
Perrysburg, New York

D&C 100: Introduction

On October 5, 1833, the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon departed from Kirtland, Ohio, on a missionary journey to Upper Canada. En route, they stopped in eastern villages and towns to proclaim the message of the Restoration. On October 12, seven days after leaving Kirtland, they arrived at the home of Freeman Nickerson in the town of Perrysburg, New York.

In Perrysburg, the Prophet Joseph Smith received this revelation informing him that “Zion must be chastened yet for a season, although she would finally be redeemed.”¹ Joseph was also told,

Behold, and lo, I have much people in this place, in the regions round about; and an effectual door shall be opened in the regions round about in this eastern land; ... lift up your voices unto this people; speak the thoughts that I shall put into your hearts, and you shall not be confounded before men; For it shall be given you in the very hour, yea in the very moment, what ye shall say. (D&C 100:3, 5–6)

In response to this revelation, the next day Sidney Rigdon preached to “a large congregation” in the Freeman Nickerson home. Of his preaching and of the meeting in the Nickerson home, Joseph Smith wrote, “I bore record while the Lord gave His Spirit in a remarkable manner.”² The following day, October 14, 1833, the prophet and Sidney Rigdon took their leave and continued their journey to Upper Canada. None were baptized in Perrysburg in October 1833, but a gospel “seed” had been planted—residents of Perrysburg and the surrounding region had listened to the message of the Restoration.

¹ George Q. Cannon, *Life of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1986), 154.

² Smith, *History of the Church*, 1:421.

It was not until March 1834 that Joseph Smith returned to Perrysburg. This time he brought with him Parley P. Pratt. Once again a crowd gathered in the Freeman Nickerson home to hear the message of the Restoration. Among those present were Vinson Knight and his wife. They “became convinced that he was no false prophet but an instrument in the hands of the Lord.”² They were baptized in the spring of 1834.

President James E. Faust, in his general conference address of October 1999, spoke of the importance of missionaries planting seeds of the gospel of Jesus Christ—

For years William R. Wagstaff, who served in the North Central States Mission from 1928 to 1930, felt disappointed he had not baptized more people. In the summer of 1929 he and his companion visited a farm family about 180 miles west of Winnipeg.

Brother Wagstaff remembered giving a copy of the Book of Mormon to the mother and discussing the gospel with her during numerous visits through that and the following summer.

He recalled that during each visit “she’d take off her apron and we’d sit down and discuss the gospel. She’d read and have lots of questions.”

But at the close of his mission, she still had not been baptized, and he lost touch with her.

Brother Wagstaff went home, married, and raised a family. Then in October 1969 he and his wife attended his missionary reunion. “A lady approached him and asked, ‘Aren’t you Elder Wagstaff?’” ... She introduced herself as the woman he had taught on the farm outside Winnipeg. In her hand was a worn copy of the Book of Mormon—the one he had given her 40 years earlier.

“She showed me the book,” he related. “I turned over the front and there was my name and address.”

She then told Brother Wagstaff about 60 members of her family were members of the Church, including a branch president.

Elder Wagstaff planted the seed during his mission but went home while it was still in the ground. Forty years later he learned of the rich harvest that eventually had come to pass and that “whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”³

³ James E. Faust, “Of Seeds and Soils,” *Ensign*, November 1999.