman and his wife Teri have committed to giving away their entire fortune.

More than 175 high net worth individuals have signed the Giving Pledge to donate a majority of their fortunes to charity. The Giving Pledge, created by Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett, has set a new standard of generosity among the ultra-wealthy. A report from financial research company Wealth-X predicts the pledge may be worth as much as \$600 billion by 2022.

However, unlike many billionaires and billionaire couples, the Richmans have committed not just to give away half of their wealth—they have committed to donating *their entire fortune* to charitable causes and to their heirs before and after their death.

According to Richman Wealth Management, the private office that manages family investments, Larry and his wife have already contributed a good portion of their wealth to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, including its extensive humanitarian efforts and to other causes worldwide.

Choices. Everything you do today affects your eternal future. You can destroy your future or build your future by the choices you make today. Christian discipleship emerges from a consciously chosen way of life—consistent, conscious choices for good. Character is forged at ethical moments when we choose between right and wrong, and at defining moments when we choose between better and best. Every choice we make defines, in a small way, our character and either builds celestial attributes or chips away at those attributes. The gospel helps us see more clearly to help us through our experiences on earth.

Consumerism. After the earthquake in Guatemala in 1976, we had to draw water from a well to drink, cook, and wash clothes. We learned to not waste a drop. Even today, I cannot let the water faucet run. I learned to not throw away anything that I could fix or that someone else could use.

Diets. The following is an entry from my journal on June 12, 2000: “I am about 30 pounds overweight, and I’ve been working hard to lose the extra weight. My diet is going very well. For example, this morning I woke up and thought I would pass up the carbohydrates in my usual bowl of cereal (about 220 calories). So instead, I ate a container of yogurt. Upon finishing it, I checked the label and found it also had 220 calories. On my way to work, I realized I did not have my water bottle. I was thirsty, so I stopped at a convenience store and rewarded myself for being so good in passing up the bowl of cereal by purchasing a 44-ounce Diet Cherry Coke and a chocolate donut. For lunch, I chose a reasonable tuna sandwich and for being so good, I promptly rewarded myself by buying a large pudding-filled donut. They also had their double chocolate donuts on sale, so I bought one and took it back to the office, so I’d have it on hand tomorrow when I need to reward myself for being so good about eating something else low in calories.”

Fairness and Equality. The concept of “fairness” is not helpful. The word “fair” appears in the scriptures 85 times, and in all cases, it is an adjective, such as “fair daughters” or “fair skinned people,” but not as the concept of fairness. I feel that

God is equal, and in the eternal perspective, God will be just with all His children. Everything will work out and people will have equal opportunities. When parents try to be equal with their children, they may give them all the same number of candies. However, there are also extenuating circumstances. They may give one child more affection if that child has greater emotional needs than another. They may give more attention to a child who is sick. The children not receiving the attention may feel it is “not fair.” Parents may try to explain that the sibling is sick or that he is younger and therefore needs more attention. These examples are based on the concept of equality and justice, and not “fairness.” In his book, Harold Kushner states that people faced with adversity often say that it is not fair. “God shouldn’t do this to me. It’s not fair.” Things in this life do not always have a direct cause and effect that we understand. In the short term, things are not “fair.” Therefore, I think that it is invalid to look at situations in the light of whether they are “fair” or not. I think that the concepts of equality and justice are more gospel-based than the concept of fairness.

“Going to Church.” In a general conference talk, Elder Donald L. Hallstrom said, “Some have come to think of activity in the Church as the ultimate goal. Therein lies a danger,” he said. “It is possible to be active in the Church and less active in the gospel.” (“Converted to His Gospel through His Church,” May 2012) The purpose of the Church is to help us live the gospel. It is a means to an end, and not the end in itself. We should be converted to Christ and to His gospel, not to the Church. Elder Packer taught a parable: “A merchant man seeking precious jewels found at last the perfect pearl. He had the finest craftsman carve a superb jewel box and line it with blue velvet. He put his pearl of great price on display so others could share his treasure. He watched as people came to see it. Soon he turned away in sorrow. It was the box they admired, not the pearl” (“The Cloven Tongues of Fire,” April 2000). Some people focus too much on the box (the Church) and not on the pearl (the gospel of Jesus Christ).

It’s Not Always About You. My friend Seth Adam Smith wrote an article, “Marriage Isn’t For You” and a book

titled YOUR LIFE ISN'T FOR YOU. In these, he explained that you do not marry to make yourself happy, you marry to make someone else happy. And the only way you can find your life is to give it away to others.

Sister Bonnie L. Oscarson explained it this way:

Occasionally our children would ask us the question, "Why do I have to go to Mutual? I just don't get very much out of it."

If I was having a good parenting moment, I would reply, "What makes you think you go to Mutual because of what *you* get out of it?"

My young friends, I can guarantee that there will always be someone at every Church meeting you attend who is lonely, who is going through challenges and needs a friend, or who feels like he or she doesn't belong. You have something important to contribute to every meeting or activity, and the Lord desires for you to look around at your peers and then minister as He would.

Elder D. Todd Christofferson has taught, "A major reason the Lord has a church is to create a community of Saints that will sustain one another in the 'strait and narrow path which leads to eternal life.'" He goes on to say, "This religion is not concerned only with self; rather, we are all called to serve. We are the eyes, hands, head, feet, and other members of the body of Christ."

It is true that we attend our weekly Church meetings to participate in ordinances, learn doctrine, and be inspired, but another very important reason for attending is that, as a ward family and as disciples of the Savior Jesus Christ, we watch out for one another, encourage one another, and find ways to serve and strengthen each other. We are not just receivers and takers of what is offered at church; we are needed to be givers and suppliers. ("The Needs before Us," Bonnie L. Oscarson, October 2017)

Judgement. In a leadership session at work on February 24, 2010, Elder David A. Bednar said "The Book of Mormon teaches

that the judgement is a self-judgement. We're not going to have to have the Savior tell us where we go. We're going to know." (Elder David A. Bednar, "A Conversation on Leadership," February 24, 2010) I've always felt that was the case, but I had never heard a Church leader say it that clearly.

Judging Others. Far too often, people concern themselves about how well others are living the commandments. It's none of our business. Judgment is God's and God's alone. We are commanded to free ourselves of judgment and to love all people. I need to concern myself with how well I live the commandments and leave the rest to God. I trust God to do His work with each of His children in His own way.

Loving and accepting others, regardless of how they live their lives, does not mean that we condone their behavior. We can use our beliefs as a metric of judging our own life and allow others to exercise their agency to live as they feel is best for them. We can only worry about heavenly judgment for ourselves—not others.

Elder Henry B. Eyring said, "Parents, children, brothers, and sisters may have made choices that seem to disqualify them from eternal life. You may even wonder whether you have yet been qualified through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. A prophet of God once offered me counsel that gives me peace. I was worried that the choices of others might make it impossible for our family to be together forever. He said, "You are worrying about the wrong problem. You just live worthy of the celestial kingdom, and the family arrangements will be more wonderful than you can imagine." ("The Hope of Eternal Family Love," *Ensign*, August 2016)

Learning. I relate to this quote from Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf: "Brothers and sisters, as good as our previous experience may be, if we stop asking questions, stop thinking, stop pondering, we can thwart the revelations of the Spirit. Remember, it was the questions young Joseph asked that opened the door for the restoration of all things. We can block the growth and knowledge our Heavenly Father intends for us. How often has the Holy Spirit tried to tell us something we needed to know

but couldn't get past the massive iron gate of what we thought we already knew?" ("Acting on the Truths of the Gospel of Jesus Christ," Worldwide Leadership Training, January 2012.)

Life. On July 10, 2000, I wrote the following in my journal: "Today I turned 45. Since I fully expect to live to be 90, that means that today I'm half dead."

Litigation. Awards in civil matters are becoming outrageous and foster more and more frivolous lawsuits. It is a system that feeds on itself, breeding more lawyers than are necessary, who in turn invent lawsuits that are not needed. It also degrades society's sense of responsibility as people begin suing others for any reason for the chance of a monetary award. People smoke themselves to death, then sue the tobacco company to pay for the cancer they developed. The entire system of civil suits needs to be streamlined and less important matters sent to arbitration.

Love of God. This was related by Rick Partridge in a department devotional on October 22, 2015: Rick said that his sister died of cystic fibrosis. He had a dream where he saw her in heaven, that she was healthy, vibrant, and had a glow in her eyes. In the dream, she said to Rick, "He hugged me for like 30 minutes." (Referring to her meeting Jesus in heaven.) The dream was very vivid and real to him. What I learned about the rest of the story talking with Rick the next day: A few months earlier, when it was becoming evident that she would die, Rick had joked with his sister, "when you get to the other side, find a way to come back and tell me what it's like." She did so, in a dream.

Political Parties. The political parties should decide what their party stands for (values, positions on issues, etc.) then write their platforms stating what they believe and how they intend to accomplish their goals. Instead, they write platforms that are vague and watered down so that they will not alienate anyone. They write what they think will get them the most votes. The result is that the parties do not stand for much anymore and consequently do not accomplish much.

Progress in Life. I resonate with this quote from Booker T. Washington who wisely stated, "Success is to be measured not

so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed.” (*The International Dictionary of Thoughts*, comp. by John P. Bradley and others, Chicago: J. G. Ferguson Publishing Company, 1969, p. 698.) I always liked to assume that people I met were struggling with significant challenges—because many of them were. I liked to give people the benefit of the doubt that they are doing their very best. (Also see my booklet, *Learning Through Life’s Trails.*)

Prioritizing. How do you get it all done? You cannot. When I do not get important things done at work, I will stuff them in my briefcase and take them home thinking I will get to them at night. When I do not, I stuff things back into my briefcase and haul them to work again. Every day the briefcase gets fuller. I’ve bought a new briefcase, but it still is not big enough.

Unity. In the explanation of the plan of salvation presented in the temple, note that the only person who acts alone is Satan. Everyone else counsels with others and acts in unity. The only time Satan is successful is when he isolates people.

Values. Society is moving from a sense of family values to one of individual rights. It is coming to the point that minorities insist on rights that restrict the rights of the majority. If one individual does not like prayer at a graduation exercise, then it is prohibited to the hundreds of others who may want it. We end up overprotecting the one and ignoring the other 99.

Welfare. In our country, we now have people who have known no other life than welfare for several generations. Too large a percentage of the population is on welfare, imposing a tremendous tax burden on those who work. Some people on welfare have no incentive to work because they can live on welfare as well as they can live by working, given the education and skills they possess. Without jobs, and with little hope for the future, they often turn to crime and gang violence.

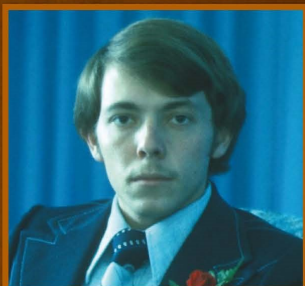
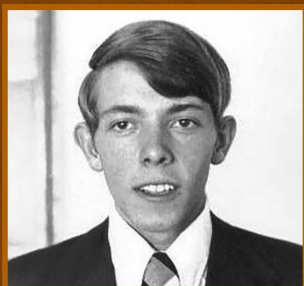
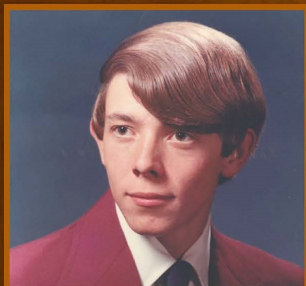
For more of my political philosophies, see the political platform I developed for my short run for President of the United States. (See campaign poster.)

TITLES I WANT TO BE REMEMBERED BY

Child of God. I have always known I was a child of God. As I grew into maturity, I recognized more and more that I had a loving Father and Mother in Heaven who loved me and always wanted the best for me.

Husband. Although I am certainly not perfect, I've always tried hard to be a good husband. I love Teri and have always wanted to be the best husband I could be. Even at the times I struggled most with issues in life, my love and respect for her never waned and my desire to be with her never faltered.

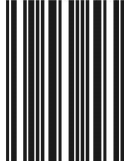
Father. I love my children and have always wanted to be a good role model for them and teach them the right things by words and deed. At the same time, I respected them as individuals and tried to give them the appropriate freedom to grow and learn.



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