

you want. You can see how the gospel works in the lives of people who were converted, from Adam's time down to our own time.

6. Alma 32:28.
7. Alma 34:26.
8. See Moroni 7:47–48.
9. See 1 Nephi 11:21–23.
10. Alma 34:28.
11. See Mark 10:45. The Lord told Peter that when he was converted, he should strengthen his brethren (see Luke 22:32).
12. 3 Nephi 9:20.
13. Along with the scriptures, the pamphlet *For the Strength of Youth* (2001) can guide you.
14. Once when King David prepared to offer a sacrifice to the Lord, a loyal subject said he would give the king the place, the animals, and the firewood to make the sacrifice. But David declined, saying, "I

will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing" (2 Samuel 24:24).

15. See Moroni 10:32–33.
16. See Ephesians 6:13–17.
17. 2 Nephi 32:3.
18. As related by Sister Nicole Christoffer-son Miller.
19. See Matthew 6:13.
20. See Hebrews 8:10; 10:16.
21. Joel 2:13. "Draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you; seek me diligently and ye shall find me; ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (D&C 88:63).

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The choir and congregation sang  
"Now Let Us Rejoice."

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## Sister Gayle M. Clegg

### The finished story

Some time ago I found a large white envelope in my mailbox. Inside was a story written by a boy I had taught years before when he was in sixth grade. I remembered the student and the assignment his class had worked on for months. I also remembered that he loved to write and would sit and think and think. Sometimes only a word or two found their way to the page. At times he worked during recess, but when the due date arrived, his story still had a chapter to go. I told him just to turn it in as it was, but Jimmy had a different vision and wanted to turn in a finished story. The last day of class he asked if he could finish during the summer break. Again I told him just to turn it in. He pleaded for more time, and finally I sent him on his way with a stack of wrinkled and smudged papers, complimenting him on his determination and assuring him of my confidence in his ability to complete a great story.

I thought about him that summer, but the assignment left my mind until years later when I found his completed project in the mailbox. I was amazed and wondered what made Jimmy finish his story. What kind of vision, determination, and effort had been required in this task? Why do any of us finish a hard task, especially if no one demands its completion?

### A pioneer who kept the faith

My husband's great-grandfather Henry Clegg Jr. was a finisher. He joined the Church with his family when the first LDS missionaries went to Preston, England. Henry had a view of his destination in his mind as he and his wife, Hannah, and their two young boys immigrated to Utah. Henry left his older parents, who were too feeble to make such a long and arduous journey, knowing he would never see them again.

While crossing the plains, Hannah contracted cholera and died. She was laid

to rest in an unmarked grave. The company then moved on, and at 6:00 in the evening, Henry's youngest son also died. Henry retraced his steps to Hannah's grave, placed his young son in his wife's arms, and reburied the two of them together. Henry then had to return to the wagon train, now five miles away. Suffering from cholera himself, Henry described his condition as being at death's door while realizing he still had 1,000 miles to walk. Amazingly he continued forward, putting one foot in front of the other. He stopped writing in his journal for several weeks after losing his dear Hannah and little son. I was struck with the words he used when he did start writing again: "Still moving."

When he finally reached the gathering place of the Saints, he began a new family. He kept the faith. He continued his story. Most remarkably, his heartache over the burial of his sweetheart and son gave birth to our family's legacy of moving forward, of finishing.

### **To stay faithful is its own reward**

I have often wondered as I have heard pioneer stories like the one of Henry Clegg, "Could I ever do that?" Sometimes I fear this question, knowing our pioneer legacy lives on today. I recently visited West Africa and witnessed everyday pioneers walking forward, joining a new church, leaving behind centuries of traditions, even leaving behind family and friends, as did Henry. My admiration and love for them is as great as for my own forebears.

Do the challenges of others appear more difficult than our own? We often look at someone with tremendous responsibilities and think, "I could never do that." Yet others might look at us and feel exactly the same way. It is not the magnitude of the responsibility but rather how it feels to be the one in the middle of the unfinished task. For a young mother with many children at home, caring for them through

the day and then through the night could feel like 1,000 miles yet to walk. Giving a lesson in Relief Society to women who are older or younger, more experienced or more educated could feel difficult, especially when the topic is one you are struggling to understand and live yourself. Teaching a class of 10 active six-year-olds can be daunting, especially when your own six-year-old is in the class and you haven't quite figured out how to teach him one-on-one.

What do we learn from young Jimmy, from early pioneers, and from modern pioneers around the world that will help us in our specific challenges? Jimmy spent years writing on his own for no deadline, Henry Clegg marched on alone and without heart even to write in a journal, and African Saints lived worthy of a temple they could not have imagined would one day rise in their own nation. To keep going, to stay faithful, and to finish had to be its own reward.

### **Encouragement on the journey**

Years ago one of our daughters asked me to come outside and play tetherball with her. She told me to sit down and watch as she hit over and over again a ball on a rope that wound itself around a pole. After watching several windings, I asked what my part was in the game, and she said, "Oh, Mom, you say, 'Good job, good job,' every time the ball goes around the pole."

"Good job!" helps the journey seem possible. It might sound like a phone call from a mother of one of the six-year-olds in that Primary class, calling to let the teacher know that her son carefully helped his little sister into the car seat without being asked, acknowledging the Primary teacher's lesson as the impetus for this new behavior. It might look like a husband getting the children off to nursery and Primary as his wife sets up her lesson for Young Women. It might be as simple as a

smile, a hug, or a long walk to sort things out with a friend, a husband, or a child.

We each must find and finish our own stories, but how much sweeter the telling when encouragement is called out, when arriving at our destination is valued and celebrated, however long ago the journey commenced.

### **Follow the Savior every day**

The greatest mentor and advocate we have said: “I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up” (D&C 84:88). Can any of us afford to leave this piece out of our individual journey?

Henry Clegg was still moving forward to live among the faithful Saints, to take his place, to raise a righteous family, to serve his neighbor. He had that picture in his mind even when his heart was breaking. I heard a Primary child from Ghana answer the question “What does it mean to choose the right every day?” with, “It means to follow the Lord and Savior every day and do your best even when it is hard.” This modern pioneer boy knew President Hinckley’s admonition. He knew about keeping commandments every day. He understood that his own story would unfold simply by putting one foot in front of the other, one day at a time.

### **A Primary training video in Spanish**

Last fall I found myself with a wonderful but challenging opportunity to develop and teach Primary training through a video made entirely in Spanish. At one time in my life I was a Spanish speaker, but recently I had been speaking Portuguese and knew what it would take to relearn Spanish. I did all the things each of you do to complete a task that feels extremely difficult. I found help from ca-

pable and dedicated Hispanic sisters. Together we studied, prayed, fasted, and worked long hours. The day arrived to go and do the thing the Lord had asked, and we not only were fearful but felt our work was inadequate. We had worked up to the moment of delivery, and nothing more could be done. I wanted to start over.

Each of our husbands gave us priesthood blessings, and peace and calm started to come. Like angels, help came in the form of a sweet husband who set the alarm on his watch so he could pray for me every half hour during the recording, a cameraman whose eyes radiated “Good job,” and Primary leaders who had confidence in the workings of the Spirit and were able to communicate that with power. We ended up with a finished film that was helpful for our Spanish-speaking leaders. All who participated in it were partly surprised and entirely grateful for its success. We walked as far as we could go, and when we thought we might abandon our carts and drop by the wayside, angels somehow pushed from behind.

### **Jesus wants us to finish our stories well**

What did we learn from this task? The same lesson Henry Clegg Jr. and Jimmy learned and the same thing all faithful modern-day pioneers are learning. With the Lord, nothing is impossible (see Luke 1:37), but we each have to finish our own stories. He sends His Spirit, we call out encouragement to each other, but we have to keep writing, keep walking, keep serving and accepting new challenges to the end of our own stories. “Still walking” is the fundamental requirement in the journey of life. He wants us to finish well. He wants us to come back to Him. I pray that each of our stories will end in the presence of our Heavenly Father and His Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, the authors and finishers of our faith. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.