

Adapted by Nicole Heiney from [Richard H. Winkel, "Web of Friendship," New Era, Aug. 2003, 10](#)

Tonight I'd like to talk to you about a beautiful place my husband and I visited a few years ago. Like tonight we were surrounded by clean air and beautiful trees, but instead of being 40 ft tall these trees were 300 ft tall. (almost twice the height of the Salt Lake Temple.) We were camping in Northern California amongst the Giant Redwoods, the world's tallest trees.

We had planned for a hike and were amazed at the beauty of these stately Giants. When we came to a rise in the trail we could see the trees spreading out like a vast sea, awe-inspiring, glory of God's creation spread out before us.

Several of the trees have names and placards as you travel through the forest. One placard estimated the tree was at least 2,000 years old. I was amazed to think that the very tree before me had been a tiny seedling when Christ walked the earth. What stories that tree could share!

The coastal Redwoods are truly lords of their realm and a most exquisite creation of our Father in Heaven. They reign over the forest because of their overwhelming height and majestic beauty. However, on my trip I learned another interesting fact about these towering Giants. Even though they grow up to heights of 300 feet (92 m) and can weigh more than one million pounds (460 tons), these trees have a very shallow root system.

I've been told that a good rule of thumb for estimating the extent of a tree's roots is to imagine the top of the tree underground. Can you imagine how deep the roots of these Giants would go? (I'm sure there are many physical limitations to this working.) So instead of being like a normal tree, the Redwoods roots go down only 3 to 6 feet (1 to 2 m) and then spread out several hundred feet to the sides (more than 100 m). As these roots extend out, they intertwine with their brother and sister Redwoods and other trees as well. This intertwining of roots creates a webbing effect.

Most engineers would tell you this shallow root system still would be incapable of keeping the Redwoods intact and protected against strong winds and floods. However, the interconnecting root systems are the secret of their strength and can teach us a great lesson.

We are like these magnificent Giants and simply cannot make it alone. We might appear to be as independently strong as the Redwoods, but others need us and we need them. Without being connected and supported by each other we would find it very difficult to survive.

We need to be webbed together as a YW group, just like the Redwoods so "that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless woe," because we will be united together to support one another and "because of the rock upon which we are built, (the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God;) which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall. What a promise!

It is simple actions which will weld us together, a friendly hello, an invitation to join you in some activity, a kind smile, an offer to help with a YW project...all these, simple acts, which remind us that we are important, that others care about us and most importantly the Lord cares about us. As each of us require these reminders of our worth to the Lord, and reap blessings as we serve as instruments in the Lord's hands reminding others of their worth.

I testify that the Young Women's program is an inspired program. It brings us together to love and support one another as we strengthen our testimony of Christ and his gospel. Just as all trees do better when they grow close together in groves, we all do better when we are supported, sustained, and loved by our families and friends. We grow taller, straighter, & stronger in our testimony of Christ.

Before closing I'd like to share some words inspired by a meditation by John Donne:

*No man is an island;
No man stands alone.
Each man's joy is a joy to me;
Each man's grief is my own.
We need one another,*

*So I will defend
Each man as my brother;
Each man as my friend.*

I know we have a kind and wise Heavenly Father and bear testimony of His Son, Jesus Christ, and of His atoning sacrifice, which touches each one of us. I ask the Lord to bless us all that we might feel more connected and caring of one another.

Posted by: swingncole on 10-8-03