

## Saturday, August 3<sup>rd</sup> - Alex Boye shared his story West High School



Custodian Ronnie Johnson, Alex Boye, and Michael Kennedy Jr. getting the microphone set up with Alex's laptop



Frances & Steve Orton giving welcoming the family at the beginning of Saturday's events



Frances & Steve Orton giving instructions before the event with Dan Adams, Brady and Audrey Orton



Alex Boye began, "This is definitely not an accident. I want to begin by telling you, two weeks ago, the Lord told me in the temple, that I needed to spend the rest of my days using my talents to make Joseph Smith famous. I have been blessed with so many opportunities all across the world but I never felt satisfied. Have you ever felt like that before that your talents are not being used for the right way.

I asked myself a simple question while in the temple and I said, "What am I supposed to do now?" I had been praying because I felt unfulfilled even though I have been blessed to use my music. I asked the Lord to reveal to me what I should do specifically. That is when I got my answer to make Joseph Smith famous through what the Lord has blessed me with. I didn't understand quite what that meant.

No sooner had I opened my eyes from that prayer in the celestial room a gentleman is standing in front of me. He said, "I don't know if you remember me but my name is Michael Kennedy Jr. fourth great grandson of Joseph Smith Jr and Emma Hale Smith. I asked him to repeat what he just said.

I couldn't remember him. All I knew was the guy in front of me was glowing. I was in shock. What is the gap between when you pray and you receive your answer. There are people who have been praying for years for an answer. Now I knew I could not turn back.

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Michael Kennedy Jr.  
introducing Alex Boye



Alex Boye and Michael Kennedy Jr.

Michael Kennedy Jr. was standing by Alex. He took the microphone and added, “While he was there. This is the scripture he showed me. Doctrine and Covenants 6:18 “Therefore be diligent; stand by my servant Joseph, faithfully, in whatsoever difficult circumstances he may be for the word’s sake.” I hope that as he shares his testimony you remember the scripture because you are the blood Joseph Sr. his father. His father was a servant also. The word is Christ.

Alex continued, “So out of two or three witnesses. I had scripture, confirmation in my heart, and Michael right there in the Mount Timpanogos Temple.”

“Now, if you go back to COVID times. A little before that, I manager auditioned me for a Broadway musical called Hamilton. Has anyone heard of that? My manager told me, “I sent a video to them and they called back and want to see you. I need you to fly to New York this afternoon. I got you your ticket.” I turn up at the theater. One day I am watching the whole cast of Hamilton for a sound check. It was the coolest experience. From then on I started shadowing the leads. I did that for a year and a half going back and forth. The roles I was trying to get, there were 2,300 people ahead of me. I kept thinking, why am I here? I was feeling like it would be the millennium before getting my chance. But the feeling kept telling me to keep going. After a year and a half I signed a contract but I wasn’t allowed to tell anyone that I was doing this.

I am working with all these incredible stars like Lin-Manuel Miranda and all these incredible people. I was having a great experience and I was learning so much. I would stand by the stage and shadowing and watching. Anyway, after a year and a half, I get a phone call from the director. He said, “I don’t know why I am going to do this because there are like 2,000 people in front of you but I have decided to give you a shot. We would like you to play Aaron Burr, you are the one who gets to shoot Hamilton every night. That was the role I was given. I was so excited. I talked with my family and I was going to the Manhattan Ward and they hooked me up with an apartment. Then two weeks before my call date, COVID hit.

[The crowd responds in sad whispers.]

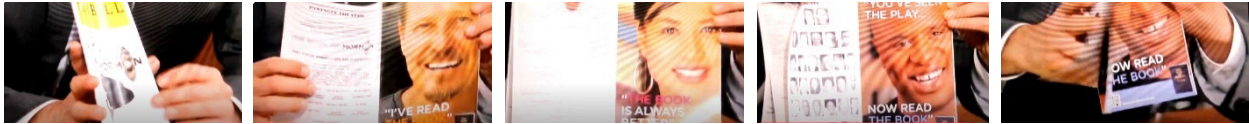
I joined the church when I was 16 years old. I don’t see myself as a murmuring type of saint. I got down on my knees and asked, “Why? This is it. This is my chance to support my family. Maybe this is the thing that will finally complete me and allow me to feel like all I have done for all these years was an amalgamation for this one thing – this is it.” The Lord said, “No, that’s not.” Then I said, “I know there is always a reason for something. No matter what happens in our lives there is always a special reason. In the hardest situations there is a reason. If someone betrays us or harms us there is a reason. Surely there is a reason for this. Could you please reveal to me what it is.” The Lord said, “Well, no. Not yet. But, what I want you to do is study Lin-Manuel.” I said, “Ok. Yes, I get to study him. Then I was I have studied him for three months and nothing is happening.”

Then one day, I get a message from a friend of mine. He said, “Alex, you are on Jimmy Kimmel. I was thinking, “I think I would have known if I was on Jimmy Kimmel.”

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Jimmy Kimmel was interviewing the creators of the Book of Mormon musical. Jimmy was congratulating them on the success of the musical. He said, "It's winner Tony awards all over the world. Tell me, do Mormons come and watch this?" The creators said, "Oh, they come all the time, they clap, they cheer." Then Jimmy said, "You know, there is something I am really impressed about. Something that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints did. They put an add in the playbill." So, during intermission when you are reading the playbill they put a picture that said, "You have seen the play. Now go read the book." My face holding the Book of Mormon in the playbill. Apparently, it has been there for about 10 years. I had no idea because I haven't seen the play. They did a close up of the picture and then Jimmy Kimmel said, "I didn't know they had black people in the Mormon church." The whole audience at NBC cracks up in laughter.

Screenshots from Jimmy Kimmel holding the playbill showing the several page ad for the Book of Mormon Musical:



Alex Boye was the last page with the longest screen time

That was part of the back story. I had been having all these experiences and it felt like something was going on. I was in the Tabernacle Choir for eight years and that changed my life. There were three black people in the choir at that time. We used to call ourselves three pieces of licorish in a sea of marshmallows. Or we would call ourselves the three amigos or the three Nephites. We used to have fun with that. There were certain experiences in this choir that was building me up and preparing me for something else. It is easier to connect the dots when you look back and hard to connect the dots before.

I decided that if I wasn't supposed to do the Hamilton play, then there has to be something better. When the Lord rejects you on something he gives you something better. When things are hard – get ready, there is something coming.

I am sitting in remote Sacramento meeting one day, a couple of weeks after COVID, and I was praying asking what everything means. This scripture came to my mind – Doctrine and Covenants 90:11. "For it shall come to pass in that day, that every man shall hear the fulness of the gospel in his own tongue, and in his own language, through those who are ordained unto this power, by the administration of the Comforter, shed forth upon them for the revelation of Jesus Christ."



I always knew what language means (you see it right before us). Where are all the returned missionaries? Let's say you go to Japan. You will wear Japanese glasses. They also have Japanese culture

glasses that are different. So, I am thinking in their own language. Then I wonder – what does tongue mean?

Then I had this strong feeling. Tongue is culture. If you teach someone in their language and their culture the spirit is even stronger.

Lin-Manuel Miranda was being interviewed by 60 Minutes or something. It was very short. In the interview he was asked how he was able to do this amazing feat. Lin-Manuel looked at the interviewer and said, “It is really simple. I took the story of our founding fathers and I used a medium to tell the story in a way it never has before. I used the most popular style of music in our culture today – love it or like it – hip hop, rap, and R&B.



Then I thought, what if I were to tell the story of our founding father and use the most popular music or culture today. So, I went to work. I put a cast of about 300 people together. I wanted to tell the story of Brother Smith. While I was preparing this, I got a phone call from a gentleman who was a professor of religion at both BYU and UVU. He said, “Alex, we need to talk.” He took me to dinner. He showed me a website of the stories of black saints and pioneers that joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints over the period of a hundred years.

The first one’s name was Black Pete. He was a slave. His slave owners were members of the church. He was told if he joined the church, they would set him free. He joined the church, they set him free. I start reading these stories. There is one, a gentleman, he came from Cincinnati and walked 1200 miles. By the time he got into the Salt Lake Valley, these people were bloody with no shoes. With his whole family –

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kids, wife, cousins, uncles, they all turned up. They knocked on Joseph Smith's door, Emma had them come in. She took care of them. The man who was an ex-slave was an undertaker. They took care of him.

When Joseph and Hyrum were martyred, the apostles asked this black man because he was an undertaker, to dig two graves. He did. The amazing thing with these two graves and he thought with inspiration, "Dig two more." So, he did. The mob came and desecrated the two graves. Joseph and Hyrum were already taken care of and this man saved their bodies. I had no idea about this.

I asked, "Where did you get all this information from?" He said, "It is right there in the church archives. It is real – holy. It is all there." Now I had hundreds of stories and thought to myself, what if I use these stories of how they lived and died with the testimonies."

(He told the story of Gobo Fango (Xhosa Tribe) was born at the Eastern Cape Colony of South Africa around 1855.) One lady was pregnant and couldn't keep her baby. She decided to go to one of the richest plantations with her kid and hid her kid in a crack of a maple tree. The matriarch of the house, steps out. She was a white very wealthy South African who had slaves. She heard this crying. She saw this little black baby and took him in and cared for him. Now the baby is eight years old, and the missionaries knock on their door. They decide to go to the states but have to hide him. He became a free prominent farmer in Idaho. He lived next to a white farmer who was stealing sheep. This white farmer shot this man, and he walked a long way and asked the people he found for a pen and paper. He wrote out a last will and testament. He left \$200 to the "needy poor of Grantsville City, Tooele County, Utah Territory," as well as several donations of less than \$100 to Hunter family members. He also left half of his estate (\$500) to the Salt Lake Temple Construction Fund. What an incredible testimony.

I am going to close with a song I have written. I wanted to call it American Prophet, but the name didn't sit right. I have been working with all these hip hop and rap producers in Burbank, California. I have been having them get me music like you would hear on the radio today. One of them was saying, "What you doing, man. What songs you want to write?" I was like, "Don't worry about it. Just give me the music."

Finally, we recorded this one song called, Lamb to the Slaughter. Joseph and Hyrum are heading to Carthage, and they are in chains. Joseph sings this song about how he is as peaceful as a summer's morning. I wrote a song about that. While I was in the studio all the words started coming to me so I had to tell this guy what it is about. This huge guy with silver on his teeth. He makes music for some of the biggest rap artists. I was almost high from the marijuana smoke, and I was writing songs about Joseph Smith. It was a very interesting experience.

I told this producer this is about a man named Joseph Smith, a leader back in the 1800's. He changed the fabric of the world. He was a white man who wasn't racist. He said, "You have to tell me more about this." I asked him if he had a choir that we could put together. He brings in Stevie's choir and they are singing the background. I asked who is Stevie? He said, "Stevie Wonder." So, we have Stevie Wonder's choir on this song about Joseph Smith.

We are going to change the title from American Prophet because of this Homie. He asked, "You mean this Joseph Smith Brother was a mayor, the head of a militia, he was a church leader, he was a prophet? He sounds like the King of New York." So, I am calling this musical, The King of New York. Everything that happened to Joseph Smith in New York changed the fabric of the world. I want this to go to Broadway and I want to call it the Real Book of Mormon Musical.

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Alex asked the kids to come up and sing with him, “Heaven will never, stop fighting for you.” He also had the crowd sing portions. What a memorable experience everyone had.



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Michael Kennedy, Jr., Alex Boye, and Steve Orton during the Saturday Event at West High School



Dan Adams helping and the youth singing with Alex



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Alex Boye signed our Smith helping hands banner – now adopted





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