

Chapter XVII

Meeting the Mormons

September 7, 1947 – September 11, 1947

On Sunday morning, Sheffield and Craig put on their suits and arrived at the church about ten minutes before the meeting was to start. As they entered the building, Roger met them in the foyer. He escorted them into the chapel and introduced them to the other men and boys who were already there. Some of them Sheffield remembered from Sylvia's wedding. Everyone was warm and cordial as they greeted the visitors and made them welcome. Sheffield and Craig sat next to Read and his uncle, Tom Rowan, who happened to be Sylvia's father in law. A man that he recognized as Nathan Little from the wedding and his son came and sat down on the other side of Tom. Nathan was Roger and Tom's brother-in-law.

As others came in, they also introduced themselves. One young man, Andrew Furness, a student in one of his government classes, especially went out of his way to greet the Admiral.

By the time the meeting started, it was five minutes late. That irritated Sheffield just a bit. In the Navy, everything always had to be right on time. The same was true with his classes and the wrestling team. However, he didn't let their tardiness get to him.

Roger sat on the stand with two other men who sat one either side of him. They had been introduced to Sheffield as James Furness and Frank Richards. Roger explained that they were his counselors in the branch presidency. It was a little odd that everyone referred to each other as Brother So-and-so. It had the ring of a close knit brotherhood. Those he met even called him Brother Brason. In all there were about fifteen men and eight boys in attendance.

Roger stood and welcomed everyone present and especially made mention of Sheffield and Craig as welcomed them. He made an announcement or two, including one about the Mutual opening social on Tuesday, and announced the opening hymn and the invocation.

One of the men stood and led the hymn, without accompaniment. It was song that Sheffield was not familiar with. Not knowing the tune, he was unable to follow along. He did catch on to the chorus on the third verse which went, "Hail to the Prophet, ascended to heaven! Traitors and tyrants now fight him in vain. Mingling with Gods, he can plan for his brethren; Death cannot conquer the hero again." It wasn't until the end of the fourth verse that it dawned on him that the song must have been about Joesph Smith.

After the hymn, one of the men offered a prayer. Roger asked if there was any business that needed to be brought before the group. One man raised his hand and said something about someone who had been injured during the week and needed help with finishing enclosing an addition he was adding to his house. Roger asked a man he called Brother Furness, who was obviously Andrew's father, to organize a work

detail. Three men offered to help and a time was quickly decided on. With the business concluded, Roger dismissed those assembled to their quorums. Sheffield thought that was an interesting term to use.

The men and boys all stood up. Following their lead, Sheffield and Craig stood up as well.

“Sheffield,” Tom said, “You go with the Nathan and Craig you come with us.”

Sheffield noticed that Tom and three other men, along with Roger and his counselors went with the boys and he followed to rest upstairs to what looked like a council room with a table surrounded by fifteen or so chairs. As he took a seat, he noticed that the men ranged in age from their early twenties to one gentleman who appeared to be in his seventies. Once everyone was seated, the man who had organized the work detail took charge. First he welcomed Sheffield and further explained that he was the Elders Quorum President. Then he talked a little more about what he called the service project. To Sheffield, in navy terms it was a work detail.

There was the word, quorum again. These people obviously had a language of their own. Sheffield reasoned that it must have something to do with the various groups within the priesthood. With the business taken care of, Brother Furness, or Connor as someone called him, said that it was his turn to teach the lesson. He explained that they were beginning a new set of lessons for the year centered around the history of the church. The subject caught Sheffield's attention as he had wondered about its history.

Sheffield became engrossed in the lesson and the discussion as he listened to Brother Furness expound upon something that Sheffield had read during the week from the writings of Joseph Smith. When he read of the First Vision, it hadn't sunk in like it was now doing. He listened with great interest and marveled that such a thing could take place. It was certainly not like anything he had ever heard before.

As questions came to his mind, he was amazed that Connor made a point to ask the very questions to the class. It was almost as he could perceive his thoughts. For example, Sheffield wondered, “Why God would come to an insignificant farm boy with such a revelation rather than to the leaders of established churches of the day.” Brother Furness asked a similar question of the group as a whole.

Someone answered, “Because if he would have, they wouldn't have been receptive to concepts that were in contrast to the accepted theology.”

Another man suggested, “God needed someone fresh and untrained in the doctrines of men so he could mold him into what he needed in order to restore anew the pure gospel of Christ.”

Sheffield thought that over while the discussion went on. Towards the end of the lesson, Connor asked, “What important truths did Joseph Smith learn from the First Vision that were unknown to rest of the world?” The question caught his attention and wanted to hear the answers.

With a piece of chalk, Connor wrote the first comment on the black board. “That God can and does reveal himself to man in modern times.”

Sheffield thought about it. "Why not." he reasoned. "The Bible is full of instances where God revealed himself. It's only reasonable." Then he realized that that was one of Geannie's questions.

The next thing that went on the black board was, "God the Father and Jesus Christ are two separate and distinct beings." That was a direct contradiction of what Sheffield had been taught all of his life. Again he remembered that Geannie had derived that very notion from her study of the Bible. To think such a thing was heresy and she kept it to herself.

While mauling this over in his mind, Brother Furness asked, "Then what do the scriptures mean when it says that they are one?"

"Yes. Tell me." Sheffield said within himself.

The answer was instantaneous. "That they are unified in purpose. Just as Coach Brason's wrestling team is unified in one body."

Sheffield was surprised that his name was brought up but he understood the analogy.

The third point was, "They have bodies of flesh and bone." Again this was not how he had been taught. This too was something that Geanie had obviously given a lot of thought to. He remembered reading a comment that he had penciled in next to the verse where Jesus appealed to his apostles in the upper room. She had written, "Body of flesh and bone."

"Man is literally created in the image of God." Was next comment. Now that he stopped to think about it on a deeper level, it made perfect sense. In fact the entire concept came clear to him. As Connor concluded the lesson with his own testimony and conviction, something stirred inside of Sheffield, similar to the experience he had in the plane when asking God which job he should take. It all came together with the feeling that what he had heard was true. He was surprised to discover a single tear drop on his cheek. He quickly wiped it away. As he did he realized that he wasn't the only one.

When Connor was finished, he announced that next week Brother Little would teach the next lesson on the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. Sheffield resolved right then that he wanted to come back to hear that lesson.

After a closing prayer, the men mingled a moment before going downstairs. Many of them gathered around Sheffield and wanted to get know him better. Everyone he talked to had a warm, firm handshake for him.

Once he made his way downstairs, he found Craig, who was standing around with Read and some other boys who were close to his age. He had the definite advantage, knowing them from school and paling around with Read.

There was an hour in which to go home and get Ramona and the girls and return for Sunday School. They were almost ready when they got home. Ramona wanted to know all about their experience. Sheffield told her about the discussion that he listened to and how he felt about it.

Once they were ready, they went back as a family. Again, they got there about ten minutes before the meeting was to start and found a place to sit about three fourths of the way back in the chapel. There was still plenty of empty places. The adults and the youth over the age of twelve were assembled in the chapel. Janet had been escorted by Bernice Little, Roger's sister, to join the children in Junior Sunday School. Again they were greeted by those already there and others as they came in. Again the meeting started five minutes late.

This time, a man by the name of Lionel Gordon took charge. He was the Sunday School Superintendent. Sheffield had met him earlier in the morning. He and two other men were seated on the stand along with Roger and his counselors. The opening hymn, "Welcome, Welcome Sabbath Morning", was one the Brasons were familiar with as they had sung it many times in the Methodist Church.

Following the hymn, a young woman offered the opening prayer. That was followed by communion, or the sacrament, as Brother Gordon had called it. Two young men in their late teens sat at the table beneath the pulpit, one of them offered the blessing on the bread, which was passed to the congregation by six boys in their teens. Then the other young man offered the blessing on the water and it too was passed to the congregation. It was was different from what they were accustomed to, as those who wished to partake of communion went up to receive it from the pastor. Since they were in the habit of taking communion, when the sacrament came to them, they partook.

Next two teenagers, a girl and a boy who were also sitting on the stand, each gave a short talk. What followed next, Ramona particularly enjoyed. The chorister announced that they were going to learn a new hymn. The organist played through it once before the congregation attempted to sing "Earth With Her Ten Thousand Flowers".

After singing all three versus, the chorister, a woman in her late thirties, had them go through the first verse two or three more times. Occasionally she would stop them and point out how it should be sung. By the time they sang it the third time, it sounded very good. The chorister said that they would practice the hymn each week for the rest of the month. Next week, they would concentrate on the second verse.

After the practice hymn, as it was called, Brother Gordon dismissed the congregation to their various classes. The youth and few adults got up to leave, and Read and Jolene invited Craig and Norma to come with them. Roger made his way to Sheffield and Ramona and invited them to come with him to the Gospel Essentials class that he had told them about.

They went to a class room upstairs where they were joined by Chantelle and two other couples. Sheffield had been introduced to the two men earlier in the morning, but for Ramona's advantage, Roger introduced them again along with their wives.

The one couple was Hyrum and Agnes Fielding. They were about the same age as Sheffield and Ramona. The other couple was Jack and Renee Brown. They were slightly older. Roger explained that Hyrum and Jack were the local missionaries that he had promised to introduce them to.

After exchanging greetings, they got to know their new acquaintances a little better. The Fieldings were from Utah, the only family in the branch who were not natives to Virginia. They had moved to Roanoke about five years earlier to take a job with the County as the supervisor of roads and bridges. Their four younger children, ages eleven to nineteen were with them, while a married daughter remained in Utah.

The Browns were long time residents of Salem. In fact, his father and mother were among the first converts in the area. Their children were all married, two sons and a daughter still lived in the area. Their daughter was a war widow and was angry at God for taking her husband. Consequently she had chose not to participate in church activity. Jack and his sons owned and operated a feed and supply store in Salem, the same place where Sheffield had bought oats for the horses, feed for the chickens, and the steel posts and barbed wire to fence off the landing strip.

Sheffield and Ramona told about themselves. The Fieldings and Browns listened with great interest. After hearing about how Sheffield lost Geannie and the kids, Jack commented, "Maybe you could help our daughter if she heard your story. It has been over two years now since her husband was killed off of Okinawa when his ship was hit. Perhaps if we had you over for dinner sometime, you could talk to her."

They went on to briefly explain how they and their children came to be a family.

Agnes was very interested in their daughters and wanted to meet them. She explained that she was president of the Young Women's Mutual Improvement Association in the branch.

After getting acquainted, Hyrum introduced the lesson for the day by writing on the chalkboard, "Our Heavenly Father" and asked, "What does this mean Brother Brason?"

Sheffield responded, "That man was created by God."

"That is absolutely correct." Hyrum said. "Not only that, but he is literally the father of our spirits." He handed Ramona a copy of the hymnal opened to a specific page and asked her to read the words of the first two verses of the hymn "O My Father."

She took the book, cleared her throat and began reading, "O my Father, thou that dwellest in the high and glorious place, when shall I regain thy presence and again behold thy face? In thy holy habitation, did my spirit once reside? In my first primeval childhood was I nurtured near thy side?"

“For a wise and glorious purpose thou hast placed me here on earth and withheld the recollection of my former friends and birth; yet oftentimes a secret something whispered, 'You're a stranger here,' and I felt that I had wandered from a more exalted sphere.”

“What do you get from that, Sister Brason?” Hyrum asked.

“Does it mean that we all lived in the presence of God?”

“That's exactly what it means.”

Sheffield commented, “When my first two children were born, I remember feeling as if they were fresh from the presence of God, but I don't ever remember being taught that.”

Brother Fielding drew a circle on the board and explained, “This represents the place where we lived before being born into this world. All of us were there as the spirit children of our Heavenly Father. We refer to one another as brother and sister, not only because we are brothers and sisters in the gospel, but also in the sense that we are the children of God.”

He went on to discuss further our relationship to God and to each other. He talked about the role of Jesus Christ in that state and how he was chosen to be the Savior of all mankind. He explained that Satan was there and countered the plan of salvation and was cast out of heaven along with one third of the spirit children of God for rebellion.

Throughout the lesson he asked questions and solicited comments from Sheffield and Ramona as well as from the others in the room.

He drew a second circle on the board and explained, “This represents this earth. We were born into it separated from our per-mortal existence by a veil of forgetfulness. We were given agency to choose for ourselves and find our way back. Satan and his followers are a major obstacle in our way. Our challenge is to choose for ourselves between good and evil.”

He explained further that God has not left us totally alone and has given us the Gospel of Jesus Christ to help us find our way back. In conclusion he said, “I testify that the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and this Church are indeed the way back through the principles taught and the ordinances administered through the authority of the priesthood. I know that it is true and invite you to investigate it further. I promise, you will find what you're looking for.”

And then he said something that Sheffield had heard at the conclusion of every lesson and talk given that day. It was not something he had heard much all of the years of attending services. Hyrum closed, “In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.”

Both Sheffield and Ramona felt that same stirring within them that they had that evening in the Governor's living room. The more they felt it, the more they felt that what Geannie had told them would find them indeed had.

After the class was over, Sheffield and Ramona visited with the others. Brother Fielding and Brother Brown asked if they could come to the Brason home one evening during the week. It was decided up on Thursday.

They made their way back downstairs, visiting with others along the way. Soon, Craig, Norma, and Janet were dismissed from the classes that they attended. On the four and a half mile drive back home, they discussed what they each had learned and how they felt. The kids were also impressed and enjoyed their classes and especially their newfound friendship with the the other kids their age.

Earlier in the morning, Ramona had prepared a roast which went into the oven when they got home. She and the girls set about getting the rest of dinner ready. By the time they were finished eating and cleaned up, it was time to go back to Sacrament Meeting.

They again arrived early at the chapel and had their choice of seats. By now, they had been introduced to nearly everyone. People went out of their way to greet them and visit for moment. The chapel began to fill up quickly as the time for the meeting approached. When the meeting started five minutes late, again, the chapel was full and about fifteen or twenty people were seated on folding chairs in the cultural hall.

President Rowan began the meeting by welcoming everyone present and a special welcome to their visitors. He smiled at the Brasons. After one or two announcements, the chorister stood up and with a nod to the organist, lead the congregation in the opening hymn. The invocation was offered by one of the women in the branch.

Following the prayer, something interesting took place that the Brasons were unaccustomed to. President Rowan extended a release to two or three people and asked those who wanted to express their gratitude for the service of those people to raise their right hands. Then he announced others to be sustained to fill the callings just vacated and called for a sustaining vote. This was an interesting process that they had never seen before.

As with Sunday School earlier in the morning, the sacrament was administered. For some reason that Sheffield and Ramona weren't aware of, the prayer over the water was repeated before being passed to the congregation. During that time, everyone was quiet, except for a few fussy children. Many were observed to have their heads bowed. Sheffield and Ramona took it as a signal to contemplate what was taking place and all that they had observed so far that day.

At the conclusion of the sacrament, Roger stepped to the pulpit and talked of his faith and belief in Jesus Christ and the Church. He used the word "know" repeatedly through out his remarks. Such as "I know that Jesus Christ was the Son of God." "I know that the Book of Mormon was the word of God." "I know that Joseph Smith was a prophet and that President George Albert Smith is the Lord's prophet on the earth

today.” That was a name that Sheffield and Ramona had not heard before. They weren't quite sure who he was. Roger also mentioned something about apostles. That caught Sheffield's attention because that was one of the things on Geannie's list. He went on to say, “I know that church is the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.” They were taken back when he said, “I know that it was the only true church on the earth.”

When Roger was finished, he turned the remainder of the meeting over to those who wished to “bear their testimonies” and invited them to come to the pulpit. Three or four people got up and went to the podium. One stood at the pulpit while the others took a seat on the podium. Through out the remainder of the meeting, several people took the opportunity. Most of them reiterated what Roger had said in other words.

Others expressed their experiences with the power of prayer or the blessings received for the payment of their tithing. Many offered gratitude to God for their blessings. Others expressed appreciation to those who had blessed their lives. There was hardly a break, as person after person took their turn; men, women, teenagers, and even children. It was interesting to note the emotion and tears that accompanied their comments, even from grown men.

Then one particular woman in her mid sixties took her turn. No sooner than she began speaking, Sheffield and Ramona knew that she must be the one that Roger had warned them about because what she said was very incoherent. It was hard to understand what she was saying because she was crying profusely. They felt sorry for the poor woman who was obviously not well of mind.

As they listened to the testimonies, again Sheffield, Ramona, and the kids felt something stirring within them. It was not anything that they had experienced during services they had attended in the Methodist Church. Those who spoke were not the polished professionals that Walt had been in delivering all of the wonderful sermons that he had preached over the years. These people spoke with a power and conviction that seemed to penetrate their inner souls that made their words believable.

At the end of the allotted time, Roger brought the meeting to close and announced the closing hymn and benediction. People lingered and visited with each other and many of them included the visitors who had been with them during their meetings that day. Some one asked if they enjoyed the meetings? They had. Another invited them to come again. They would.

When Roger made his way to them, he asked them to wait just a moment because he wanted to talk to them. After talking to one or two other people, he invited them upstairs to his office. Once they were seated, Roger asked, “So what do you think?”

Sheffield spoke for his family, “It certainly has been a good experience. We've heard and leaned a lot today but so much of it is new to us. It will take time to get it all figured out. As for myself, the most impressive thing has been the way I felt.”

“That's what I'd say, too.” Ramona added. “I can't describe the feeling.”

“What about you kids?” Roger asked.

“I really liked it.” Craig said. “I’m already friends with the guys my age. I felt something special being here that I hadn’t felt at our church.”

“I’ve made some new friends too.” Norma said. “Like Craig said, there was a good feeling here.”

“And what about you Janet?”

“It made me feel happy.”

“What you felt,” Roger said, “was the Holy Ghost. It was telling you that what you have heard and experienced is true. It’s the Holy Ghost that testifies of the truth of all things. It will come and go as you learn more about things, if you’re in tune and paying attention. Once a person has been baptized there is a second ordinance called confirmation in which the Gift of the Holy Ghost is bestowed. After that they can have his influence as a constant companion.”

“There is certainly a lot more to learn, and we want to pursue things further. We’re having Hyrum and Jack over to talk to us on Thursday. They call it a cottage meeting.”

“Good. They’ll be able to more directly answer your questions in the privacy of your own home. I hope to be getting some full time missionaries in the next few weeks. Until then Brother Fielding and Brother Brown can take care of you.”

“Depending on how things go and what we discover, it’s very possible that the my brothers, Walt and Shenan as well as the Austin brothers and their families will want to learn about it as well. I know for sure that Walt does.”

“Well then, I better ask again about those full time missionaries. So, Craig and Norma. Are you coming to our opening social on Tuesday?”

They both nodded eagerly. “Can I bring my girlfriend too?” Craig asked.

“Absolutely.” Roger said. “And what about you, Janet, do you want to come to Primary on Wednesday?”

“Uh huh.”

“And I plan on coming to Relief Society on Thursday.” Ramona added.

“Not only that,” Sheffield concluded, “but we’ll definitely be back next Sunday.”

“Good.” Roger said. “I don’t want to keep you any longer. I just wanted to see how things went with you today.” He stood up and opened the door for them and shook each of their hands as they left his office. As they left, others were waiting to see him.

As they made their way downstairs, there were still several people lingering. From the chapel they could hear the choir rehearsing. They visited a moment longer before going home. Like they told Roger, it had been a good experience.

For the remainder of the evening, that feeling persisted with them, but the next morning as they got up and went about getting ready for the day, it was gone, only the memory of it remained. It was rekindled somewhat as they read together from the Book of Mormon. Ramona had nearly completed the entire book on her own. Sheffield was about a third of the way through.

The kids got off to school and Ramona went about her day which kept her busy at home. Sheffield got to school a half an hour ahead of his second period class. During the middle of his third period government classes, a messenger from the office brought him a message to call the State of Kansas Attorney General's office. He had about fifteen minutes left before the end of class, so he waited until the bell rang.

The note indicated that he could call collect and ask for a Mr. Bernie Higgins. He closed the door to his office and picked up the telephone and dialed the local central office. He explained that he needed to place a collect call and gave them the number on the note.

A moment later a woman's voice was heard on the other end. Sheffield listened as the operator explained that this was a collect call for Mr. Bernie Higgins from Sheffield Brason. The woman accepted the call and identifying herself as Miss Gwen Jackson, Mr. Higgins secretary.

She explained that Mr. Higgins was tied up in a meeting at the moment but explained that he wanted to fly to Roanoke and get a deposition from he and Ramona regarding the pending case against Charles Helm. He would fly in on Thursday and requested a meeting with them on Friday morning before flying back to Wichita. The meeting was arranged for eight o'clock at the Brason's home.

Miss Jackson said that the attorney general's office had gathered significant information in a short time. The evidence that not only implicated Mr. Helm, but also the Goodland Chief of Police, the Sherman County Sheriff, the local magistrate judge, and others.

After hanging up, Sheffield called home to tell Ramona the news. They both wanted to put that entire episode behind them, but if their cooperation could bring justice, they were willing to put themselves through it. At least he was coming to them and they didn't have to make a special trip back to Kansas.

He had his lunch and taught his fourth period class. After his preparation hour, he put his wrestling team through their try out conditioning. He had to be impartial with Craig and treat him equally with the rest of the boys. Craig and Read were doing well and would most likely make the team.

On Tuesday evening. Craig took Norma with him and swung by to pick up Edith before going out to the Rowan's ranch for the Mutual opening social. Read had really talked it up and he was excited for the evening's activity. When they got there, President Rowan and his brother had a wagon load of baled hay hitched up to a team of draft horses.

There were a few kids there already and the rest arrived shortly. In all twelve girls and twelve boys climbed onto the wagon and seated themselves on the bales. A few of the adult leaders found a spot for the ride as well. Norma managed to squeeze in between Craig and Read. She was thrilled just to sit next to him. The heat of his body as she sat close made her heart pound. She didn't seem to mind that he talked over her to Craig. She was too shy to say much to him any way.

Even though the barn wasn't far from where they assembled, Roger and Tom drove the team away from the barn and up over a nearby hill, down through a gully, and around and about. After twenty minutes they pulled up in front of the barn.

Everyone piled off the wagon and went into the barn that had been decorated for an Appalachian hoe down. The rest of the adult leaders were there waiting for them. After an opening prayer, the activity began. There were games and donuts and apple cider. As the evening progressed, a three piece band that had been hired for the evening, took their position at one end of the barn and called the kids together for some dance instruction.

The band consisted of fiddle player, a banjo player who doubled as the caller, and a woman with a washboard. The first order of business was to select a partner. Craig and Edith were naturally a pair. Norma hoped that Read would select her. He chose Carmen Fielding instead. Norma's disappointment was short lived as she was quickly asked by Ammon Fielding to be her partner. Ammon was also a freshman and was in a couple of her classes at school. She had known him since the fourth grade when his family first moved to Roanoke. On Sunday, he had gone out of his way to make her welcome at Sunday School. The kids had a pretty good idea of what was expected as they had had been taught such dances at school since the elementary grades. Anyone growing up in Virginia was familiar with the Virginia Reel.

Craig and Edith were lost in each other, and Norma had gotten over not being asked by Read. As the dance progressed through partners, she did get to dance with him, although she was just another partner to him. He obviously didn't feel the same way about her that she did about him. Oh well, Ammon was kind of cute too. She clung to him the rest of the evening, including the return hayride. When they got home, they told their mom and dad all about their evening and the fun that they had.

On Wednesday, it was Janet's turn. All day she looked forward to attending Primary. After school, she and the other children at her school were picked up by one of the Primary leaders. The same thing happened at the other elementary schools within the boundaries of the branch. The preschool children were brought and dropped off by one of the mothers from the various areas. They had a good system worked out to get the children to the meetinghouse.

In all there were approximately thirty five children who participated and on any given week there were about thirty in attendance, give or take one or two. They met in the same room located in the basement

that the Junior Sunday School used on Sunday. The entire group met for opening exercises and then broke up into four groups that met separately for a lesson taught by one of the primary leaders. The president taught the eight to eleven year old girls, the first counselor taught the eight to eleven year old boys, the second counselor taught the first through third graders, and secretary taught the preschool children.

Janet joined a class of seven other girls who were there that day, among them were Beverly Rowan and Olivia Furness. Her teacher was Jane Gordon, a woman in her early thirties. The class was collectively known as Lihomas, which stood for little homemakers. She was given a bandalo, a sash made of green felt worn around the neck. At the bottom was affixed a plastic house that represented the girls' focus on home. It also had a plastic seagull attached to it representing her age group. It had her name printed on the back.

The other girls' bandalos were full of other emblems that they earned as they had advanced through the class. Sister Gordon told Janet that she could earn some emblems for hers as well until she turned twelve in four months. That day their lesson was on the importance of keeping the Word of Wisdom. Janet had never heard of it before. She learned that it meant that tobacco and alcohol were not good for the body and should be avoided. That was something her new mom and dad did, however her natural father was a smoker. Janet hated the way it smelled. She learned that it also meant to eat healthy food and get enough sleep.

At the end of the lesson, she received a winged foot to put on her bandalo signifying that she understood the principle and had promised to live by it. The other girls already had one. When the class was over, Sister Gordon collected all of the bandalos and put them in a closet until the next week.

Ramona was there to pick her up when Primary was over. Jane took some time to visit with her and showed her Janet's bandalo and explained more about Primary to her and Janet and what she could accomplish between then and when she turned twelve. She encouraged Ramona to help Janet set some goals that she could work toward in that time, including memorizing as many of the Articles of Faith as possible. Janet was excited about the things that she could work on until her birthday in January.

On Thursday morning, Ramona drove over to the meetinghouse to attend Relief Society. There were about twenty other women that meet in what was called the Relief Society Room located downstairs at the rear of the building. Most of them she had been introduced to on Sunday and got to know them better. A few were older, a few were about her age, but about half of them were younger than her with small children.

Jane Anderson, the Relief Society President, taught the spiritual living lesson for month on the law of tithing. Thanks to Geannie, paying tithing was something that they were in the habit of doing. From the lesson, Ramona recognized the blessings that had come to them for doing so. The only real question in her mind was where should they pay it now, to the Methodist Church to which they still belonged or to the Mormon Church which they were investigating.

In the Methodist Church their contribution went to the local congregation to pay the expenses and the salary of the minister. She learned that in the Mormon Church it went to Salt Lake and was used throughout the Church and that none of it went to pay salaries, except for actual church employees.

She also learned about fast offerings that were collected on Fast Sunday and how they were used for caring for the poor and the needy. But that wasn't all. Contributions were also collected for the branch budget for paying the expenses such as electric and heating bills and the such, much like in the Methodist Church. She also learned that the branch was hoping to one day build a new building because they were outgrowing their current building. In such an event, they would be required to cover thirty percent of the cost, the rest coming from the tithing funds of the church.

The main point she came away with was that tithes and offerings were a spiritual law of sacrifice, but with promised blessings. As Sister Anderson put it, "Its about faith, not money." She also acknowledged that it was asking a lot but that where much was expected, much was given in return. She concluded by sharing how her husband's modest salary as an electrician was adequate to support their family of six children She emphasized how they always had what they needed when they needed it. All through the meeting, Ramona felt the warm stirrings of the Holy Ghost that she had come to recognize.

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The 1947 Course of Study for the Melchizedek Priesthood Quorums of the Church was the first of four volumes called Church History and Modern Revelation which were all written by Elder Joseph Fielding Smith and "Published by The Council of the Twelve Apostles."

For many years prior to 1980, Sunday School was conducted as described, including the administration of the sacrament.

The Gospel Essentials lesson that Brother Fielding taught in the story was the first lesson from 1972 edition of the Gospel Essentials Manual.

In those days the Church curriculum year began in September, corresponding with the school year.

