



Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation

History Counts!

In a society that is so adrift with technology and abundance on the one hand and poverty, hunger, and tragedy on the other, it is easy for one to topple into the abyss of cynicism regarding the involvement of God in our everyday lives. If you are on the edge of that abyss, you might find your lifejacket in our history. You will then, at least, be able to stay afloat until you get your feet on firmer ground.

Church history has always been “out there” for me. It was surely a “good story” that tied us all together. But when I came to Kirtland to be a tour guide, the “out there” found a home “in here,” deep in my heart. The “good story” became a “sacred story” as I became acquainted with the saints of old. Now I can “see” Hyrum Smith, shovel in hand, walking across the wheat field and intently beginning to dig the foundation of the temple. Other brethren grab their shovels to lend a hand. No one has a clue as to the outcome, but God has given the dimensions and the commandment to begin the work. As I stand in the shadow of the temple and contemplate its existence, I am confounded by the questions: how did uneducated, itinerant farmers manage to erect this magnificent structure? How can you build something this grand with no blueprints and nothing but hand tools? What does this building mean in my life 174 years later?

The clues are in the history. The answers are the involvement of God in their everyday lives. The saints of the 1830's did the unimaginable. They could only accomplish these incredible feats by obedience to, sacrifice for, and the blessings of their God. These people had little or nothing, but they had big hearts and bigger faith. I have abundance, and by comparison, a small heart and smaller faith. I'm blessed by improvements in the world, by technology, by education, by opportunity, by family, by sufficient financial resources, by good health, and many other things, none of which are deserved. They just are. The same is true of poverty, hunger, and tragedy. They are not deserved either, but they still are.

When I begin to wonder where God is, I only have to return to our history. Have I, in my abundance, been as obedient to the call of God as the early saints were out of their poverty? Have I, from my abundance, sacrificed for my God as the early saints did from their poverty? One hundred and seventy-four years later, we are still called to community, just as the early saints. We are called to bring peace and justice to the world, to build communities of joy, hope, love, and peace. Where better to find the example of how to do that than by looking at our sacred story and the saints who, by their example, showed us the true meaning of obedience and sacrifice to accomplish tasks that seem impossible. Does history count? You can count on it!

---Cherie Buletza, Volunteer, Kirtland Temple



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Additional information and opportunities to help preserve and share church heritage may be found on the
Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation's website: www.HistoricSitesFoundation.org