

# Dog Back from Dead

To: The Epoch Times

by Sterling D. Allan, 228033, UDC

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This is an enlarged version of a brief piece, "Dog Retrieves From Death," dated 11/8/23, available at

[IndComing.org](http://IndComing.org) > Editorials.

We've all heard stories of dead people being raised, Lazarus being the most well-known example. In modern times as well, I met a guy, Yohanne (sp?) Wolfgram, who brought an infant back to life by the power of God after she was accidentally ran over by a parent backing out of their driveway. Modern medicine sees many examples of people "dying" (e.g. flat-lining) then being revived. In the U.S., around 0.18% of the population have had a "near death experience," which comes to nearly 600,000 people dying, going to the "other side," then coming back.

What about animals dying and being brought back?

On Nov. 5, I heard a Fellow inmate, Bret, tell the story of their beloved family dog that died (was probably hit by a car a few days prior) then was instantly revived to full health after the family offered a prayer.

There was no doubt that the dog was dead, being cold to the touch and having rigor mortis setting in.

The above paragraph synopsis would be further compressed in a scriptural account. What I'd like to present here is a non-fictionalized elaboration of the story, as well as of the meeting setting where Bret

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Felt safe enough to share this. It was a monthly "testimony meeting" that is held in each congregation worldwide of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In the Utah prison system, we see people from many denominations attend LDS services and classes during the week, made possible by the loving service of many LDS volunteers. So, I don't know if Bret is LDS.

That entire meeting was one of the best Testimony Meetings I've ever attended in this near 60-year incarnation. (Ü) By going into some detail, I can give you a glimpse into some of the wonderful opportunities we have in prison, thanks to the Church's outreach, and how God is able to work in our lives, reviving the <sup>spiritually</sup> "dead" back to vibrant life.

The 8:00 am hour prior to the worship service was choir practice with 22 inmates, directed by fellow inmate, Roland Pitt, who got his PhD in Music at BYU along with his friend, Mack Wilburg, who now directs the Tabernacle Choir. Roland played a key role in Mack's volunteering to direct a prison choir for several years, coming nearly weekly to practice with us in Draper, notwithstanding his full schedule and demands for his phenomenal skills. Roland is comparable in his directing ability. He's even better as an accompanist. We are truly blessed to have his talents at our disposal (for our use — for those translating this).

We were working on a song to perform in a couple of weeks when Elder Cook of the leadership of the Quorum

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of 70 will be visiting our branch. Hoping Roland might go with "Be Thou My Vision," I've put about 30 hours, so far, into being proficient in its accompaniment, loving the arrangement and the challenge (long story). (TTB arrangement by Dan Forrest, ASCAP ©2005, Hal Leonard Corp.) It's easy for Roland, who wants to do it at 102 bpm, not 76-80 as prescribed.

As inmates were arriving for worship service, being welcomed by around 10 volunteers, Sister Carlyle (sp?) asked me to play piano for prelude/postlude and three congregational hymns (92, 194, 140, all with extemporaneous embellishment/improvisation). Two of my sisters have told me that my playing reminds them of Jon Schmidt of The Piano Guys (.com, with billions of views), though I'm not as accurate as he is.

The prelude time was extended as around ten extra chairs needed to be brought into the packed, smallish chapel, mostly on the two-steps-up rostrum for the volunteers (who usually sit among us inmates). I would estimate that there were around 150 people - the most I've seen in a worship service in my 7<sup>3/4</sup> years of incarceration. I saw only three empty chairs in the chapel adorned with white walls and white, upward-sloping ceiling to a front wall (on west) with artistically-wavy panels, and ~5-foot-tall windows high across the south wall, showing a stormy overcast sky (that the volunteers walked under to get here). Us inmates are all in white prison garb, having "UDC INMATE" stamped in gray.

On the other side of the rostrum was a lady

doing American Sign Language for two deaf inmates in the front row. She alternated with another signer, who wears a clear plastic mask over her mouth (so they can read her lips) with an air filtering edge/perimeter.

Presiding on the stand was Pres. Steve Smith from the Utah prison district presidency. He was my branch president (we called him "bishop") in Promontory in 2018 and generously met with me for an hour each week for two months. Since advancing to the district presidency, he also occasionally meets with me when he comes to visit a branch I'm in.

In Promontory, he approved my "Extemporaneous Ensemble" idea for prelude music, in which the choir would sing, with me on the piano (also singing & harmonizing), turning to a hymn we liked and performing it ad lib, harmonizing, doing key changes. Volunteer, Bro. Jules, who taught Corey training courses professionally, was an enthusiastic participant.

The first time we did it was when Elder Stevenson of the Quorum of the Twelve visited (May 5, 2018). He loved it. And, per<sup>(in part)</sup> Bishop Smith's arrangement, he and I team-taught Sunday School about how us inmates might <sup>in a prison setting,</sup> apply the new "ministry" approach (formerly "Home Teaching" by men, and "Visiting Teaching" by women) introduced in General Conference the

previous month. (The evening prior, I got a black eye and broken nose <I snapped it back a couple of days later> playing softball, which added to the paradoxical image of an Apostle standing shoulder-to-shoulder <his initiative> teaching class with an inmate.)

So, yes, I was glad to see Pres. Smith present, with his wife. (BTW, the ASCII sum of "Steve Smith" = 1068; and on p.1068 of Strong's ©2007 <ISBN 978-1-59865-378-8> is the entry, "Smith." I showed that to him early on.) On his behalf, I should emphasize that he does not buy into my paradigm. When I met with him for a few minutes on 11/5 and asked him how many people he's told about my website (IndComing.org), he said, "Zero."

Last Sunday (11/5), when our Branch President Biddulph introduced the testimony meeting, he told a story of when he was a young doctor (he's still young-looking), hurrying up a stairwell of the hospital, and he accidentally ran into Dr. Russell M. Nelson coming into the stairwell, knocking him over. After helping him up, Dr. Nelson jovial advised him, "You need to slow down." As he proceeded on his way, he had the impression, "[Someday,] he's going to be the Prophet."

The first inmate to bear his testimony taught our Sunday School lesson last week (9am hour). When he was on his mission, he served as assistant to the President and oozes with a strong, positive leadership persona. I could see him on the Church Education System speaking cir-

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cut. (Ditto several other inmates I've met.) I thought, "I need to get to know him," but I still don't know his name. (Michael?)

### Story of Dog Coming Back from the Dead

The next testimony was by Bret, who is about 6' 2", sturdy build, muscular, red hair to his shoulders, trimmed beard. He said that when he was a teen, his family had a Japanese-breed dog that looked like a Husky. His family loved the dog. Occasionally, it would wander off for a couple of days, then come back. But this time, he was gone for five days, then they were very worried about him. Finally, he showed up, bedraggled, hair matted, prickles in his fur, walking very slow and painfully. He didn't greet anyone but slowly walked down to the basement where he laid down. He wouldn't eat his food or drink water. He just laid there. Bret inspected him for injuries and had the impression he was probably hit by a car. He wouldn't let him feel his mid-section. Bret's dad [in divinely-inspired denial?] said that if he didn't improve by morning, they'd take him to the vet [who would have likely put him down].

The next morning, the dog was dead. He was cold to the touch, and rigor mortis had started.

The family got together around their dog and offered up a prayer to express gratitude for what a great dog he'd been for them. Bret didn't say this, but I bet at least one

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of them asked for the dog to be healed, if that be God's will. When the heartfelt prayer was through, the dog got up and started licking their faces. He then went into their yard, ~~and~~ joyfully running in an "8" eight times. (I think that's what he said. "8" is symbolic for infinity  $\infty$ .) He was back to his vivacious self as if nothing had happened.

Wow! Before this, I'd never heard (that I recall) a story of an animal returning from death.

After concluding his account, when Bret returned to his seat to my right, I shook his hand and looked at his name on his shirt. I'm not sure (I didn't look carefully), but I think his last name is Jackson (I was looking for the first name). He attends the week-day morning Bible study by Chaplain Chris Brockman, who is a phenomenal teacher and scholar. On the first day I attended his class on 9/12, I told him I learned more in that hour than in any other class I've taken. Since then, I've been visiting with him during the one-on-one time that follows the Bible study, for about 15 mins on ave., each time. He's a good listener.

In hind-sight, given my now being impressed to write this story for publication and dissemination to the world, I see divine synchronicity in Bret having selected a seat that ended up being right next to me. (I had my scriptures... under my seat to reserve it in the front row while playing the piano.)

After Bret, Terry Pierce, my friend who looks

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like the late Stephen R. Covey, and has strong leadership charisma (he was my section leader when I was in Promontory with Bish. Smith), talked about how this day of max evil and max good is a fertile environment for miracles to show up. My friend, Jonathan, spoke of a synchronicity the night before, that highlighted four principles he recently learned. My friend, Tim Butler, our local stand-up comedian, gave gratitude for God's ongoing love flowing through his life to others. I then went up to one of the "in<sup>gu</sup>ague" seats and basked in <sup>my friend,</sup> Phil Stone's glowing countenance as he bore his testimony. Despite his Turret ticks, he's a gifted musician who has done the music tracks for several Church videos.

With just a few minutes left, I gave gratitude that so many inmates were present for such an excellent testimony meeting. "I would dare say that there isn't an inmate here (in Green) that wouldn't have benefitted from and appreciated this. And I confessed that I had been recently mulling the notion of not attending, admitting that this sentiment was not coming from God; and how grateful I was "to be here this morning." (I've been frustrated with (A) the dogmatic resistance to doing the Extemporaneous Ensemble here; (B) being viewed as an "apostate" by volunteers and fellow inmates because I'm so different, loving "The Chosen's" slogan, "Get used to different!")

Pres. Biddulph then got up to ditto the sentiment about



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what a great meeting it had been. His wife did the same.

We often hear volunteers share the sentiment opinion that they feel the Spirit stronger in our worship services than they do on the outside. Possible reasons include our genuine yearning for repentance, striving to improve our lives, and the time we have to study the scriptures. There's no doubt that God uses the volunteers as conduits of his love for us, and encouragement. They feel it, and we deeply appreciate it. They're astonished at how much they learn and benefit from the service they provide here.

As mentioned above, I've never heard of an animal coming back from death. I don't have a problem believing this story. Bret seems like an honest person. Looking like a jock, he's not the type of person to make up such a story. He was very brave to share that story with us.

And like ~~this~~ dog came back from the dead, I believe everyone, including inmates, can repent and transform their life back to full spiritual health, thanks to Jesus Christ, even as rapidly as did <sup>this</sup> ~~their~~ dog.

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Staci D. Allen  
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