

# “Things Too Wonderful for Me”

VAUGHN J. FEATHERSTONE

There is a scripture to which President Howard W. Hunter referred during the training of General Authorities at October conference 1992. I have written that statement in my scriptures in the margin. This is the scripture from Jeremiah 31:31–34:

*Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:*

*Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; . . .*

*But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

*And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.*

It is my conviction that most of you will live to see that day. How can the great Jehovah put His law in our inward parts and write it in our hearts? Why will there no longer be a need

to teach our neighbors? Why will He forgive our iniquity?

A year ago this coming April, President Packer, who, along with the Twelve Apostles, is responsible for the training of all of the General and Area Authorities, gave us counsel and direction that will lead to the fulfillment of the quote from Jeremiah. The training was the deepest and most meaningful of any I have experienced in my 29 years as a General Authority. It changed my life and, I would assume, the lives of all the Brethren. President Packer is a divine seer. He took the necessary preparation time and made the total effort required by the Lord to receive the direction necessary from the Lord. He read the books on Christ by Frederic William Farrar, possibly the most accurate biblical scholar outside of the Church. It is he and his writings that Elder James E. Talmage quotes in *Jesus the Christ*. Elder Bruce R. McConkie referred to his works often. President Packer read *The New Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, which I also picked up and read. The humiliation, suffering, and horror

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*Vaughn J. Featherstone was a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when this devotional address was given at BYU on 13 February 2001.*

of the early Christians and the cruelty of the protesters is beyond our ability to comprehend. Most of the Christians were burned at the stake, had their flesh torn from them, were buried alive, or were put in dens with half-starved lions or tigers. These early Christians suffered the deepest, most penetrating pain possible, and almost to their dying breath called out to Jesus. It was as though they could already see Him. As I read stories of hundreds who suffered those horrific experiences, I wondered, and I hoped that if I were ever to be put in similar circumstances that I would suffer in the wonderful dignified way they did. I hope I would be strong enough to do that.

President Packer read *Jesus the Christ* again. He read every scripture about the Holy Ghost and the Spirit of God in the standard works. He pondered and prayed, and the revelation came. I am convinced it was not just to be lodged in the hearts of the Brethren but is revelation for the whole Church. I believe as General Authorities we are under the sacred and holy obligation to take the message to the Church. I believe you will hear more on this inspired subject in the days, months, and years ahead that will help and bless this Church more than anything else.

President Packer's message was that we must live worthy to have the Holy Ghost with us 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for the rest of our lives. This was not a message for us only; it is a message for every member of the Church. Can you imagine what would happen if every man, woman, youth, and child lived in such a way as to qualify? We would startle the world. Imagine 11 million members of the Church now, and then 20, 50, 80, and 100 million in the future having the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost.

It is my belief that President Howard W. Hunter, quoting that wonderful scripture in Jeremiah, knew that in a future day not many years off President Packer would help us qualify for the fulfillment of this wonderful blessing.

The second revelation of absolute and profound importance came as he and the Twelve encouraged us to testify of the Living Christ. You have read the declaration of the Living Christ by President Hinckley, his counselors, and the Quorum of the Twelve. How often do we testify of the things we hold most precious and dear in this life? For some it may be occasionally—i.e., once a year or once in a while when we are called upon to speak or in a testimony meeting. We are true disciples of Christ; we ought to testify every day in every Latter-day Saint home to our wives/husbands, siblings, and children. These are the people we should love most on this earth. These are those we want to know the truth of this mighty work. Opportunities will come at school, in our work, and in the community to testify to our friends and neighbors not of our faith in a humble and sweet way, as well as to testify to each other and build greater faith.

For example, a son may say to us, "I sure think President Hinckley is a good man."

We could say, "Indeed, he is wonderful."

What if instead we said, "Son, I know he is a prophet of God, a seer, and a revelator. He may be one of the greatest prophets that ever lived."

Can you see the difference? Can you feel the difference?

A daughter might say, "We have a nice bishop."

We could respond, "Yes, sweetheart, he is."

What if we took this opportunity to say, "Sweetheart, he was called by God by revelation. He has the mantle upon him, and he is guided by inspiration in his calling."

Children need to hear their parents testify. Siblings can strengthen each other, and their friends can be lifted spiritually.

Can you think of anything in this generation that would affect members of the Church more than living to be worthy of the Holy Ghost constantly and testifying as guided and directed by the Holy Ghost of the truth

of this great, majestic, divine work and more especially of Him whose work this is?

This is how we will put His law in our inward parts, and it will be written in our hearts. It is how our iniquity will be forgiven. Of course, when we live worthy of the Holy Ghost, it will have required repentance, submission, and meekness. Then we will have qualified, and then the Holy Ghost will inspire us to testify and forgiveness will come.

Section 93 of the Doctrine and Covenants teaches us the reality of the possibility for every worthy member of this Church:

*Verily, thus saith the Lord: It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am. [D&C 93:1]*

The Savior said “every soul,” not just the Brethren or specially privileged souls—every soul. Can you comprehend the power that would surge through the Church if every soul sought to seek the face of Christ and know that He is? Remember, the Lord’s promises are sure.

In the first section of the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord counsels us in this powerful declaration:

*What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken, and I excuse not myself; and though the heavens and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same. [D&C 1:38]*

In D&C 18:36 the Lord teaches, “Wherefore, you can testify that you have heard my voice.” If ever I have heard the Lord’s voice, it is in the declaration from D&C 1. There is a witness that penetrates my heart and soul that what the Lord states is truth. Like Jeremiah, I thrill that “his word [is] in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones” (Jeremiah 20:9).

This is the time to make a sacred resolution to follow the apostles and the prophets, to seek the Holy Ghost, and to testify and qualify to see the Master’s face.

It has been my experience that fasting, prayer, study, and pondering are essential. Equally important is service. We must follow the pattern Christ modeled for us. King Benjamin said:

*And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God. [Mosiah 2:17]*

François-Auguste-René de Chateaubriand said: “In the days of service all things are founded; in the days of special privilege they deteriorate; and in the days of vanity they are destroyed.”

Henry Drummond in an inverse way helps us to understand the attitude of many, both in and out of the Church:

*I lived for myself, I thought for myself,  
For myself, and none beside—  
Just as if Jesus had never lived,  
As if He had never died.*

[*The Greatest Thing in the World* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, n.d.), 40]

No one can ignore Jesus the Christ. His name may be profaned. He may be treated lightly as of no consequence, but He cannot be ignored.

*Napoleon Bonaparte, in speaking of the Savior, said: “Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I, myself, have founded great empires; but upon what did these creations of our genius depend? Upon force! Jesus alone founded His empire upon love; and to this very day millions would die for Him. I think I understand something of human nature; and I tell you all these were men, and I am a man. No other is like Him. Jesus Christ was more than*

*a man. I have inspired multitudes with such an enthusiastic devotion that they would have died for me, but to do this, it was necessary that I should be visibly present with the electric influence of my looks, of my words, of my voice. Christ alone has succeeded in so raising the mind of man toward the Unseen that it becomes insensible to the barriers of time and space. Across a chasm of eighteen hundred years, He makes a demand which is beyond all others difficult to satisfy. He asks for the human heart. He will have it entirely to Himself. He demands it unconditionally, and forthwith His demand is granted. Wonderful! In defiance of time and space, the soul of man, with all its powers and faculties, becomes an annexation to the empire of Christ. All who sincerely believe in Him, experience that remarkable supernatural love toward Him. This phenomenon is unaccountable; it is altogether beyond the scope of man's creative powers. Time, the great destroyer, is powerless to extinguish this sacred flame; time can neither exhaust its strength, nor put a limit to its range. This is what strikes me most. I have often thought of it. This it is which proves to me quite convincingly the divinity of Jesus Christ."* [Julia A. Farnsworth Lund, "Thoughts Inspired by the Christmas Tide," *Young Woman's Journal* 11, no. 1 (January 1900): 24–25]

Napoleon could not ignore Him; neither can all the modern world leaders. By and by, all shall know Him, and the time will come when every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ, the king of heaven and earth. As Elder Maxwell has often witnessed, He is not "a one-planet God."

If we would be like Him, if we are going to be able to testify in His name and of Him, we must have the Holy Ghost as a constant, faithful companion. Even those who have left the kingdom or turned aside from it, those who may have put Him low on their list of priorities, are not lost.

Job witnessed:

*For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease.*

*Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground;*

*Yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant. [Job 14:7–9]*

I believe that through the "scent" of our testimonies, they will return and bud again. Testifying may be more important to many who have lost their way than we would ever dare to suppose.

Your generation will live to see the fulfillment of all these things. Listen to the words of truth in this verse:

*The Torch Bearer*

*The God of High Endeavor*

*Gave me a torch to bear.*

*I lifted it high above me*

*In the dark and murky air;*

*And straightway with loud hosannas*

*The crowd proclaimed its light*

*And followed me as I carried my torch*

*Through the starless night,*

*Till drunk with the people's praises*

*And mad with vanity*

*I forgot 'twas the torch that they followed*

*And fancied they followed me.*

*Then slowly my arm grew weary*

*Upholding the shining load*

*And my tired feet went stumbling*

*Over the dusty road.*

*And I fell with the torch beneath me.*

*In a moment the light was out.*

*When lo! from the throng a stripling*

*Sprang forth with a mighty shout,*

*Caught up the torch as it smoldered*

*And lifted it high again,*

*Till fanned by the winds of heaven*

*It fired the souls of men.*

*And as I lay in the darkness  
 The feet of the trampling crowd  
 Passed over and far beyond me,  
 Its paeans proclaimed aloud,  
 And I learned in the deepening twilight  
 The glorious verity,  
 'Tis the torch that the people follow,  
 Whoever the bearer may be.*

[Author unknown, "The Torch Bearer," *The Master of Men*, comp. Thomas Curtis Clark (Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1930), 205–6]

Whenever I speak to those your age and younger, I always wonder: Are there those who are listening to me today who will be mothers of apostles and prophets, wives of these great leaders, mothers and wives of members of the Quorums of the Seventy, of temple presidents, mission presidents, stake presidents, and bishops?

Are future apostles, prophets, and members of the Quorums of the Seventy, these great leaders who will direct the affairs of the kingdom, here today? Are those men who will preside over the Church, temples, missions, stakes, and wards here? Yes, I always know you are out there. I want to warn you as a watchman: Be careful, be wise, be clean and pure. You don't know who you are, but we do, and so does Lucifer. It will demand discipline, control, and purity if you will be called where you are foreordained. An unknown author makes this preliminary statement:

*Expect to have your body cravings almost overwhelm you when you are alone. The narrowed perspective will be ever present to persuade you, your physical self, to gratify itself in spite of great things out there. Emotion is the king, right emotional relationships is the thing. Knowing this helps at times, but it doesn't bring a cure-all. . . . You have to have a strategy for handling this temptation. Perhaps the most subtle of temptations come to us when we don't recognize them as bodily*

*appetites pushing for overemphasis. However, in the very clash of ideas, if we hold up our side in the battle, the truth arises. Opposition in all things needs to be strengthened from the righteous side. We need to oppose evil with good in order for the truth to emerge. We might look at temptation and say,*

as C. S. Lewis did with this unusual insight:

*A silly idea is current that good people do not know what temptation means. This is an obvious lie. Only those who try to resist temptation know how strong it is. After all, you find out the strength of the [opposing] army by fighting against it, not by giving in. You find out the strength of a wind by trying to walk against it, not by lying down. A man who gives in to temptation after five minutes simply does not know what it would have been like an hour later. That is why bad people, in one sense, know very little about badness. They have lived a sheltered life by always giving in. We never find out the strength of the evil impulse inside us until we try to fight it: and Christ, because He was the only man who never yielded to temptation, is also the only man who knows to the full what temptation means—the only complete realist. [C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan, 1960), 124–25, book 3, chapter 11, paragraph 7]*

Now how does all of this apply to you? I promise you that once you commit your heart and soul to this wonderful work, you will have what Lloyd C. Douglas, author of *The Robe*, described as a "magnificent obsession."

I love this wonderful Church, not only for what it is but also for what it makes of us and of those around us.

There was a Filipino woman in Manila. I was standing in my office, and I looked down to see her walking on two very heavily calloused knees dragging two crippled legs behind her going to the temple. I called downstairs to Bishop Santos and asked him how long it would take him to find and buy a new wheelchair. He said it would take a little over an hour. I asked

him, “Will you go out and buy a new wheelchair and take it over to the temple? You’ll see a woman coming out walking on her knees. I’d like you to present it to her.”

He left and came back with the wheelchair and put it behind a pillar of the temple. As the woman came out, he went up to her and asked, “Do you have a wheelchair?”

She began to weep and said, “No. I used to, but it wore out and fell apart. I’ll never be able to afford another one as long as I live.”

He replied, “How would you like a wheelchair?”

This wonderful woman cried. Bishop Santos went behind the pillar and pulled out the wheelchair, and they lifted her up into it. I watched as they wheeled her across the street to the patron housing.

About a week later Bishop Santos came to my office. He said, “President Featherstone, we have a request for 200,000 pesos from a branch president down on a distant island. A four-year-old boy has a brain tumor, and they don’t know what to do. They went to a charity hospital, and he was put on a one-year waiting list. They went to the Catholic Church, and they said they couldn’t help him. Then they remembered that two years before they had been baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They had only attended Church once—the Sunday they were baptized—and had never been back. But they were desperate, and they needed some help. Their branch president knows that we can’t grant their request, but he needs an answer for them. What do you think?”

I said, “Let me look at the request.” I read it, and then I said, “Bishop, if this was your son, we would do it, and if it was my son, we would do it. We’re going to help this little boy.” And I signed that request.

Bishop Santos, a wonderful Filipino, stood there with tears flowing down his cheeks and said, “President Featherstone, we belong to a wonderful and magnificent church.”

I said, “Yes, Bishop, we do. We belong to a wonderful and magnificent church.”

I was in Richfield and saw a good friend that I had met in San Antonio on my mission. His name is John. His eyesight is failing; he is almost blind. His family needed a car. He had bought an old van for, I believe, \$200, and thought he could make it work. It didn’t run. He bought parts—as many as he could afford. About three months later it still wasn’t running. He really needed the money back out of the car, so he let it be known that he was selling it.

One of the good men there went to him and said, “John, I understand you’re selling your car.”

John answered, “Yes, I am.”

The man asked, “How much do you want for it?”

John said, “Well, I’d really like to get what I have into it. I have \$200 into it.”

The man said, “Two hundred dollars, huh? Would you take \$300 for it?”

Tears started glistening in John’s eyes, and he said, “That would be wonderful.”

Then the man said, “Well, then how about \$400?”

Then the tears came a little faster.

“Okay. This is my final offer. I’ll give you \$500 for it.”

God bless those kind of people! I’m so grateful for that kind of faith in the Church.

A Relief Society president was at dinner. Suddenly she jumped up and said, “I’ve got to go!”

Her husband asked, “Where are you going?”

She answered, “I can’t tell you. I’ll be back later.”

She was gone for about an hour. When she came back, her husband asked, “What was that all about?”

She replied, “I had the strongest impression I had to go to the bishop’s. I went over and knocked on the door. The bishop’s wife came to the door, and I said, ‘LaRae, I’m here. How can I help?’

"The tears flowed down her cheeks, and she put her head down on my shoulder and wept. She said, 'You know, everybody loves my husband. He's the bishop. They bear testimony about him on Sunday and talk about what a great man he is. I'm not sure anybody in the ward even knows I'm here, knows I exist, or even cares. I wondered even if God cared or knew I was here. So I knelt down and prayed, "Heavenly Father, if you know I'm here or even care, please let me know."' "

And there was a knock on the door, and the Relief Society president said, "I'm here. How can I help?"

Many years ago I was in Stockton, California, and a high councilor came up to me and said, "Elder Featherstone, I've been impressed by what you've said about the family. I have a son who is 17 years old. I haven't hugged him or told him I loved him for half of his life—not since he was eight years old. I'm going home today, and I'm going to hug him and tell him I love him."

I was afraid he might chicken out, so I asked him to write me a letter and tell me how it went. He wrote me a letter that arrived about three days later. Essentially, he said this, "I went home after Church. My son was watching a football game. He was slouched in the big easy chair with his leg up over the arm. I walked up to him, grabbed him by the arm, pulled him out of the chair, hugged him, kissed him on the cheek, and told him I loved him for the first time in half his life."

I read the letter as I sat in my office, and the tears ran down and splashed on the letter. Of course we love each other. Love is critical.

Years ago, way back when I was just about 11 or 12, I remember my father had received his paycheck on Wednesday and finally came home Friday night. Nothing was left. There wasn't any food in the house—at least very

little. I had saved 67 cents for tithing. He took me by the hand and pulled me into his bedroom and said, "Vaughn, I understand you have 67 cents saved for tithing."

I said, "Yes, I do."

He said, "Vaughn, the Church doesn't need your money."

That was true. In those days you could buy a loaf of bread for 14 cents, a small loaf for a nickel, and you could buy a quart of milk for 14 cents. The money could have at least bought our family's supper.

So he said, "Vaughn, the Church doesn't need your money. It has millions of dollars."

That may have been true. Then he said, "Your brothers and sisters are hungry. We need that money for food. I want you to go get your money and give it to me."

I remember I stood there. I couldn't move. The tears came to my eyes. He was my father. I couldn't say no. But I couldn't move. I just stood there. I thought, "No, I'm not going to get it."

A second time, a little heavier, he said, "I'm telling you, go get your tithing money."

It was like my shoes were nailed to the floor. The tears came faster, and I didn't move again. He was a big man.

Then a third time, threateningly, he said, "I'm telling you, Vaughn, you go get the tithing money."

I remember standing there thinking, "I don't care if he beats me. I'm not going to give it to him. It's not my money. It's the Lord's money, and I'm not going to give it to him."

My mother must have heard part of the conversation, because she came in and grabbed me, pulled me out of the bedroom, and said, "You let the boy alone. If he wants to pay his tithing, he's going to pay his tithing."

I don't think I've missed paying tithing in all the years since.

Teilhard de Chardin said:

*The day will come when, after harnessing [space], the winds, the tides, gravitation, we shall harness for God the energies of love. And, on that day, for the second time in the history of the world, man will have discovered fire.* [Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, “The Evolution of Chastity,” *Toward the Future*, trans. René Hague (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), 86–87]

That is what this gospel is all about. You have some wonderful things to do in preparation. Enjoy the process of preparing for celestial marriage. Be excited and energetic, and be careful.

One man who once stood in a high place in the Church is now no longer a member. He has lost everything that is precious and dear. His brother wrote to him, trying to persuade him back. In so doing, he shared with him this quote from Shakespeare’s *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594). It is a warning to all of us. The villainous Tarquin says:

*What win I if I gain the thing I seek?  
A dream, a breath, a froth of fleeting joy.  
Who buys a minute’s mirth to wail a week?  
Or sells eternity to get a toy?  
For one sweet grape who will the vine destroy?  
Or what fond beggar, but to touch the crown,  
Would with the sceptre straight be stricken down?*  
[lines 211–17]

Then follow the words from poor Lucrece:

*Thy secret pleasure turns to open shame,  
Thy private feasting to a public fast,  
Thy smoothing titles to a ragged name.*  
[lines 890–92]

These words could not describe more accurately this fallen priesthood leader.

You will want beauty in your life, not sorrow and heartache. One woman shared her frustration about dating in these lines:

*At sweet sixteen I first began  
To ask the good Lord for a man.  
At seventeen, I recall,  
I wanted someone strong and tall.  
The Christmas when I reached eighteen,  
I fancied someone blond and lean.  
And then at nineteen I was sure  
I’d fall for someone more mature.  
At twenty I still thought I’d find  
Romance with someone with a mind.  
I retrogressed at twenty-one  
And found the college boys more fun.  
My viewpoint changed at twenty-two,  
When “one man only” was my cue.  
He broke my heart at twenty-three,  
So I begged for someone kind to me.  
Then begged when I was twenty-four  
For anyone who wouldn’t bore.  
Now, Lord, that I am twenty-five,  
Just send me someone who’s alive.*

Don’t ever feel that desperate. Hope sees things that are just around the corner. Someone else said, “Whether you end up with a goose egg or a nest egg depends upon the chick you marry.”

*I recently read of a man who asked his girl to wed.  
“Go to my father,” she said.  
Now she knew that I knew her father was dead.  
And she knew that I knew the life he had led.  
And she knew that I knew what she meant when she said, “Go to my father.”* [Leader Lore Newsletter, December 2000]

The years before you are glorious, marvelous years. Life will be hard but wonderful. You will be tested, but you will win. You will have sorrow but find peace. Enjoy the process of life. And in a lot of years you will look back and realize you have had a wonderful one.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox gives profound insight in this beautiful poem:

## Gethsemane

*In golden youth when seems the earth  
A Summer-land of singing mirth,  
When souls are glad and hearts are light,  
And not a shadow lurks in sight,  
We do not know it, but there lies  
Somewhere veiled under evening skies  
A garden which we all must see—  
The garden of Gethsemane.*

*With joyous steps we go our ways,  
Love lends a halo to our days;  
Light sorrows sail like clouds afar,  
We laugh, and say how strong we are.  
We hurry on; and hurrying, go  
Close to the border-land of woe,  
That waits for you, and waits for me—  
Forever waits Gethsemane.*

*Down shadowy lanes, across strange streams,  
Bridged over by our broken dreams;  
Behind the misty caps of years,  
Beyond the great salt fount of tears,  
The garden lies. Strive as you may,  
You cannot miss it in your way.  
All paths that have been, or shall be,  
Pass somewhere through Gethsemane.*

*All those who journey, soon or late,  
Must pass within the garden's gate;  
Must kneel alone in darkness there,  
And battle with some fierce despair.  
God pity those who can not say,  
"Not mine but thine," who only pray,  
"Let this cup pass," and cannot see  
The purpose in Gethsemane.*  
[Ella Wheeler Wilcox, *Poems of Power*  
(Chicago: W. B. Conkey Company, 1901),  
147–48; emphasis in original]

Yes, we will all have our personal Gethsemane-type experiences, but that is okay. It is what life is all about. Along with the problems that drive you to Gethsemane, there will

be the mountain peaks of joy that will compensate for every moment of innocent suffering. If you are faithful, the time will come when you will have merited this that I promise.

*And now the year of my redeemed is come; and they shall mention the loving kindness of their Lord, and all that he has bestowed upon them according to his goodness, and according to his loving kindness, forever and ever. [D&C 133:52]*

And if you are honest and gracious, you will exclaim as did Job: "Therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not" (Job 42:3).

We had a son, Joe, who was at the Alpine Slide. He was up at the top with the children, bringing them down the slide, and his mother was waiting down at the bottom. She saw a woman at the side fumbling in the grass looking for something. She went over and asked if she could help her find something. Apparently the woman had lost the lens cap off her camera and was looking for it. Merlene got down and helped her. The woman spoke in very broken English. Merlene said, "You're not from the United States. Are you from Mexico?"

The woman said, "No, I'm from Ecuador."

Merlene asked, "What are you doing here from Ecuador?"

The woman answered, "I have come to find the beloved missionary who baptized me into the Church. I will love him as long as time lasts."

Merlene said, "How long ago were you baptized?"

The woman said, "About 20 years."

Merlene told her, "We have a son who served about 20 years ago in Ecuador. I'll bet he'll know him. What was the elder's name?"

She answered, "Well, it was a peculiar name: Elder Joseph Featherstone."

Merlene said, "Come on over to the bottom of the slide. I want to introduce you to someone."

About that time Joe came down the slide. He saw his mother standing there with a

woman he didn't recognize. As he got closer, he did recognize her. They ran and fell on each other's necks, but they couldn't speak because their hearts were full.

It is my testimony that the Holy Ghost and testifying should be our foundation pillars of direction as we move into the new millennium. Along with the prophet Job, I say, These are things I understand not that were "too wonderful for me."

We belong to a wonderful and magnificent church. I bear my solemn and absolute witness that the Book of Mormon is true, that Christ is the Savior of the world, that this church is His true and living church, that God our Father is the Lord Omnipotent, that we are His children, that He loves us and answers our prayers, however humble. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.