

# THE STORYTELLER

Exploring our Historic Connections to the Mission Initiatives

“Listen to your own journey as a people, for it is a sacred journey and it has taught you many things you must know for the journey yet to come.”  
Doctrine and Covenants 162:2a

## Discover the inspiring ways people from our shared past modeled the Mission Initiatives...

### INVITE PEOPLE TO CHRIST

#### EMMA BURTON, ALICE CASE, AND THE *EVANELIA*

In 1894, Emma Burton and Alice Case sailed from the San Francisco harbor on a newly christened schooner called the *Evanelia*. The two women were headed westward toward the beautiful islands of French Polynesia. They accompanied their husbands, Joseph Burton (also captain of the ship) and Hubert Case, both missionaries assigned to the islands. Unfortunately, Alice suffered from seasickness the entire trip. When they arrived in Tahiti and finally stood on land Alice said, “I thought that the land would stay still, but it seems to be moving, just as the ocean kept doing.”

Once on land, Alice and Emma devoted themselves to missionary service and education. Alice led church school programs, taught women’s groups, led women’s prayer circles, and served as district conference secretary. Emma was equally active during her time on the islands. She helped publish a thousand copies of the *Doctrine and Covenants* in the Tahitian language, helped publish *Te Orametua* (a Tahitian periodical), translated mimeographed church school lessons, and worked with the women and children living on the islands.

While in Tahiti, Emma sent a letter to President F.M. Smith sharing that she was witnessing spiritual and physical healing through the gift of prayer and laying on of hands. Although women were not involved in the formal leadership of the church on the islands, females were encouraged to take a spiritual role in their families and at the community level. Emma grew very comfortable in this environment and often led “The Sisters’ Prayer Meetings.”

The *Evanelia* served the missionaries well for two years before it sank in the South Pacific Ocean.



The *Evanelia* carried missionaries from island to island from 1894-1896



Gathering of women from French Polynesia visiting with Alice Case (far right).



Emma Burton

Marietta Walker, editor of the “Mothers’ Home Column” (a monthly column in the *Saints’ Herald* written for a female audience), established the Home Column Missionary Fund to support missionaries in the field. In 1892, Marietta pleaded with her readers to support the construction of the *Evanelia*. Women were encouraged to make donations on their birthday: one penny for each year. She also co-authored a book of poetry and donated all proceeds to the *Evanelia*. Within two years, enough funds were raised to build and christen the “Gospel boat.” The *Evanelia* was one of many missionary endeavors supported by the Home Column Missionary Fund.

# ABOLISH POVERTY, END SUFFERING & PURSUE PEACE ON EARTH

## WHITNEY FAMILY AND KIRTLAND'S "FEAST FOR THE POOR"

Early church members knew what it was like to be poor. Truman Coe, a Presbyterian minister who lived in 1830s Kirtland, Ohio, said of our community: "Many of them live in extreme indigence... A grotesque assemblage of hovels and shanties and small houses have been thrown up wherever they could find a footing, but very few of all these cabins would be accounted fit for human habitation."

Among the wealthier members during this time were Newel and Elizabeth Ann Whitney. They owned a store, orchards, ashery, and two homes. Church members often depended on the Whitney family for housing, food, and employment.

In December 1831, Newel was called to the office of bishop. After accepting the call, Newel and Elizabeth committed themselves to helping those in need. Newel was instructed by revelation to travel among all the churches searching after the poor to administer to their wants by humbling the rich and proud. One solution to feeding the poor was "fast meetings" where individual members abstained from meals and brought butter, bread, and other

food to the bishop's storehouse for distribution to the poor. The fast meetings occurred about the same time as the "feasts for the poor," open meals for those in need. The feasts served widows, orphans, the homeless, etc.

Newel and Elizabeth Ann hosted an enormous feast for the poor at their home in 1835. The meal was so large the guests were served in shifts over a three day period. Years later, Elizabeth reflected on her ministry to the poor:

*"We had always been in the habit of entertaining our friends and acquaintances generously and hospitably, but after we received the Gospel we did not feel like using our means and time in a way that would only benefit those who had an abundance of this world's means. According to our Savior's pattern... and our own ideas of true charity and disinterested benevolence, we determined to make a Feast for the Poor, such as we knew could not return the same to us; the lame, the halt, the deaf, the blind, the aged and infirm. The feast lasted three days, during which time all in the vicinity of Kirtland who would come were invited, and entertained as courteously and generously as if they had been able to extend hospitality instead of receiving it..."*

The Whitneys were model examples of Christ's mission of compassion.

*"His work was peacemaking in action."*

John Smith describing his colleague at the United Nations, Perce Judd

## PERCE JUDD AND THE UNITED NATIONS

As a young boy, Perce Judd looked forward to the weekly church gatherings at Sister Cole's home. His pastor, Edwin Davies, would roll out a large map of Palestine and share stories from the scriptures. Perce was fascinated by the wars, captures, and prophecies, but what he remembered most was the passion of his pastor as he shouted, "And they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Decades later, Perce would discover these words written on the

United Nations building in New York City. Raised in southern Australia, Perce traveled the world promoting peace among nations most of his life. He was in London in 1946 when the UN General Assembly met for the first time. He was invited to serve on the newly formed UN Secretariat. Over the next three decades, he traveled the world on behalf of the United Nations, working for better trade practices, equitable sharing of resources, and the pursuit of justice for the poor and developing countries. World leaders hailed him for his perseverance, honesty, integrity, and skillful "diplomacy of quiet negotiation." He later reflected on his unique heritage and calling:

*"A sister who made a brief statement at the time when I was called to the office of teacher in the church stressed the importance of 'peacemakers.' This thought became a basis for my life, and particularly later when I joined the UN. I deem it a great privilege to have worked so long for the UN as well as for a church whose very symbol and motto is 'peace' which stresses the need to spread the message of Christ, namely Peace on Earth."*

Perce Judd's passion and purpose reflected Christ's mission of justice and peace.



Perce Judd (right) worked for the United Nations for over 30 years.

## DEVELOP DISCIPLES TO SERVE

### CLIFFORD COLE: PIONEER IN CHURCH EDUCATION REFORM

Francis Cole knew an education was crucial for the future of her son, Clifford, but there simply were no valid options in her rural community. A Presbyterian minister named Elbert Nash heard of Francis' concerns and invited Clifford to move in with his family in Moorcroft, Wyoming, 35 miles away. The Coles accepted the hospitable offer, and Clifford felt like a member of the Nash family throughout his high school years. Each night following dinner, the Reverend Nash would pull out the scriptures, and the family would read and discuss. While sitting at the dinner table, Elbert and Clifford would carry on long conversations about Clifford's RLDS roots, spanning theology to Restoration history. It was during this time that Clifford discovered there were faithfully devoted Christians outside his own denomination and that "genuine religious experiences" could happen outside an RLDS church.

His experience of being welcomed into the Nash family inspired him to devote his life to the ministry of Christ. Clifford entered church appointment in 1946, when the traditional faith of the church was undergoing one of the most rigorous self-examinations in its history. Faith often was

measured by one's ability to defend the "one true church." Clifford set out to change this mentality by working with others to reform church education. In 1954 he was named the new director of Religious Education. In this role Clifford published new materials for youth from primary to senior high. In addition, he widely published materials for adults. It included the historic context surrounding the scriptures. For the first time the works of several major biblical scholars were cited, and teachers were urged to use these in the congregation. Clifford worked on church-wide curriculum for 25 years. His impact still is felt in the church today.

One family bravely opening their home to a young teenager in need led to extraordinary things within our faith community.



## EXPERIENCE CONGREGATIONS IN MISSION

### YOUNG GENTLEMEN AND YOUNG LADIES' RELIEF SOCIETY OF NAUVOO

During the winter of 1843, a group of young men and women gathered at Heber C. Kimball's home in Nauvoo, Illinois. The topic of conversation that evening revolved around the teenagers' concerns that they were spending too much time at parties and not enough time helping improve and strengthen their community. Kimball suggested they meet again in a more formal atmosphere to create an organization specifically for the needs of the youth and Nauvoo.

Attendance continued to grow as the organization met several times in a variety of places including the Mansion House and Red Brick

Store. The youth chose the name "The Young Gentlemen and Ladies' Relief Society of Nauvoo," elected officers, and adopted a charter. The mission of the society was the "correction of the follies of youth, to guard against temptations to which they are exposed, and to aid in charitable enterprises."

Joseph Smith, Jr. attended a society meeting in the spring of 1843 and praised the youth for their remarkable conduct. The group was encouraged to dedicate their service to the relief of the poor in Nauvoo. To promote their good works, Joseph gave the youth a petition from Brother Maudsley, an English convert who recently had moved to Nauvoo and needed help building a home. The group agreed to raise funds and support for Maudsley. A newspaper praised the group as a model society:

*If the youth throughout our land would follow this good example and form themselves into such societies, ...there would not be as many suffering poor, neither would there be as much immorality among the people. But on the contrary, peace, good order, happiness, cheerfulness and plenty, would reign in the land, the Lord would look down from his holy habitation and smile upon us, and bless us all."*



One of the Society's meetings was held at the Red Brick Store



# Preserving the Past, Inspiring the Future

The Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation is dedicated to preserving and sharing church heritage with present and future generations. In addition to raising funds for historic site preservation and maintenance, the foundation advocates for the historic sites, develops, educational resources, funds young-adult internships, and helps promote appreciation for Community of Christ heritage. To learn more about how you can help preserve and share church heritage, visit our website:

[www.HistoricSitesFoundation.org](http://www.HistoricSitesFoundation.org)



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