

## Developing Spiritual Wanderlust

Enjoying Our Spiritual Pilgrimage

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For those of you who like to title sermons and sermonettes, I would like to call this one "Developing Spiritual Wanderlust." *Wanderlust* is a German word for *love of traveling*—something all of us in this room anticipate every year as we move toward the Feast of Tabernacles. An alternate title we might use is "Enjoying our Spiritual Pilgrimage."

Some of the descriptors used to call up this message on the search engine are: Gypsy spirit, outcasts, spiritual evacuees, spiritual Ellis Island, refugees, romanticism, wilderness wanderings, and the Place of Safety. As you recall, on the first evening of the Feast, I asked how many of us found ourselves infected with Feast fever. You will remember we had a lot of hands go up. This constitutes my 39th Feast of Tabernacles, and it seems like the yearning for this event and what this event signifies has given me greater Feast Fever than ever before.

I recall back in 1987 to 1989, when I played with Captain Kersch's rolling country band every Saturday night at the Pasadena VFW, that around Feast time he would always pull out one of Willie Nelson's tunes, "On the Road Again." But he set his own lyrics to it. "Going to the Feast again; can't wait to go to the Feast again." Some of Willie's other lyrics include:

*On the road again  
Goin' places that I've never been  
Seein' things that I may never see again,  
And I can't wait to get on the road again.*

*On the road again  
Like a band of gypsies we go down the highway  
We're the best of friends . . .*

Back in 1960, when I was sixteen years old growing up on the farm, I recall seeing a movie on late night television called "Golden Earrings," starring Ray Milland and Marlene Dietrich. The story involved, according to the synopsis, a former British spy (Milland) who received a set of gold earrings in the mail and recalls his wartime journey across Germany disguised as a Gypsy by a beautiful Gypsy woman (Marlene Dietrich). During the trip, he gathers damaging information against the Nazis as he falls in love

with the woman who hides him.

Because it has been almost 46 years since I have seen this film, I am not going to recommend it to anyone until I have a chance to see this again. I made this mistake last year and had to do some tall explaining.

At the age of sixteen (my son Aaron's age), I recall that there were enough androgens coursing through my bloodstream that the prospect of having a beautiful traveling companion like Marlene Dietrich, while roaming through the Bavarian and Bohemian countryside, brought out the romantic gypsy spirit and the spirit of wanderlust in me.

By developing a spiritual wanderlust, we can rekindle our first love and actually resist succumbing to spiritual burnout as we resolve to continue our pilgrimage into the kingdom of God.

One of the dominant biblical (as well as secular) motifs or patterns in the psyche of physical Israel, as well as spiritual Israel, has been the wandering and the pilgrim experience. Do you realize that virtually all of our patriarchs were wanderers and pilgrims? Let us turn to Hebrews 11 for a synopsis of this perennial pattern:

**Hebrews 11:8-12** By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. [Just like us.] By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as *in* a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God. By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as *many* as the stars of the sky in multitude—innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.

**Hebrews 11:13-16** These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced *them* and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. And truly if they had called to mind that *country* from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return [as we have]. But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly *country*. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

Please scroll down to Hebrews 13:14.

**Hebrews 13:14** (*Amplified Bible*) For here we have no permanent city, but we are looking for the one which is to come.

For all of us in the Israel of God, this proclivity to wander and to seek a better, more permanent homeland has been our perpetual legacy. It would take probably hundreds of sermons or Bible studies to completely explore this perennial wandering theme. We realize that it has been God's desire that the human race not concentrate in one spot. He wanted them disbursed over the entire land surface of the earth. In the future, God's family will spread out to the entire universe, traveling to new vistas where no human has ever traveled before.

As I discussed this idea with my former boss and teacher, Raymond McNair, he suggested that I consider Isaiah 51:16.

**Isaiah 51:16** "And I have put My words in your mouth; I have covered you with the shadow of My hand, That I may plant the heavens, lay the foundations of the earth, and say to Zion, 'You *are* My people.'"

The entire history of Israel, including the Israel of God (Abraham's physical offspring and spiritual offspring), have been bound up in wandering, sometimes willingly and obediently, but often reluctantly and grudgingly, from a less desirable venue, location, or condition to a more desirable venue, location, or condition. Let us pick up the thread of this theme in Genesis 12:1-5.

**Genesis 12:1-5** Now the LOORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." So Abram departed as the LOORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan.

On October 27, 2001, John Ritenbaugh commenced upon a series of sermons called "Wilderness Wanderings" in which he stated that, like our forebears embarking for the promised land, we have no clue as to the specific details of the trek. God does not always lead our lives in the way we think best for us. Like our forebears in the wilderness, the experiences that we are going through right now and the way we are handling them are preparing us for our responsibilities as we acquire our inheritance in the permanent kingdom we are seeking.

After a short while, strife broke out between Abram's and Lot's herdsmen about adequate grazing room for their livestock. Abram graciously gave his nephew first choice of the grazing land. Lot, of course, picked the well-watered plain of Jordan just as close to the Sodom-Gomorrah metropolx as he could go. Genesis 13:11 suggests that Lot journeyed east, pitching his tent even as far as Sodom. We later learn that Lot did not have much wanderlust, preferring to linger around the more secure environs of Sodom.

By inference, we learn that father Abram, with more of a romantic spirit, moved westward into the rugged high country. I like to imagine it covered with mesas, canyons and gorges—like the old American West. I know that western I have seen filmed in Israel (like the spaghetti Westerns in Italy) are a dead ringer for the American Southwest. Genesis 13:18 states that Abraham moved his tent and dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre, where he built an altar to the Lord. From the pictures of terebinth trees I have downloaded from Google, it reminds me of the live oaks of the American Southwest where Hoppy, Gene, and Roy would camp for the night, having a respite before the next exciting adventure. For many of you around my age, those were our heroes, inspiring us with wanderlust and the desire to follow them on new adventures.

As we scroll over to Genesis 26:15-17, we find that our patriarch, Isaac, also had to repeatedly break camp and move on in order to peacefully resolve conflict:

**Genesis 26:15-17** Now the Philistines had stopped up all the wells which his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father, and they had filled them with earth. And Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go away from us, for you are much mightier than we." Then Isaac departed from there and pitched his tent in the Valley of Gerar, and dwelt there.

This new venue did not last very long.

**Genesis 26:20-24** But the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, "The water *is* ours." So he called the name of the well Esek, because they quarreled with him. Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that *one* also. So he called its name Sitnah. And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So he called its name Rehoboth, because he said, "For now the LOORD has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land." Then he went up from there to Beersheba. And the LOORD appeared to him the same night and said, "I *am* the God of your father Abraham; do not fear, for I *am* with you. I will bless you and multiply your descendants for My servant Abraham's sake."

Our patriarch, Jacob, also found himself perpetually on the move and on the dodge after he and his mother deceived his brother, Esau—getting the birthright and other blessings

**Genesis 27:41-43** Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father blessed him, and Esau said in his heart, "The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then I will kill my brother Jacob." And the words of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah. So she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said to him, "Surely your brother Esau comforts himself concerning you *by intending* to kill you. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice: arise, flee to my brother Laban in Haran.

Pick up the thread in Genesis 28:10-14.

**Genesis 28:10-14** Now Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran. So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep. Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And behold, the LOORD stood above it and said: "I *am* the LOORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

We all know how Jacob's son, Joseph, was sold into slavery into Egypt. Through his

obedience and the continual optimism that God was leading him, he saved his physical family from starvation. God's servant, Moses, compresses 400 years of slavery and joyous release from bondage as he gives final instructions to those who will finally enter the physical promised land, in Deuteronomy 26:5-10.

**Deuteronomy 26:5-10** And you shall answer and say before the LOORD your God: 'My father was a Syrian [an Aramian] about to perish, and he went down to Egypt and dwelt there, few in number; and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous. But the Egyptians mistreated us, afflicted us, and laid hard bondage on us. Then we cried out to the LOORD God of our fathers, and the LOORD heard our voice and looked on our affliction and our labor and our oppression. So the LOORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, with great terror and with signs and wonders. He has brought us to this place and has given us this land, "a land flowing with milk and honey"; and now, behold, I have brought the first fruits of the land which you, O LOORD, have given me.' Then you shall set it before the LOORD your God, and worship before the LOORD your God.

We learn that only those with the wanderlust and vision of what God was about to give them would actually go into this land and possess it.

**Deuteronomy 1:20-27** And I said to you, 'You have come to the mountains of the Amorites, which the LOORD our God is giving us. Look, the LOORD your God has set the land before you; go up *and* possess *it*, as the LOORD God of your fathers has spoken to you; do not fear or be discouraged.' "And every one of you came near to me and said, 'Let us send men before us, and let them search out the land for us, and bring back word to us of the way by which we should go up, and of the cities into which we shall come.' "The plan pleased me well; so I took twelve of your men, one man from *each* tribe. And they departed and went up into the mountains, and came to the Valley of Eshcol, and spied it out. They also took *some* of the fruit of the land in their hands and brought *it* down to us; and they brought back word to us, saying, '*It is* a good land which the LOORD our God is giving us.' "Nevertheless you would not go up, but rebelled against the command of the LOORD your God; and you complained in your tents, and said, 'Because the LOORD hates us, He has brought us out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us.

**Deuteronomy 1:34-36** "And the LOORD heard the sound of your words, and

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was angry, and took an oath, saying, 'Surely not one of these men of this evil generation shall see that good land of which I swore to give to your fathers, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him and his children I am giving the land on which he walked, because he wholly followed the LOORD.'

Caleb and Joshua were the only two spies or scouts who retained the spiritual wanderlust to continue the pilgrimage. Wanderlust is a German word which translates into loving to travel—looking forward to the journey—something we experience when we have Feast Fever.

My great grandfather, Julius Maas, immigrated to this country in the 1890s from Pomerania or Prussia, a territory now under Polish domination.

My maternal grandfather, Johannes Pillegard (which he changed to John Hansen when he immigrated to America), I credit for having inspired in me a life-long wanderlust, a love of traveling. Because he was considered lowborn in the old country, Juutland Denmark, he immigrated to the United States as an indentured servant, working for a farmer in Iowa for a year, before moving to Minnesota.

My great grandfather, Johannes Hartmann, grandma's dad, homesteaded in Lemon, South Dakota, living out on the prairie in a sod hut.

Grandpa Hansen, through backbreaking hard work, became a successful farmer in Redwood County, Minnesota, making enough money to allow him to go on many trips throughout North America. Before he died, he had been to virtually every state in the United States (lower 48, Alaska, Hawaii), virtually every province in Canada, down into Mexico, and throughout Europe. I enjoyed staying at Grandpa's farm during the summer months as I was growing up. I remember spending hours looking at View-Master reels that he purchased on his travels. It was from those early memories that I learned to appreciate the wonders of Bryce Canyon, Grand Canyon, Yellowstone National Park, Lake Louise, Crater Lake, the Painted Desert, the Badlands of South Dakota, Kings Canyon, Sequoia National Park, etc. Our family would take yearly trips from southern Minnesota to the Black Hills of South Dakota.

Combined with my steady diet of Gene Autry's *Melody Ranch* Radio Programs, grandpa's View-Master films, and my own dad's love for camping, I developed an intense wanderlust—a desire to keep on moving west. I have had the chance to live in the West, both on the edge of the Black Hills of South Dakota, and in California. Julie

and I, as well as our sons Michael, Eric, and Aaron, had the chance to live a little under a year in Newhall, right between the William S. Hart Ranch and the former site of Gene Autry's Melody Ranch. When Aaron was a baby, I used to take him on my shoulder, singing him cowboy songs, "Back in the Saddle Again," "Tumbling Tumbleweeds," "Take me Back to my Boots and Saddles," and "Sing me the Song of the Saddle" I have never stopped being a cowboy at heart—even though I live in East Texas.

Gilbert Boyer once sent a letter describing himself as the cowboy from Normandy. As American Poet Archibald MacLeish has stated, "West is a country in the mind and so eternal."

My Dad and my late mother used to be what many would call snow-birds or winter Texans, spending their summers on our farm in southern Minnesota and wintering down in the Rio Grande Valley in Pharr, near McAllen. My late mother was an artistically talented lady, gifted at landscape painting. In our bedroom I have a painting of Lake Emily (my boyhood home) on the east wall and the Garden of the Gods in Colorado Springs, near the Air Force academy, where my brother Ed attended and my nephew, Andy, later served as an instructor, teaching parachuting skills.

Mom also composed lyrics to many songs, some of them religious and some for the jam sessions they performed in the Rio Grande Valley—mom on the autoharp and dad on the violin. Their CB handles were Fiddler and Harpo. One of my favorite songs that Mom and Dad performed was called *Minnesota Cowboy*. I would like to share with you some of the lyrics:

*He's a Minnesota Cowboy and I'm a Cowboy's Wife*

*We ride the range together and are sweethearts all through life*

*We like Rocky Mountain music with Blue Grass Melodies,*

*And Country Western flavor to Northern melodies.*

*Chorus*

*Yodel Letty Hoo, Yodel Letty Hay*

*He's a Minnesota Cowboy and I'm a Cowboy's Wife.*

*We go riding through the country with horsepower under the hood*



*In all kinds of weather both the bad and the good*

*We ride our leather bucket seats until we are saddle sore*

*Then pause at a Way Side rest stop till we're ready to ride some more.*

*Chorus*

*We go camping in the North Woods where the pine trees find their place*

*In the Land of the Sky Blue Waters amid ten thousand lakes.*

*We stake our claim beneath their boughs and listen to their whisper songs*

*And rope and tie some memories that we might take along.*

*Chorus*

*We ride our R.V. Horses from the east coast to the west*

*Across the State of Texas and many of the rest.*

*When it's springtime in the Rockies we mount our trusty Van*

*Come back to Minnesota, the best state in the whole land.*

Now all this nonsense about Minnesota being the Holy Land became pounded out of both dad and me when we became naturalized Texans. After my mother's death in 1996, my Dad remarried a woman from San Antonio. Her name is Olive, whom I call "madrastra." These newlyweds also travel extensively, making two or three trips up to Minnesota every year, throughout the Hill country of Texas, Branson, Missouri, and have even made an extensive trip criss-crossing Germany.

This westering spirit has seemed to permeate the entire psyche of the sons of Jacob—especially his grandchildren Ephraim and Manasseh. Let us turn over to Genesis 49:22 for Jacob's blessing on his son:

**Genesis 49:22, 26** Joseph is a fruitful bough, A fruitful bough by a well; His branches run over the wall.

**Genesis 49:26** The blessings of your father Have excelled the blessings of my ancestors, Up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills. They shall be on the head of Joseph, And on the crown of the head of him who was separate from his brothers.

Now look at the final blessing of Moses on the Children of Israel.

**Deuteronomy 33:13-17** And of Joseph he said: "Blessed of the LOORD *is* his land, with the precious things of heaven, with the dew, and the deep lying beneath, with the precious fruits of the sun, with the precious produce of the months, With the best things of the ancient mountains, With the precious things of the everlasting hills, With the precious things of the earth and its fullness, And the favor of Him who dwelt in the bush. Let *the blessing* come 'on the head of Joseph, And on the crown of the head of him *who was* separate from his brothers.' His glory *is like* a firstborn bull, And his horns *like* the horns of the wild ox; Together with them He shall push the peoples To the ends of the earth; They *are* the ten thousands of Ephraim, And they *are* the thousands of Manasseh."

Melvin Rhodes, in the September/ October "Good News Magazine," used the metaphor of a citadel and caravan: "In explaining Europe to Americans, and America to Europeans, I have sometimes used the analogy of a citadel and a caravan. Europe is the citadel—America, the caravan."

I have heard other variations on this idea, such as "fortress Europe" and "covered wagon America." This wagon train or teamster image also applies to the offspring of Ephraim as much as Manasseh. The sun never sets on the British Empire. Canada, Australia, and South Africa have all been populated by the wanderlust of the children of Ephraim, while America has primarily absorbed the offspring of Manasseh.

Back in 1982, my late son Michael and my son Eric piled into our Ford camper van and commenced on a journey, beginning in Los Angeles and ending in Augusta, Maine. We drove first to Las Vegas, camping in the parking lot of Circus Circus casino. The next day we took off for Utah, driving thru Zion Canyon and camping at Bryce Canyon. Our next stop was Coalville, Utah, before going on to Douglas, Wyoming, and then up to the Stiver Ranch in South Dakota.

We then drove to my Dad's farm in southern Minnesota, spending three days there,

after which we piled into Dad's motor home and headed down to my brother's farm in Iowa. We drove around the south side of Chicago up into Indiana, stopping at a KOA in Michigan City. The next day, we drove up to Greenville, Michigan, staying overnight at my Uncle Lloyd's. We continued up to Sault Ste. Marie, Port Huron and London, Ontario, camping along Lake Ontario.

We continued down into Buffalo, saw Niagara Falls, continuing eastward thru New York up the Mohawk Valley, camping near Rome and Verona. The next day, we drove up thru Albany and Schenectady, and then thru the scenic and verdant mountains of Vermont. We arrived in Manchester, New Hampshire, where we spent a couple days with my aunt and uncle, making some short visits to Boston and Salem, Massachusetts. The final leg of the trip took us up to Augusta, Maine.

Walt Whitman said in the preface of *Leaves of Grass* that the immense size of America inspires a generosity, a trait found abundantly in the peoples of Ephraim and Manasseh. The total impact of that trip left me with an incredible feeling of awe and wonder, realizing that God must have really loved father Abraham to grant us—his physical offspring—these incredible blessings.

The wandering motif is extremely prevalent in the scriptures dealing with our Elder Brother Jesus Christ.

**Matthew 8:19-21** Then a certain scribe came and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay *His* head."

**Matthew 10:23** When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

Interestingly, this set of beliefs that binds all of the splits of the greater church of God together, has been referred to as "The Way" in Acts 9:2; 19:9; 29:23; 24:14; 25:22.

It is no state secret that the Worldwide Church of God split into hundreds and thousands of splinters in the early '90s. It is a pleasure to find people in various splits still keeping the Sabbath and the Holy Days. One of the code words I have heard various people use is "the way." Robin Webber, one of my former pastors, once gave an inspiring sermon using the analogy of the early pioneers; when he heard I was in another group but

keeping similar beliefs, he said, "I am so glad you are still in The Way."

It is almost like our covered wagon team or caravan has been split up and we are compelled to ask passing caravans for news of loved ones and family in wagons further back or ahead on the trail. Christ warns that in these last times some of us will be martyred and some of us will be taken to a place of safety.

**Revelation 12:14** But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.

Recently, I had an insight about the Place of Safety when some evacuees from Metairie, Louisiana, took refuge at my ranch (I call it my ranch, but it is actually Tyler State Park.) They had literally lost everything they owned except their vehicles, their pets, and a few valuable papers before they had to flee the rising waters of Lake Ponchartrain.

They were grateful for a screened shelter with electricity, a water spigot nearby and a public restroom up the hill. Wesley Cox, his son and his family, and his two daughters and sons-in-law all stuck together—surviving on the charity of East Texans who brought provisions, help and encouragement. Seeing this family at peace in the middle of extreme adversity renewed my hope in the pilgrimage we have left to go.

The Feast of Tabernacles depicts temporariness. In the annual Jewish cyclical tradition of Torah readings, the rather pessimistic treatise, Ecclesiastes, which chronicles Solomon's quest for pleasure and the disillusioning consequences, is specifically reserved for the Feast of Tabernacles. John Ritenbaugh, in a 1993 sermon, suggested that Ecclesiastes illustrates the disillusionment that love for worldly pleasures will inevitably bring. There are at least 14 specific reminders that we will die. This past year I have attended funerals for Ron McCollum and John Ogwyn in the Big Sandy area. I have served as a pallbearer for Sylvia Bjoraker and Dorothy Williams. One of the undertakers at Croley Funeral Home said, "You are becoming a regular around here." Of course, we have lost Peggy Decker, Bobbi Bulharowski, and lots of others. In Psalm 90, Moses puts our physical lives into perspective.

**Psalm 90:3-4** You turn men back to dust, saying, "Return to dust, O sons of men." For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night.

**Psalm 90:10** The length of our days is seventy years— or eighty, if we have

the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass,  
and we fly away.

It seems that my sense of time has changed over the years: days have become like hours; weeks have become like days; months have become like weeks; and years have become like months. This summer my brother Paul and I took a trip down memory lane, beginning at my birthplace in St Paul, Minnesota, down to Le Sueur, Minnesota, where I lived and went to school, to the location of the farm which was my home until I was 21.

The house that had been built with native oak timbers and square nails, remodeled by my parents in 1956, had now been demolished for a housing development and a golf course. We drove thru Ottawa, Minnesota, where I noticed that a house that I had visited many times, owned by old church acquaintances from 36 years ago, had been converted to a community center. I visited my cousin, who lives on my grandfather's farm. After the family reunion attended by aging Maases, my brother and I visited my mother's grave in the same cemetery as my grandparents and my great grandparents.

I felt as though my life was passing before me—almost like someone ready to expire. Since my baptism in 1966, I have moved 19 times. Julie and I have moved 8 times since our marriage in 1986.

Herbert W. Armstrong, at the graduation exercise in 1981, said there is nothing more certain than death. He lamented that most of his acquaintances from 50 years ago were gone. He told the seniors that we do not really have life. We have a physio-chemical existence. Everything physical (our lives, our possessions, our accomplishments, our family circle, our friends, even our closest companions, our mates) is temporary.

The American author William Saroyan, as he approached the reality of his own death, remarked, "I know that all men would have to die, but I thought in my case there would be an exception—what now?" The Yiddish Proverb tells us: "*Yeder Mentsch vaist er vet shtarben, ober kainer vil es nisht gloiben.*" That is, "*Every person knows he will die, but no one wants to really believe it.*"

Like Tevia, the milkman, we are all wanderers, moving from an unpleasant past to what we hope will be a brighter future. Eventually we will understand the Feast of Tabernacles as a mere watch in the night—a temporary camp. The Millennium will constitute a spiritual Ellis Island—a processing of refugees, preparing them for immortality in God's kingdom. Like Caleb and Joshua, we have to inspire them with wanderlust, for the galaxies beyond our own, what Herbert Armstrong used to call

unfinished furniture.

From the official archives of the LDS church, I learned that on April 15, 1846, at or near his campsite, William Clayton reportedly penned the words to an old English folk tune, "All is Well," after receiving word that his wife, Diana, still in Nauvoo, had given birth to a healthy baby boy. Since renamed "Come, Come, Ye Saints," the stirring hymn—an anthem of faith, full of praise amidst privation—has come to signify the Mormon migration to the West perhaps more than any other piece of writing.

I would like to conclude this sermon with the lyrics to this stirring hymn which encapsulates the whole pilgrim experience.

### **William Clayton**

#### *"Come, Come, Ye Saints"*

Come, come, ye Saints, no toil nor labor fear;  
But with joy wend your way.  
Though hard to you this journey may appear,  
Grace shall be as your day.  
'Tis better far for us to strive  
Our useless cares from us to drive;  
Do this, and joy your hearts will swell—  
All is well! All is well!

Why should we mourn or think our lot is hard?  
'Tis not so; all is right.  
Why should we think to earn a great reward  
If we now shun the fight?  
Gird up your loins; fresh courage take.  
Our God will never us forsake;  
And soon we'll have this tale to tell—  
All is well! All is well!

We'll find the place which God for us prepared,  
Far away in the West,  
Where none shall come to hurt or make afraid;  
There the Saints will be blessed.  
We'll make the air with music ring,  
Shout praises to our God and King;

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Above the rest these words we'll tell—  
All is well! All is well!

And should we die before our journey's through,  
Happy day! All is well!  
We then are free from toil and sorrow, too;  
With the just we shall dwell!  
But if our lives are spared again  
To see the Saints their rest obtain,  
Oh, how we'll make this chorus swell—  
All is well! All is well!

["Come, Come, Ye Saints," *Hymn*, no. 30]