

Dedicatory Prayer

By Elder H. Tracy Hall
Formerly Second Councilor in the Pleasant View Ward Bishopric
at the time of the Hole in the Rock Scouting Accident

Our Dear Father In Heaven,

We are gathered here today to dedicate this monument in remembrance of those who died here June 10th, 1963. Our Boy Scouts and others were on their way to Hole in the Rock for a "Rafting Trip" that was to exit the Colorado River at "The Crossing of the Fathers." Shortly, the Glen Canyon Dam would form a large reservoir obliterating the rapids. Therefore, this would be a "last chance" situation.

Forty-six persons were aboard the "cattle-rack open air truck." A few were crowded into the cab with the driver, but most of them were in the back sitting on the rubber rafts, tents, food containers and camping gear.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of this tragic accident, wherein the heavily laden truck stalled, rolled backward and plunged into the thirty foot deep wash, spewing out a jumble of precious souls and the aforementioned equipment as it ran over, then rolled over in the wash crushing bodies under the truck.

Of the 46 persons aboard, 13 persons died and 26 were injured. Those with lesser injuries valiantly attempted to help those with more serious injuries and attend to the dying. Some of the injured walked miles trying to find help. Unfortunately, some of the more seriously injured carry their scars to this day. Although the injured are not listed on this beautiful marker, we also remember them.

Seven of the dead were members of the Pleasant View Ward. As the Second Councilor in the Pleasant View Ward Bishopric, I knew them all very well. They were;

H. Darrel Taylor, BYU Professor and Scout Master, 45
William Allen Creer, Assistant Scout Master, 39

The Pleasant View Ward Scouts who died were:

Joseph William Erikson, 16
Randy Wayne Miller, 14
Gary Lynn Rasmussen, 15
Lynn Lewis Merrell, 15
Garry Lynn Christensen, 14

Others who perished were:

Dorothy June Hansen, Deseret News writer
Merlin J. Shaw, Manavu Ward Bishop and leader of the expedition
Gordon Henry Grow, friend of Pleasant View scout, 15
Randy Melvin Hall, my nephew, son of Eugene & Joyce Hall, Ogden, 13
Robert Cook, Salt Lake teacher
Marvin Porshatis of Salt Lake, 29

Having briefly outlined the circumstances of the Scouting accident, Our Father, we wish to turn our thoughts towards some gospel themes. There is no solace in the fact that down through the centuries bad things have happened to millions of faithful, good people. Some, unfortunately, will blame God for the bad things or even come to say there is no God. President Spencer W. Kimball shed some light on this problem. He said:

“If we looked at mortality as the whole of existence, then pain, sorrow, failure and short life would be calamity. But if we look upon life as an eternal thing stretching far into the pre-earth past and on into the eternal post-death future, then all happenings may be put in proper perspective...If all the sick for whom we pray were healed, if all the righteous were protected and the wicked destroyed, the whole program of the Father would be annulled and the basic principle of the gospel, free agency, would be ended. No man would have to live by faith”

Death for most of us appears to be the ultimate tragedy. This is particularly so in the case of an “untimely death”, as for example our young Boy Scouts. But here is in the long view, a greater tragedy for all of us, namely sin.

Father, your prophets through revelation have given us Your Word in the Holy Scriptures. We have been admonished, by prophets of old and prophets living today, as to our obligations and responsibilities. The Ten Commandments are basic principles to which we must adhere. The Holy Ghost, The Spirit of Christ and our own immortal spirit tells us what is right from what is wrong if we will only listen. While we strive to work out our own salvation through ordinances and obedience, we must not forget our fellow man. Righteous living requires that we must do good to all men.

With respect to doing good, we recognize the tremendous effort put forth by the sheriffs, the nurses, the doctors, the farmers and all the good people who had to travel great distances in this remote area to aid and abate the pain, anguish and suffering of the afflicted persons involved in this accident.

We express our gratitude to Tom Heal and Lee Colvin for “spear-heading” the drive to create the monument and for all those who make financial contributions to pay for its construction.

May those who travel the scenic routes through Garfield and Kane County and chance to pass this monument, pause and reverently reflect on what happened here.

On this occasion, we pray for a blessing on for us all that we will love one another, live in harmony together, forgive trespasses and grievances and receive the peace that surpasses all understanding.

Heavenly Father I now dedicate this monument by the authority and power of the Melchizedek Priesthood which I hold and pray for its protection, that it will be free from vandalism and any other desecration.

And I do this in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, to whom we ascribe the honor and the glory. Amen.