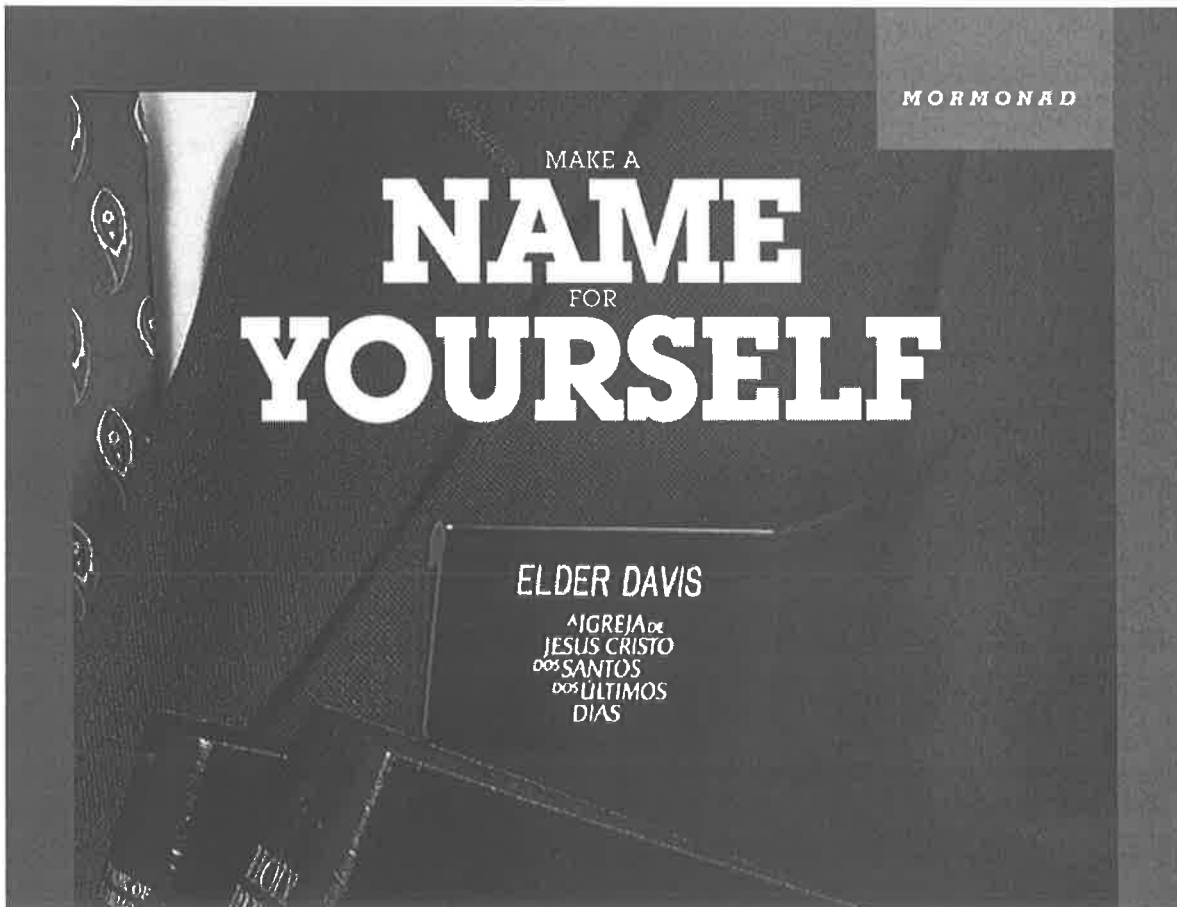


I Hope They Don't Ask Me About My Mission

by L Thomas | Mar 22, 2014 | Featured, LDS Missions | 18 comments



“Who here thought that their mission was the most important Spiritual experience in their lives?” the Elder’s Quorum instructor raised his hand expectantly while giving a lesson on missionary work. Most everyone raised their hand. I looked around, but the only others with their hands down were the new converts. “Of course you can develop a testimony without going on a mission,” he continued, “but we know that those two years cause your testimony to grow faster than in any other situation. I’ll always be grateful for my mission.” These lessons are not uncommon. I’ve been in one a half dozen times. “Return Missionaries” is a fraternity. Don’t serve a mission and you will never belong to it.

"Where did you go on your mission?" innocently asked the wife of the Elder's Quorum President while we ate at the Pot Luck after church. This is the male equivalent of, "When is your baby due?" There isn't a way to spare either of us any embarrassment. "I'm not pregnant, just fat." Or in this case, "I didn't go on a mission; I'm just a wicked and lazy person." She might have saved herself a little if she had asked first if I had actually gone on a mission, but it wouldn't have helped much. The assumption is that anyone who is still bothering to go to church at this point already went on a mission. It is a commandment after all.

"The question is asked: Should every young man fill a mission? And the answer of the Church is yes, and the answer of the Lord is yes. Enlarging this answer we say: Certainly every male member of the Church should fill a mission, like he should pay his tithing, like he should attend his meetings, like he should keep his life clean and free from the ugliness of the world and plan a celestial marriage in the temple of the Lord" (Spencer W. Kimball, "Planning for a Full and Abundant Life", Ensign, May 1974, 86).

I'm sorry to disappoint you, President Kimball. I received every level of Priesthood at the age I should. At 12 I became a Deacon, at 14 a Teacher, at 16 a Priest, and at 18 an Elder. I got married in the temple. But yes, I was missing a step in there. And I don't mean attending BYU. I was way too cool to follow my Mormon friends to "the Lord's University."

Now I'll never be an "RM." I'll never have stories about throwing up while eating Sister Manzanita's terrible lasagna. I'll never tell about the time we decided to knock on "just one more door" before finding the golden investigator. I'll never have the joy of baptizing someone into the Church, or the feeling of failure from never finding a convert. I don't have any horror stories about terrible companions. I can repeat these stories, but they'll never be mine.

42



You may also like:

Parallels and
Mormon Scripture

For Insights on the
Future of Women's
Ordination

Announcement

to me for therapy

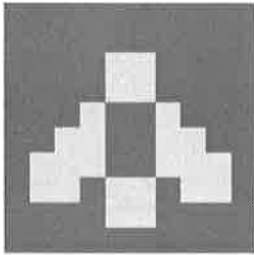
Mormon Women
Have Their Say - A
Book Review

Guilt by
Association:
Apostasy in the
Temple
Recommend
Interview

Approaching A
Theology of
Activism

Heavenly Mother:
Divine Body and
Priesthood

Share This Post! Because Sharing Really is Caring!

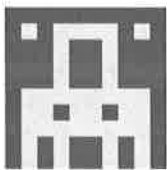


L Thomas

Dr. Thomas is a metallurgist living in Pittsburgh with his wife and two children.

All posts by L Thomas

18 Comments



jenna on March 22, 2014 at 11:53 am

Another equivalent would be to ask any couple, "How many children do you have?" I'm so grateful that although I am very guilty of asking probably all three of these stupid questions way too often, that I'm a little wiser now. The measuring sticks that we use in Mormon culture can be unfair and hurtful! I'm also grateful to know that as wrong as it is to judge people for whether or not they've completed (or taken) the aforementioned prescribed life "steps," it is just as wrong for us to judge those who ask those questions out of ignorance of character. I hope people were able to forgive me for my ignorance when I was among the guilty...