

Ward Despain

I, C. Ward Despain Jr. was born at home in Granite, Utah (at the mouth of Little Cottonwood Canyon in Salt Lake Valley) on July 6, 1922. I was born of goodly parents, Charles Ward Despain Sr. & Elsie Fryer, the fifth of six children.

Solomon Joseph Despain was my Great Grandfather. He migrated, with his family, to Utah, crossing the plains in the David H. Cannon company, which arrived in Salt Lake City Aug. 17, 1861. At the time that the Salt Lake Stake of Zion was reorganized he was called to be the Bishop of the Granite Ward. He had three wives and twenty seven children, seventeen boys and ten girls.

I graduated from Jordan High School in 1940 and attended three years of college in Logan where I was a member of the R.O.T.C. In April of 1943 the unit was called to serve in the army where I spent the next three years in the 209th Anti Air Craft Battalion as a First Lieutenant, the last year in the Philippines and Japan.

On March 19, 1943 I married my eternal sweetheart, Irene McGee, in the Salt Lake Temple. We had three children, two boys and one girl.

My education consists of a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Utah in 1951, and a Master of Science degree from the Brigham Young University in Educational Administration and Church History in 1956. My Master's thesis was a biography entitled "THOMAS BULLOCK EARLY MORMON PIONEER". He was a personal secretary to Joseph Smith the Prophet and his successor Brigham Young. My Doctorate was obtained at Washington State University in Pullman Washington in 1965. My thesis was entitled "ANALYSIS OF MALE NAVAHO STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF OCCUPATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARD DEVELOPMENT OF SKILLS AND TRAITS NECESSARY FOR OCCUPATIONAL COMPETENCE".

Thirty nine years of my life have been spent in the Seminary and Institute program of the church. I was the Principal of the Summit Stake Seminary in Coalville, Utah for eleven years. I was then assigned to Coordinate the Seminaries and Institutes in Southeast Utah where we lived in Price, Utah for two years. Boyd K. Packer, who was a Supervisor of Seminaries and Institutes, then assigned me to be the Coordinator of the Indian Seminaries for the Church, which extended thru-out the United States. My office was at BYU and we lived in Orem, Utah for two years. We then moved to Pullman, Washington



for another two years to get my Doctorate. I also coordinated early morning seminaries in eastern Washington during that time. My next assignment was at the St. George, Utah Institute of Religion, where I served for eighteen years, first as teacher and then as Director. The last four years before my retirement I spent in Hawaii as Coordinator of the Seminaries and Institutes on the following Islands, The Big Island (Hawaii), Maui, Molokai and Lanai. I retired and returned to St. George in 1987. If I ever get to see the Savior in person, and if I get the opportunity to say it, I shall say thanks for all of the wonderful experiences that I was given while I was in mortality.

The following is an indication of church service and church callings: I have had a wonderful experience associated with many blessings in serving in many positions in the church. I have served as Bishop two times, on two Stake High Councils, High Priest Group Leadership three times, Sunday School President two times, and served in one capacity or another in about every auxiliary in the church.

One very interesting assignment was being Bishop of the Kilauea 2nd Ward in Hilo, Hawaii for three years. The ward membership was a very diverse group. There were Hawaiians, Filipinos, Japanese, Caucasians (otherwise known as Haoles), Tongans, Samoans, African Americans, Europeans, Chinese and what have you. You name it, they were all there.

One of my very cherished experiences has been working, along with my wife, in the St. George LDS Temple for fifteen years. The following positions were filled during that time: Ordinance Worker, Assistant Supervisor, Supervisor, Temple Trainer, and Sealer for eight years, a position I now hold in association with my wife, Irene Despain. When President Gordon B. Hinckley laid his hands upon my head and conferred the Sealing Power upon me he indicated that Irene and I would have the opportunity of having joy and happiness in working together in regards to this calling. We have been working together now for a year and eight months, she as the Sealer Receptionist and I the Coordinator of the Sealers on the Tuesday Mid-Shift. What a glorious opportunity to work together in this aspect of the work of the Lord.

We Sons of the Utah Pioneers, in holding any church position, owe much to our wives for their support and sustaining us in those positions. In reality we must see that all we dream and hope for in the eternities to come hinge to a great deal upon our wives. President Gordon B. Hinckley said, "My Brethren, you will never in all your lives have a greater asset than the woman into whose eyes you looked as you joined hands over the altar in the house of the Lord."

We also owe so much to those Pioneers who paved the way, with their blood, tears and sacrifice, bringing so many blessings into our lives.

I want to say that I know that God, our Eternal Father, lives and loves each of us and that His Son is the true and living Christ, our Savior and Redeemer, the Light and Life of the world.

C. Ward Despain