



A READER'S THEATER

“MEN AND WOMEN OF FAITH”



“Tell John that I Died With My Face Toward Zion” by Clark Kelley Price

James Steele shades the face of Mary Murray Murdoch

“Men and Women of Faith”

A Readers’ Theater by Cecile Scribner

Presented in Elk Ridge, Utah in Fall 2011 at a Empty-Nesters’ Home Evening

Written for a Stake Relief Society Celebration, but was never presented

Cast of Characters:

Tammy Sayers
Jennifer Sparks
Lucie Stirzaker
Woman (Granddaughter of Drucilla)
Drucilla Sears Howard
Mary Murray Murdoch (Wee Granny)
John Murdoch
Rebecca Swain Williams
Frederick Granger Williams
Joseph Smith
Emma Smith
Brigham Young
Mother Smith
Isaac Swain

Music: Piano
Bagpipe or Harmonica or Accordion
Trumpet
Violin

“To know nothing of our ancestry or from whence we came, to have no reverence for the precious memories of the past, is to ignore the elements and influences that have made us what we are . . .”
(Marshall P. Wilder)

This particular readers’ theater was written to be performed for a large crowd, but in fact was performed with only one rehearsal and in a home for about twenty-five people. This is the kind of versatility a readers’ theater can have.



Wee Granny Murdoch



John Murray Murdoch



John Fitz Alan Howard



Drucilla Sears Howard



Rebecca Swain Williams



Frederick Granger Williams



Emma Hale Smith



Joseph Smith, Jr.

Music - “Amazing Grace” - (bagpipes and/or harmonica or piano) while everyone walks on and forms a “picture” on the stage. Three women are in the front of the “picture”

Three women (Tammy, Jennifer, Lucie) sing: “Amazing Grace” John Newton (1725 – 1807)

*Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.*

*Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come;
'Tis Grace that brought me safe thus far
and Grace will lead me home.*

*The Lord has promised good to me.
His word my hope secures.
He will my shield and portion be,
As long as life endures.*

Tammy: My name is Tammy Sayers. I’ve only been a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for a year now. It hasn’t been easy. My father is a minister in another faith, and he thinks I’ve made a big mistake.

Jennifer: My name is Jennifer Sparks. I’m only forty-two years old and still have several teenagers at home. My husband just recently died from results of a car accident. One of my sons is ready to go on a mission, but another son is looking in the wrong places for acceptance. I need employment – but what about my children at home?

Lucie: My name is Lucie Stirzaker. I’ve always loved the church, but lately my prayers never seem to be answered. My husband makes demands on me that I know are wrong. I want my children to learn the good things in the church, but now I feel that I don’t fit in. Was Joseph Smith really a prophet? I’m not sure anymore. Does God even exist? Does he hear my pleadings?

Tammy: I know that the Lord has promised “good” to me, but I hardly know how to cope sometimes.

Jennifer: I feel so alone and desperate.

Lucie: I’m empty – the testimony I once had is no longer there. I lack the faith to be healed.

Woman coming up from audience: Oh, excuse me sisters. I hope I’m not interrupting, but could you help me hang this piece of artwork. (*They are pretending to hang the picture that is already formed on the stage*) Woops, it’s too far to the left (*as the people on stage all lean to their right, but do not break their expressions, positions, etc.*). Let’s straighten it. There, that’s better. (*as the people on stage all straighten back up*). This painting is called, “Men and Women of Faith.” Do you like it?

Jennifer: Yes, of course. These are beautiful looking people. It must have been easier to have faith back in those days. Oh, I know they had trials, but I just think having Faith must’ve been easier somehow.

Woman: Perhaps you'll let me tell you about them. For example, you may have heard of Wee Granny Murdoch from Scotland. Well, there she is right there. Remember, she was in the Martin Handcart Company. She died before ever arriving in Salt Lake.

Tammy: Yes, Yes, I saw her picture at Martin's Cove last year. She was sitting on the ground about ten miles from Chimney Rock in Nebraska. She was dying, and the caption under the picture said, "*Tell John that I died with my face towards Zion.*" Was John her husband?

Woman: No, John was her son. Wee Granny Murdoch started across the plains when she was seventy-five years old. Just imagine. She just couldn't make it all the way. Well, let me show you another lady. This is my very own grandmother. Her name was Drucilla Sears Howard.

Tammy: And why is she in this picture? Surely your grandmother didn't come over the plains.

Woman: No, she didn't do that, but her grandfather, John Gailey, a preacher with the United Brethren in England heard the Gospel preached from Wilford Woodruff. He traveled to Nauvoo with his sweetheart and they were married the 27th of June 1843, and a year later on their first anniversary, the Prophet Joseph Smith was killed. He and his wife left Nauvoo with the other saints, buried a set a twins on the plains, but eventually made it to Utah.

Lucie: That's amazing for Drucilla...and you. . . to have such a heritage. Surely her life was simple compared to what her grandfather and grandmother had to bear.

Woman: Oh, you can't even imagine what trials and suffering she had. But she was a woman of faith. That's why she's in this picture. I'd love to tell you about her and her husband John Howard. . . And I will, but look, here's someone that I wasn't very familiar with. . .well, not until I read about her. Rebecca Swain Williams. She was the wife of Frederick Granger Williams, who became a counselor to Joseph Smith. But Frederick died before the Saints came west, and Rebecca drove a team all by herself to get to Salt Lake.

Lucie: What would it be like to be married to the counselor to Joseph Smith, or to any man for that matter who honored his priesthood?

Woman: Not only was he Joseph's counselor and close friend, but Joseph and Emma named one of their sons after this man. . .his name was Frederick Granger Williams Smith! Well, look, right there you can see Joseph and Emma in this picture, and just above them a smidgen, you can see Brigham Young and.

Wee Granny: Ah Choo

Woman: Oh, bless you, Wee Granny

Emma Smith: My goodness, Mary, are you going to be okay?

Wee Granny: I think I've been sneezing ever since arriving in Nebraska and then into the increasingly barren, windy and unforgiving environment of the West. I walked the whole distance, you know – almost to Chimney Rock. ¹

Brigham Young: Sister Murdoch, I believe you were one of the most noble and brave women on the trek west—and only 4 foot 7 inches tall. That determined Scottish blood in you ran deep.

John Murdoch: Well, President Young, my mother may only be 4 feet 7 inches, but at seventy-four years old, she was a ninety pound wonder out there in the bitter weather on the plains. Please, let me tell you about her. She bore eight children, you know – and not one of them spoiled! Six of us grew to adulthood. And would you believe she has seventy-two grandchildren!

Brigham: Seventy-two? My, that's a big number. And by the way, I know somebody else in Salt Lake who ended up with a lot of grandchildren. You have certainly helped your mother reach that number, John. At my last counting, I believe you and Anne have brought fourteen children into the world.

John Murdoch: Ah Hem, President Young, I hate to correct you, but that would be. . . fifteen.

Joseph Smith: So, brethren, I can see that I left the Church in good hands. Not only did the missionaries convert the pick and flower of England, but it seems they also converted the pick and flower of Scotland. I'm anxious to hear about your conversion, Sister Murdoch.

Wee Granny: Oh, President Smith – I just knew I would meet you someday. And, President Young, my son John wrote to me in Scotland and told me so much about you. And here we all are together! Oh, it's just a wonder!

Brigham Young: Go ahead, Wee Granny, tell President Smith your story.

Wee Granny: First of all, I was born in 1782. And my James and I married in Ayrshire, Scotland in 1811.

John Murdoch: I'm sure you all will remember Ayrshire as the home of Robert Burns. It's a bonny place to call home, with the River Doon running through the villages.

Wee Granny: It's a bonny place for sure. And my James was just the match for my heart. My greatest sadness came twenty years after we were married when James lost his life trying to rescue a man in a mine. He had fallen victim of foul air in the bottom of a new mine shaft they were sinking. They both were overcome by the gas and died.

John Murdoch: I was only ten years old at the time of my Father's death in 1831. This brought Mother much grief and sorrow, but she had a brave and courageous spirit. We never heard the Gospel until 1850 – twenty years later – when the Mormon Elders came to Scotland.

Drucilla: Why, that was just ten years after my grandfather, John Gailey, joined the Church in England. He and his mother and his sister were the only ones to join. Mary, did your whole family accept the Gospel?

Wee Granny: Wee Johnny here was the first to join – he was married at the time. But I made a careful and prayerful investigation of the new doctrine and was convinced of the truth. I was baptized in 1850 at age sixty-seven. Three more of my children joined as well, but not all. President Smith, I never had to meet you in order to know you were a Prophet of God, but to see you now brings joy to my soul and confirms my testimony of the restoration and truthfulness of the Gospel.

President Smith: Sister Murdoch, you came into the Church well prepared for what trials lay ahead of you—and just at a time when you probably thought your greatest trials were behind you.

Emma: But Joseph, the Relief Society was formed by women just like Wee Granny Murdoch. While those missionaries were teaching her and the other Saints in Scotland and England, their wives were left alone to care for the children. I think we all remember those lonely times without our husbands. And Wee Granny, I certainly know what it was like to lose a husband early in your life. I understand the pain and sorrow that you suffered.

Wee Granny: Emma, I too had to bury babies not long after birth. I wish I had known the Gospel earlier and been with you during your trials. I could've helped you through those losses. And Mother Smith, I often thought of you as you made the 1,000 mile journey from Kirtland, Ohio, to Far West, Missouri – I especially thought of you as I was walking through the bitterness of Nebraska in 1856. You were my inspiration as I often fell to my knees in prayer (*she goes to her knees*).

(soft music behind this, “Come, Come, Ye Saints” Page 30)

Mother Smith: Oh, the memory of it all. I wondered if we would ever get to Missouri.

Emma: When Mother and Father Smith got to a little town called Huntsville, Mother got out of her sick bed in the wagon. No one knew she had “*escaped*.” She used sticks to help her walk, she reached a fence and held on to it and followed it into a thicket—she was a long way from the wagon. When she got there she threw herself on the ground and prayed.

Mother Smith: “*Dear Father, if you will not hear me, and if I must die, then this is as good a place to die as any. I ask for mercy. Please restore my health, that I may be of some use to my family, and please grant my daughter Catherine her life. She has not been well since the birth of little Alvin. (hesitate) Father, I beseech thee. . .*”² (*goes on knees*)

“Come Come Ye Saints” Page 30, written by William Clayton (Everyone)

*(2) 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;
(Mother Smith and Wee Granny get up from their knees – join in the singing)
And soon we'll have this tale to tell – All is well! All is well!
(give a couple of measures for sitting down music)*

Brigham Young: I wonder what any of us would have done without the faith and prayers of the women of Zion. Rebecca, you've been very quiet during this whole conversation. What are your thoughts?

Rebecca Swain Williams: Well, President Young, I have been deep in thought. I've thought of my own trials that always seemed so severe, and yet as I stand here listening to these women speak of their losses of little babies, it hurts my heart. I've not had to suffer in such a way.³

Emma: Oh, Rebecca – how can you say that after all you've been through. I know personally the pain you have felt when you went against your father in joining the Church. Do you follow your heart that you know is telling you truth or do you risk being disinherited by your beloved father? I do know personally your pain.

Rebecca: Emma – if you could only begin to understand how much love we all have for you. How proud we were to be part of an organization that you led. Your words often drove me on in times of despair: Especially when you said: “*Sisters, we are going to do something extraordinary.*”

Emma: Those early Relief Society days in Nauvoo were exhilarating to all of us. Do you remember when I said, “*When a boat is struck on the rapids with a multitude of Mormons on board, we shall consider that a loud call for relief; we expect extraordinary occasions and pressing calls.*”

Rebecca: Yes, I do remember. And we had those extraordinary occasions and pressing calls. We had them often. This helped me to forget myself and think of others instead. Unfortunately, some of those pressing calls were to your home, and sometimes they were to mine.

Mother Smith: “*This institution of Relief Society is a good one. We must cherish one another, watch over one another, comfort one another and gain instruction, that we may all sit down in heaven together.*” Well, just like we’re doing at this very moment.⁴

Rebecca: And I believe that is what happened to me in Kirtland. I had friends during my trials.

Drucilla: Just imagine, Wee Granny here is more than 100 years older than I am. And you, Rebecca and Emma. . . why you’re more than sixty years older. . . and yet, it doesn’t seem like our trials have been so different. Relief Society had grown strong in numbers during my years. Neither could I have faced my trials without the love and help of my sisters.

Brigham Young: As you remember ladies, the Relief Society didn’t exist as an organization after we left Nauvoo, but twenty years later in 1866, I asked Eliza Snow to be the next President.

Drucilla: Then she must have been president when I was born in Salt Lake City in 1874.

Rebecca: But President Young, Relief Society did exist in a way after we left Nauvoo. As we crossed the plains, the sick were nursed, children were born, and mothers and babies were cared for during the long and difficult trek. The dead were dressed and buried by kind and gentle hands along the entire length of that trail from the Mississippi River to Winter Quarters and to the valley of the Great Salt Lake.⁵

Wee Granny: I do remember the caring sisters, who tried so desperately to give me relief on that journey. They have a special place in heaven for the sacrifices they gave. Just how did you hear the Gospel, Rebecca?

Rebecca: Well, like you, my conversion began long before I heard the Gospel. In many ways I feel like I was led to where the Gospel would reach my ears. I was seventeen years old when I made a voyage from Lake Ontario to Detroit.

Frederick G. Williams: And on that voyage, she met the tall, dark-eyed pilot of the ship. Extremely handsome and personable. Successful. . .

Rebecca: I suppose you all know my husband, Frederick Granger Williams!

Frederick: Affection for each other soon turned to love and we were married in 1815 – just four years after you, Wee Granny, and your husband, James Murdoch. I wish we all had known each other then. Rebecca and I finally settled in Kirtland, Ohio in 1828.

Rebecca: Very good, Frederick, you are getting better at remembering those two important dates! And just two years after our arrival the first Mormon missionaries arrived in Kirtland in 1830. I attended all of the missionaries’ meetings.

Frederick: And I came as often as my medical practice would allow.

(Music starts here, “Come All Ye Saints of Zion”, page 38)

Rebecca: It was such an exciting time in my life. We would study, discuss and learn together. I became convinced of the truthfulness of the gospel. The excitement and energy of it all still gives me a thrill.

“Come All Ye Saints of Zion” Page 38 by W. W. Phelps

*(1) Come all ye Saints of Zion, And let us praise the Lord
His ransomed are returning, According to his words
In sacred song and gladness They walk the narrow way
And thank the Lord who brought them To see the latter day*

*(2) Come, ye dispersed of Judah, Join in the theme and sing
With harmony unceasing The praises of our King
Whose arm is now extended, On which the world may gaze,
To gather up the righteous In these the latter days*

(Sung by everyone, but add trumpet—Include Audience)

*(3) Rejoice, rejoice, O Israel, And let your joys abound
The voice of God shall reach you Wherever you are found
And call you back from bondage, That you may sing his praise
In Zion and Jerusalem, In these the latter days.*

Rebecca: At age thirty-two, I joined the church in October 1830, the same year the missionaries arrived in Kirtland.

Frederick: Sometimes I just wanted to leave the Church alone, but in the end I could not because I felt drawn back to that sacred, new book of scripture, The Book of Mormon. As the spirit worked on me, I recognized the truthfulness of the gospel and followed Rebecca’s example by being baptized.

Joseph Smith: You were as faithful as anyone who had ever joined the Church, Frederick. As I recall, you were ordained an elder right after your baptism and confirmation, and the very next day you enthusiastically accepted an assignment to leave within a few weeks to serve a mission with Oliver Cowdery.

Frederick: I certainly did! And what was supposed to be a three-week mission, turned out to be a ten-month mission to Missouri.

Rebecca: Because of Frederick’s long absences for the purpose of church service, I spent long months raising my children without the help of my husband.

Emma: Oh yes, didn’t we all.

Mother Smith: Rebecca, I remember how you housed Joseph and Emma in your home when the Smiths first arrived in Kirtland. You were always loyal to the whole Smith family.

Emma: And Rebecca cared for us through many trying times. . .

Joseph Smith: . . . and often in very clever ways! One time a mob came and surrounded the home looking for me. Rebecca disguised me in her bonnet and cloak – can you just imagine that? - and I was able to leave the house and pass through the crowd to safety. Very clever, indeed, Rebecca.

Brigham Young: And then, Joseph, when the mob burst into the John Johnson home in Hiram, Ohio, and drug you out, tarred and feathered you and Sidney Rigdon and left you for dead, we all were aware of the kindness that Rebecca and Frederick offered you at that time.

Music behind these next two lines as she recalls this event, “Though Deepening Trials” Page 122

Mother Smith: (to audience, as she recalls this terrible incident) Those terrible men pulled the warm covers from the bed and dragged Joseph out into the cold night where he was savagely clawed and beaten, poisoned and tarred and feathered. One tried to tar up his mouth, but he twisted his head so they could not. All his clothes were torn off except his shirt collar.

Emma: (to audience) Another tried to force a vial of poison in Joseph, but it cracked on his tooth. One man fell on top of him and scratched his body with his nails like a mad cat. Then they left him there, there on the ground.

Mother Smith: Perhaps only the Savior himself suffered a similar pain and disgrace for the sake of those who would accept the Gospel. *(music ends here)*

Joseph Smith: That event is a very dark memory in our lives. Rebecca and Frederick both spent the night peeling tar from my bleeding and torn body and helped Emma care for the children. Their succor was greatly needed and appreciated.

Rebecca: In becoming a member of the Church, I had tasted the love of God – the least I could do was to return some of that love. My greatest desire was to share the love the Savior has for each of us—to share the Gospel with those I loved most, my own family. So, I wrote my father a letter. . .

(unnerving music)

Isaac Swain: (Coming up from the audience) This letter infuriates me! I will demand that she leave this church. I will not accept anything of the Mormons. What has she done. . .and what is she doing to us!? *(as if writing a letter)* “Dear Rebecca, . . .I’ve read newspapers about the Book of Mormon and the testimony of the Three Witnesses. I’m sorry to do this, but if you do not leave this church I will vow to cut off all communication with you. . . you will no longer be my daughter.”

Rebecca: “Dear Father, It gives me pain to hear that your mind is so much disturbed about the Book of Mormon. I’ve read it. I know it is true. I have heard the Three Witnesses, declare in public meeting that they saw a Holy Angel come down from heaven and bring the plates, and lay them before their eyes. I know these to be good and honest men. Father, should you and mother know the circumstances as we do in relation to this work, I am persuaded you would believe it.”⁶

Isaac Swain: I will have nothing to do with it, and I forbid your brother John to read any more of your letters. I am saddened that you have been so easily swayed. . .*(shakes his head)* “not even one word of repentance in this letter.”⁷

“Though Deepening Trials” Page 122 Eliza R. Snow

*(1) Though deep’ning trials throng your way, Press on, press on, ye Saints of God!
Ere long the resurrection day Will spread its life and truth abroad (repeat)*

Frederick Williams: If only I had been able to support Rebecca. .

Drucilla: What do you mean Frederick? Why couldn't you help?

Frederick Williams: Those were troubled times, Drucilla. This all happened a few years before your grandfather, John Gailey, joined the church in 1840. Joseph Smith could tell you the whole story. For a time, a time I'm not proud of, I participated in activities involving several former high-standing members of the Church. Many thought Joseph was a fallen prophet. I began to think so myself. I went to Missouri but was forced off the land in the expulsion order of Governor Boggs. I journeyed to Quincy, Illinois, in the wintertime.

Rebecca: Upon his arrival in Quincy, he learned that he had been excommunicated from the Church. Near that same time, in 1839, I learned that my beloved Father died. Only a year earlier in April 1838 while we were in Farr West, Missouri, our eldest son who had been an invalid died. Those were difficult years.

Frederick Williams: My health was broken. I had been reduced to a state of poverty. I had lost my membership in the Church. I had lost a son. The marriage of our daughter Lovina was coming unraveled and my son-in-law had fallen away from the Church. All my dreams . . . all of them . . . had been shattered.

Joseph Smith: Frederick could easily have felt himself a failure, embittered, and simply could have given up. Quincy, Illinois represents the culmination of the darkest days in the life of President Frederick G. Williams; but it also represents his finest hour as he triumphed over adversity in the final years of his life.

Brigham Young: I believe Rebecca was the great strength in his life. It was at this moment of terrible fire-forging that Frederick G. Williams shines. At the first opportunity, he presented himself humbly before the membership of the Church as general conference assembled and asked for forgiveness for his former wrongdoings in Missouri and expressed his determination to do the will of God. He requested rebaptism, all of which was granted.

Joseph Smith: *“Brother Frederick G. Williams is one of those men in whom I place the greatest confidence and trust, for I have found him ever full of love and brotherly kindness. . . He shall ever have place in my heart. . . God grant that he may overcome all evil. . . Blessed be Brother Frederick, for he shall never want a friend, and his generation after him shall flourish.”*⁸

Emma: Frederick's health was never restored, and he died in 1842, two years after his rebaptism. And five years later Lovina, Frederick and Rebecca's eldest daughter, died and was buried in Quincy.

Though Deepening Trials: Page 122 Eliza R. Snow

(Everyone) (3) Lift up your hearts in praise to God; Let your rejoicings never cease. Though tribulations rage abroad, Christ says, “In me ye shall have peace.” (repeat)

(All including audience) (5) This work is moving on apace, And great events are rolling forth; The kingdom of the latter days, The “little stone,” must fill the earth. (repeat)

Drucilla: Oh, Rebecca, I think you are the “little stone” that Eliza Snow was talking about when she wrote those words. You, Mother Smith and Emma, and Wee Granny. “By small and simple things are great things brought to pass.” You are the backbone for all of us. However did you manage to go on?

Brigham Young: I will tell you how she did it. She had a commitment to the faith – right from the beginning. Her faith and courage endured every imaginable trial. When the Saints trekked west to Utah, she traveled with her son Ezra's family and drove her own team. She remained “steadfast and immovable” to the end. (*Mosiah 5:15*)

Rebecca: Thank you, President Young.

Drucilla: And Wee Granny. How I've learned to love you tonight. You also buried babies and lost your husband at an early age, but kept an open heart. What ever made you decide to make the trek across the plains at age seventy-four?

Wee Granny: Well, my son John was already in Zion. He and Ann arrived in 1852. He saved some money and sent me the fare so I could come and join them. The thought of the adventure and particularly of seeing that part of my family again was more overpowering than the thought of 6,000 miles.

John Murdoch: How does any Scotsman comprehend what a 6,000 mile journey is like? It was just a number for all of us who had hardly ventured from our wee villages. But many of the Saints in Scotland were then emigrating to Utah using the Perpetual Emigration Fund. However, I felt my lot was to be hard work and poverty. . . Yet. . .

Brigham Young: But the Lord thought differently. A call came from Franklin D. Richards, President of the British Mission for two Scottish shepherders and their dogs to go to Utah and herd sheep for a certain person in need in Salt Lake City . . . that person in need was . . . President Brigham Young!

John Murdoch: I answered that call.

(John Murdoch actually made up these words, sung to "Flow Gently, Sweet Afton") Sung by John and accompanied by a bagpipe or a harmonica or an accordion.

*Oh, Scotland, my country and land of my birth
In fondness I'll ever remember thy worth.
For wrapped in thy bosom my forefathers sleep
Why then should I leave thee and cross the wild deep?*

*(Wee Granny joins in the singing here)
But why should I linger or wish for to stay?
The voice of the Prophet is "haste, flee away.
Lest judgments o'er take you and lay Scotland low."
To the prophets in Zion, Oh, then let me go!*

*(The whole group join in here)
Farewell then, dear Scotland, one last fond adieu
Farewell my dear brethren so faithful and true
May angels watch o'er you till warfares are o'er,
And in safety we all meet on Zion's fair shore.⁹*

Joseph Smith: Many have told us your story, John. Your trip on the boat was hard, and you lost your son and your daughter. It was a heart-rending experience for you.

John Murdoch: I had not shed a tear since being a boy of thirteen and thought my days of crying were over, but not so. There was no more food on the ship, and my son needed both food and medicine. After begging unsuccessfully for food for my dying son, I gave vent to my feelings in a flood of tears. Otherwise, I felt that my heart would burst. I cried so hard that I had to unbutton my vest to allow for the surging of my wounded heart.

Emma: Oh, John, I'm so sorry that you and Ann had to suffer so, and that your son and your daughter also suffered so much before they died. If only we could have seen then the glorious reunions that were ahead of us, but I don't think we were meant to be rescued from all these hardships. I never myself understood why, but I do now.

Wee Granny: And look at us now. All together again. John didn't end up doing much shepherding, but he did dig potatoes for President Young, and eventually sent me the money to fulfill my dream of possibly seeing him and his family again and seeing Zion.

Drucilla: Do you know what I like best about you, Wee Granny. It's your spirit of adventure. I'm glad you made it as far as you did in Nebraska. I know that thousands will hear your story and it will give them a desire to seek the most out of life that is possible. I suppose your little, worn-out body just gave way to fatigue and exposure on that journey.

Wee Granny: Aye. That it did. But, to those loving saints surrounding me, I still had the strength to say, "tell John that I died with my face towards Zion."

John Murdoch: Her weary, worn out body was buried in a shallow grave, without a coffin, by the side of the wagon trail. But I had to smile when her last words were carried to my ears. I knew she was very much alive somewhere else and united with my father. Even in our greatest sorrows we can feel the love of God.

"Come Come Ye Saints." Page 30, William Clayton (1814-1879)

*(Everyone) 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!*

Joseph Smith: I know while we were in Ohio and then Missouri and then Nauvoo, we thought that surely there was a place of refuge – and a time when tribulations would cease – at least that's what we desired – to live in peace, without persecution – to be able to worship our God and our Savior without distraction. But that wasn't the peace that the Savior talked about when he said, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you. Not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your hearts be troubled. Neither let them be afraid." Drucilla, you've said very little about yourself, but I think if all those here could hear your story, they'd be amazed to hear of those trials that came even in your day.

Rebecca: Oh, yes, please tell us what your life was like in the 1900's. I hope it was easier for you than it was for us. We wanted our children and grandchildren to be blessed with prosperity and. . . peace.

Drucilla: I'm just such an ordinary person, but I did have a motto – and you will like this, Wee Granny – it was: "If you want to have a thrill in life, you have to go out after it." And my thrills began one Sunday morning at church when this very handsome young man walked in. As I caught his eye, I realized that he was already looking at me. At that very moment we both seemed to just know. Well, you know what I mean. I just knew that life was about to take on new dimensions.

Woman (Drucilla's granddaughter): Excuse me, everyone, but I just can't hold back any longer. I know and love all of your stories, but you must allow me to help tell the story of my grandmother, Drucilla. She's been an inspiration to me all of my life, though I only knew her six years before she was gone.

John Howard: Well, I've been taking all this in, but I suppose I'd better contribute before the night's over. I'm John, Drucilla's husband. I've hesitated to reveal too much of myself, but thankfully someone included me in this group of very faithful and inspiring people. I'm not sure I belong here, but I've felt a great deal of love and acceptance from all of you good people.

Frederick Williams: None of us here are perfect, John. All our good deeds will be counted to us for good.

Drucilla: John was the perfect romantic. He had a buggy, but had sold his horse. So sometimes he would get between the buggy shafts himself and pull the buggy down to my house. He would usually be carrying a bouquet of flowers as well.

Woman: And in not too many weeks he came to Drucilla and told her that he had rec'd a mission call to Switzerland.

Drucilla: Of course, I was happy for John, but three years seemed like an eternity.

John Howard: So I did what any good red-blooded Mormon boy would do at a moment like that. I asked Drucilla to marry me before I left. We were married in the Salt Lake Temple on Sept 26, 1895, and the next day I left for three years on my mission.

Rebecca: Oh my goodness, and I thought that ten-month mission of Frederick's was so long.

Drucilla: Well, I worked as a stenographer and sent money to support John while he served his mission. When he came home, I traveled from Salt Lake to Denver to meet him. Our reunion assured me that life was going to be very sweet.

Woman: Her life was sweet. It was hard, but great love can make even a difficult life sweet.

Drucilla: *"Like my mother I had twelve children. I've seen much progress and three wars. Airplanes, radios, automobiles, telephones, automatic washers, vacuum cleaners and all sorts of modern inventions became commonplace during my lifetime; but each new child brought a new and lasting excitement."*¹⁰

Woman: In 1906, John decided to study medicine.

Rebecca: Just like my husband did. . . only 100 years earlier!

Woman: What a coincidence, Rebecca! So as you must know, Drucilla had to be thrifty with so many little children and a husband going through medical school.

Drucilla: There were many times when hunger pangs were so severe that we put the children to bed early so they would sleep away the hunger pangs. If you could just give me a bone and an onion, I could prepare a meal! Beans were only three cents a pound, so that's what we ate.

Woman: But would you believe that my Grandfather Howard made it through chiropractic school and in 1906 began his own school of chiropractic. Well, the school still exists today in 2011, but as a full university, and in April of 2001 the new National University of Health Science in Illinois saw its first graduating class. When you walk into the front foyer, there is a picture of my grandfather right at the top as the founder. I'm very proud to be his granddaughter.

Drucilla: It was a tragedy that changed the course of my life.

Woman: But it was in the faith and bravery that my grandmother displayed through this trial of life that I found my own roots for strength.

John Howard: We had a big family. I was writing a medical encyclopedia. I was still going to medical school, and I was running my own chiropractic school. I had pain in my back. I started to take drugs to kill the pain. In the end, I suppose I had a physical breakdown. Then I became addicted to these substances.

Drucilla. Three of my twelve children died as new babies. But John was there for those trials. Losing him to addictive substances was even harder than losing those babies.

Mother Smith: Oh, bless you, my dear.

Drucilla: But my nine remaining children were beautiful, and fun, and good. They all loved each other so much. There was so much happiness and love in our home

Woman: My mother spoke of you so much, Grandma. She told us about the happiness in the home as she and her siblings grew up. She said, "*Mother had eyes that danced, that warmed as they welcomed you, that melted the mean thoughts in your heart before you uttered them. Sometimes just to be near her was enough to recharge us spiritually.*"¹¹

John Howard: Well, Frederick, like you and Rebecca, I wish I could've been able to help Drucilla in her hardest moments, which were yet to come. It was easier for her to live without me than with me, so . . . we separated.

Drucilla: The 1930's hit and along with them came an outbreak of tuberculosis. My son Alan was twenty-four years old and engaged to be married. Winnie was twenty-six and Lora was twenty-two. These three were together so much that it's hard to think of them separately.

Woman: Alan needed to have his tonsils removed, but afterwards started to hemorrhage. He never improved and died of tuberculosis in December 1933.

(music under this - possibly "Be Still My Soul," Page 124, Music by Jean Sebelius)

Drucilla:

*Soon the Spring will come again
With leaves unfolding on the trees,
With flowers blooming everywhere
And on the air a warm south breeze.*

*How can I bear to welcome it,
Enjoy its beauty and its cheer
When my brave lad who loved it too
Has gone away and left me here?*

Wee Granny:

*Soon the Spring will come again
With lovers walking down the lane,*

Rebecca:

*Thrilled with the endless dreams of youth,
Repeating still the old refrain.*

Emma:

*Help me, dear Lord, to understand.
Cleanse me from bitterness and woe,*

Drucilla, Emma, Mother Smith, Wee Granny, Rebecca: (finish the poem all together)

*Remembering that Thou leadest me,
Smiling and hopeful, let me go.
(Drucilla S. Howard - 1934)*

John Howard: Our daughter Winnie already had a lesion on her lungs that had healed, but just when the family was starting to get renewed life after Alan's death, the girls were all in the living room laughing and having fun, and Winnie started to cough and couldn't stop. It broke this lesion, and she died October 1934, just ten months after Dru and the family buried Alan.

Woman: Before the family had even been given enough time to sorrow, it was evident that Lora too was very ill. She definitely was worn thin as her two closest companions in life had left.

Drucilla: I wanted her to get out and get some sunshine to bring some color back in her face, but she simply said, "You know, Mother, don't you, that I'm not afraid to die. Winnie and Alan are okay. I know that." She had such a strong faith and knowledge of the afterlife. Her health never returned and she died in July 1935, just nine months after Winnie.

Mother Smith: Oh, such a heartbreak.

Drucilla: It was a heartbreak, and Mother Smith, you know, I suppose more than anyone here, what it's like to lose children in their prime of life.

(music as she recalls the past - could repeat "Be Still My Soul.")

Mother Smith: Yes.. . yes, I do. After the bodies of my two sons were washed and dressed in their burial clothes, we were allowed to see them. I had for a long time braced every nerve, roused every energy of my soul, and called upon God to strengthen me, but when I entered the room and saw my murdered sons extended both at once before my eyes and heard the sobs and groans of my family. . . it was too much; I sank back, and cried to the Lord in the agony of my soul. "My God, . . ., why hast thou forsaken this family!"¹²

Drucilla: I hardly dared say it at the time, but I felt the same way – for a time, I felt forsaken.

Emma: Yes, I, too, know those feelings.

Wee Granny: Where did you find strength, Drucilla?

Drucilla: In daily prayer. And in the wonders of this earth. In the majesty of all God's creations. I know he watches over each of us individually and loves us. As He still does.

Woman: Grandma would often go outside, no matter how cold, and watch the moon come over the mountain. She continued to get a thrill out of life even though she had to live it without Grandpa and without seven of her twelve children. She could've been bitter, but she wasn't. But she survived because she understood the power of prayer.

“Awake, Ye Saints of God, Awake!” Eliza R. Snow and Evan Stephens Page 17

**(Everyone.) (1) Awake, ye Saints of God, awake! Call on the Lord in mighty prayer
That he will Zion’s bondage break And bring to naught the tempter’s snare (repeat)**

**(3) With constant faith and fervent prayer, With deep humility of soul
With steadfast mind and heart, prepare To see thèternal purpose roll, (repeat)**

**(Men only) (2) Tho Zion’s foes have counseled deep, Although they bind with fetters strong,
The God of Jacob does not sleep; His vengeance will not slumber long; (repeat)**

(Include audience and trumpet)

**(4) Awake to righteousness; be one, Or, saith the Lord, “Ye are not mine!”
Yea, like the Father and the Son, Let all the Saints in union join, (repeat)**

Joseph Smith: I’m surrounded tonight by you great men and women of FAITH. I’m proud to be your brother in the Gospel. You’re great examples of living the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If some of you lost HOPE while on earth, it was only for a season. And here we are conversing, as we did on earth, but free from sorrow, evils, temptations, and persecutions. Certainly the Lord is MERCIFUL. It’s just like Brother Murdoch said, “All our good deeds will be counted to us for GOOD.”

“Amazing Grace” (Tammy, Jennifer and Lucie come back in front during the above song.) They sing:

**The Lord has promised good to me.
His word my hope secures.
He will my shield and portion be,
As long as life endures.**

**(Drucilla, Rebecca, Wee Granny walk forward and stand by these three women as bagpipe plays a
verse of Amazing Grace. They acknowledge each other.) Six women sing a half note higher:
Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess within the veil,
A life of joy and peace.**

**(All performers sing as they go back into their original picture frame:)
Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.**

All freeze with the three women looking at the picture as bagpipe plays last two lines of Amazing Grace.

NOTES:

1. All of the information for Mary Murray Murdoch (Wee Granny) and her son John Murdoch is taken from *The James and Mary Murray Murdoch Family History* in possession of David Murdoch, Elk Ridge, Utah, 84651. pp. 52-56 and pp. 204-220.
2. From *JS History* by Lucy Mack Smith, Scot and Maureen Proctor.
3. Information for Rebecca Swain Williams taken from April 2011 *Ensign*, pp.
4. Quote from Lucy Mack Smith.
5. Quote from Gordon B. Hinckley
6. (Rebecca Swain Williams to Isaac Swain, June 4, 1834, Church History Library, SLC)
7. (George Swain letter Mar. 17, 1839, typescript, Church History Library, SLC).
8. (*History of the Church* 7:297)
9. *The James and Mary Murray Murdoch Family History* in possession of David Murdoch, Elk Ridge, Utah, p. 207.
10. (Drucilla's journal in possession of Cecile J.Scribner)
11. (Lucie James Journal in possession of Cecile Scribner)
12. *JS History* by Mother Smith, Scot and Maureen Proctor, pg. 457 – 458.



Our Cast: Tammy - Jenny Scribner; Drucilla Howard - Marielen Christensen, John Howard - AJ Christensen, Isaac Swain - Doug Scribner, John Murdoch - Craig Scribner, Wee Granny Murdoch - Pualani Graham, Mother Smith - Dixie Linn, Frederick Granger Williams - Jim Scribner, Rebecca Swain Williams - Stephanie Miller, Joseph Smith - Scott Scribner, Emma Smith - Leona Christensen, Brigham Young - Leon Graham, Jennifer - Robbyn Scribner



"Amazing Grace"

Craig Scribner, Jenny Scribner, Scott Scribner, Robbyn Scribner



The Picture of Men and Women of Faith - cast members "frozen in place."

***Elk Ridge, Utah
24 October 2011***



Jim (piano Player) and Stephanie Miller Scribner as Frederick Granger and Rebecca Swain Williams



"Oh, President Smith – I just knew I would meet you someday. And, President Young, my son John wrote to me in Scotland and told me so much about you. And here we all are together! Oh, it's just a wonder!"



"None of us here are perfect, John"



Frederick and Rebecca Williams, Joseph and Emma Smith, Brigham Young, Granddaughter of Drucilla Sears Howard

