

Carry On!

JANET B. BRADFORD

Happy August 2nd! Some of you may be celebrating a birthday today. If so, you join the likes of Rembrandt's wife, Saskia, who was born in 1612; Irish actor Peter O'Toole, born in 1932; and Andrew Gold, born in 1951. He wrote the song "Thank You for Being a Friend," which became the theme song for that popular TV series in the eighties called *The Golden Girls*.

For others, however, today is one of sadness and reflection as they remember and honor someone who died. Some who passed away on August 2nd include Wild Bill Hickok, who died in 1876; the Italian tenor Enrico Caruso, in 1921; Alexander Graham Bell, in 1922; and, in 1998, the American ventriloquist and puppeteer, Shari Lewis (remember Lamb Chop?).

Well, like any good librarian, I did not stop there! After some additional research, I discovered that in 1776 the Declaration of Independence was actually signed on August 2nd (not July 4th, like most of us think!); in 1790 the first U.S. census was conducted; and in 1870 the Tower Subway, the world's first underground tube, opened in London. These are all good things, but August 2nd also had its share of tragedy. In 1922 a typhoon hit China, killing more than 50,000 people; in 1934 Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany; in 1968 an

earthquake shook the Philippines, killing 270 people and wounding nearly 300; in 1973 a flash fire killed fifty-one at the Summerland amusement center at Douglas on the Isle of Man; and in 1980 a bomb exploded at a railway station in Bologna, Italy, killing eighty-five people and wounding more than 200.

I next wondered what notable August 2nd events we have as Latter-day Saints and found that in 1831, Joseph Smith, who had traveled to Missouri for the first time, met with others on today's date to begin the building of yet another new settlement for the outcast Saints. Our Prophet recorded:

I assisted the Colesville branch of the Church to lay the first log, for a house, as a foundation of Zion in Kaw township, twelve miles west of Independence. The log was carried and placed by twelve men, in honor of the twelve tribes of Israel. At the same time, through prayer, the land of Zion was consecrated and dedicated by Elder Sidney Rigdon for the gathering of the Saints.

Janet B. Bradford was a librarian at the BYU Harold B. Lee Library when this devotional address was given on 2 August 2011.

He concluded:

It was a season of joy to those present, and afforded a glimpse of the future, which time will yet unfold to the satisfaction of the faithful. [HC 1:196; emphasis added]

It was “a season of joy” and “afforded a glimpse of the future.” Keep that thought!

Just two years later, on August 2, 1833, a revelation was given through Joseph Smith at Kirtland, Ohio. At that time members of the Church were being persecuted in Missouri, and the Prophet had been forced to sign an agreement in late July that the Saints would leave Jackson County. This revelation is section 97 of the Doctrine and Covenants, which gives beautiful insights into Zion and “the pure in heart” (verse 21) and instructions for building a temple, a house of the Lord.

LDS birthdays today include Matthew Cowley, born in 1897, apostle and great missionary to the Maori Saints.

Finally, I want to bring your attention to the fact that on August 2, 1985, our Church released the first new English hymnbook in thirty-seven years. This is the green hymnal, which replaced the navy one (for those of you who can remember that far back!). Since then, this hymnal has been translated into many languages and continues to be the one used today. (See “It Happened in August,” What’s Up? *New Era*, August 2006, 36.) More on hymns to come! (Unless otherwise noted, all songs cited are from *Hymns*, 2002.)

So why point out all of this? I hope you recognize that we could research any day of the year and come up with similar results. Every day is important, and we need to remember that good and bad things happen. In fact, I think sometimes the difference between a good day and a bad day is about twenty-four hours. Good and bad are part of life, part of the “opposition in all things” (2 Nephi 2:11)

that Lehi discussed in his final words to his son Jacob. In Ecclesiastes 3:1–4 we read:

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;

A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;

A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.

I encourage all of us to savor every moment of every day and, on those bleak days when nothing seems to be going right, to think of hymn number 255 and “carry on!” (“Carry On”). Have that “season of joy” that affords “a glimpse of the future” that the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote about in his journal on August 2, 1831.

The hymn “Carry On” was written in response to the theme “Onward with Mormon Ideals” that was announced for the Mutual Improvement Association in 1930, the Church’s centennial year. This was an exciting time in the Church as members looked back over the first hundred years yet looked to the future as well.

We have so many examples of Saints who press forward with faith during trying times. Our dear President Gordon B. Hinckley put it this way:

It isn’t as bad as you sometimes think it is. It all works out. Don’t worry. I say that to myself every morning. It will all work out. If you do your best, it will all work out. Put your trust in God, and move forward with faith and confidence in the future. The Lord will not forsake us. He will not forsake us. [Quoted in “Excerpts from Addresses of President Gordon B. Hinckley,” Latter-day Counsel, *Ensign*, October 2000, 73; see also Hinckley, “Put Your Trust in God,” *Ensign*, February 2006, 63]

If President Hinckley needed to remind himself daily to carry on, then we probably need to be reminding ourselves even more.

I believe that carrying on is a tradition that gets passed down through the generations, and I have been blessed by the valiant examples of my ancestors. My paternal grandmother, Eliza Teuscher Bischoff, was born in Switzerland. She fell in love about the same time that she and her family met the Mormon missionaries. The entire family eventually joined the Church and started preparations to join the Saints in America. Margaritha, her sister, was especially thrilled and could not wait to go, but my grandmother was pulled in two directions; she wanted to go with her family, but she did not want to leave her sweetheart. She called it her time of sadness and joy. Just before the family was ready to leave, tragedy struck when Margaritha became ill and died. It is said that my great-grandmother's hair turned white overnight. Nonetheless they followed through with their plans and sailed for America with heavy hearts.

Aunt Jo, from my mom's side of our family, was a stalwart Saint who carried on even though that meant being disowned. Johanna Adrianna Gobel Tonks was raised in Holland. She and her sister had to hide their Book of Mormon under the mattress up in their attic bedroom. The oil for their little lamp would burn just long enough for the sisters to read one chapter of the book every night. Their mother, suspicious of all things Mormon, said one evening, "No more light for you girls up there." Somehow Aunt Jo managed to get some matches, and she and her sister were able to continue reading that precious chapter nightly, even though the oil should have burned out long before. She stated, "No one in this whole wide world can tell me the hand of the Lord wasn't over us."

Aunt Jo could not get baptized until she turned 18, and that happened while her mother was away helping a sister. Aunt Jo recalled

being discouraged, for she loved her mother and did not want to disobey her. She wondered if she was doing right in going against her mother's wishes, but when she came up out of the water, she exclaimed, "Oh, I am so happy!" for the greatest feeling of joy came over her, and she was glad she had done the will of the Father.

When her mother came home one week later, Aunt Jo met her at the depot, and during their late-night supper her mother said, "Jo, you have come of age while I was gone. What have you done?"

Aunt Jo answered, "Well, mother, I have been baptized, but let me stay here and live with you. You can go to your church and I can go to mine. I want to stay and take care of you."

Her mother replied, "I cannot live with a Mormon. You leave the house now."

It was 11:00 p.m. and raining terribly. That did not make any difference to her mother, however, and Aunt Jo had to walk twenty minutes to stay with an aunt, never to return to her home again.

Oh, how I love these stories of pressing forward with faith during trying times.

Become an Instrument in the Lord's Hands

One of the first poems I memorized is the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi:

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love.

Where there is injury, pardon.

Where there is doubt, faith.

Where there is despair, hope.

Where there is darkness, light.

Where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,

grant that I may not so much seek

to be consoled as to console;

to be understood as to understand;

to be loved as to love.

*For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.*
[Attributed]

This simple prayer contains profound truths. The imagery of becoming an instrument in the Lord's hands is beautiful, and it is my first guideline for carrying on. This has become my motto.

I sang a setting of this poem at a BYU commencement back in the eighties. Often I find myself humming this song to remind me of the good I can do in the world today (see "Have I Done Any Good?" no. 223).

In recent years I have learned a lot about musical instruments. My husband, Daron, is a professional musician. He gets asked on occasion to acquire a new instrument for a recording gig, so we are usually on the lookout for something to complement his current lineup that now numbers 118!

Primarily we own wind instruments—like clarinets, flutes, saxophones, recorders, and some pretty cool ethnic ones—but we also have a nice piano, some keyboards, a couple of organs, guitars, a ukulele, and even some kazoos. Some are very big, like the baritone saxophone; others are very small, like the Oscar Meyer Wienerwhistle. No two are alike; each one is unique. They sound great, but it takes some effort to keep them playable. They must be kept clean, tuned, and regulated. Pads must be level, joints lubricated, endless reeds fixed and conditioned, wood bodies humidified, and silver bodies kept free of tarnish. So, too, must we keep ourselves in top condition to be directed by the Heavenly Maestro.

Mary Ellen Smoot said in the October 2000 general conference:

*Truly, we may **each** be an instrument in the hands of God. Happily, we need not all be the same kind of instrument. Just as the instruments in an orchestra differ in size, shape, and sound, we too*

*are different from one another. We have different talents and inclinations, but just as the French horn cannot duplicate the sound of the piccolo, neither is it necessary for us to all serve the Lord in the same way. ["We Are Instruments in the Hands of God," *Ensign*, November 2000, 90; emphasis in original]*

This is an important point. The Lord needs you to do it in your own way, using your own talents and your unique individual caring. Remember:

*Angels above us are silent notes taking
Of ev'ry action; then do what is right!*
["Do What Is Right," no. 237]

No one else can do what you can do. Please do not compare yourselves to others. Rather, bloom where you're planted! This is one of the lessons I learned from growing up in a very small farming community. Of course at the time I felt rather put upon because of all the chores and responsibilities this afforded. I wondered each time we left events early to "go home and milk" why I couldn't stay like my city cousins. Their life looked so much easier. But looks can be deceiving. Do not seek for greener grass or covet what is thy neighbor's. This is something my parents taught me: learn to be content where you are.

I also learned about service and how to be an instrument in the Lord's hands by observing my parents and their selfless acts of kindness to neighbor and stranger alike. It was common for my mom to feed a hobo passing by or to fix dinner for a needy family or to go visit someone "just because." My dad was always first in line to help put up hay or to fill up someone's gas tank because of miscalculated mileage to the next gas station. He was especially good at listening and lifting others' souls. He gave hope where there was despair and lightened many heavy burdens with his humor and kindness. He loved the Charlie

Chaplin song *Smile*, which actually is a great carry-on song:

*Light up your face with gladness,
Hide ev'ry trace of sadness,
Al-'tho a tear may be ever so near,*

*That's the time,
You must keep on trying,
Smile, what's the use of crying,
You'll find that life is still worth-while
If you just smile.*

[Charles "Charlie" Chaplin, music (theme for *Modern Times*, 1936); John Turner and Geoffrey Claremont Parsons, lyrics and title (1954)]

Sometimes we question our promptings because of what I call the "smallness factor." We think that because the Lord wants us to do just a tiny thing that it is not important. This is wrong. Sister Bonnie D. Parkin, former general Relief Society president, counseled:

What does it mean to be an instrument in every-day terms? I think it means to nurture others. Joseph Smith called it acting "according to those sympathies" in our hearts. . . .

*. . . Believe me when I say each of us is much better than we think. We need to recognize and celebrate what we're doing right. Much of what we do seems small and insignificant—just a part of daily living. When we are called "to give an account to Jehovah," as the Prophet Joseph counseled, I know that we will have much to share. ["Sweet Moments," *Ensign*, November 2005, 107; see Relief Society Minutes, 28 April 1842, Archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 38 and also 34]*

Carrying on is about being consistent—line upon line, precept upon precept. Testimonies are built one step at a time.

In his 2006 October general conference address, Elder Don R. Clarke, then of the Second Quorum of the Seventy, spoke about

becoming instruments in the Lord's hands. One story is so tenderly told that I want to quote it. He began:

My maternal grandfather, Alma Benjamin Larsen, was only 34 years old when he woke up one morning and noticed that he had problems seeing. Shortly thereafter, he lost his sight entirely. Grandfather had served a mission and been a faithful member of the Church. He was a farmer with a wife and three children, and he could not imagine life without sight. Grandfather's wife and small children now had to bear the extra burdens of helping on the farm, and money became tight.

During this time of physical darkness, many people became instruments in God's hands to help my blind grandfather. One experience that had a powerful impact on his family happened in 1919. It was a year of great financial difficulty for all the people in Grandfather's town. Farms were being foreclosed, and businesses were going broke. There was a sizable mortgage on his farm, and Grandfather received a statement saying he would have to pay \$195 in order to carry the mortgage over for another year. For him, paying this bill was like demanding a pound of flesh. Nearly everyone was in the same condition, and it seemed impossible to obtain that much money. If he had gathered everything that the farm produced—the horses, cows, and machinery—he could not have sold them for \$195. Grandfather asked a neighbor to butcher two or three of his cows, and he sold them and some other products. He had extended credit to his neighbors with the understanding that they would pay at the end of the year, but none of his debtors was able to pay him. The economic situation for his family was bleak.

Elder Clarke quoted from his grandfather's journal:

"I shall never forget that cold evening, just before Christmas of 1919. It looked as though we would lose the farm. My daughter, Gladys, laid a slip of paper in my hand and said, 'This came in the mail today.' I took it to her mother and asked her what it

was. This is what my wife read to me, 'Dear Brother Larsen, I've had you on my mind all day today. I am wondering if you are in financial trouble. If you are, I have \$200 you may have.' The letter was signed 'Jim Drinkwater.' Jim was a small, crippled man, and he would have been the last man on earth that anyone would have thought had that much money on hand. I went to his house that night and he said, 'Brother Larsen, I received a wireless message from heaven this morning, and I could not get you off my mind all day. I was sure you were in financial trouble.' Brother Drinkwater gave me \$200 and we sent the \$195 to the mortgage company, and with the extra \$5 we bought boots and clothes for the children. Santa Claus did come that year."

Elder Clarke's grandfather then bore his testimony:

"The Lord has never let me down. He has touched the hearts of others as He touched the heart of Brother Drinkwater. I bear witness that the only safety and security that I have ever found has come through trying to keep the commandments of the Lord and upholding and sustaining the authorities of this Church."

Elder Clarke then concluded:

I have thought about Jim Drinkwater many times and wondered how he came to be one that the Lord could trust. Jim was a little, crippled man that God trusted to help a blind farmer with a heavy mortgage and three children. I have learned a great deal from my grandfather's experience with Jim Drinkwater. I have learned that a person does not need to have a Church calling, an invitation to help someone, or even good health to become an instrument in God's hands. [Don R. Clarke, "Becoming Instruments in the Hands of God," *Ensign*, November 2006, 97–98]

My young brothers and sisters, strive to be someone the Lord can trust. Always be listening for that still small voice. Have you received

"a wireless message from heaven" today? President Dieter F. Uchtdorf gave this advice in the April 2011 general conference:

Often [the Lord] speaks to us in ways that we can hear only with our heart. To better hear His voice, it would be wise to turn down the volume control of the worldly noise in our lives. If we ignore or block out the promptings of the Spirit for whatever reason, they become less noticeable until we cannot hear them at all. Let us learn to hearken to the promptings of the Spirit and then be eager to heed them. ["Waiting on the Road to Damascus," *Ensign*, May 2011, 70–75]

As we help others carry on, our own burdens get lighter. Become an instrument in God's hands.

A Hymn a Day

Another suggestion for carrying on is to include the study of hymns in your daily personal worship time. Have you read what the First Presidency recommends in the preface to the hymnbook?

The hymns can greatly benefit us as individuals. Hymns can lift our spirits, give us courage, and move us to righteous action. They can fill our souls with heavenly thoughts and bring us a spirit of peace.

Hymns can also help us withstand the temptations of the adversary. We encourage you to memorize your favorite hymns and study the scriptures that relate to them. Then, if unworthy thoughts enter your mind, sing a hymn to yourself, crowding out the evil with the good. ["First Presidency Preface," *Hymns*, 2002, x]

I love the hymns! They are truly "song[s] of the heart" (D&C 25:12), and I highly encourage you to turn to them for inspiration. Each is a mini-sermon that can build testimony, strengthen resolves, and help us *carry on*. My own gospel convictions have developed and

become stronger through the years as I have pondered their messages. I share a few personal experiences to illustrate the power of our hymns and hope as I do that you will recall your own teaching moments.

My first favorite was “There Is a Green Hill Far Away.” The simplicity of this text gave me a basic, childlike understanding of the unconditional love of our Savior:

*Oh, dearly, dearly has he loved!
And we must love him too,
And trust in his redeeming blood,
And try his works to do.*
[No. 194]

As a teen I participated in a dance festival at the annual June conference in Salt Lake City. This was so fun for me—a farm girl who came to the big city to participate with hundreds of other youth in a spectacular event at the football stadium at the U. After the finale, as we dancers learned that the prophet, Spencer W. Kimball, was there, everyone spontaneously began to sing “We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet” (no. 19). My voice broke as the Spirit bore witness to me that we do have a living prophet, and this feeling has come again and again as I have had opportunities to see prophets in person—not on TV but here at BYU or in the LDS Conference Center. I do give thanks for a prophet who guides us in these latter days!

I went to Ricks College (now BYU–Idaho) and attended the weekly devotionals. One particular day I was feeling a bit depressed—just sort of sad and wondering where my life was going—as I trudged into the meeting. I do not remember who spoke that day, but I do remember singing hymn number 250, “We Are All Enlisted.” Verse three was particularly poignant:

*Fighting for a kingdom, and the world is our foe;
Happy are we! Happy are we!
Glad to join the army, we will sing as we go;*

*We shall gain the vict’ry by and by.
Dangers may gather—why should we fear?
Jesus, our Leader, ever is near.
He will protect us, comfort and cheer.
We’re joyfully, joyfully marching to our home.*

As these words entered my sad heart that morning, I immediately felt buoyed up and happy to be part of God’s army.

On my mission I had a goal to memorize as many hymns as possible. Hymn number 29, “A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief,” was one of the first. As you know, this is the hymn that John Taylor sang for Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum that fateful day in June 1844 at Carthage. John Taylor recalled:

All of us felt unusually . . . languid, with a remarkable depression of spirits. In consonance with those feelings I sang a song, that had lately been introduced into Nauvoo, entitled, “A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief.” . . .

. . . After a lapse of some time, Brother Hyrum requested me again to sing that song. I replied, “Brother Hyrum, I do not feel like singing,” when he remarked, “Oh, never mind; commence singing, and you will get the spirit of it.” At his request I did so. [HC 7:101–2]

This was a carry-on moment!

It took me longer than most to marry. On occasion I thought I might be that stereotypical “old-maid” librarian! Turning to the hymns on many lonely evenings lifted my spirits and helped me to maintain eternal perspective. Where could I turn for peace? Where was my solace? Where was “the quiet hand to calm my anguish? Who, who [could] understand? He, only One” (“Where Can I Turn for Peace?” no. 129).

In May 2002 I was diagnosed with breast cancer. About a month later my father had a stroke and died within a week on July 3rd. This, indeed, was a time I needed strength to carry on. Hymn number 115 gave me hope:

*Here bring your wounded hearts; here tell your
anguish.*

Earth has no sorrow that heav'n cannot heal.

...

*Come to the feast of love; come, ever knowing
Earth has no sorrow but heav'n can remove.*

[“Come, Ye Disconsolate”]

I suspect that each of you has experienced similar soul-searching times, and I testify that the hymns can heal our wounded hearts and bring solace. They can also move us to action. Our dear prophet, President Thomas S. Monson, said:

*My brothers and sisters, may we resolve from this day forward to fill our hearts with love. May we go the extra mile to include in our lives any who are lonely or downhearted or who are suffering in any way. May we “[cheer] up the sad and [make] someone feel glad” [“Have I Done Any Good?” no. 223]. May we live so that when that final summons is heard, we may have no serious regrets, no unfinished business, but will be able to say with the Apostle Paul, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith” [2 Timothy 4:7]. [“Now Is the Time,” *Ensign*, November 2001, 61]*

Daily hymns remind us how to live.

*We are sowing, daily sowing
Countless seeds of good and ill.*

...

*By a whisper sow we blessings;
By a breath we scatter strife.
In our words and thoughts and actions
Lie the seeds of death and life.
[“We Are Sowing,” no. 216]*

*You can make the pathway bright,
Fill the soul with heaven's light,
If there's sunshine in your heart.*

...

*You can live a happy life
In this world of toil and strife,
If there's sunshine in your heart.
[“You Can Make the Pathway Bright,” no. 228]*

*Are you ever burdened with a load of care?
Does the cross seem heavy you are called to bear?
Count your many blessings; ev'ry doubt will fly,
And you will be singing as the days go by.
[“Count Your Blessings,” no. 241]*

*In the days of trial his Saints he will cheer.
[“Let Us All Press On,” no. 243]*

*Improve each shining moment.
[“Improve the Shining Moments,” no. 226]*

*And never stand still till the Master appear.
His adorable will let us gladly fulfill,
And our talents improve
By the patience of hope and the labor of love.
[“Come, Let Us Anew,” no. 217]*

*Come unto him all ye depressed,
Ye erring souls whose eyes are dim,
Ye weary ones who long for rest.
Come unto him!
Come unto him!
[“Come unto Him,” no. 114]*

It is my prayer that we can all stand “faithful and true” (“True to the Faith,” no. 254). I know that our Savior lives and that this is a gospel of joy.

*O youth of the noble birthright,
Carry on, carry on, carry on!
[“Carry On,” no. 255]*

I say this in the sacred name of our Savior, Jesus Christ, amen.