

A HEAVENLY EXPERIENCE

Do You Have My Name?

(As the audience enters the room, they are handed slips of paper with names on them. It is important that the names listed at the end of this program are handed out. Other names can be made up so that everyone in the audience is given a name - like at the temple.)

Narrator: "We thank you for coming to our Heavenly Experience tonight. How great shall be your joy for joining us here tonight! Each of you may take part in the program. Look at the paper you have been given. There you will find the name of a person and the year of their birth. Many people have accepted the gospel in the spirit World and are waiting for earthly ordinances to be performed, so that they too may participate in the blessing of the Gospel. The first ordinance that must be performed is baptism, then endowment work, and finally families are reunited through sealings."

Narrator: "Let's sit back now and imagine that we have come to participate in the ordinance work of baptisms, endowments, and sealings. You have been given names. Just names? names without faces or stories? but these names represent people who have lived here on the earth; real people who are living now in the Spirit World, learning and hoping-hoping that someone has come to do work in their behalf tonight. Wouldn't it be wonderful to hear their stories and know them as real people instead of just names?"

(Instructions: People dressed in white file up the aisles, ad-libbing about their presence and their hope to be baptized, endowed, or sealed. They gather in the choir seats behind the podium.)

Narrator: "These people will tell their stories and state their names. If you have their name, will you please make yourself known."

(Alexander Hill shakes hands with the Narrator, thanks him, and comes to the podium.)

Alexander Hill: "May I introduce myself to this company? My name is Alexander Hill. I was born at Skipness, Argyshire, Scotland on August 1, 1779. When I was ten years old, I was apprenticed as a sailor boy, and later rose to the dignity of first mate. I fought in several important battles for the British Navy, including the Battle of the Nile, led by Lord Admiral Nelson in 1798, where I received a grape shot just above the knee. The government awarded me a land grant of 100 acres in Canada for my military service, so I moved my wife Elizabeth and our seven children to Bathurst District, Ontario, Canada in 1821. Here we joined the John Taylor society and later converted to the Church through the instrumentality of the early missionary, Samuel Lake, and his companion Parley P. Pratt. We removed to Nauvoo in 1842, and then had to flee to Winter Quarters in 1846. There I was severely afflicted with fever and ague for 15 months and entirely lost the use of my right side. Eventually, I was able to go to the Valley of the Great Salt Lake. My lovely Elizabeth and I were sealed there."

(An older gentleman joins him.) "I want to introduce you to my father, Daniel Hill, who died in Scotland. Because of my health, I was never able to have his temple work performed. Does anyone have my father's name, Daniel Hill, born in 1753?"

(No one has his name. Alexander takes his father back to his seat and exits the room. The next name comes up to podium, and so on.)

Janet Lamb Shiell: "My name is Janet Lamb Shiell, and I was born into the world in Scotland in 1818. My husband Andrew and I came to East Wawanosh Township, Huron, Ontario to homestead in this new land in the 1840s. We worked hard to make a new home for ourselves, but never heard the Gospel in this life. Does anyone have my name, Janet Lamb Shiell?"

(Someone has her name. Janet joins the person in the audience who has her name.)

Martha Severance: "My name is Martha Severance. I was born on October 20, 1718 and married Asahel Burt in 1737. We were blessed with four sons and one daughter. On April 15, 1747 my husband and friend were driving cattle home from the field, when Indians fired upon them, and they were both killed." "I tried very hard to raise our children by myself, but it was so difficult. In 1754 my only daughter passed away, and two years later one of my sons joined her. My last three sons lived to be 95, 83, and 91. They had a total of 23 children and my posterity now numbers over one hundred thousand. Please, does anyone have my name, Martha Severance?"

(Someone does. Martha Severance joins them in the audience.)

Lydia Sawyer: "My name is Lydia, and I am the wife of Caleb Sawyer. I was born just recently, around 1720, but no one seems to be able to find my records to know what my parents' names were. They do know I had two children. I realize extensive research had been done, but as far as I know, no one had found the missing information. Please, has anyone found evidence of my maiden name so my work can be done, along with my parents? My name is Lydia Sawyer does anyone have my name?"

(No one had her name; she starts to walk away but comes back to the podium.)

"I have been hoping for so long that someone would find me, you can't imagine how many spirits are waiting to have their work performed. I've seen the happy faces of those whose names have finally been called after hundreds of years of waiting. I've also seen countless faces of those who have left the temple sad and disappointed because their names have yet to be called. We are waiting, please find us and submit our names so that our work might be done."

(The Narrator escorts her back to her seat.)

Susannah Brown: "My birthday is March 23, 1673. Belbroughton, England was my home, and they call me Susannah Brown. I married Arthur Waldron. Do you have my name?"

(Someone has her name. She joins the person with her name.)

Helge Hanson: "I died on a fishing voyage in 1842. My name is Helge Hansen, and I am from Kvinnherad, Norway. I have witnessed the trials of my daughter, Marta Karena Helgesdatter, who joined the Church when she was 19 years old, on January 29, 1861. She received much persecution for her membership and finally left Norway for America to be with the Saints. I wish to add my faith to hers and to be baptized, endowed, and then sealed to my faithful daughter. Does anyone here have my name? It's Helge Hansen; please help me and all the others who are anxiously waiting."

(No one has her name. The Narrator escorts her back to her seat.)

Richard Hill: "My grandparents lived at Tareytown, Maryland, during the Revolutionary War. In fact, my Grandfather's well was sometimes used by General George Washington and his horsemen. My parents loved him so much, we gave our son that name ? George Washington Hill. My name is Richard Hill, and I was born November 27, 17903 in Maratta, Ohio. There I grew up and married Sarah Strait, and we had four sons. We had to move many times, and I was gone a great deal seeking work as a brick mason. We were often ill from the ague and fever, and wanted to find a healthier place to live. Eventually we joined my son and his young wife in southern Missouri."

"While there, our son George became acquainted with a young Mormon girl, Cynthia Utley Stewart, and I tried all I could to keep him from marrying her; everything I'd ever heard about Mormons was low and bad. But George became convinced the Mormons' doctrine was true, so they got married, and he was pretty convincing when he talked about his church. He got baptized and followed the Mormons all the way to Salt Lake, where he arrived in September 1847. I wrote him out there, to learn more about his church; it had a strong effect in his life, and maybe it could help me. He came back to teach and baptize me. I lived to see him again, but the fever took hold of me, and I died with a testimony, but before the privilege of baptism. Somehow, each of my descendants has forgotten my three boys ? my work was done, but what about my son William James Hill? And what about John Strait Hill? And my son Return Richard Hill? We want all our sons sealed to us. Does anyone have these names?"

(Someone has their names. William, John and Return join those who have their names. Richard Hill escorts them to their seats in the audience and exits the room.)

John Stewart: "I was born and raised in the south. My name is John Stewart, and I came into the world June 11th, 1844 in Fayette, Alabama. I grew up in a time of great turmoil, and to defend our accustomed way of life, I joined the Confederate Army as a private in 1861. I served in the 26th Alabama Regiment Infantry, Company B. I then continued in several other infantries until September 20, 1863, when I was wounded and lost my right leg at Battle Chickamaunga. I was furloughed from the hospital and came home, but never fully recovered and died later that year."

"Sometimes I wonder if anyone will do my temple work, considering I died for this cause. Maybe they think a southern gentleman is undeserving. I come here often hoping to find somebody with my name, ready to do the work for me. Maybe someone here has it today. It's John Stewart. Does anyone have the name of John Stewart? I do hope so ... it seems I've waited so long."

(No one has his name. The Narrator escorts him back to his seat on the stand.)

Song: The Hearts of the Fathers are Turning

Belle Harriet Topper: "My name is Belle Harriet Topper. I was born on January 4th, 1893 in Warren, Pennsylvania. My father was a coal miner and later worked in the oil fields, so he was gone a lot. But, I had a very happy childhood and many good memories. There were always lots of children around our neighborhood, and we loved to play. One of my jobs was to take a tin bucket and go daily after milk for our family. In the evening folks sat on their front porches. We would often have a molasses taffy pull. Two doors down lived the Smith family. The Grace Church was directly across from their home, and I went there for league meetings and church services. They always knew if I was with a date or not. They had a son George. He did not attend church there, but gradually I would find him waiting at the church door to meet me and walk me home. We later fell in love and married. I have had a wonderful life filled with love and joy. I would like it to continue forever. Does anyone have my name? My name is Belle Harriet Topper."

(Someone does. Belle Topper joyfully goes to the audience and sits by the person with her name.)

Samuel Gorton: "I left a comfortable life in England, due to the frustrating religious hypocrisy I had encountered. My name is Samuel Gorton, born in 1593 in Manchester, England. I was a clothier and a professor of the mysteries of Christ. My wife, Mary Maplet, and I sailed to America, to Plymouth, Massachusetts in 1636, just 13 years after the pilgrims first landed there. But I disagreed with many of the practices of the Puritans, one of which was their method of rather serious religious discipline. It seems I was constantly arguing with the authorities, and finally I was banished from Plymouth in December of 1638, because I tried to defend my maid, who had been reprimanded for smiling in church.

We moved to Rhode Island, where I later established the town of Warwick. I was friendly with the Narragansett Indians until the son of Chief Massasoit, whom we called King Phillip, warred against us. We eventually subdued these Indians in the Great Swamp Fight in South Kingston, Rhode Island. Now that the true Church of Jesus Christ is on the earth, I am anxious to receive the blessings of the Gospel. Does anyone here have my name, the name of Samuel Gorton?"

(Someone has his name.)

Johanna Olofsson: "I was born May 15, 1798 in Elfsborg, Goteborg, Sweden, where I grew up and married Johannes Magnusson. We had a lovely family, and our children attended the village schools. We would bake twice a week and wash all our clothes twice a year. We went to the sea with the wash, washed all day and then danced all night. We always looked forward to this. At night, our dresses would be frozen so hard that when we took them off they would stand alone.

"When my son Olaf was 12, he took cholera and died. A few days later I passed this life from the same dreaded disease. Then a week later, my good husband joined me across the veil. We left 3 children orphans. We missed the chance to raise them to adults, but we do want to be sealed as a family. We love each other so much ? we want to be a family forever. Do you have our names?"

(Johannes Magnusson calls out names of family, one by one, beginning with his wife, and then each child: Mother: Johanna Olofsson Born 1798, Son: Olaf Johannsson Born 1824, Daughter: Johanna Maria Johansson Born 1827, Daughter: Olga Johansson Born 1829, Son: Hans Johansson Born 1833)

(Someone has the children's names, and they go sit with them ? all but the youngest daughter, Olga. Father tells her that maybe nobody had his name either, and they can wait together.)

Daughter, Olga: "Papa, you haven't asked if anyone had your name."

Johannes asks: "Does anyone have the name of Johannes Magnusson?"

(Someone has his name. Johannes turns to Olga. He kisses Olga on the cheek and joins the person who has his name.)

(Narrator takes Olga by the hand, escorts her back to her seat and sits next to her.)

END