

Ensign



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Hope of Zion, by Miroslava Menssen-Bezakova

Many Latter-day Saints traveled west to the Salt Lake Valley in the mid-19th century. Years before, on August 1, 1831, the Prophet Joseph Smith spoke to the Saints in Missouri, giving them hope for their future in Missouri and for their eventual trek west.

In a revelation to the Prophet, the Lord said:

“For after much tribulation come the blessings. Wherefore the

day cometh that ye shall be crowned with much glory; the hour is not yet, but is nigh at hand.

“Remember this, which I tell you before, that you may lay it to heart, and receive that which is to follow” (D&C 58:4–5).

Here we see some of those who remained faithful, and they represent all who moved forward in faith to build Zion.



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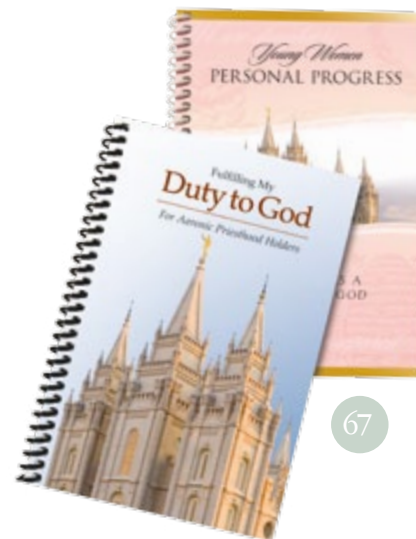
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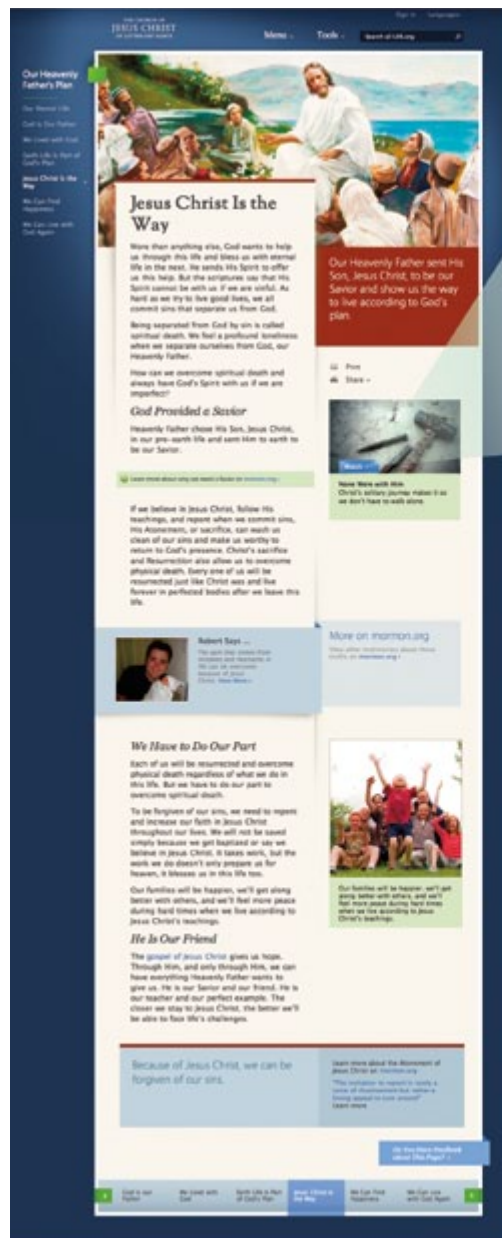
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By President
Dieter F. Uchtdorf
Second Counselor in the
First Presidency



BROTHER, I'm Committed

Two young brothers stood atop a small cliff that overlooked the pristine waters of a blue lake. This was a popular diving spot, and the brothers had often talked about making the jump—something they had seen others do.

Although they both wanted to make the jump, neither one wanted to be first. The height of the cliff wasn't that great, but to the two young boys, it seemed the distance increased whenever they started to lean forward—and their courage was fading fast.

Finally, one brother put one foot at the edge of the cliff and moved decisively forward. At that moment his brother whispered, "Maybe we should wait until next summer."

The first brother's momentum, however, was already pulling him forward. "Brother," he responded, "I'm committed!"

He splashed into the water and surfaced quickly with a victorious shout. The second brother followed instantly. Afterward, they both laughed about the first boy's final words before plunging into the water: "Brother, I'm committed."

Commitment is a little like diving into the water. Either you are committed or you are not. Either you are moving forward or you are standing still. There's no halfway. We all face moments of decision that change the rest of our lives. As members of the Church, we must ask ourselves, "Will I dive in or just stand at the edge? Will I step forward or merely test the temperature of the water with my toes?"

Some sins are committed because we do wrong; other sins are committed because we do nothing. Being only sort

of committed to the gospel can lead to frustration, unhappiness, and guilt. This should not apply to us because we are a covenant people. We make covenants with the Lord when we are baptized and when we enter the house of the Lord. Men make covenants with the Lord when they are ordained to the priesthood. Nothing can be more important than keeping a commitment we have made with the Lord. Let us remember the reply of Rachel and Leah to Jacob in the Old Testament. It was simple and straightforward and showed their commitment: "Whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do" (Genesis 31:16).

Those who are only sort of committed may expect to only sort of receive the blessings of testimony, joy, and peace. The windows of heaven might only be sort of open to them. Wouldn't it be foolish to think, "I'll commit myself 50 percent now, but when Christ appears at the Second Coming, I'll commit myself 100 percent"?

Commitment to our covenants with the Lord is a fruit of our conversion. Commitment to our Savior and His Church builds our character and strengthens our spirit so that when we meet Christ, He will embrace us and say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21).

There is a difference between intention and action. Those who only intend to commit may find excuses at every turn. Those who truly commit face their challenges squarely and say to themselves, "Yes, that would be a very good reason to delay, but I made covenants, and so I will do what I have committed to do." They search the scriptures and earnestly seek the guidance of their Father in Heaven. They accept and magnify their Church callings.



They attend their meetings. They do their home or visiting teaching.

A German proverb says, “Promises are like the full moon. If they are not kept at once, they diminish day by day.” As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we have committed to walk in the path of discipleship. We have committed to follow the example of our Savior. Imagine how the world will be blessed and transformed for good when all members of the Lord’s Church live up to their true potential—converted in the depth of their souls and committed to building the kingdom of God.

In some way, each of us stands at a decision point overlooking the water. It is my prayer that we will have faith, move forward, face our fears and doubts with courage, and say to ourselves, “I’m committed!” ■

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

One way to help learners understand gospel principles is to have them draw pictures. Drawing allows them to explore and express their understanding and feelings of gospel stories and principles” (*Teaching, No Greater Call* [1999], 166). Consider reading the article, discussing the principle of commitment to the gospel, and then asking those who wish to do so to draw a picture of a gospel activity that demonstrates commitment. Younger children may need suggestions about what to draw.

YOUTH

All I Can Give

By Alyssa Hansen

I was stressing about how I was going to pay for the things I wanted to do over the summer: classes, workshops, summer camps, and so on. I thought I was going to cry. Then I remembered all the things I'd been taught about having trust and faith in the Lord. I decided to put the situation in the Lord's hands and trust that if it was His will, He would provide a way.

Not too long after that, my mom

found an uncashed check from a job I had had earlier that year, and the very next day I got a small cash prize in the mail for taking second place in a competition. This was a great testimony to me that God does live, that He loves and cares about me and will provide.

I was so filled with gratitude and love for my Heavenly Father and Savior. I felt as if I might burst! I longed to show how thankful I was,

to praise God the best that I could, and to share that feeling. Others have done this by composing a song, writing a poem, or painting a picture, but I felt inadequate to do any of those things. I realized the only thing I could give that would be adequate praise would be my life—to be “an example of the believers” (1 Timothy 4:12), to give my life to Christ. That's all He asks, and that's all I can give.

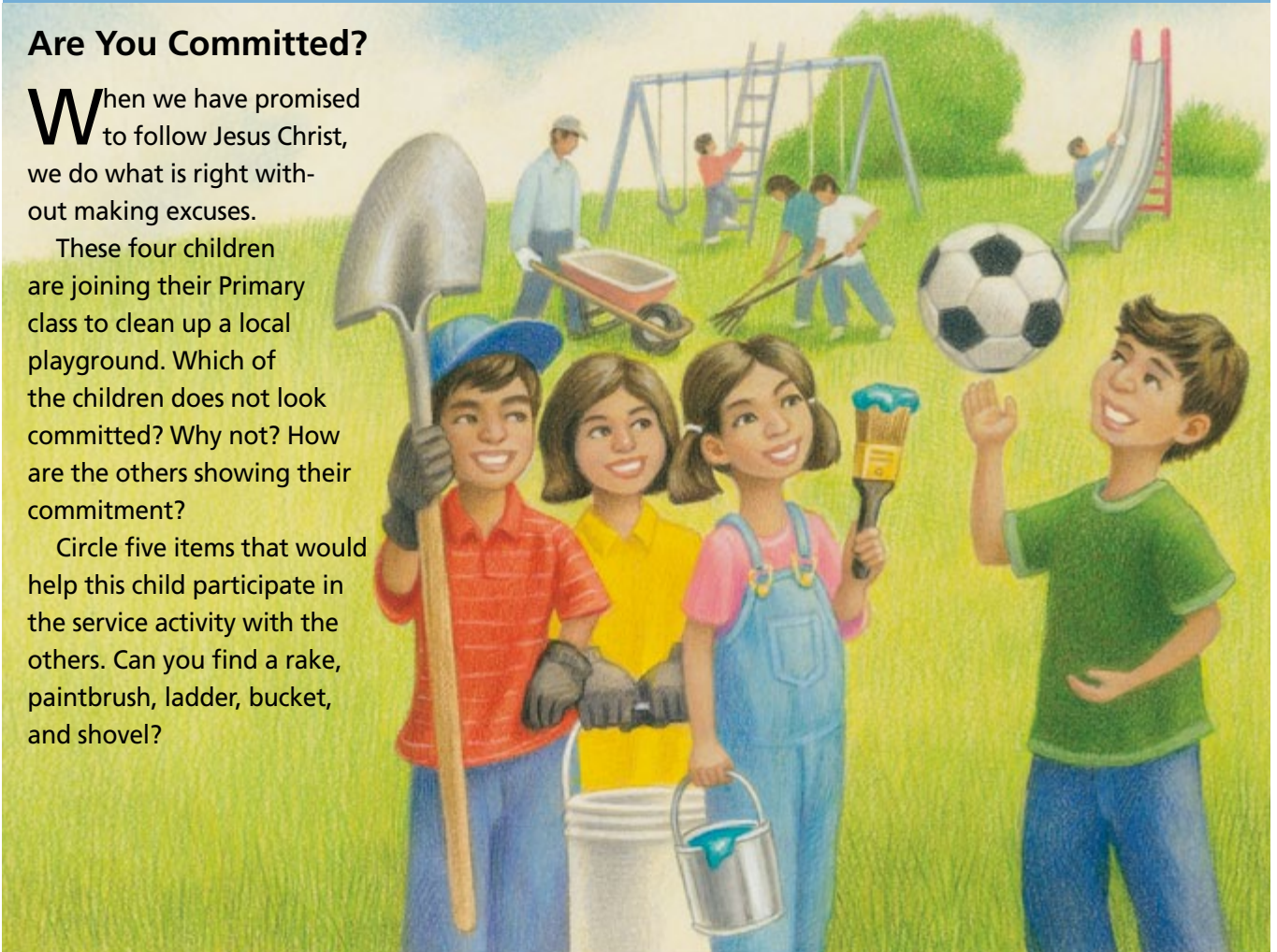
CHILDREN

Are You Committed?

When we have promised to follow Jesus Christ, we do what is right without making excuses.

These four children are joining their Primary class to clean up a local playground. Which of the children does not look committed? Why not? How are the others showing their commitment?

Circle five items that would help this child participate in the service activity with the others. Can you find a rake, paintbrush, ladder, bucket, and shovel?





Faith • Family • Relief

Come to the Temple and Claim Your Blessings

Study this material and, as appropriate, discuss it with the sisters you visit. Use the questions to help you strengthen your sisters and to make Relief Society an active part of your own life.

Sisters, we are most blessed. The Savior stands at the head of this Church. We are led by living prophets. We have the holy scriptures. And we have many holy temples throughout the world where we can obtain the ordinances necessary to help us return to our Heavenly Father.

We go first to the temple for ourselves. “The primary purpose of the temple,” explained Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “is to provide the ordinances necessary for our exaltation in the celestial kingdom. Temple ordinances guide us to our Savior and give us the blessings that come to us through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Temples are the greatest university of learning known to man, giving us knowledge and wisdom about the Creation of the world.

Endowment instructions give guidance as to how we should conduct our lives here in mortality. . . . The ordinance consists of a series of instructions on how we should live and covenants we make to live righteously by following our Savior.”¹

But our temple service does not end there. President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught: “Acting as proxy for someone who has gone beyond the veil, you will have reviewed before you the covenants that you have made. You will have reinforced in your mind the great spiritual blessings that are associated with the house of the Lord. . . . In the covenants and ordinances center the blessings that you may claim in the holy temple.”²

Come to the temple and then come again. Making and keeping temple covenants will keep us on course to the greatest of all blessings—eternal life.

Barbara Thompson, second counselor in the Relief Society general presidency.

From the Scriptures

Isaiah 2:3; 1 Corinthians 11:11; Revelation 7:13–15; Doctrine and Covenants 109

What Can I Do?

1. What experience will I share to strengthen those I visit in their determination to “come to the temple”?
2. How can I personally claim the blessings of the temple?

For more information, go to www.reliefsociety.lds.org.

From Our History

The Prophet Joseph often spoke to Relief Society sisters at their meetings. With the Nauvoo Temple under construction, the Prophet instructed the sisters in doctrine, preparing them to receive more knowledge through temple ordinances. In 1842 he said to Mercy Fielding Thompson that the endowment “will bring you out of darkness into marvelous light.”³

An estimated 6,000 Latter-day Saints received temple ordinances before the exodus from Nauvoo. President Brigham Young (1801–77) said, “Such has been the anxiety manifested by the saints to receive the ordinances [of the temple], and such the anxiety on our part to administer to them, that I have given myself up entirely to the work of the Lord in the Temple night and day, not taking more than four hours sleep, upon an average, per day, and going home but once a week.”⁴ The strength and power of temple covenants fortified the Saints as they left their city and temple for a journey into the unknown.

NOTES

1. Robert D. Hales, “Blessings of the Temple,” *Liahona*, Oct. 2009, 14; *Ensign*, Oct. 2009, 48.
2. Boyd K. Packer, *The Holy Temple* (1980), 170, 171.
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 414.
4. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* (1997), 299.



WORK IS AN ETERNAL PRINCIPLE

Our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ worked to create the heavens and the earth. They created the sun, the moon, and the stars. They gathered the seas and caused the dry land to appear and the plants to grow. Then They created every living thing in the sea and on the land. (See Genesis 1; Moses 2.) Their example shows us that work is important in heaven and on earth. (See also John 5:17; 9:4.)

When God created man and woman in His own image, He placed them in the Garden of Eden (see Genesis 1:26–27; 2:8). Later, when they were cast out of the garden, the Lord said to Adam, “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread” (Genesis 3:19). From that time on, Adam and Eve worked to provide for their own needs and the needs of their children (see Moses 5:1).

Since the time of Adam and Eve, work has been a way of life for all of us on earth. We work to provide for the physical, spiritual, and emotional well-being of ourselves and our families. Parents strive to establish homes where principles of work are taught. Giving children work assignments that fit their abilities and praising their successes help them have positive work experiences. As a result, they

can develop a strong work ethic, a good attitude, and basic skills.

We should also seek to find the proper balance between work and rest. Six days a week, blessings can come to us as we remember to mix work with activities that refresh us. On Sundays, however, the Lord promises us special blessings as we obey His commandment to refrain from our temporal work and keep the Sabbath day holy (see Exodus 20:9–11; D&C 59:9–19).

Work is a part of our Heavenly Father’s plan for us in heaven and on earth. If we are righteous, we will return to live with Him. There we will continue to have opportunities to work as we help build the kingdom of God (see Moses 1:39). ■

As we help one another and share the burden of our work, even the heaviest load becomes lighter.



We are responsible to care for ourselves and our families.



1. Parents have a sacred duty to care for their children (see D&C 83).



2. Children will be blessed as they care for their aging parents (see 1 Timothy 5:3–4, 8).



3. We should help members of our extended family when possible.



1. We strengthen our character and develop work skills.



2. We feel the joy of God's plan for us on earth.

Blessings come to us as a result of work.



3. We become more prepared and self-reliant as we build a three-month supply of food, water, and other necessities.

“Let [man] labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth” (Ephesians 4:28).

For more information, see *Gospel Principles* (2009), 155–60; and “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.

DRINK DEEPLY OF THE Living Water



HE IS THE LIVING WATER

“Do you wish to partake of this living water [spoken of in John 4:14] and experience that divine well springing up within you to everlasting life?

“Then be not afraid. Believe with all your hearts. Develop an unshakable faith in the Son of God. Let your hearts reach out in earnest prayer. Fill your minds with knowledge of Him. Forsake your weaknesses. Walk in holiness and harmony with the commandments.

“Drink deeply of the living waters of the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Abundant Life,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2006, 100.

“Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst” (John 4:14).

By Matthew Heaps

Welfare Services

My employment takes me to communities all over the world where people do not have access to clean water. Our group works with local governments and residents to provide maintainable sources of pure, life-sustaining water such as wells and spring or rain captures.

These water projects offer a significant improvement in the quality of life. Health drastically improves because clean water stops the contraction of typhoid, cholera, and other water-borne diseases. The economy also improves because parents and children who previously spent their time carrying water can now pursue employment and education. Even in communities with numerous and wide-ranging problems, people always say that clean water is what they would like most.

The Savior spent His earthly ministry in a time and place where people relied on wells for water. As He taught the woman at the well by saying that “whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall

give him shall never thirst” (John 4:14), was He also teaching us that His gospel quenches—permanently—our most basic needs? I believe so.

I will always be grateful to a woman in Kenya, Africa, who taught me about willingness to work to obtain water. I met her at a celebration following the installation of a well in her community. With gratitude she told me that the new well would cut her daily nine-mile (14 km) trip to get water to a one-mile (1.6 km) trip. She was overjoyed at the opportunities that would now be hers.

I couldn’t help but think how I would feel if I had to walk a mile to get water. I was impressed that she put everything—from housework to gardening—aside while she made her journey to fetch water. She knew she couldn’t complete the other tasks without that water. I thought about how heavy her burden was. Carrying water takes strength and endurance. Yet, for the sake of her family, she was willing to walk nine miles every day to get it.



The Savior taught, “Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14).

I wonder if we who get clean water from taps in our homes sometimes expect to come unto Christ with the same ease as turning a knob to get a glass of water. Or are we willing to put aside other tasks, even important ones, to seek to know Jesus Christ and His Father?

I know that the well of living water the Savior offers us never runs dry and is pure and life sustaining. When we come to Him with an empty cup, He will fill it, often beyond our capacity to receive. He is truly living water, a manifestation of the love of God. ■

WHAT IS THE LIVING WATER?

- The living water is the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- “The fountain of living waters . . . [is] a representation of the love of God” (1 Nephi 11:25).
- Living water can bring us “everlasting life” (John 4:14; D&C 63:23).

For more information on this topic, see 1 Nephi 8; 11; and Richard G. Scott, “The Transforming Power of Faith and Character,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 43.

HOW DOES THE LIVING WATER BLESS US?

Kathleen H. Hughes, former first counselor in the Relief Society general presidency, helped answer this question in her general conference talk “Blessed by Living Water” (*Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2003, 13).

1. The living water heals us through the power of the Holy Ghost.
2. The living water nourishes and sustains us (see Matthew 11:28).
3. The living water brings peace and joy (see John 14:27; D&C 101:16).

Consider reading 1 Nephi 11:25 with your family or a friend. Discuss the relationship between the fountain of living waters and the tree of life.



T-I-M-E SPELLS LOVE

By Breanna Olaveson

Church Magazines

Families are as diverse as individuals. The activities they do together vary, but one thing is true for all of them: as President Dieter F. Uchtdorf said, “In family relationships *love* is really spelled *t-i-m-e*, time.”¹ Whether family members get together for scheduled outings, sharing interests, or serving others, these gatherings strengthen relationships that can be eternal. The families below share what they’ve learned about making time together a priority.

Individual Attention

Leyla Williams of Virginia, USA, understands that children need one-on-one interaction just as much as adults, so she and her husband make it a priority to schedule time with them.

“My husband and I came up with our ‘Mommy and Me’ or ‘Daddy and Me’ dates with our five children,” Leyla says. “We would take them out—one at a time—for an evening or afternoon together. Sometimes it was dinner, sometimes bowling, sometimes just an ice cream cone or playing at the playground. But it was always a chance to stay close to them as they grew and to keep lines of communication open.

“As our children got older, the conversations we had on these ‘dates’ would turn to problems they were having with school, friends, siblings, and—yes—even their

parents! Sometimes the conversations went deeper into struggles with certain commandments or their testimonies. Because we started when they were young, our teenage children were more comfortable broaching subjects that others their age might have found very difficult to discuss with a parent.

“Now that our older children are blazing through their teenage years, and all the activities that entails, we use it as a time to reconnect and reestablish those close relationships. Our kids look forward to it and like to plan their own activities. And with everyone headed in all different directions, I can look forward to those golden moments of having my children’s undivided attention for at least an hour or so.”

“When I’m Home, I’m Home”

Joe Staples of Utah, USA, sometimes found it challenging to keep an appropriate balance between his profession and his home life.

“Like many people, I had a natural tendency to want to excel, to do well, to get the next promotion—all worthy goals,” he says. “However, too often that ambition can come at the expense of family time.”

So, Joe set a rule that has helped him keep things in perspective and give his family the attention they need.





Grandparents can make a huge difference through an investment of quality time with their grandchildren.

“Early in my career I set a personal rule that has helped me tremendously. In a nutshell, it has been, ‘When I’m home, I’m home.’ For me that meant not coming home from work simply to do more work. Not checking e-mail on the weekend. Not taking business calls at my home. I try to make a clear distinction between my work life and my time with family. This approach didn’t detract from my ambitions at work, and there were occasional exceptions, but in general this simple rule created an environment where I could be an engaged and involved father during my all-important time at home.”

Redefining “Date Night”

Bob and Suellen Weiler of Georgia, USA, have learned through many years of marriage that while some things are nonnegotiable, that doesn’t mean “family time” can’t be redefined. When it comes to date night, they know that the activity isn’t the most important part.

“As a couple, we have had to redefine ‘date night’ many times over the years,” Suellen says. “Now and then we actually do the dinner-and-a-movie thing, but many times we count running errands together, an emergency visit to one of the families he home teaches, or going to the hospital to give a blessing as our date. Our experience is that a chat over ice cream can make any outing a ‘date!’”

Sharing Interests

Making family a priority can be a challenge at any phase of life, but once children are grown and grandchildren live far away, it can be particularly difficult to spend time with family members. One grandmother was determined to spend time with her grandchildren, even though it was difficult.

“Refusing to be robbed of the ties and strength that come from my bright grandchildren, I decided to fight back. Grandmas can do that, you know,” says Joan Bone of Utah.

Joan decided to set aside a day to spend time with her grandchildren who lived nearby, but she had difficulty deciding what they should do together. She considered the activities her grandchildren liked, but Joan wanted to do something they could all enjoy—grandma and grandchildren alike.

“A wonderful inspiration came to me,” she says. “It was, ‘Share with them what *you* like, what *you* do. They get plenty of the activities that they do.’”

“As we piled out of the car and gathered into my kitchen on the appointed day, the earthy aroma of wheat and yeast greeted us. The table was ready. The dough was prepared, and the boys’ eyes grew wide as I released it onto the table. My grandsons each took a portion and pushed, pulled, smacked, and rolled it. They smelled the dough and rubbed it against their cheeks. We laughed and talked and kneaded. We each formed a loaf and set it aside to rise again (if the yeast survived the intense workout the boys gave it) while we ate fried scones made from the extra dough. With honey dripping through our fingers, we enjoyed each other’s company and love.”

A Family Calling

The Ashby family from Utah has learned that serving in Church callings doesn’t need

to distract from family time. They often find ways to help their father fulfill his Church calling while still spending time together as a family.

“When my husband was set apart as bishop, we decided that our young family would seek out opportunities to combine family time and his calling whenever possible,” Lisa Ashby said. “We began ‘family visit nights,’ where we visit ward members to let them know we are thinking of them. We take homemade goodies to them on Sunday evenings or invite them over for dinner or family home evening.”

Together Forever

While it can be easy to get caught up in planning activities and coordinating schedules, it's significant to remember why families are important. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” states, “The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave.”² Thus, strengthening those relationships helps us prepare for eternal life.

We can teach our children these important principles by holding family prayer and family home evening, going to church, keeping the commandments, reading the scriptures together, and keeping the focus of all these activities on the temple.

No matter how busy we are, these efforts will make a difference. As Lisa Ashby explains, “Finding time within our callings or responsibilities to include the family brings great strength, deepens testimonies, softens hearts, and builds a strong foundation of faith and service.” ■

NOTES

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Of Things That Matter Most,” *Liahona* or *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 22.
2. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liahona* or *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.



TIME PASSES QUICKLY

“Near the end of his life, one father looked back on how he had spent his time on earth. An acclaimed, respected author of numerous scholarly works, he said, ‘I wish I had written one less book and taken my children fishing more often.’

“Time passes quickly. Many parents say that it seems like yesterday that their children were born. Now those children are grown, perhaps with children of their own. ‘Where did the years go?’ they ask. We cannot call back time that is past, we cannot stop time that now is, and we cannot experience the future in our present state. Time is a gift, a treasure not to be put aside for the future but to be used wisely in the present.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Dedication Day,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 66.

Inviting the Spirit through hymns helps unite families.



START Moving

By Elder Von G. Keetch

Area Seventy, Utah Salt Lake City Area

A story is told of a group of smoke jumpers. These brave men and women fight forest fires by parachuting onto the ground above a fire and fighting it from the top down, while others fight it from below.

During one particularly large forest fire, an elite team of smoke jumpers assembled for a briefing before taking off in their airplane. The dispatcher—a wise and experienced firefighter—told the smoke jumpers that things were very volatile and that he could not give them precise instructions. Rather, the dispatcher instructed, the smoke jumpers should contact him by radio once they had parachuted onto the ridge above the fire. Then he would give them instructions as to the course they should take to begin to fight.

Quickly the smoke jumpers took off in their plane, parachuted onto the ridge above the raging fire, and assembled themselves for action. As they viewed the fire from above, they could see half a dozen possible paths they could take to begin their work.

In keeping with their agreement with the dispatcher, the leader of the team took out a handheld radio, found

Relaxing on the ridge may seem a safe way to avoid making mistakes, but it's also a way to avoid making progress.

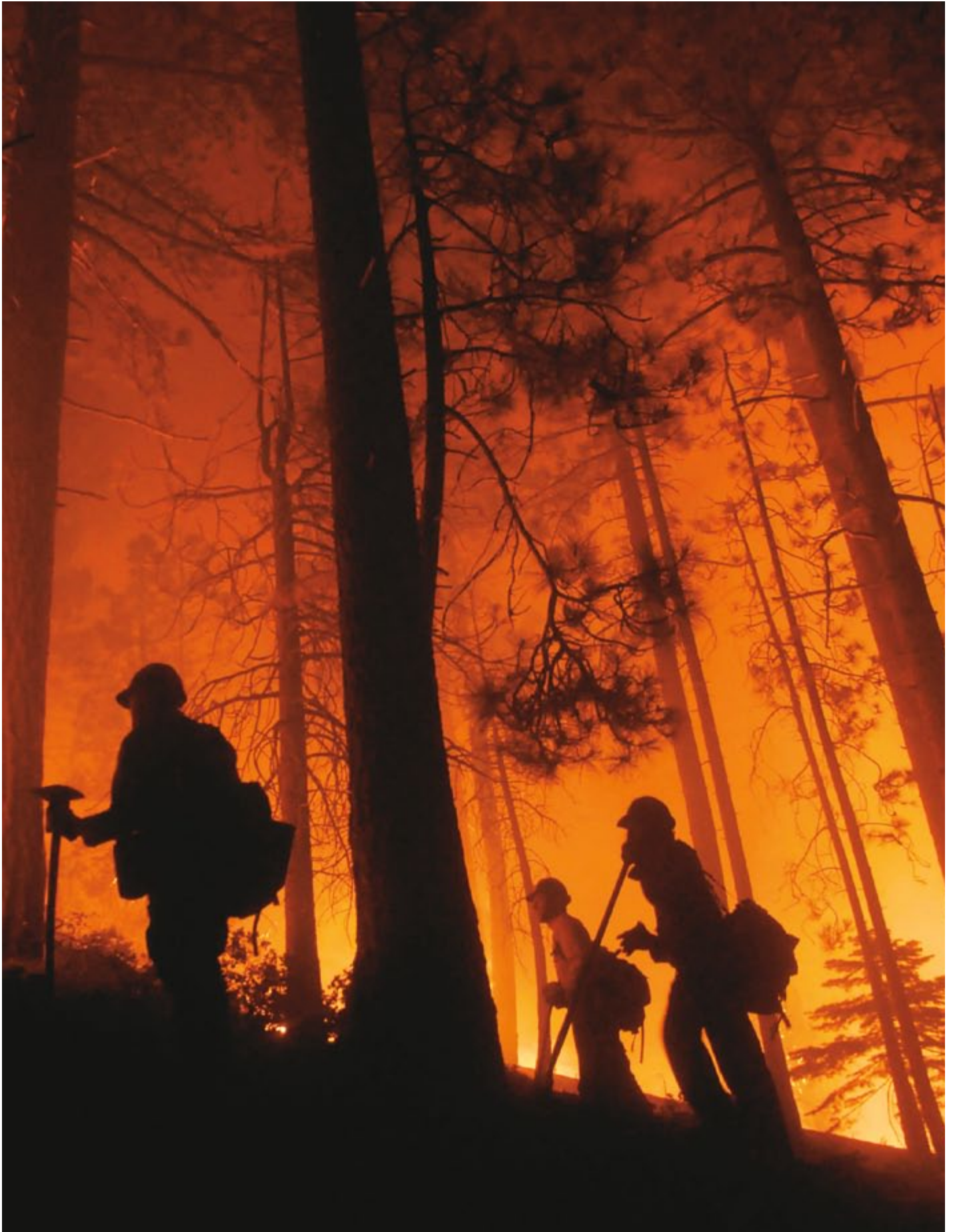
the proper frequency, and called the dispatcher to request instructions as to which path to take. But only static came back from the radio; they could not hear the dispatcher at all.

Presuming that the dispatcher was busy with other tasks, the smoke jumpers decided to wait 10 minutes and try again. But when they tried the dispatcher the second time, they received the same result—dead air and static and no instructions.

The smoke jumpers conferred with each other. They could still see several paths down the mountain that would put them in a good position to fight the fire. But they were concerned that they didn't have any direction from the dispatcher. They worried that if they started moving down the path that looked best to them, they might actually be moving counter to the course the dispatcher wanted them to take and they would be forced to retrace their steps.

So they decided to wait on top of the ridge. Fifteen minutes later they tried the dispatcher again. Nothing. They took off their backpacks and found a place to sit down. Thirty minutes became an hour; an hour became two hours. They regularly tried to contact the dispatcher. But as before, they received only static in return.

The smoke jumpers decided to eat lunch. After that, when they still couldn't contact the dispatcher, they reclined on their backpacks and took a nap. They were frustrated. If the dispatcher would just pay some attention to them and tell them which way to go, they would happily follow that course and begin their firefighting efforts. But the dispatcher seemed to be ignoring them, probably preoccupied with others. And they had decided that they weren't going to move without the dispatcher's directions. After all, those directions had been promised to them before they parachuted onto the ridge.



PHOTOGRAPH © LANDOV

Seven hours after the smoke jumpers arrived at the top of the ridge, a weary crew chief from the group fighting the fire farther down the mountain came up the trail and found the smoke jumpers. He was flabbergasted. Approaching their leader, he asked, “What are you doing lounging around on the ridge? We really needed your help. The fire almost got away from us because we didn’t have help to contain it. And all this time you’ve just been relaxing up here on the ridge?”

The lead smoke jumper explained their predicament to the crew chief. They had been promised instructions from the dispatcher. They had been vigilant in trying to obtain those instructions. But the dispatcher had ignored them, never responding to their calls. True, they could see several paths down to the fire. But they were afraid they would take the wrong one. So they decided to wait until they had the promised instructions from the dispatcher.

The crew chief held out his hand and took the small radio the smoke jumpers had been using. He then walked about 50 yards (45 m) down one of the paths that led toward the fire. He stopped and tried the radio. The dispatcher’s voice came through loud and clear. The crew chief then walked back to the top of the ridge and traveled about 50 yards (45 m) farther down another path. He stopped and called the dispatcher. Again the dispatcher’s voice came back immediately.

The best and clearest direction comes in our lives not when we are just waiting for our Heavenly Father to send help and guidance but when we are anxiously engaged with our back bent to the task.



The crew chief hiked back to the smoke jumpers and tossed the radio to the leader, saying, “You are in a dead spot. All you had to do was start moving down one of the trails, and the dispatcher could have easily given you course corrections and brought you right into the spot where we needed you. Instead you lounged up here, and you were totally worthless to us.”

Often in our need for spiritual guidance and direction, we can be tempted to do exactly what the smoke jumpers did. We find ourselves in unfamiliar territory. We see several paths available to us, and we’re not sure which one to take. We have been promised inspiration and help from our Heavenly Father. But it doesn’t always come immediately. We grow frustrated and decide we are simply going to sit down and wait until the

promised guidance comes. We wait and we wait and we wait, wondering why the divine Dispatcher doesn’t help us with our course.

In so doing, we ignore an important principle of revelation. Our Father in Heaven expects us to use our own intelligence, ability, and experience to chart our initial course. As we press forward along the path we have chosen, we are in a much better position to receive the course corrections He may have for us. But if we simply plop down on the ridge and recline on our backpacks until He gives us instruction, we risk finding ourselves in a spiritual dead spot.

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has taught us:

“We are expected to use the light and knowledge we already possess

to work out our lives. We should not need a revelation to instruct us to be up and about our duty, for we have been told to do that already in the scriptures; nor should we expect revelation to replace the spiritual or temporal intelligence which we have already received—only to extend it. We must go about our life in an ordinary, workaday way, following the routines and rules and regulations that govern life.

“Rules and regulations and commandments are valuable protection. If we need revealed instruction to alter our course, it will be waiting along the way as we arrive at the point of need.”¹

I testify that the best and clearest direction comes in our lives not when we are just waiting for our Heavenly Father to send help and guidance but when we are anxiously engaged with our back bent to the task. To those of you who are waiting upon the Lord for guidance in your lives—who need help with a major decision or question—I give you this challenge: Prayerfully and carefully use your own intelligence and your own resources to choose a path that seems right to you. Then become anxiously engaged in walking that path (see D&C 58:26–28). When the time for course correction comes, He will be there to help you and to guide you. ■

NOTE

1. Boyd K. Packer, “The Quest for Spiritual Knowledge,” *Liahona*, Jan. 2007, 16; *New Era*, Jan. 2007, 4.

BY SMALL MEANS

By Laurel Teuscher

I thought I was doing fine. I had served a mission, graduated from college, secured a full-time job, and finally moved into an apartment by myself. I attended church every Sunday and sometimes went to activities. I had plenty of friends, single and married, and I suddenly had more time for reading, my favorite thing to do as a child. Yet even with all of these activities, I still felt lost.

In Alma chapter 37, we read of Alma’s advice to his son Helaman. In verses 41–42, Alma talks about Lehi’s family and the Liahona. He explains that the Liahona would not work when “they were slothful, and forgot to exercise their faith and diligence” and that “they did not progress in their journey; therefore, they tarried in the wilderness, or did not travel a direct course.” Reading these verses helped me realize that I was not progressing. I was not exercising my faith or being diligent in anything in my life. I had stopped working toward a goal. I was simply waiting for something to happen.

There wasn’t one specific moment when I made a list and wrote down everything I needed to change.

Rather, those changes came little by little. First, I started to get up early and go for a run or do some other form of exercise. Next, I began to look into school programs that might help me progress in my job or allow me to get a different one. I found a program and then spent time preparing to take the necessary tests to apply. Scripture study and prayer became more important to me, and I tried to spend time every day feasting on the words of Christ and seeking to feel the Spirit. I made a special effort to be more involved in my ward—even if it meant sacrificing some personal time.

Since I started making these small changes, I have felt happier. I feel that I’m progressing and Heavenly Father is giving me new challenges. I can face those challenges with hope rather than fear or discouragement. I’ve learned that when we cease to work or exercise our faith and move in a direction, Heavenly Father cannot help us progress and we will not reach our destination. I am so grateful for the small changes in my life that have helped me to see a way ahead. ■

STRENGTHENING MY BACK WITHOUT REMOVING MY **BURDEN**



We don't always know why the Lord allows our specific challenges, or why He doesn't take them away when we pray sincerely and often. But we can be assured that He is in control.

By Ryan E. Kunz

I'm no different than any other child of God in that my Heavenly Father has seen fit to test me with a number of challenges that seem perfectly tailored to try my faith, my capacity to endure, and to help me grow spiritually.

I was born with a speech impediment. In situations with any degree of stress, my tongue freezes up and my lips refuse to obey my commands. When I'm speaking with family or close friends, my stutter is negligible, but I feel tongue-tied when I have to speak in front of a group or to unfamiliar people to the point where merely introducing myself can be a wearisome ordeal.

I've lost count of the number of times I've petitioned the Lord for relief. What purpose could this serve, I've wondered late at night, and what could I possibly hope to learn from this? Wouldn't it be a simple matter for the Lord to simply tweak my tongue or vocal cords and save me embarrassment for years to come? Surely whatever lesson I might learn isn't worth the frustration I would endure in the process, I've thought.

When I turned 19, the time came for me to serve a mission. Part of me hoped that some miraculous development would occur that would speedily rid me of my problems so that



I might better serve the Lord—or that I might be healed as a result of faithful service.

So I continued the long process of praying for deliverance. I had four priesthood blessings during my mission for my speech, all of which promised me strength, but none promised any sort of immediate release from my problems.

“What am I doing wrong?” I asked myself.

By the time my mission was coming to a close, I had reached a point where door approaches were doable, if still frustrating. With the Lord’s help, I could speak to whomever I needed to and express what I wanted to say, but I still wasn’t satisfied.

I envied the confident way some of my companions spoke to members and investigators, and I fantasized about speaking freely and fluently in a way I never had. But such a gift never came.

I read the scriptures, finding again and again stories where the Savior healed people—the paralytic, the blind, the deaf. Why wouldn’t He heal me?

I recognized that my problems were small compared to the afflictions of many people in the world, but to me, they were big because I was forced to face them every day, almost any time I opened my mouth.

I returned home with honor, but not with complete satisfaction. I cherished the memories I had accumulated during my mission,

but I harbored a small pocket of bitterness that I’d had to struggle so hard when other missionaries had served the Lord seemingly without any trouble.

I began college, knowing I would continue to face many of the frustrations that had plagued me on my mission. I dated, attended social events, and enjoyed time with my roommates, but the frustration at never being able to speak as I wanted was never far away.

In my quest to understand my specific set of challenges, I have found many scriptures that shed light on my situation. There is one passage in particular, where Alma the Elder and his people labor in captivity, praying for deliverance. The wicked priest Amulon had placed great burdens upon Alma and his people.

“And it came to pass that so great were their afflictions that they [the people of Alma] began to cry mightily to God.

“And Amulon commanded them that they should stop their cries; and he put guards over them to watch them, that whosoever should be found calling upon God should be put to death.

“And Alma and his people did not raise their voices to the Lord their God, but did pour out their hearts to him; and he did know the thoughts of their hearts” (Mosiah 24:10–12).

Though I’m not in bondage to a tyrannical leader, I can sympathize with Alma and his people and their desperate need for hope.

Yet their answer wasn’t a miraculous rescue from their afflictions:

“And it came to pass that the voice of the Lord came to them in their afflictions, saying: Lift up your heads and be of good comfort, for I know of the covenant which ye have made unto me; and I will covenant with my people and deliver them out of bondage.



HEALING FROM HIM WHO LOVES US BEST

“Healing blessings come in many ways, each suited to our individual needs, as known to Him who loves us best. Sometimes a ‘healing’ cures our illness or lifts our burden. But sometimes we are ‘healed’ by being given strength or understanding or patience to bear the burdens placed upon us.”

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “He Heals the Heavy Laden,” *Ensign*, November 2006, 7–8.



The Prophet Joseph Smith was never free of hardship. God revealed to him: “Thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment; and then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high” (D&C 121: 7–8).

“And I will also ease the burdens which are put upon your shoulders, that even you cannot feel them upon your backs, even while you are in bondage; and this will I do that ye may stand as witnesses for me hereafter, and that ye may know of a surety that I, the Lord God, do visit my people in their afflictions.

“And now it came to pass that the burdens which were laid upon Alma and his brethren were made light; yea, the Lord did strengthen them that they could bear up their burdens with ease, and they did submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord” (Mosiah 24:13–15).

Eventually, the Lord delivered the people of Alma. He promises that anyone who struggles but remains faithful will eventually be delivered, even if that deliverance isn’t found in this life.

The thing I found most helpful was the fact that when the people prayed, the Lord did not immediately free them from their burdens. Instead He *strengthened* them and let them know that He was watching over them, but He did not free them.

Another example of delayed deliverance comes from the life of the Prophet Joseph

Smith. After hearing of the horrific events that were befalling the Saints during his imprisonment in Liberty Jail, the Prophet pled with the Lord for deliverance for his people. He prayed, “O God, where art thou? And where is the pavilion that covereth thy hiding place?” (D&C 121:1).

The Prophet’s pleas were probably far more desperate and sincere than mine were, but even so it would be a long time before the Saints were free from persecution. Joseph himself would never be free from hardship in his life.

I like to think, however, that the Lord’s admonition came as a comfort to the Prophet:

“My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment;

“And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes.

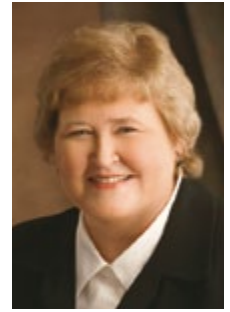
“Thy friends do stand by thee, and they shall hail thee again with warm hearts and friendly hands” (D&C 121:7–9).

We don’t always know why the Lord allows our challenges, or why He doesn’t take them away when we pray sincerely and often. But we can be assured that He is in control and “that all these things shall give [us] experience, and shall be for [our] good” (D&C 122:7).

I’m slowly accepting that perhaps my lot isn’t to be free and fluent in my speech. But I know that when I ask for it, the Lord is willing to grant me strength to deal with my problems. And I know that although he doesn’t always remove our burdens, He is always willing to help us carry them. ■

For more on this topic, please see President Henry B. Eyring, “The Power of Deliverance,” Brigham Young University Devotional, January 15, 2008; Elder Dallin H. Oaks, “He Heals the Heavy Laden,” Ensign, November 2006, 6–9; and Elder David A. Bednar, “In the Strength of the Lord,” Brigham Young University–Idaho Devotional, January 8, 2002.

By Barbara Thompson
Second Counselor in the
Relief Society General Presidency



“As I Have Loved You”

*Love and service are
what distinguish us
as disciples of Christ.*

I once had a roommate who was a lovely person, but almost everything I did seemed to annoy her. I thought, “How could I possibly annoy her? I am so easy to live with. Right?”

Because she wasn't very fond of me, I used that as an excuse not to love her either. Fortunately, I recalled the advice a bishop had given during a sacrament meeting while I was in college. I vividly remember his counsel: “If you don't love someone very much, you probably haven't served that person enough. If you serve a person, you will love that person.”

After thinking about the advice of my bishop, I decided that I needed to serve this roommate and put the bishop's counsel to the test. I began looking for little ways to help my roommate, show kindness to her,

and be more responsive to what she needed and wanted.

Then almost immediately a miracle happened! I learned that I really did love her. She was a wonderful, talented person. It was a blessing for me to share an apartment with her. I was amazed how my view of her changed in such a short time.

Loving and Serving Others

As we examine John 13, we learn some of the most significant lessons the Savior taught during His earthly ministry, including:

1. Serve one another.
2. Love one another.

As the Savior and His Apostles met to observe the Passover meal, the spirit in the room was likely subdued.

Jesus wanted the Twelve—and He wants each of us—to learn that humility and service are worthy characteristics we should seek to obtain. He taught that no one is too important to serve others.



The Savior knew that He was about to be offered up and crucified. I am sure that even if the Apostles didn't then understand the significance of the events that night, they would soon learn and more fully comprehend the Savior's mission.

After supper Jesus took a towel, poured water into a basin, and washed the feet of each man present. The cleansing of the feet was done in

reverence and humility as the Savior undoubtedly dealt with feelings of sorrow for events that would soon transpire, including His impending betrayal.

Peter, knowing that Jesus was the Messiah and promised Savior, wanted to serve the Lord rather than have the Lord serve Him. "If I wash thee not," the Savior said, "thou hast no part with me"

(John 13:8). Then Peter readily consented to the Savior's loving service.

Afterward Jesus explained:

"Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

"If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

"For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13:13–15).

Jesus wanted the Twelve—and He wants each of us—to learn that humility and service are worthy characteristics we should seek to obtain. He taught that no one is too important to serve others. In fact, one of the things that make us great is our willingness to serve and give of ourselves. As the Savior said, "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant" (Matthew 23:11; see also Luke 22:26).

Following the Savior's Example

This brings to mind the service performed after some of the natural disasters that have taken place during the past months and years. We have witnessed storms, earthquakes, famines, and pestilence. There are many accounts of people, though suffering themselves, who cared for others who were injured, sick, or otherwise in need.

After an earthquake in Peru destroyed the homes of thousands, a bishop left the crumbled ruins of his own house and rushed to account for the members of his ward and to

bless and comfort his little flock.

As a mother in Haiti mourned the loss of her own family members following an earthquake, she still reached out to help calm the fears and soothe the broken hearts of others, strengthening survivors and helping them find food and shelter.

Young adults in Chile hurried to assist in distributing food and supplies to those who had been affected most by an earthquake there. As these members served, their happy faces and willing hands belied the fact that their own personal circumstances were also precarious.

All of these people and many others followed the Savior's plea to "do as I have done to you" (John 13:15). Later in John chapter 13 we read:

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (verses 34–35).

Have you noticed how often Church leaders—from President Thomas S. Monson to the Twelve Apostles to local presidencies, bishops, and teachers—express their love for those they serve? This love comes from following the example of the Savior.

Serving others is the way we show love for them. Perhaps love and service are one and the same. Truly, they are what distinguish us as disciples of Christ. ■



EXTENDING CHRISTLIKE LOVE

"Let us love at all times. And let us especially be there for our brothers and sisters during times of adversity. . . .

"As we extend our hands and hearts toward others in Christlike love, something wonderful happens to us. Our own spirits become healed, more refined, and stronger. We become happier, more peaceful, and more receptive to the whisperings of the Holy Spirit."

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "You Are My Hands," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2010, 70, 75.

The background of the page is a painting of the Crucifixion. In the foreground, a large, simple wooden cross is visible, with a figure of Christ on it. The background shows a more detailed scene of the crucifixion, with Jesus on the cross in the center, flanked by two other figures. The scene is set against a light, hazy sky. The overall tone is somber and reflective.

THE MEANING OF THE CROSS

FOR LATTER-DAY SAINTS

I hope that members of the Church will carry the message of Christ's Atonement and its blessings deeply within their heart and share that message with others.



GRAY DAY GOIGOTHA, © BY J. KIRK RICHARDS

By Elder
Gregory A. Schwitzer
Of the Seventy



All of us have passed by churches that have a cross on their steeples or cupolas, and we've all seen people wearing a necklace with a cross, indicating they are Christian or a member of a certain Christian denomination. Some of our new members may even continue to wear a cross, feeling that it connects them with their past or other religious traditions.

We may wonder why we Latter-day Saints don't place a cross on our churches or wear a cross to show that we are Christians, thereby making it easier for others to identify in whom we believe. Is the cross important to our faith?

The answer is an unequivocal yes! The Redeemer's suffering on the cross is vitally important to us and is an inseparable part of the Atonement, through which He suffered and died for our sins and thereby provided us with a clear path to salvation and exaltation. The Savior was clear when He stated that in following Him we should take upon ourselves a cross—not the Roman cross that was the instrument of death but our *own cross*, whereby we present a sacrifice to the Lord of our own heart to be obedient to His commandments.

“And he that taketh not his cross,

and followeth after me,” Jesus said, “is not worthy of me” (Matthew 10:38).

In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul indicated that the “preaching of the cross . . . is the power of God” (1 Corinthians 1:18). We understand through this scripture that the meaning of the cross is much deeper than just a symbol or outward sign, especially for members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is the preaching of what happened on the cross that is more important than the symbol of the cross.

As I Have Been Lifted Up

When the Lord appeared to the Nephites just a short time after His death and Resurrection, He clearly indicated that the cross He expected them to take upon themselves was that of denying themselves the sins of the world: “For it is better that ye should deny yourselves of these things, *wherein ye will take up your cross*, than that ye should be cast into hell” (3 Nephi 12:30; emphasis added).

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (1926–2004) said:

“The Church would grow much faster now, numerically and spiritually, if it were not for the wickedness of the world (see 1 Nephi 14:12). It



HE IS RISEN, BY DEL PARSON

A DECLARATION OF THE LIVING CHRIST

I do not wish to give offense to any of my Christian colleagues who use the cross on the steeples of their cathedrals and at the altars of their chapels, who wear it on their vestments, and imprint it on their books and other literature. But for us, the cross is the symbol of the dying Christ, while our message is a declaration of the Living Christ. . . .

“ . . . The lives of our people must become the most meaningful expression of our faith and, in fact, therefore, the symbol of our worship.”

President Gordon B. Hinkley (1910–2008), “The Symbol of Our Faith,” *Liahona and Ensign*, April 2005, 3.

would also grow much faster if you and I were better by taking up the Christian cross daily (see Luke 9:23). Part of taking up the cross is denying ourselves the lusts and appetites of the flesh. . . .

“Thus, the *daily* taking up of the cross means *daily* denying ourselves the appetites of the flesh.”¹

What happened on the cross and in the Garden of Gethsemane is the essence of our faith in Jesus Christ’s sacrifice. The Savior taught this clearly to the Nephites:

“And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me, that as I have been lifted up by men even so should men be lifted up by the Father, to stand before me, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil—

“And for this cause have I been lifted up; therefore, according to the power of the Father I will draw all men unto me, that they may be judged according to their works.

“And it shall come to pass, that whoso repenteth and is baptized in my name shall be filled; and if he endureth to the end, behold, him will I hold guiltless before my Father at that day when I shall stand to judge the world” (3 Nephi 27:14–16).

The message of the gospel of Jesus Christ includes what happened on the cross, but this message and meaning is within each of us and requires no external symbol to manifest our faith. Our cross is the giving up of worldly sins and following the Savior with a humble heart and an obedient spirit.

The Lord, in choosing a new king

for Israel, taught the prophet Samuel a great lesson when He said, “Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).

Peter wrote, “But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price” (1 Peter 3:4).

Paul said, “While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Corinthians 4:18).

Holding Up Our Light

We should all carry the testimony of the Atonement deep within us. The blessing of what happened on the cross is witnessed in our behavior, our families, and our standards. We are Christians in the true inward sense, and we display Christ to the world through our lives, our message, and our love rather than through a symbol whereby we are identified.

In the process, we follow Jesus Christ’s admonition to hold up our light. “Behold I am the light which ye shall hold up—that which ye have seen me do” (3 Nephi 18:24).

I hope that members of the Church will carry the message of Jesus Christ’s Atonement and its blessings deep within their heart and share that message with others, as He has asked us do. ■

NOTE

1. Neal A. Maxwell, “Overcome . . . Even As I Also Overcame,” *Ensign*, May 1987, 71.

CALLED OF GOD

By Ramona Dutton

I learned firsthand what it means to be “called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority” (Articles of Faith 1:5).



SEEKING THE GUIDANCE OF THE SPIRIT

“A person must be called of God to serve in the Church (see Articles of Faith 1:5). Leaders seek the guidance of the Spirit in determining whom to call. They consider the worthiness that may be required for the calling. They also consider the member’s personal or family circumstances. Each calling should benefit the people who are served, the member, and the member’s family.”

Handbook 2: Administering the Church (2010), 19.1.1.

My husband and I had just moved to a new town and were excited to attend our new ward. It turned out that the ward boundaries were being changed, and the ward was divided.

After church our second Sunday, the ward clerk set an appointment for us to meet with the new bishop on Tuesday evening. After a short visit, the bishop asked my husband’s permission to call me as the Primary president of the new ward. Then he issued the call to me. I was shocked, but I had been taught never to turn down a calling, so I agreed to do my best.

The bishop gave me a list of names and asked me to meet with him in two days with names picked out for counselors and a secretary. I felt overwhelmed. When we arrived home, I locked myself in the bathroom and cried. Then I poured out my heart to Heavenly Father, expressing my concerns over my new calling. I didn’t know anyone in the new ward, and I needed His help. When I finished praying, peace filled my heart.

The next morning I prayed and then dove into my usual housework.

The list of names the bishop had given me sat on the kitchen table, and I briefly glanced at it each time I passed. After I had looked at the list several times, two names seemed to stand out to me. I picked up the list and read the names. As I pronounced the names, a warm feeling engulfed me. I had never felt the Holy Ghost so strongly.

I immediately approached Heavenly Father in prayer, tears streaming down my cheeks as I said the names again. I didn’t know anything about either of these women, but I knew in my heart they were to be my counselors.

Later that evening I went over the list of names in my head. One name came into my mind every time I pictured the list. She became my secretary.

I met with the bishop the next day and gave him the names for my counselors and secretary. To my surprise they were the same women the bishop thought would work well in the Primary. When I got to church on Sunday, the first counselor in the bishopric stood outside the chapel with me, pointing out my counselors

and secretary as they arrived. As I watched these sisters, I felt that I already knew them. The Spirit again confirmed to me that these women were called of God.

I knew we could work harmoniously together serving the Lord—and we did. Although these sisters were strangers to me, they were perfect for their callings. The Lord knew whom He wanted to call. What a growing experience it was to me to learn firsthand what it means to be called of God by prophecy. ■





Nelson Coila (left) adds a fresh layer of totora reeds to Utama, the floating island he and his family (above) inhabit on Lake Titicaca.

ISLANDS OF FAITH: A STORY OF DILIGENCE

Only by regularly adding to their island can the Coila family keep from sinking.

By Adam C. Olson Church Magazines

Nelson and Dora Coila live on an island—not a typical island made of solid rock jutting up from an ocean or lake—but a tiny island they made themselves of nothing more than floating reeds on Lake Titicaca in Peru.

Building an island and making it your home takes faith. Only about four feet (1.2 m) of layered reeds suspends their family and the dozen or so huts on their island above the

50-degree (10 °C) water, and the elements continually threaten to literally disintegrate their island home.

But for Nelson and Dora, their island represents physically what they are trying to build spiritually for their family: an island of faith that will hold together against the world.

What they have learned in the process is that the faith to build must always be followed by the diligence to maintain.

THE FLOATING ISLANDS OF THE UROS

Utama is one of about 50 in a community of floating islands that are home to several hundred descendants of the Uros, a pre-Incan people who have lived on such islands for hundreds of years.

Typically, multiple families, often related to each other, live on a single island and share in its upkeep. Another family shares half of Utama with the Coilas. The largest islands support as many as 10 families.

The islands are loosely tethered in place by a long rope anchored to the lake bed, though in 2010, the anchors were strengthened after an unusual gale tore more than 40 of the islands from their locations and blew them several miles away.



The Reason for Consistency

For the Uros people, who have built and lived on these islands for generations, the totora reed is an essential part of daily living. The reed, which grows in the shallows of Lake Titicaca, can be used as fuel for cooking fires. Its root can be eaten. Its husk can be used for medicinal purposes. And, of course, almost everything is made with the reed: their dwellings, their traditional boats, their watchtowers, the islands themselves, even their trash baskets.

The Uros build the islands by laying down layer upon layer of reeds. But as building materials go, totora reeds don't last long. The sun

dries them out during the dry season. Moisture during the rainy season hastens their decay. And the submerged bottom layers gradually decompose. The continual erosion of the Coilas' island means that Nelson has to put down a new layer of reeds every 10 to 15 days.

"Building the island was just the start," he says. "If I stop adding reeds, the island will slowly fall apart. But the more layers I put on, the stronger the island gets over time."

The Danger of Procrastination

Adding a layer of reeds is not complex or difficult, but it is work. Delaying it would be easy.

Procrastination, however, increases the risk of a family member putting a foot through a weak spot and ending

up in cold water. That can be little more than a nuisance for adults, but it's potentially deadly for little children such as the Coilas' two-year-old son, Emerson.

So Nelson adds a layer of reeds today, knowing that the safety of each family member depends on it tomorrow.

It's a lesson about diligence that has made a difference in the Coilas' lives.

The Effects of Diligence

Diligence is persisting in doing something in spite of opposition.¹

Dora first learned how important—and how difficult—diligence can be after she was baptized in 1998.

When Dora was 17, she and her younger sister Alicia were baptized—helping lead to the growth of the

For the Coila family—Nelson, Dora, and Emerson—and the Uros people living on Lake Titicaca, the totora reed is important to sustaining life. But like gospel principles, it must be applied regularly.





STRENGTHEN FAITH CONTINUALLY

“However much faith to obey God we now have, we

will need to strengthen it continually and keep it refreshed constantly. . . . Learning to start early and to be steady are the keys to spiritual preparation. Procrastination and inconsistency are its mortal enemies.”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “Spiritual Preparedness: Start Early and Be Steady,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 38.



FAITHFUL FAMILIES

“I was deeply humbled that, there on the floating islands of Lake Titicaca,

these faithful Latter-day Saint families would ask me to pray for the little island of Apu Inti and ask the Lord to bless [their] homes and families.”

Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Presidency of the Seventy, “Special Experiences,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2008, 12.

To learn more about Elder Rasband’s visit to the islands of the Uros, go to conference.lds.org and navigate to his talk in the April 2008 general conference.

To view more photos from this story, visit liahona.lds.org.

Church in the islands of the Uros. About a month later, however, their father forbade them from having anything to do with the Church.

But something odd happened to the girls. They were suddenly less pleasant to be around and more likely to argue. Their father realized that during the time they were participating in Church activities, they had changed for the better.

“It changed his mind,” Dora says. “He began waking us up early to make sure we got to church on time.”

Dora attributes the change the gospel made in their lives to small things she and Alicia did regularly, like paying tithing, praying, studying the scriptures, keeping the Sabbath day holy, and renewing their covenants weekly by taking the sacrament.

Later, having seen for himself the changes that come from faith and diligence,² Dora’s father joined the Church along with the rest of the family.

The Rewards of Diligence

Persisting in doing what is right—in spite of opposition—is required of the Lord’s covenant people. However, the Lord promises great blessings to those who are diligent in prayer,³ in keeping the commandments,⁴ in heeding

revelation,⁵ in searching the scriptures,⁶ and in laboring in His work.⁷

Through the Coilas’ experiences in maintaining their island of faith both literally and figuratively, they have found the rewards of diligence to be real. “Sometimes we get suffocated by the daily routine of working, cooking, and so forth,” says Nelson. “When we forget God, things get complicated. There are more problems, and things begin to fall apart.”



Nelson pauses to gesture toward a new layer of reeds he put down that morning. “If we are constant,” he says, “if we pray, study, fast, and hold family home evening regularly, we are going to become stronger.” ■

NOTES

1. See *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed. (2003), “diligence”; see also “persevere.”
2. See Alma 32:41–43.
3. See 1 Nephi 2:18–19; 10:17–19; Enos 1:12.
4. See 1 Nephi 15:8–11; 16:28–29; Enos 1:10; Mosiah 1:11; 4:6.
5. See Mosiah 1:16; Alma 12:9–11.
6. See Mosiah 1:6–7; Alma 17:2.
7. See Jacob 1:19; 5:75; Moroni 9:6.

MI VIDA, MI HISTORIA

Stories of faith and inspiration from Latin American Latter-day Saints.

The Latter-day Saints on these pages shared their stories of conviction and belief in the gospel of Jesus Christ in a recent Church History Museum exhibit. Collectively they represent millions of Latin American Saints.

Twenty-four stories were on display in the Church History Museum in Salt Lake City, Utah, through June 2011. The multimedia exhibit can still be viewed online at lds.org/churchhistory/museum/exhibits/mividamihistoria.

Carmen Echeverría Wood

Carmen was born into a religious family in Guatemala City, Guatemala. When she was nine years old, Latter-day Saint sister missionaries taught her family the gospel. She enjoyed attending Primary and spoke of a new feeling of happiness in her family. A year later the family was baptized. She says, “This was a wonderful, wonderful time.” She recalls President David O. McKay (1873–1970) visiting Guatemala in 1954 and teaching the children the principle of tithing. At age 17 she was called to serve in the Central American Mission and was grateful to share “the hope of a better life and being together forever.”





Miriam Puerta Amato

Miriam is a native of Brazil. When she wanted to serve a mission, she filled out the papers. Seven weeks later, with her family gathered at home, she read the letter calling her to the Utah Salt Lake City Temple Square Mission. She says, “When I read the letter, it was interesting that my family shouted the same way they do when the national football team of Brazil scores a goal. I was happy as well, and I knew that the Lord was sending me.”



Nelson Mousqués

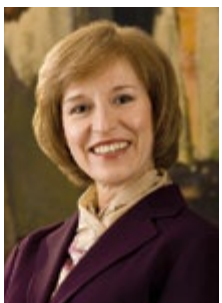
Not long after Nelson was born in Asunción, Paraguay, his parents met the missionaries. “One day my dad was on the porch at home and saw Elder Higbee and Elder Johnson but did not know they were missionaries,” Brother Mousqués recalls. “He told my sister to bring out two chairs because, he said, ‘Those young men will change our lives.’ When the elders clapped at the door, he opened it and said, ‘Come in. We have been waiting for you.’ My father and the entire family joined the Church.”

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK J. DAVIS, CRAIG DIMOND, KENT MILES, AND CRAIG J. LAW



Robin Mendoza

Robin was raised in Ecuador in poverty, but he wanted to better himself. Once, while working at a plantation 12 hours a day, he prayed for guidance, and lightning flashed during his prayer. Robin saw this as God's message that life held promise. "I knew that my feelings came from God," Robin recalls. He came to know that through faith, he could change his life. At age 16 he left for work in Guayaquil, where he was baptized. Continuing inspiration led him to Brigham Young University, where he fulfilled his ambition of obtaining an education.



Ursula Binder Brock

Sister Brock remembers pondering the meaning of life when she was only five. When she was a teenager in Venezuela, the missionaries taught her and her family the gospel, and they were baptized. Filled with faith, she was called to be branch Primary president at age 16. Now, after a lifetime of service, she has come to realize that for her, "faith is a choice." She explains, "I choose to make room for the Savior in my life. I have come to know that the Atonement is the most wonderful, selfless act of love for all humanity. My Savior and Redeemer, the Giver of peace, has become my very best friend—a constant for me."





Lincoln Peters

Lincoln lived with his family in Santiago, Chile, until his mother died when he was 10. Afterward, he lived with his aunt and uncle. When Lincoln was 18, Elder Barton and Elder Bentley came to his aunt and uncle's home. Lincoln's aunt and grandmother immediately accepted the gospel, but Lincoln avoided the missionaries. One Sunday morning, his normally gentle grandmother came to his room, ripped the quilt off his bed, and told him he was going to church with them. Shocked by his grandmother's unusual behavior and out of respect for her, he got up and went to church. That day he felt something new and powerful within his soul that changed his life. He soon became one of the Church's first converts in Chile.

Luis and Karla Hernández

Luis and Karla met as teenagers in Honduras. They began dating and soon married. Luis, not a member of the Church, admired Karla's parents, who "treated each other with respect and love, and this made me want to learn about their values." Soon Luis was baptized, and Karla and Luis were sealed in the Guatemala City Guatemala Temple. In their early 30s, their relationship came under stress, and Karla left home, questioning whether their teenage marriage was a mistake. Luis fasted and prayed and asked God to "bring Karla back home, and He did it. He did it." Today their marriage is stronger than ever.





Noemí Guzman de Abrea

Noemí was born in Argentina, where her family joined the Church. They immigrated to the United

States when she was a teenager. While she loves being an American, she is most happy when she can experience the culture of Argentina. “In Latin America, people are very, very warm. They immediately bring you in; they befriend you; they fellowship you. They love to be with family and friends, to eat good food. That is wonderful, and experiencing that part of the culture is something I wouldn’t change for anything.”



Omar Canals

In Uruguay on a rainy spring day in 1948, Omar’s mother offered her umbrella to two Latter-day Saint sister missionar-

ies waiting for the bus. As a result, the missionaries started visiting the Canals family, and Omar’s older sister was later baptized. Born in 1948, Omar was the first baby blessed in the Uruguay Mission, which had opened in 1947. Omar and his parents were baptized when he was nine. A few years after Omar married his sweetheart, they immigrated to the United States. Already a broadcaster, Omar was hired by the Church in 1973 and became a Spanish interpreter for general conference. ■

Sand AND Stone

The Hole-in-the-Rock trail in southern Utah challenged youth and leaders from three stakes both physically and spiritually. The experience changed more than a few lives.

By R. Val Johnson

Church Magazines

Pushing or pulling, taking a handcart over jagged stone is tough. The rocks slow you down, jar your bones, sap your strength.

But sand is worse. When faced with a hill of it, all you can do is take a deep breath and run. With enough speed, and a little help from others, you make it to the top, where you can rest, drink half a lake of water, and move on.

But what nearly does you in are those long stretches of sand that claw at your feet and handcart wheels. Your only option is to keep pulling and pushing, pulling and pushing, until you have to stop before you collapse. Getting started again takes nearly all your energy. Still, foot after foot, you gather your strength and move ahead. Finally, suddenly, you discover you've left the sand behind.

Your destination is still a long way off, but somehow, having made it through the sand, you know you can finish. You know you can make it to camp or to home—to that place where you will rest and heal and prepare to face with greater confidence the next hard thing you need to do.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY VAL JOHNSON





PHOTOGRAPH BY OLIVER HARRIS

EXPERIENCING TRIAL AND TRIUMPH TOGETHER

The original pioneers assigned to the San Juan Mission consisted of 250 people, most in families. The average age of the adults was 26. The average age of those who followed in their footsteps in 2010 was much younger. Most travelers were teens, organized with their leaders into “families.”

Of his trek “family,” one young man from the Kanab Utah Kaibab Stake said, “Although I didn’t know the people in my family very well at the beginning, they all became my friends. We worked together, pulled hand-carts together, camped together. We’ll be friends forever. The trek was life changing.”

One stake leader noted that the most important decisions the leaders made in preparing the youth for the trek was calling dedicated “Ma’s” and “Pa’s” for each of the families and determining which of the youth should be with them.

For more information about the Hole-in-the-Rock pioneers and trekking to San Juan Hill, go to hirf.org. Because the trail to San Juan Hill is on public land, groups planning to hike the trail need government permission. The Hole-in-the-Rock Foundation provides guidance and help. You’ll also find more photos at ensign.lds.org.

Down the Hole-in-the-Rock

Sand and stone confronted nearly 750 youth and their leaders in June 2010 as they drove, walked, climbed, and pulled handcarts over portions of the Hole-in-the-Rock trail between Escalante and Bluff, Utah, USA.

The trail was built in the winter of 1879–80 by Mormon pioneers who had been called by President John Taylor to settle the San Juan region of Utah. When southern and northern routes to the area proved to be too dangerous or not

passable year-round, the 250 pioneers decided to build a new, more direct trail. Part of the route they chose was through a wilderness so barren and hard to get through that those familiar with the area considered the task impossible. The pioneers gave themselves six weeks to get to their destination. It took them six months.

Over the course of those six months, they used picks, shovels, and black powder to build a nearly impossible road

(continued on page 45)





PHOTO BY LEM REDD



GETTING THERE—WITH THE LORD’S HELP

The pioneers who settled the San Juan traveled in 83 wagons. In 2010, trekkers used handcars. The Kanab stake had a covered wagon (C) for a measure of historical authenticity. “Pulling that handcart taught me I can do hard things,” said Spencer Bradford of the Blanding Utah Stake. “We had to pull through some sandy spots, and I wanted to quit. But I thought of the pioneers. They did hard things for months on end. I just needed to trust in the Lord.”

DOWN THE HOLE-IN-THE-ROCK

In 1879, an exploratory party located a crack in what had seemed an impenetrable canyon wall between southwestern Utah and the San Juan country to the southeast. The crack, later called Hole-in-the-Rock, was not passable for wagons, but with ingenuity and plenty of black powder, the pioneers built a road down the incline. (Beginning on page 48 Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles relates the story of the last wagon down.)

Today, fallen boulders encumber the Hole-in-the-Rock. Though it is navigable on foot (A), the climb is difficult. Natasia Bleak summed up what she learned in hiking the Hole: “No way can our [physical] trials compare with those of the pioneers, but we know God’s love. He will see us through our trials, just as He did the pioneers.”

HOME ON THE RANGE

Whether climbing the Hole or pulling a handcart, doing it with friends made it enjoyable. By many accounts, relationships forged on the treks will last a long time. Those relationships were built not only on the trail, but also while preparing for the treks and camping with one another (B,D). Camping gave the trekkers a greater understanding of the meaning of home.

PHOTO BY KAY SHUMWAY

DANCING THE WEARINESS AWAY

Like the pioneers themselves, their modern-day counterparts relaxed after a day of hard work by doing something nearly as rigorous—dancing. The Blanding stake and Kanab stake did their dancing at Bluff Fort. The Blanding West stake spent an afternoon after their trek at Dance Hall Rock (right), where the original pioneers spent many nights dancing. Joining the stake were youth and leaders from the Cedar City Utah Stake (D).

One Blanding stake leader observed that many of the youth couldn't get enough of the square dancing, even after a long, hot day working on projects at Bluff Fort. "They danced up a cloud of dust," he said. "And when we tried to end the dancing, they kept asking for more."

SERVING, LEARNING, GROWING

Each stake engaged in service projects (C) and activities similar to those the original pioneers participated in. Some members even chiseled holes in rock (B), as the pioneers did in creating roads. One young woman from the Kanab stake said, "The service project we did at [Bluff] Fort was my favorite part of the trek. I was amazed at how hard some of the youth in our stake worked. I didn't know that about them. And it helped me realize how hard the pioneers had to work even after all they went through to get to the San Juan."

For many youth, the activities that had the most impact were the devotionals, such as the ones held at the top of San Juan Hill (A), the last major obstacle for the original pioneers and the one that nearly sapped their last ounce of strength. "I think the reason the Lord wanted me on the trek was to hear Brother Black's talk on the hill," said Lizz Hurst of the Blanding Utah Stake. "As Brother Black was talking, the Spirit was talking to me. I had a lot of questions answered."

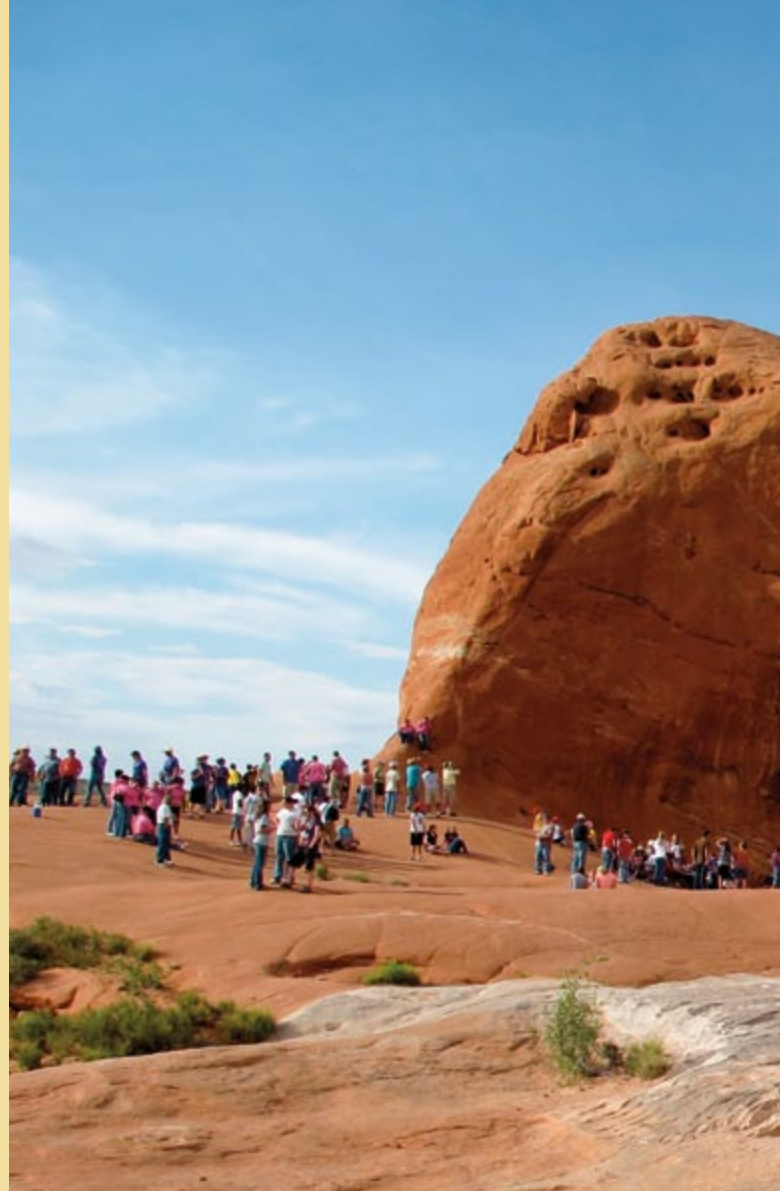


PHOTO BY KAY SHUMWAY

A



B



C



D





down a crack in the edge of the Colorado River gorge they called Hole-in-the-Rock. Some 1,200 precipitous feet (366 m) down the hole, they were confronted by the muddy Colorado River. After floating their wagons across the river on a raft, they still had to blast and cut and pray their way through another 120 miles (193 km) of sandstone ravines, cliffs, box canyons, and sheer drop-offs.

When the exhausted group finally arrived at their destination, a farmable area near the San Juan River, on April 6, 1880, they built cottonwood log homes and named the place Bluff after the spectacular sandstone bluffs surrounding the settlement.

Enduring Where They Endured

Re-creating the experience of the Hole-in-the-Rock pioneers, members of the Blanding Utah Stake, the Blanding Utah West Stake, and the Kanab Utah Kaibab Stake pioneered paths of their own. One stake went down, then

up, the Hole-in-the-Rock itself. The other two stakes trekked from Bluff to the last major obstacle the pioneers faced—San Juan Hill.

The goal for each of these stake activities was to help the youth appreciate the faithful sacrifice, undaunted perseverance, and inspired ingenuity of the original pioneers. Perhaps more important, stake leaders wanted the youth to find in themselves the same inner strength and faith in God that the original pioneers exhibited in settling the San Juan country.

Many, both youth and adults, found what they sought. Lyle Bales, one of the “Pa’s” called to lead a temporary “family” on his stake’s trek, said, “I have been so blessed to be a part of this experience. I needed to rub shoulders with youth and leaders of this quality. I admire the character and determination they possess. They have been great examples to me, and I am a better person for being there.” ■

WE WILL NOT TURN BACK

One of the great contributions of pioneer life and of pioneer colonizing was the fact that the Latter-day Saints did not turn back.

By Elder Clifford E. Young (1883–1958)

Assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Clifford E. Young was born on December 7, 1883, in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA. In 1941 he was called as an Assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. He died on August 21, 1958. The following is an excerpt from a general conference address given in April 1947, the 100th anniversary year of the Saints' arrival in Utah. For the full address in English, go to scriptures.byu.edu.

This is a great year, an anniversary year, and I think we may reflect on some of the things that have gone before, and they may give us inspiration for the future.

I am thinking this morning of a little log cabin that stands down in Liberty Park [in Salt Lake City, Utah], built by my grandfather Riter. It was transported there from one of our pioneer lots by the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers and others who are interested in preserving shrines that they may be a source of inspiration to the people.

This little log cabin is no different from many that were built in 1847. It was originally a one-room log cabin and built in that year. Later on, a partition was placed in it so that



there were two rooms. The mother who lived in that little log cabin was a convert to the Church from Pennsylvania. She, her sisters, her mother, and her husband were caught in the “gospel net” (see Matthew 13:47). . . . They too were pioneers. They came out of the world. The physical hardships may not have been quite so severe when they came, but they pioneered nevertheless. They left their homes, their kindred, and many times their own parents for an unpopular faith because they had in their souls a testimony of the divinity of this work.

Experiences of a Pioneer Family

Well, this little family to which I referred, the mother who at one time lived in this little log cabin, came to Nauvoo, there to find not a home as she expected, because shortly after she came, she was to witness the Martyrdom of the Prophet [Joseph Smith] and his brother, [Hyrum] the patriarch. Then the family moved on, and they started across those boggy Iowa plains. . . . I doubt that you and I can visualize, can appreciate, the difficulties under which they traveled. As they began their



journey, they met with discouragement, hunger, lack of things to keep them warm. The conditions were indescribable, yet there was no complaint. Oh, some of them felt and wondered why.

In this little band there was a father who was a practical fellow. He was a Pennsylvania Dutchman. He left a home where things were reasonably secure, and he said one day to his wife, “We’d better turn back. We’d better go back whence we came. Conditions are so uncertain.” That is a natural thing for any father to say. It is a natural thing for a mother to think. They were traveling among Indians and were not sure just where they were going, and conditions were not very favorable. They naturally would think of their children. They had two boys. They thought of the boys’ welfare, not of their own. I am wondering how many of us would want to turn back, but that mother wouldn’t turn back.

She had been caught in the “gospel net” (see Matthew 13:47), and she knew it was true, and so she said, “We will not turn back—we’ll not turn back; we’re going on!” That was my grandmother Riter, and her faith and indomitable spirit have always been an inspiration to me and that spirit should be a source of inspiration to all of us.

No Turning Back

This Church is now celebrating the 117th anniversary of its organization. There has been no turning back since that memorable day; there must be no turning back now. Some perhaps have dropped by the wayside. One of the great contributions of pioneer life and of pioneer colonizing was the fact that the Mormon people did not turn back. You have read the story of other pioneer companies who came to the West in those early periods. Many of them started out perhaps with 30 or 40 people and ended with

half the number. They were not home builders; they were trappers; they were men seeking something else than homes. But it was different with the Latter-day Saints. They were to come west under the direction and inspiration of a great leader to build homes, and there was little turning back. That is the inspiration for us today, my brethren and sisters, that there be no turning back, there be no wavering.

. . . We are gratified about [the growth of the Church], but when we come to analyze it, numbers mean very little. We are only strong, we’re only powerful and influential insofar as we live the things that God has revealed for us, His children. We are only a great people as we cling to those concepts that were revealed for our benefit and blessing. . . .

God help us that we may live so to do and that we may not turn back and not waver but be worthy and strong in the faith. ■

Faith to Answer THE CALL

We all must have a conviction burning in our hearts that this is the work of God and that it requires the best we can give to building up “waste place[s] in Zion.”

In 1849, just two years after the Saints had entered the Salt Lake Valley, Elder Parley P. Pratt of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles led an expedition to the south. The farther south the expedition went, the more difficult the terrain became. After the men had dropped 3,000 feet (914 m) from the rim of the Great Basin to the convergence of the Virgin and the Santa Clara Rivers (south of modern-day St. George, Utah), the terrain became dry and sandy, volcanic and rugged. The scouts were not impressed. A journal says:

“Passed . . . over a rugged, stony, sandy almost indescribable country, thrown together in dreadful confusion. . . .

“A wide expanse of chaotic matter presented itself, consisting of huge hills, [red] deserts, cheerless, grassless plains, perpendicular rocks, loose barren clay, . . . sandstone . . . lying in inconceivable confusion—in short, a country in ruins, . . . turned inside out, upside down, by terrible convulsions in some former age.”¹

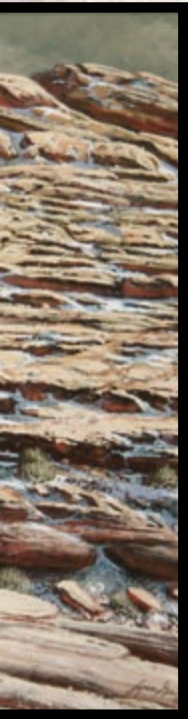
But however rugged the land looked going south, the wind-whipped, erosion-gutted cliffs and canyon wilderness of San Juan country to the east looked a lot tougher. Church leaders knew that taming that rough, uncharted corner of the territory would be difficult, but they nevertheless wanted to establish communities for the Church there. At the quarterly conference of the Parowan Stake in 1879, 250 people accepted the call by President John Taylor to establish the San Juan Mission. With 80 wagons and nearly 1,000 head of cattle and horses, they began to cut their way toward and through imposing, unexplored



THE LAST WAGON, BY LYNN GRIFFIN

**By Elder
Jeffrey R. Holland**

Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles



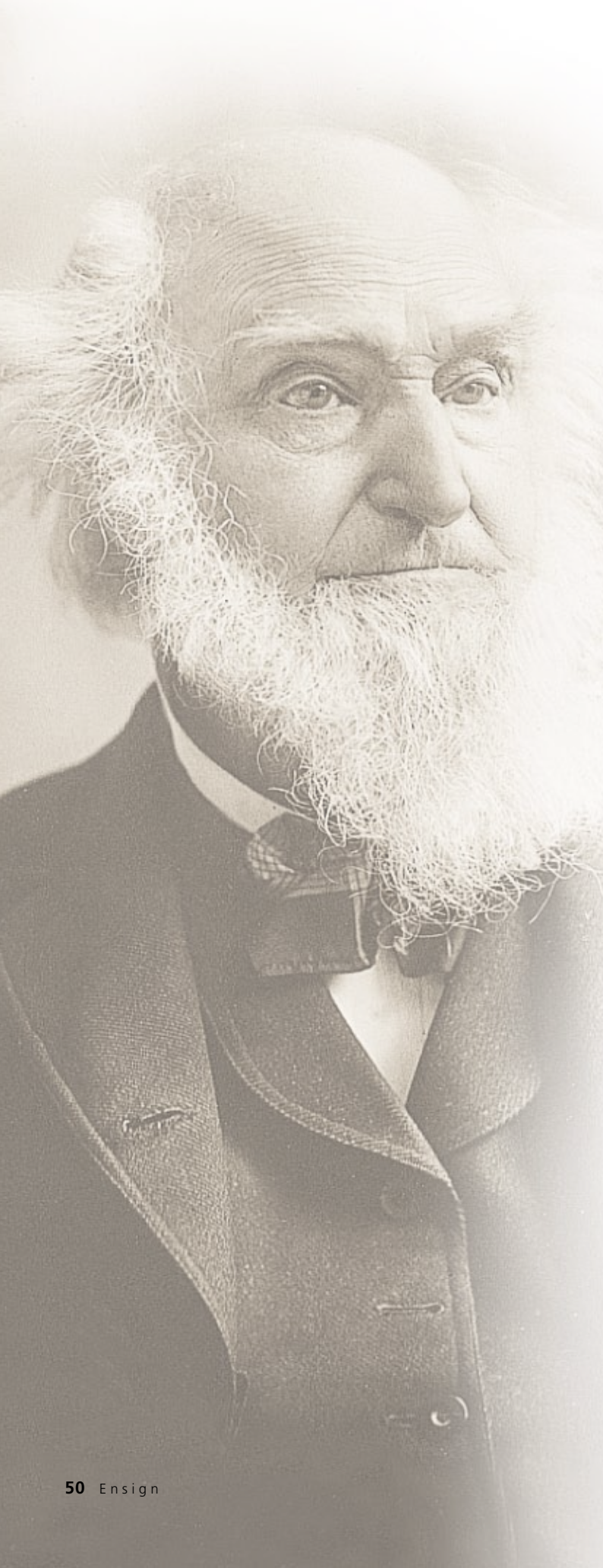
territory of snow-capped mountains and towering stone pinnacles.

Seeking the shortest route to San Juan, those first explorers overcame one obstacle after another but soon faced the largest and most intimidating barrier of all: the impassable gulf of the Colorado River gorge. Miraculously their weary scouts found a narrow slit in the canyon—a crevice running 2,000 feet (610 m) down the red cliffs to the Colorado River below. This lone, near-lethal “hole in the rock” seemed to offer the only possible passage to the eastern side.

For the most part, the slice in the sandstone was too narrow for horses and in some places too narrow even for a man or woman to pass through. Sheer drops of as much as 75 feet (23 m) would seem to have made it impossible for a mountain sheep, let alone loaded wagons. But the hardy Saints were not going to turn back, so with blasting powder and tools, working most of December 1879 and January 1880, they cut a precarious, primitive road into the face of the canyon precipice.

With this roadbed finished, such as it was, the task was now to get the first 40 wagons down the “hole.” The other wagons, waiting five miles (8 km) back at Fifty-Mile Spring, would follow later.

They organized themselves in such a way “that a dozen or more men could hang on behind the wagon” with long ropes to slow its descent. Then the wheels were brake-locked with chains, allowing



What are we seeing in these examples of faithful pioneers? We are seeing what we saw when the Saints fled New York and Pennsylvania and Ohio and Missouri and then fled their beloved Nauvoo across an ice-bound river with the temple soon burning in the distance.

them to slide but avoiding the catastrophe of the wheels actually rolling.

In one of the great moments of pioneer history, one by one the company took the wagons down the treacherous precipice. When they reached the canyon floor, they eagerly started to ferry across the river with a flatbed boat they had fashioned for that purpose. As it turned out, the Joseph Stanford Smith family was in the last wagon to descend that day.

Stanford Smith had systematically helped the preceding wagons down, but somehow the company apparently forgot that Brother Smith's family would still need help as the tailenders. Deeply disturbed that he and his family seemed abandoned, Stanford moved his team, wagon, and family to the edge of the precipice. The team was placed in front and a third horse was hitched *behind* the wagon to the rear axle. The Smiths stood for a moment and looked down the treacherous hole. Stanford turned to his wife, Arabella, and said, "I am afraid we can't make it."

She replied, "But we've got to make it."

He said, "If we only had a few men to hold the wagon back, we *might* make it."

Replied his wife, "*I'll* do the holding back."

She laid a quilt on the ground, and there she placed her infant son in the care of her three-year-old, Roy, and five-year-old, Ada. "Hold little brother 'til papa comes for you," she said. Then positioning herself behind the wagon, Belle Smith grasped the reins of the horse hitched to the back of the rig. Stanford started the team down the hole. The wagon lurched downward. With the first jolt the rear horse fell. Sister Smith raced after him and the wagon, pulling on the lines with all her strength and courage. She soon fell too, and as she was

dragged along with the horse, a jagged rock cut a cruel gash in her leg from heel to hip. That gallant woman, with clothes torn and a grievous wound, hung on to those lines with all her might and faith the full length of the

called out, "Forget it, fellows. We managed fine. Belle here is all the help a fellow needs [to make this journey]."²

When the Call Comes

The Hole-in-the-Rock expedition is only one of many examples of the dramatic determination and devotion of the early Saints to answer the call of their prophet when it came. Another example is the creation of and call to the Muddy Mission in present-day Nevada. As with so many early pioneer settlements, the Muddy promised a very hard life, and much soul-searching was done when the calls came to settle there.

Some of those called in the 1860s certainly must have asked, "Of all places on the earth, why the Muddy?" Well, there actually were reasons. First of all, the American Civil War had given rise to the possibility of shipping commodities via the Colorado River. Second, when the war interrupted traditional sources for textiles, the Cotton Mission had been established in the cities of St. George and Washington not too many miles away. It was assumed that cotton for that mission could be grown in the Muddy region. Third, the Latter-day Saints felt strongly their obligation to work with the Native American tribes in the region, helping to feed them and hoping to educate them.

But the region was nevertheless a lonely, barren wasteland. It seemed to have almost nothing to offer but heat and hard work. It was isolated and for



incline all the way to the river's edge.

On reaching the bottom and almost in disbelief at their accomplishment, Stanford immediately raced the 2,000 feet (607 m) back up to the top of the cliff, fearful for the welfare of the children. When he climbed over the rim, there he saw them literally unmoved from their position. Carrying the baby, with the other two children clinging to him and to each other, he led them down the rocky crack to their anxious mother below. In the distance they saw five men moving toward them carrying chains and ropes. Realizing the plight the Smiths were in, these men were coming to help. Stanford

When her father was called to move his family to the difficult Muddy Mission in present-day Nevada, USA, Elizabeth Claridge (above) wept but declared, "I should not own him as a father if he would not go when he is called."

the most part desolate, and the river that gave the mission its identity was aptly named.

As to how and with what faith and determination the Muddy was settled, I will let one of the settlers have her say. She represents the grit and spunk and moral conviction that both young and old had—in this case especially the young. Wrote Elizabeth Claridge McCune of her father’s call to settle the Muddy:

“No place on earth seemed so precious to me at fifteen years of age as [the town of] dear old Nephi [in Utah’s Juab County]. How eagerly we looked forward to the periodical visits of President Brigham Young and his company! . . .

“. . . Bro. Brigham, Bros. Kimball and Wells with [their] entire company got out of their carriages, and walked over the flowery road . . . to our homes, [where] dinner was prepared and served. . . .

“We all attended the [Sunday] afternoon meeting, the girls in white having reserved seats in front. The sermons were grand, and we were happy until President Young announced that he had a few names to read of men who were to be called and voted in as missionaries to go and settle . . . the ‘Muddy.’ This almost stilled the beating of the hearts of all present. Many of our people had been called to go to settle the Dixie country—but the Muddy, so many miles farther south! and so much worse! oh! oh! I did not hear another name

except ‘Samuel Claridge.’ Then how I sobbed and cried, regardless of the fact that the tears were spoiling [my] new white dress. The father of the girl who sat next to me was also called. Said my companion, ‘Why, what are



you crying about? It doesn’t make me cry. I know my father won’t go.’ ‘Well, there is the difference,’ said I. ‘I know that my father *will* go and that nothing could prevent him, and I should not own him as a father if he would not go when he is called.’ Then I broke down sobbing again. . . .

“As we had just moved into a new house and were fixed [so] comfortably, many of our friends tried to persuade father to keep his home and farm; to go south awhile and then come back. But father knew that this was not the kind of mission upon which he had been called. ‘I shall sell everything I own,’ said he, ‘and take my means to help build up another waste place in Zion.’”³

It is the heart of our conviction that the work not only should go forth but that it also can and will and must go forth. I don’t know how else mothers and fathers could leave those babies in those makeshift graves on the plains and then, with one last look, weep their way forward toward Zion.

Faith in the Work

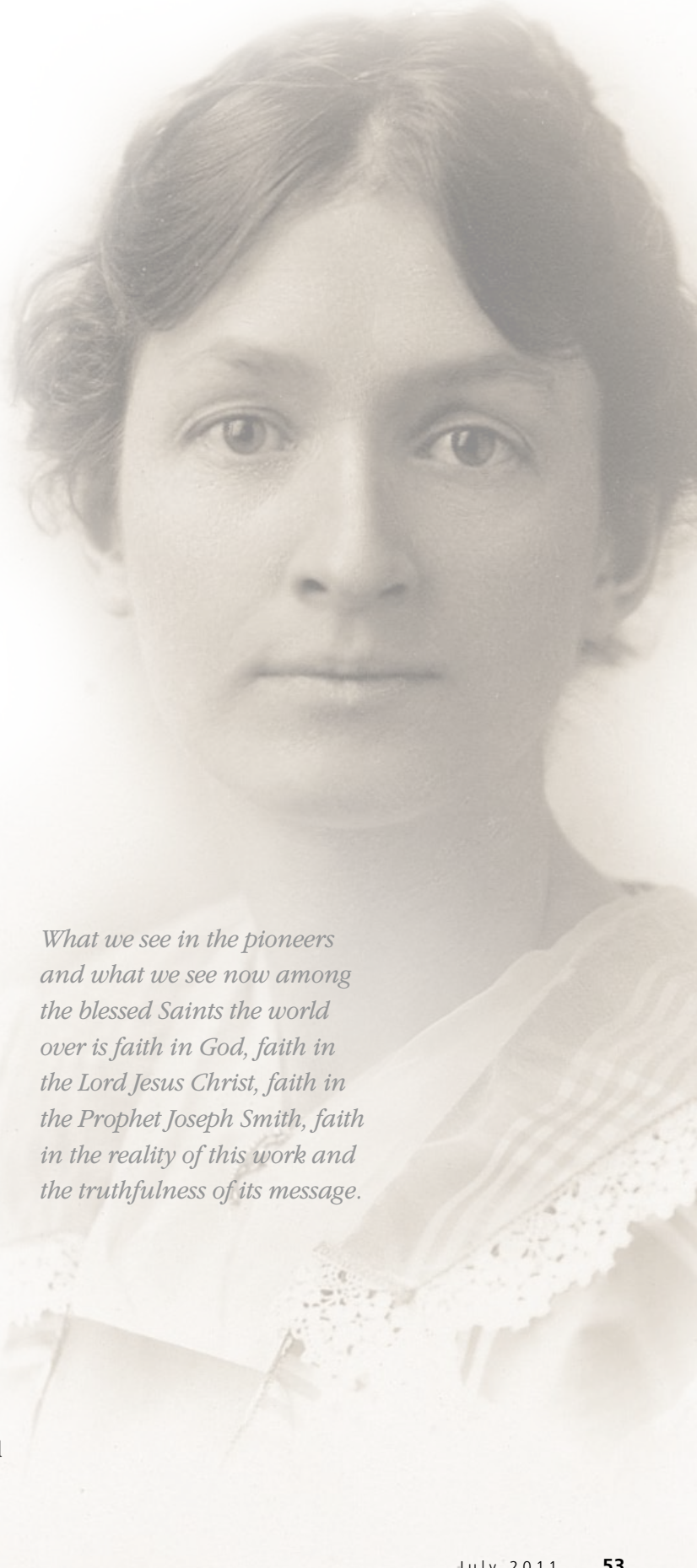
What is it that bred then and breeds now the loyalty and devotion found in this 15-year-old girl and the family into which she was born? What is it that made her turn on her slightly less stalwart friend and declare, "I know that my father *will* go and that nothing could prevent him"? Where does that kind of spunk come from that would allow her to go on to say, "And I should not own him as a father if he would not go when he is called"?

And what of those three little children who watched their parents disappear in a wagon over the edge of the Colorado River gorge but trusted in the instruction they had been given by their mother? They sat there stalwartly, determined not to move or weep despite what must have been their tremendous fear.

What are we seeing in these examples of faithful pioneers? It is what we have seen down through the dispensations of time and certainly down through this dispensation. We are seeing what we saw when the Saints fled New York and Pennsylvania and Ohio and Missouri and then fled their beloved Nauvoo across an ice-bound river with the temple soon burning in the distance. It is what we saw when those same people buried their dead in large numbers at Winter Quarters, followed by leaving isolated graves, sometimes as tiny as a bread box, in Wyoming near Chimney Rock or at one of the many crossings of the Sweetwater River or in a snowbank at Martin's Cove.

What we saw then and what we see now among the blessed Saints the world over is faith in God, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, faith in the Prophet Joseph Smith, faith in the reality of this work and the truthfulness of its message. It was faith that took a boy into a grove of trees to pray, and it was faith that enabled him to get up off his knees, place himself in God's hands for the Restoration of the gospel, and ultimately march toward his own martyrdom scarcely two dozen short years later.

Little wonder that faith always has been and always will be the first and abiding principle of the gospel and of our work. It is the heart of our conviction that the work not



What we see in the pioneers and what we see now among the blessed Saints the world over is faith in God, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, faith in the Prophet Joseph Smith, faith in the reality of this work and the truthfulness of its message.

only should go forth but that it also can and will and must go forth.

I don't know how else mothers and fathers could leave those babies in those makeshift graves on the plains and then, with one last look, weep their way forward toward Zion. I don't know how else a woman like Belle Smith could set her children at the edge of a cliff and muscle her wagon down the perilous incline. I don't know how else Samuel Claridge could sell all he owned and head off to build Zion in the desolate Muddy Mission. The fundamental driving force in these stories is faith—rock-ribbed, furnace-refined, event-filled, spiritually girded faith that this is the very Church and kingdom of God and that when you are called, you go.

A Call for Conviction

There are still “waste place[s] in Zion” to be built up, and some of those are much closer than the Muddy or San Juan Missions. Some of them are in our own hearts and in our own homes.

And so I issue a call for the conviction we all must have burning in our hearts that this is the work of God and that it requires the best we can give to the effort. My appeal is that you nurture your own physical and spiritual strength so that you have a deep reservoir of faith to call upon when tasks or challenges or demands of one kind or another come. Pray a little more, study a little more, shut out the noise and shut down the clamor, enjoy nature, call

down personal revelation, search your soul, and search the heavens for the testimony that led our pioneer parents. Then, when you need to reach down inside a little deeper and a little farther to face life and do your work, you will be sure there is something down there to call upon.

When you have your own faith, you are prepared to bless your family. The single strongest indicator of activity and service, of devotion and loyalty in this Church continues to be the presence of strong family ties. I say that, knowing full well that part of the majesty of this Church is in the *individual* member. Sometimes that member is a new convert; sometimes that member is the only Latter-day Saint in the family. Some individual somewhere had to plant the flag of faith and start a new generation in the gospel. But the fact is that faith is better nurtured and more protected and longer lasting when there is an entire family to reinforce it. So after standing alone if you have to, work diligently to see that others in your family *don't* stand alone. Build your family and see that faith is strong there.

With that accomplished, we can serve the Church near at hand or at some distant outpost if called. Then we can search out that lost sheep—member or nonmember, living or dead. This can be done wisely and well only when the other 99 lambs, including our own little flock, are safely folded while we search. If we have loved and taught those at home,

they will understand exactly as little Elizabeth Claridge did: when the call comes, you can be certain that your father and mother, your brothers and sisters are going to go.

There is work to be done. We cannot say that every one of our neighbors has deep faith, that every one has a strong family, that every one near and far has heard the gospel message and has become a believing, teaching, temple-going Latter-day Saint. The world is getting more wicked, and the times ahead will try the best of us. But the forces of righteousness will always prevail when people like Stanford and Arabella Smith, people like Samuel Claridge and his spunky daughter Elizabeth make it prevail.

We must have faith in this work—faith in what all believers are called to do, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and in our Father in Heaven. We need to conform our will to theirs and then make that will rock-ribbed and pioneer strong indeed. If we do that, I know we will be safe and secure in the inexorable onward movement of the Church and kingdom of God on earth. ■

From a regional stake conference broadcast address delivered on September 12, 2010, at Brigham Young University.

NOTES

1. In Milton R. Hunter, *Brigham Young the Colonizer* (1973), 47.
2. See David E. Miller, *Hole-in-the-Rock: An Epic in the Colonization of the Great American West* (1959), 101–18; emphasis added and punctuation standardized.
3. Elizabeth Claridge McCune, in Susa Young Gates, “Biographical Sketches,” *Young Woman's Journal*, July 1898, 292, 293; punctuation standardized.

TRAVELING LIGHT

By Sharon Price Anderson

*Chariots of Israel,
fire hidden in wood
of handcart wheels,
churn the dust,
rut the rock,
toil in heat and cold.
Wet from yet another
crossing of the Platte,
they are bent to round
Zion bound.*

*Those who go leave
all but seventeen
pounds of poverty
carefully weighed.
Each ounce considered,
they abandon offense,*

*desert regret,
lessen their load,
hastening the trail
a thousand miles
where oxen pulled.*

*Evening river
and western sky glow
gold as a pillar of faith,
their vision of hope.*

*Igniting a legacy, they
muscle the mountains,
venture the road.
Campfires of a hundred
days mark the way
we will follow,
traveling light.*



Be of Good Cheer

CHOOSING HAPPINESS

Challenges have always been part of mortality and God's plan for our growth. Through the power of the Atonement, we can still "be of good cheer."

By Camille Fronk Olson

Associate Professor of Ancient Scripture,
Brigham Young University

To the paralytic man lying helpless on a bed, Jesus proclaimed, “Be of good cheer” (Matthew 9:2). To the frightened Apostles battling the tempestuous sea, Jesus appeared on the water, declaring, “Be of good cheer” (Matthew 14:27). As Joseph Smith met with 10 elders about to be sent out on missions fraught with trouble and danger, the Lord announced, “Be of good cheer” (D&C 61:36). In each instance the people had every reason to be anxious, fearful, and hopeless, yet the Lord directed them toward a reason to rejoice.

How does the Lord’s admonition of cheer sound in our world today? When economic uncertainties, terrorist threats, and corruption provide top stories for the evening news, how can the good news of the gospel intervene? When we experience personal loss in so many ways and on so many days, what is left to be cheerful about?

The Key to Cheerfulness

We find the key to understanding this seeming contradiction in the context of the Last Supper. Speaking to the Apostles in His final moments before Gethsemane, Jesus said, “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). Elder Neal A. Maxwell explained: “The unimaginable agony of Gethsemane was about to descend upon Jesus; Judas’ betrayal was imminent. Then would come Jesus’ arrest and arraignment; the scattering of the Twelve like sheep; the awful scourging of the Savior; the unjust trial; the mob’s shrill cry for Barabbas instead of Jesus; and then the awful crucifixion on Calvary. What was there to be cheerful about?



Just what Jesus said: He had overcome the world! The atonement was about to be a reality. The resurrection of all mankind was assured. Death was to be done away with—Satan had failed to stop the atonement.”¹

Christ’s enabling power helps us feel happiness and cheer amid mortal gloom and doom. Misfortune and hardship lose their tragedy when viewed through the lens of the Atonement. The process could be explained this way: The more we know the Savior, the longer our view becomes. The more we see His truths, the more we feel His joy.

Consider two false assumptions that, if pursued, will block our appreciation of and access to the Lord’s divine assistance.

False Assumption 1: We Can Avoid Tribulation

First is the false assumption that, if we are good enough, we can avoid having bad things happen to us and those we love. If we can just keep all of the commandments, pay an honest tithing, and have daily prayer and scripture study, we can assure ourselves of

During the Last Supper Jesus told His Apostles, “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).



Obedience to God is not insurance against pain and sadness. Challenges have always been included in God's great plan to test our faith and to help us grow in humility and compassion.

His protection from heartache, accident, or tragedy. But trials will surely come, including when we are trying to do everything right.

If we believe that God will shield us from tribulation because of our obedience and then adversity strikes, we may be tempted to accuse God of not hearing our prayers or, worse, of not honoring His promises. Obedience to God is not insurance against pain and sadness. Challenges have always been included in God's great plan to test our faith and to help us grow in humility and compassion.

The Apostle Paul acknowledged, "There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, . . . to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure" (2 Corinthians 12:7). Part of Christ's mission is to heal broken hearts. He came to wipe away our tears, not to ensure that we would never weep (see Revelation 7:17). He clearly promised, "In the world ye shall have tribulation" (John 16:33).

False Assumption 2: We Can Trust in Our Own Efforts

A second false assumption might come from misunderstanding 2 Nephi 25:23—"It is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do." We mistakenly deduce that we must first prove our worth through our obedience and righteousness before the Lord's sacrifice will cover us or His grace enable us.

We may come to believe that we can and should trust in our own efforts rather than humbly acknowledge God. This is *self-righteousness*. When we look through the lens of our righteousness and take comfort in our good efforts, the idea of depending wholly on Christ (see 2 Nephi 31:19; Moroni 6:4) seems a bit risky.

Unwittingly, when we reason this way, we sound eerily similar to Korihor, the anti-Christ from the Book of Mormon, who taught that "every man fared in this life according to the management of the creature; therefore every man prospered according to his genius, and . . . conquered according to his strength" (Alma 30:17), thereby arguing that his listeners had no need for Christ and His Atonement.

Such thinking easily leads to justifying wrongdoing because we think we are in control; we think we know better than others, and sin is not a problem for us. If we can just get control over our world—our addictions in all their varieties, our eating disorders and obsession with thinness, our insistence that our house always be immaculate, our fascination with outward evidence of education and success—then we can finally be cheerful.

Christ declared, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; *I* have overcome the world" (John 16:33; emphasis added).

Be of Good Cheer

Cheerfulness in the scriptural context connotes a divinely assured optimism, “a deep trust in God’s unfolding purposes,” a grounded conviction that God will always keep His promises.² When Christ proclaims, “Be of good cheer,” He is not requesting a naïve, Pollyanna-like response to life’s cruel twists and turns. Nor is He promising a pain-free life of constant bliss. Trial is no respecter of persons. Tragedy and hardship do not discriminate. Our world sees opposition among rich and poor, men and women, the righteous as well as the wicked. The Savior specifically prayed that God would not take us

“out of the world” (John 17:15). “In this world your joy is not full,” He taught, “but in me your joy is full” (D&C 101:36). True happiness and satisfaction are found only by turning away from the world and coming to Christ.

Only after Sariah feared the loss of her sons and then saw their deliverance did she come to her own deeper conviction of the Lord and His plans. She declared:

“Now I know of a surety that the Lord hath commanded my husband to flee into the wilderness; yea, and I also

know of a surety that the Lord hath protected my sons, and delivered them out of the hands of Laban, and given them power whereby they could accomplish the thing which the Lord hath commanded them” (1 Nephi 5:8).

She discovered that Christ’s grace was sufficient. And when her sons returned to their father’s tent, Nephi reported, “My mother, Sariah, was exceedingly glad”

THE ULTIMATE FORMULA FOR HAPPINESS

“The gospel of Jesus Christ has the answers to all of our problems. The gospel is not a secret. It is not complicated or hidden. . . . It is not someone’s theory or proposition. It does not come from man at all. It springs from the pure and everlasting waters of the Creator of the universe, who knows truths we cannot even begin to comprehend. And with that knowledge, He has given us the gospel—a divine gift, the ultimate formula for happiness and success.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Way of the Disciple,” *Liahona or Ensign*, May 2009, 75.



BE PATIENT IN AFFLICTIONS

Name withheld and posed by models

Beginning with complications from a strep infection at age 10, I have spent the past 30 years in and out of hospitals. I have had four kidney transplants, two bone fusions, two neurological operations, and more than two dozen other surgeries. Due to side effects of the medications I need to take, I have also developed osteoporosis, arthritis, and numerous other maladies.

Despite experiencing chronic pain and many disappointments, I have learned to distance myself from negative thoughts and focus on recognizing Heavenly Father’s hand in my life. Over the years, the words of the Lord to the Prophet Joseph Smith have been particularly meaningful for me: “Be patient in afflictions, for thou shalt have many; but endure them, for, lo, I am with thee, even unto the end of thy days” (D&C 24:8).

One of the greatest blessings I have received is the opportunity to serve others. There was a time when I struggled with depression, and looking back, I realize that I was spending all of my time and energy thinking about my problems and feeling sorry for myself. But an inspired Church leader called

When I forgot myself and spent my energy helping others, the deep sadness disappeared and I became happy and content with my life.

me to work with a special-needs Mutual group. Being able to serve these choice spirits of our Heavenly Father quickly brought me out from my emotional void. I found that when I forgot myself and spent my energy helping others, the deep sadness disappeared and I became happy and content with my life.

I know that the Savior has been with me throughout my trials, and I take comfort in the knowledge of the Resurrection, that someday I will be restored to a perfect body free of infirmities (see Alma 11:43). I know that if it were Heavenly Father’s will, I could be healed. However, I also know that He allows us to experience adversity so that we can grow and become more like Him. Knowing that He wants only what is best for me makes it easier to say, “Thy will be done.”

The healing power of Christ’s Atonement has no adverse side effects; it is perfect and complete. I know that as we have faith in Him and follow His example, we will be filled with happiness and hope. ■



(1 Nephi 5:1). Naturally such gladness came because her sons returned safely. But such joy is also evident in her witness that the Lord's power enabled her sons to do good works that they otherwise would not have been able to do if left to their own means.

After suffering physical and emotional persecution throughout years of missionary labors, Paul landed in a Roman prison and then declared:

"I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

"I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:11–13).

The Lord clearly promises, "In the world ye shall have tribulation" (John 16:33). When we acknowledge that we each face difficulties, that the Savior overcame the world, that He has lifted and strengthened and given vision to each of us in very personal ways, we will realize that we are never alone. We will feel a peace within even though the crisis without still rages. We will be filled with hope and even cheer.

A GRATEFUL HEART

"A grateful heart is a beginning of greatness. . . . It is a foundation for the development of such virtues as prayer, faith, courage, contentment, happiness, love, and well-being."

President James E. Faust (1920–2007), "Gratitude As a Saving Principle," *Ensign*, Dec. 1996, 5.

Christ Has Overcome the World

As mentioned before, Jesus Christ has indeed overcome the world. As darkness has no power when light appears, so the world cannot overcome the Light of the World (see John 1:5). He is the Victor, come to earth "with healing in his wings" (3 Nephi 25:2) for all humankind. He will not forsake us.

As a mother hen covers her chicks with her wings, so the Redeemer will surround us with His comprehensive power if we will come to Him (see Matthew 23:37). There is room under those wings for all of us, for He declares:

"Wherefore, be of good cheer, and do not fear, for I the Lord am with you, and will stand by you; and ye shall bear record of me, even Jesus Christ, that I am the Son of the living God, that I was, that I am, and that I am to come" (D&C 68:6).

True, we live in a time of war, a day of conflicts and terrors not only among nations but within our own hearts. But He who is the Balm of Gilead (see Jeremiah 8:22) is the Lord of all creation; only in Him are peace and serenity found. Amid all our mortal gloom and doom, Jesus Christ has overcome the world. Come, let us rejoice. ■

Adapted from a Brigham Young University Women's Conference address given April 30, 2004. For the full text, visit speeches.byu.edu.

NOTES

1. Neal A. Maxwell, *But a Few Days* (1983), 4.
2. Maxwell, 4.

FOR MORE ON THIS TOPIC

- Topical Guide, "Happiness, Happy," "Joy"; Psalms 30:5; James 5:11; 2 Nephi 2; Mosiah 2:41; Alma 41:10.
- Claudio R. M. Costa, "Fun and Happiness," *Liahona* or *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 92–94.
- Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Your Happily Ever After," *Liahona* or *Ensign*, May 2010, 124–27.
- James E. Faust, "Our Search for Happiness," *Liahona*, Oct. 2000, 2–8; or *Ensign*, Oct. 2000, 2–6.
- Joseph B. Wirthlin, "Come What May, and Love It," *Liahona* or *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 26–28.
- Richard G. Scott, "Finding Joy in Life," *Ensign*, May 1996, 24–26.
- Richard G. Scott, "How to Live Well amid Increasing Evil," *Liahona* or *Ensign*, May 2004, 100–102.
- Thomas S. Monson, "Happiness—the Universal Quest," *Liahona*, Mar. 1996, 2–8; or *Ensign*, Oct. 1993, 2–7.

A LOVING MOTHER'S LIFE MISSION

By Peiholani Kauvaka



Above: The author's father, Moses, mother, Lavinia, and niece on the Los Angeles California Temple grounds in 1999.

When I was growing up in Tonga, my mother occasionally helped teach seminary. From the time I was 5 until I was 10, she would often wake me up before seminary and lead me to the house where the class met. Although it was less than a quarter of a mile (0.4 km) walk on the trail through the guava bushes, she would ask me, “Are you afraid?” I would bravely answer, “No.”

Then she would say, “Someday you must be brave and serve your Heavenly Father. He has provided all things for us, even a plan that we can return to live with Him. Someday you will go on a mission and serve Him with all your heart, might, mind, and strength. You must start preparing now to be a good missionary.”

Eventually my parents moved our family to Ontario, California, USA. My mother found herself in an unfamiliar country, unable to speak the language and in culture shock. Like a hen that gathers her chicks under her wings, she would gather all of us children and fall to her knees, pleading to Heavenly Father that none of the children He had given her would fall away from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. My parents used family prayer, daily scripture reading, regular family fasts, weekly family home evening, and Church meetings to seek Heavenly Father's help in fortifying our family.

My parents encouraged us to behave like missionaries early in life. We always wore white shirts to church and had missionary haircuts. As a priest I would bless the sacrament, and my younger brothers would prepare and pass the sacrament as teachers and deacons. I could see my mother and father watching us, making sure we completed our duties faithfully.

Before I left on my mission, my mother said, “Do your part, and I will do mine. I will fast and pray for you to find people to teach.” She continued fasting and praying for all four of her sons during their missions. We all served faithfully and returned home with honor.

During my last visit with her before her death, my mother said, “Peiholani, I have taught you all that I know to be most important in this life and the life to come. That is, the gospel of Jesus Christ is true. The atoning blood of Jesus Christ is salvation to your soul. Honor the covenants you have made with the Lord in the temple. Do this, and our family will be together again. This I know without a doubt because Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ live.”

My testimony was built on the gospel, by every word my mother and father said. I know that our family will be together again someday because my parents fulfilled their mission to teach us the gospel and lead us to the Savior. ■

GETTING OUT OF Debt FOR GOOD

By Luke V. Erickson

Personal and Family Finance Educator



Alex* took a deep breath as he drove down Main Street, his pulse and mind racing with bittersweet exhilaration. With the windows down and wind blowing through his hair, he shifted into third gear and savored the seamlessness of the gear transition in his brand-new car. It felt good to be rid of that ancient beast of an automobile he had inherited from his parents. Alex thought to himself—not for the first time—that his purchase might even help him get a few more dates. Besides, he was 24 and had just one year of school left. “I deserve it,” he thought. But the next thought wasn’t quite as pleasant: “The car may impress some people, but what would they think if they knew how much debt I’m dragging around with it?”

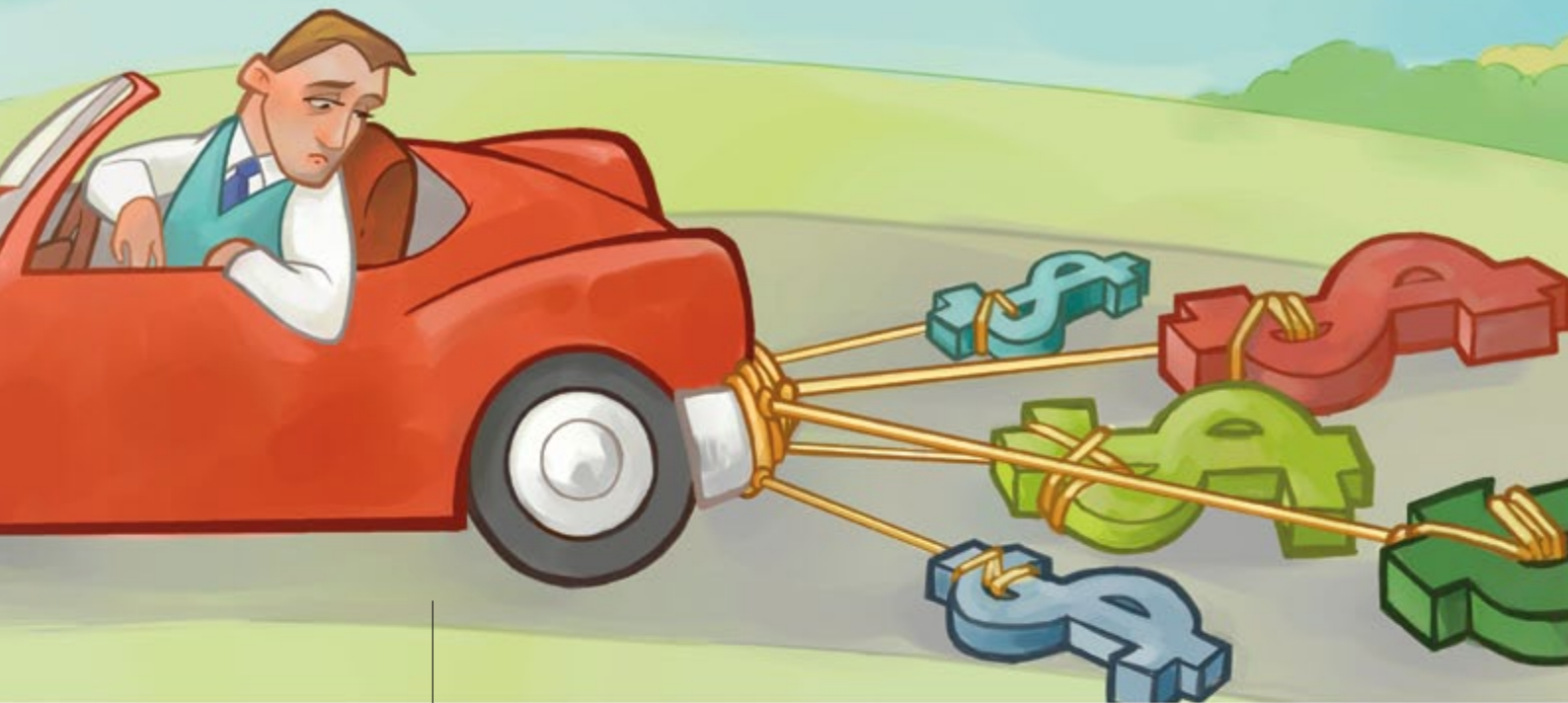
It wasn’t only the debt of the new car that worried him. His credit card statements, maybe five or six of them, had a balance of a few hundred dollars each. One even had a balance of more than \$1,000. He had done the math and knew that even if he applied every cent he made at the part-time job he had taken to get through school, it would take months to pay off those credit cards, and that wasn’t including any interest or other potential fees. To top it all off, he had several student loans he had used to pay for tuition, books, and some living expenses.

This reminded Alex of a newspaper cartoon he had seen that showed a 90-year-old man telling his wife after mailing a letter, “Now that we’ve finally paid off our student loans, we can start saving for retirement.” Alex smiled. It was only a joke, right? It couldn’t really turn out that way, could it?

You Will Be Happier

Like Alex, more and more people today are drowning in unmanageable debt. President Thomas S. Monson has warned against excessive debt. He says it is commonly accepted in today’s culture, but we will be happier by living within our means than we would be if we were “constantly worrying about how to make the next payment on nonessential debt.”¹ Elder Marvin J. Ashton (1915–1994) cited statistics showing that nearly 90 percent of divorces could be traced back to quarrels and accusations over finances.² When a single adult accumulates debt and later brings it to a marriage, the debt is likely to become an instant wedge between spouses.

Of course, because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we understand that there is always a path of redemption, as long as we make a firm and unyielding commitment to follow the path He would have us follow. A later reprinting



of Elder Ashton's talk included a debt-elimination calendar that can help us quickly and permanently rid ourselves of the bondage of debt.³

Where to Begin

The first step, and the most important factor in debt elimination, is a firm commitment to reject debt.⁴ A debt-elimination calendar will simply not work if new debts continue to be added to the old. This change in attitude is not subtle or gradual but rather resembles the flip of a switch—it's a resolute determination to make a clean break from the culturally accepted addiction to debt.

As a personal finance educator, I find it tremendously rewarding to see this light "switch on" in others. For instance, a student who attended a series of community-education finance classes announced enthusiastically on the last day of class that during the previous month she had taken some extra jobs and used tax-return money to

The car may impress some people. But Alex wondered what they would think if they knew how much debt he was dragging around with it.

pay off five credit cards and two department store cards. She had also opened a certificate of deposit and started a savings account at her bank. This student became a living embodiment of the wise statement that those who understand interest earn it rather than pay it.⁵

A Simple, Effective Method

Although there are many approaches to debt elimination, my own experience with teaching has shown that the debt-snowball method, which arranges debts from lowest to highest balance rather than highest to lowest interest rate, can be an extremely motivating way to confront and eliminate debt. This method is simple. Arrange your debts from smallest to largest. Make the minimum payment on all debts each month except for the smallest one: on that one, pay as much as you can. Once it is paid off, roll the regular payment you had been paying on that debt to the next-largest debt until it is paid off. Continue the process until the payment "snowball" has grown so large it quickly knocks out debts that stand in its way.

The following example shows this method. The last line indicates that the total debt payment will always be \$646, but as the smaller debts are eliminated, more and more of that amount is applied to the next-largest debt.

AN EXAMPLE OF HOW THE “DEBT-SNOWBALL” METHOD ELIMINATES DEBT

July 2011

October 2011 (3 months later)

Arranged from smallest to largest balance.

DEBT	BALANCE	PAYMENT	RATE
Family Loan	\$150	\$50.00	0
Credit Card 1	\$323	\$8.00	17.9
Credit Card 2	\$356	\$8.00	24.9
Credit Card 3	\$402	\$12.00	19.9
Credit Card 4	\$435	\$13.00	18.9
Credit Card 5	\$629	\$17.00	14.9
Credit Card 6	\$1,350	\$30.00	13.9
Student Loans	\$2,360	\$58.00	4.7
Auto	\$18,670	\$450.00	7.5
Totals	\$24,675	\$646	

DEBT	BALANCE	PAYMENT	RATE
Family Loan	\$0	\$0	0
Credit Card 1	\$313.31	\$58.00	17.9
Credit Card 2	\$354.12	\$8.00	24.9
Credit Card 3	\$385.73	\$12.00	19.9
Credit Card 4	\$416.26	\$13.00	18.9
Credit Card 5	\$601.09	\$17.00	14.9
Credit Card 6	\$1,306.41	\$30.00	13.9
Student Loans	\$2,213.16	\$58.00	4.7
Auto	\$17,663.80	\$450.00	7.5
Totals	\$23,253.88	\$646	



Eliminating the smallest debts first increases motivation and has a “snowball” effect that is highly successful.

April 2014 (33 months later)

DEBT	BALANCE	PAYMENT	RATE
Family Loan	\$0	\$0	0
Credit Card 1	\$0	\$0	0
Credit Card 2	\$0	\$0	0
Credit Card 3	\$0	\$0	0
Credit Card 4	\$0	\$0	0
Credit Card 5	\$0	\$0	0
Credit Card 6	\$0	\$0	0
Student Loans	\$620.34	\$196	4.7
Auto	\$6,496.26	\$450.00	7.5
Totals	\$7,116.60	\$646	

Using the numbers in this example, the snowball method could save someone \$1,173 and reduce the time it took to pay the debts by almost seven years.

No matter what approach we take to debt reduction, an attitude change and firm commitment to reject debt is the most valuable action we can make. It's about overcoming the accepted cultural norm of attaching debt to everything we buy. Words of our prophets⁶ that are decades old are now being verified by the opinions of countless personal finance experts who agree that only three types of debt are wise or economically justifiable:

- A mortgage on an affordable house.
- Loans for college degrees or training that are accompanied by higher expected earning increases.
- Loans for certain well-thought-out business plans.

Even in situations where debt may be economically justifiable, you will likely be better off including the debt in your debt snowball and paying it off sooner rather than later.

We live in a day when the adversary is using his most cunning tools in an effort to destroy our spirituality. Debt could put us into predicaments of choosing either to honor debts to our

FREE YOURSELVES FROM BONDAGE

“Since the beginnings of the Church, the Lord has spoken on [the] matter of debt. To Martin Harris through revelation He said: ‘Pay the debt thou hast contracted with the printer. Release thyself from bondage’ (D&C 19:35).

“President Heber J. Grant spoke repeatedly on this matter from this pulpit. He said: ‘If there is any one thing that will bring peace and contentment into the human heart, and into the family, it is to live within our means. And if there is any one thing that is grinding and discouraging and disheartening, it is to have debts and obligations that one cannot meet’ (*Gospel Standards*, comp. G. Homer Durham [1941], 111).

“We are carrying a message of self-reliance throughout the Church. Self-reliance cannot obtain when there is serious debt hanging over a household. One has neither independence nor freedom from bondage when he is obligated to others.

“In managing the affairs of the Church, we have tried to set an example. We have, as a matter of policy, stringently followed the practice of setting aside each year a percentage of the income of the Church against a possible day of need.

“I am grateful to be able to say that the Church in all its operations, in all its undertakings, in all of its departments, is able to function without borrowed money. If we cannot get along, we will curtail our programs. We will shrink expenditures to fit the income. We will not borrow.

“One of the happiest days in the life of President Joseph F. Smith was the day the Church paid off its long-standing indebtedness.

“What a wonderful feeling it is to be free of debt, to have a little money against a day of emergency put away where it can be retrieved when necessary. . . .

“I urge you . . . to look to the condition of your finances. I urge you to be modest in your expenditures; discipline yourselves in your purchases to avoid debt to the extent possible. Pay off debt as quickly as you can, and free yourselves from bondage.

“This is a part of the temporal gospel in which we believe. May the Lord bless you . . . to set your houses in order. If you have paid your debts, if you have a reserve, even though it be small, then should storms howl about your head, you will have shelter for your [families] and peace in your hearts. That’s all I have to say about it, but I wish to say it with all the emphasis of which I am capable.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) “To the Boys and to the Men,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 53–54.

fellow men or to pay tithing, for instance. No man can serve two masters (see Matthew 6:24), and in trying to do so, we can hinder our spiritual growth.⁷

On the other hand, as we permanently remove debt from our lives, we will find that a portion of our agency has also been restored. Our Father's plan of salvation is also a plan of agency. We should never willingly forfeit even a portion of that agency by being bogged down by unnecessary debts. ■

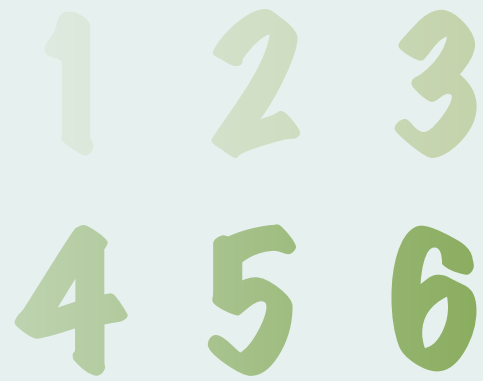
Editors' note: For more ideas and tools—including a debt-elimination calendar and other family finance resources—to help you get and stay out of debt, please visit providentliving.org.

In addition, listen to an interview with the author, Luke V. Erickson, on the Mormon Channel at radio.lds.org/programs/mormon-identities. Look for episode 56, "Living Debt Free."

** Alex is not a real person, but his character is a composite of individuals with whom I have had personal counseling experience.*

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, "True to the Faith," *Liahona* or *Ensign*, May 2006, 19.
2. Marvin J. Ashton, "One for the Money," *Ensign*, July 1975, 72.
3. Marvin J. Ashton, "Guide to Family Finance," *Liahona*, April 2000, 42–47.
4. See Orson Scott Card, "Family Finances," *Ensign*, June 1978, 15.
5. See L. Tom Perry, "Becoming Self-Reliant," *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 66.
6. Articles that reference the teachings of early Church leaders include Joe J. Christensen, "Q&A: Questions and Answers," *New Era*, Aug. 1971, 35–36; Max W. Brown, "I Have a Question," *Ensign*, Dec. 1997, 62; Marvin J. Ashton, "One for the Money," *Ensign*, July 1975, 72–73; Joseph B. Wirthlin, "Earthly Debts, Heavenly Debts," *Liahona* or *Ensign*, May 2004, 40–43; Robert D. Hales, "Becoming Provident Providers Temporally and Spiritually," *Liahona* or *Ensign*, May 2009, 7–10.
7. See "Climbing Out of Debt," *Ensign*, July 2002, 67.



CAN I AFFORD THAT PAYMENT?

Frequently, when someone applies for a loan, the seller or lending institution will "qualify" the buyer for a surprisingly large monthly payment. Before you agree to assume the debt by signing your name, you should be certain that the payment for which you qualify is one that you can actually afford. If the payment is one that will be new to your budget, set up a new bank account and "make the payment" to that account for a period of six months. If the payment will be replacing another amount, like rent or another car payment, continue to pay the original amount and then send the difference between the old and new payment to the bank account for six months.

Six months is a great time frame to use for this exercise because many of the "unexpected" expenditures we tend to forget about will show up during that time period, such as the semiannual car insurance payment, the periodic trip to the dentist, or the occasional need for a visit to the urgent-care office. At the end of six months, if you can comfortably meet the obligation to yourself, you know you can continue to do so with a lender. Not only that, but you will have a nice little stash of cash to increase your down payment on that car or home.

Cassy J. H. Budd, CPA
Associate Teaching Professor, School of Accountancy
Brigham Young University





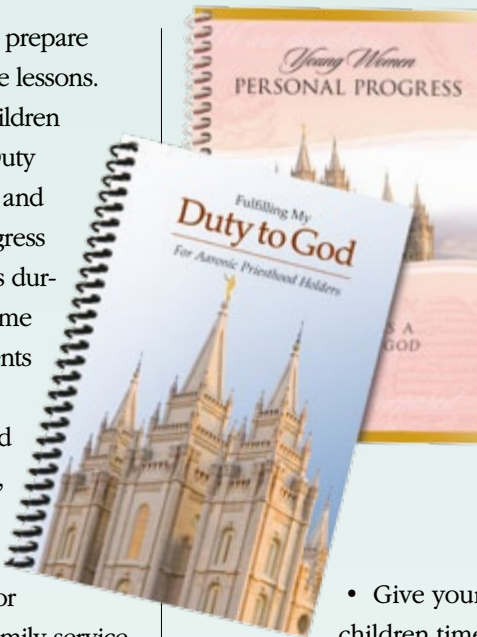
Incorporating Youth Programs into Family Home Evening

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles counseled parents to “participate in Personal Progress and Duty to God with [their] children.”¹ To follow this counsel, you could consider implementing these programs into your family home evenings by doing the following:

- Adapt Personal Progress value experiences and activities in the Duty to God book as family home evening lessons. Help

your children prepare and give these lessons.

- Help your children create their Duty to God plans and Personal Progress value projects during family home evening. Parents and younger children could also set goals, or you could set goals as a family (for example, a family service project or family scripture study plan).



- Give your children time in family home evening to share experiences

they had while fulfilling their plans or projects.

Elder Hales has promised that by working on these inspired programs “you will grow together in a bond of faith and friendship that will allow you to strengthen each other and stay on the gospel path forever, to indeed be an eternal family.”²

NOTES

1. Robert D. Hales, “Our Duty to God: The Mission of Parents and Leaders to the Rising Generation,” *Liahona* or *Ensign*, May 2010, 96.
2. “Our Duty to God,” 96.

HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

“T-I-M-E Spells Love,” page 12: Review the article, giving attention to the ways each family implemented changes to make family time a priority. Are there specific ways your family could show greater love for one another by spending more time together? Invite family members to share their ideas. Consider planning an outing or activity together as a family. It could be as simple as a picnic at the park or a game night at home.

“Be of Good Cheer: Choosing Happiness,” page 56: Discuss the two false assumptions outlined in the article. Consider asking the following questions: Why do righteous people experience tribulation? How can we find joy even when we are going through hard times? Consider sharing an experience of when you were able to “be of good cheer” through a difficult time.

“Getting out of Debt—for Good,” page 62: After reviewing the article, reread this quote from President Hinckley: “I urge you . . . to look to the condition of your

finances. I urge you to be modest in your expenditures; discipline yourselves in your purchases to avoid debt to the extent possible.” Discuss the importance of following the counsel of prophets to get and stay out of debt. If you have children, consider discussing how they can start making good financial decisions now to avoid excess spending.

Be of Good Cheer
CHOOSING HAPPINESS

Challenges have always been part of mortality and God's plan for our growth. Through the power of His Atonement, we can still "be of good cheer."

The Key to Cheerfulness
We find the key to understanding this evening contribution in the counsel of the Last Supper. Speaking to the Apostles in His final moments before Conference, Jesus said, “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved” (John 16:33). Elder Neal A. Maxwell explained: “The remarkable agency of God’s Atonement was about to descend upon Jesus’ Atonement was to be born. Then would come Jesus’ atonement and assignment, the atonement of the Father. But during the joyful atonement of the Father, the spirit will be made manifest to all the righteous, and of those, and then they will be purified on Calvary. What was there to be cheerful about?”

By Carole Frank Olson
Illustration: Jeffrey Stinson, Design: Tony Gaudy

The parallel man being brought on a “bad” personal progress. “Be of good cheer” (Matthew 24:29). In the English translation of the scriptures, we, Jesus appeared on the water, declaring, “Be of good cheer” (Matthew 14:27). As Joseph Smith said with 18 others about to be sent on a mission through trials, tribulation, and the last moments: “Be of good cheer” (D&C 45:16). In each instance the people had every reason to be anxious, fearful, and hopeless, yet the Lord directed them toward a reason to rejoice.

How can the Lord’s administration of cheer stand in our world today? When economic uncertainties, career fears, and corruption provide no reason for the evening terms, how can the good news of the gospel overcome? When we experience personal loss in an untimely way and on many days, what is left to be cheerful about?

Cherishing the Last Supper
The Apostles, “In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer.” (James 1:2-3)

Just what Jesus said He had overcome the world. The atonement was done to be a reality. The atonement of all mankind was assured. Death was to be done away with. Jesus had indeed to keep the atonement.”

Cherishing the power helps us feel happiness and cheer and avoid grief and pain. We know and hardly know their strength when we are through the Atonement. The promise could be explained this way: “The more we know the more the longer our lives become. The more we know the more we have the more we have.”

Consider two false assumptions that, if proved, will block our experience of and access to the Lord’s divine sentence.

False Assumption 1: We Can Avoid Tribulation
First is the false assumption that, if we are good enough, we can avoid tribulation. Change happens to us and those we love. If we can get through all of the tribulations, we are better off, and we have daily prayer and scripture study, we can create members of

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID STOKER

DEFENDING MY THESIS—AND THE BOOK OF MORMON

When I was a university student, the honors program in which I was enrolled required students to write a thesis. Each student's thesis had to be supervised and approved by two professors.

For my thesis I chose to research and analyze warfare in the Book of

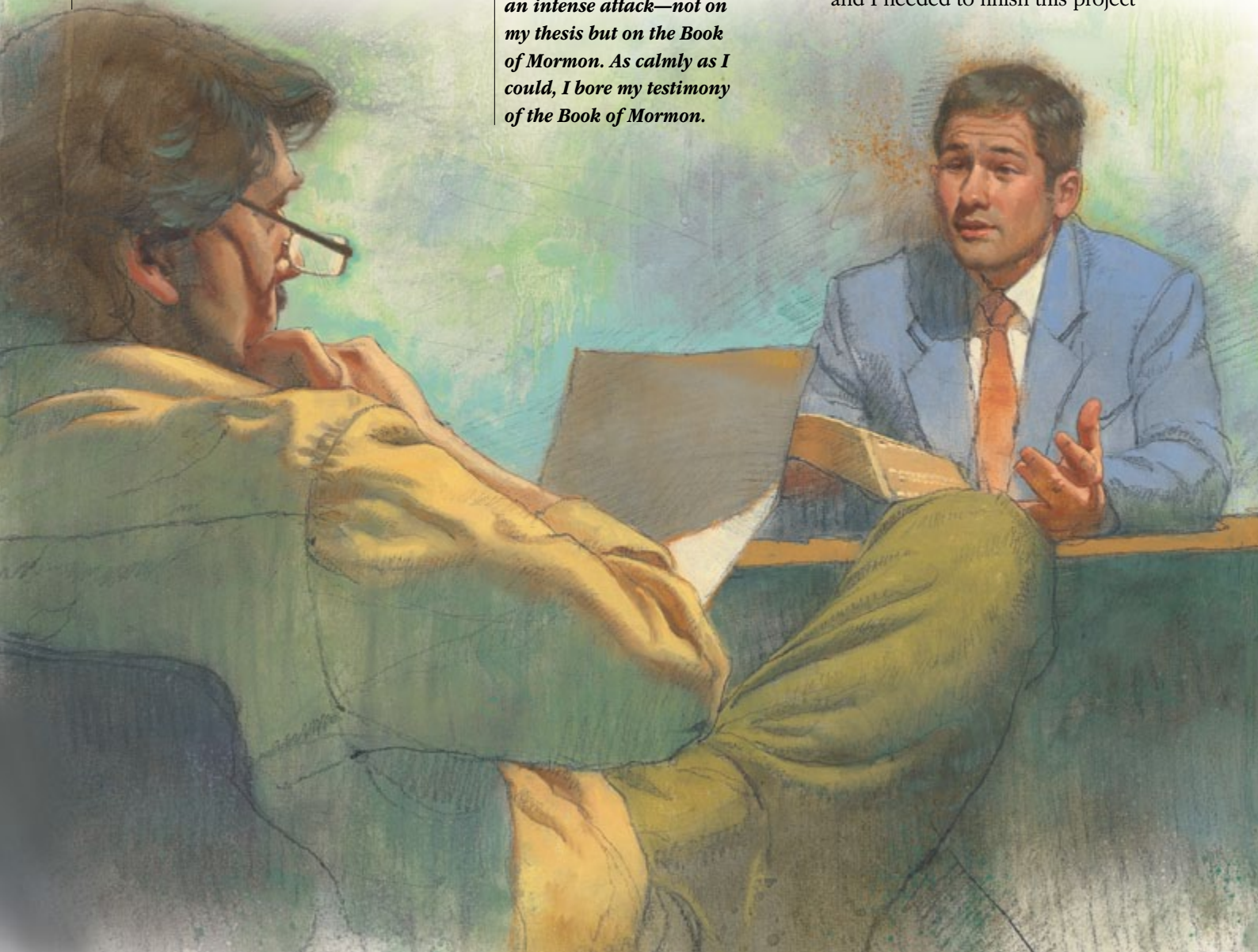
Mormon. I consulted with one professor about my idea, and he agreed to be one of my supervisors. He also suggested another professor as a potential second supervisor.

I met with the second professor

Almost immediately, the professor launched into an intense attack—not on my thesis but on the Book of Mormon. As calmly as I could, I bore my testimony of the Book of Mormon.

to explain my thesis topic to him. As soon as I mentioned the Book of Mormon, his demeanor changed and he began to criticize the Church. I listened quietly until he had finished and then briefly explained that I felt he misunderstood our beliefs. He didn't seem convinced, but to my surprise he agreed to supervise my thesis.

After almost a year of research and writing, I submitted my thesis for faculty approval. During that year I had been accepted to law school, and I needed to finish this project



to graduate and move forward.

Within a week I received an e-mail from the professor who had criticized the Church. He asked me to meet him at his office.

When I arrived, he asked me to close the door and sit down. Almost immediately, he launched into an attack—not on my thesis but on the Book of Mormon. As calmly as I could, I bore my testimony of the Book of Mormon.

I hesitantly asked the professor if he would still approve my thesis. He said he would not.

I went home feeling depressed and unsure what to do. Without this man's approval, I could lose my chances to graduate from the honors program and to begin law school. I prayed that everything would work out somehow.

When I explained my situation to the other professor who was supervising my thesis, he advised me to visit the professor the next day and give him one more chance to approve my thesis.

The next morning I found myself waiting outside the professor's office. I was nervous, unsure of how he would react to seeing me again. When he arrived, he silently opened his office door, gesturing for me to come in. Without saying a word he took out a pen and signed my thesis, officially giving me his approval. He offered no explanation of what had caused him to change his mind but smiled at me as I said good-bye.

I am grateful that I had the

opportunity to bear my testimony to this man. I know that as we stand for what we believe, Heavenly Father will strengthen and bless us. ■

Scott Macdonald, California, USA

WHEN I MEET MY BROTHER AGAIN

When I was a young girl, I desperately wanted my brother, Juan Fernando, to run and play like other children. When I asked my mom why he couldn't, she said he had suffered a severe brain injury at birth from lack of oxygen and would never be able to do those things.

My brother spent his entire life in bed. Because I was raised in the Church, I understood and accepted his condition and knew the greatness of his spirit. Nevertheless, my young heart longed for him to be like others, even though I couldn't imagine what it would be like to watch him walk or run or speak.

I was worried about who would take care of him if the rest of the family died before he did. In heartfelt prayers I pleaded with Heavenly Father not to take us before He took Juan Fernando. I knew He would answer me.

My brother was 16 when he died on a cold winter afternoon, leaving a tremendous void in our family. We

felt sadness but also hope. A few days after he died, I fell asleep while thinking about him and had a beautiful dream.

I was walking, but my vision was dimmed by clouds. I could see something in the distance, so I continued walking slowly toward it. As I drew closer, I saw that it was a wagon full of beautiful flowers. While staring at them, I noticed a handsome young man, dressed in white, standing by the wagon. I paused a moment, trying to recognize him, and then I realized it was my brother. I was so happy to see him. He spoke to me, and I wanted to hug and kiss him. Then I woke up.

I was so grateful that I heard his voice and saw him looking whole. I can only imagine the moment when we will meet again. I'm sure there will be hugs and kisses and loving words—all thanks to the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Because of the Savior we will all rise from the grave and can be reunited as families, never to be separated again.

I remember the words of Amulek: "The spirit and the body shall be reunited again in its perfect form; both limb and joint shall be restored to its proper frame" (Alma 11:43).

I'm thankful for the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, which brings peace to my soul. I know I will see my brother again someday. ■

María Isabel Parra de Uribe, Mexico

MY PIONEER DAYS IN CALGARY

I was born in a small town in northern England in 1947. When I was 15 years old, I was introduced to the missionaries through friends, and I joined the Church. My family, however, did not join.

As I learned about the early pioneers of the Church, I felt that I had been shortchanged by not having a heritage of ancestors who had crossed the plains. But as I progressed in the gospel, my feelings changed.

I came to understand that the early pioneers forged the way for people like me to join the Church. The two missionaries who introduced me to the gospel were descendants of those pioneers, so I owe much to the pioneers. I came to feel linked to them in a special way.

I also realized that I *do* have a heritage of generous, hardworking people who sacrificed, labored, and even fought wars to make it possible for me to have things they never had and to give me the freedoms I enjoy today. My parents didn't join the Church, but they raised me with good values and principles that prepared me to accept the gospel.

Finally, I learned that there are many kinds of pioneers. I am a first-generation member of the Church. My family was not happy with my decision to be baptized, which made it

difficult for me to attend my meetings. Our small branch struggled because of a lack of members, especially priesthood holders. Eventually it became evident that the mission was going to close it.

As a result, I decided to move to Canada, which was one of the hardest decisions I have ever made. I was an only child and loved my parents very much, as they loved me, but my testimony would have been at risk had I stayed in an area where I couldn't attend church. I can still remember the night I left—my father running alongside the train blowing kisses to me while my mother looked on. My heart was breaking, but I knew I had to leave.

I arrived in Calgary, Alberta, on Mother's Day in May 1967. I attended church with the members I was staying with and cried through the whole meeting. I remember writing letters home to my parents with tears streaming down my face, telling them I loved Canada but missed England and my family so much.

I struggled to adjust to my new life, suffering homesickness, loneliness, and disappointments, but I stayed true to the gospel. I attended all of my meetings and accepted callings. These were my pioneer days.



I can still remember the night I left—my father running alongside the train blowing kisses to me while my mother looked on. My heart was breaking, but I knew I had to leave.

Eventually I met my husband. We were sealed in the Cardston Alberta Temple and raised three children in the Church.

Each time I return to England, I am flooded with memories of my conversion and can't help but be grateful for my blessings. Where might I be today had I not had the courage to make such a difficult choice and follow the Spirit?

I will be eternally grateful to the early pioneers both in and out of the Church who paved the way so that I and others like me could hear the gospel. Those who came before gave me the opportunity and the courage to be a modern-day pioneer. ■

Lorraine Gilmour, Ontario, Canada

TWO CITIES AND A TENDER MERCY

Like Nauvoo, Illinois, the city of Natchez, Mississippi, USA, sits high on a bluff overlooking the Mississippi River. Early Latter-day Saints coming from England often passed through Natchez on their way upriver from New Orleans to Nauvoo. In fact, in 1844 a group of ruffians set fire to a boat docked at Natchez that was carrying a number of Latter-day Saints.

When I arrived in Natchez to accept a job with the U.S. National Park Service, I entertained doubts and fears. I had left all that was comfortable and familiar to me in Utah, and as I took up residence in this new and seemingly foreign city, I felt lost and alone.

On my first day of training, the supervising ranger began by taking me through the park's Civil War-era mansion and demonstrating the type of guided tour I would soon be expected to conduct. By the time we had finished exploring the first floor, I was already having a hard time remembering all of the details. From the French rococo revival furniture to the English porcelain china, the ornate home embodied Southern

prosperity—and thoroughly overwhelmed me. Realizing that we had yet to see the second level of the home, I was overcome with a feeling of frustration and a longing for home.

As we climbed the grand staircase, an oil painting of a townscape caught my attention. I had never seen it before, yet there was something familiar about it. My eyes were drawn to the depiction of a large building atop the town's bluff, and I recognized the sweeping curve that the river made around the city. Could it really be what I thought it was?

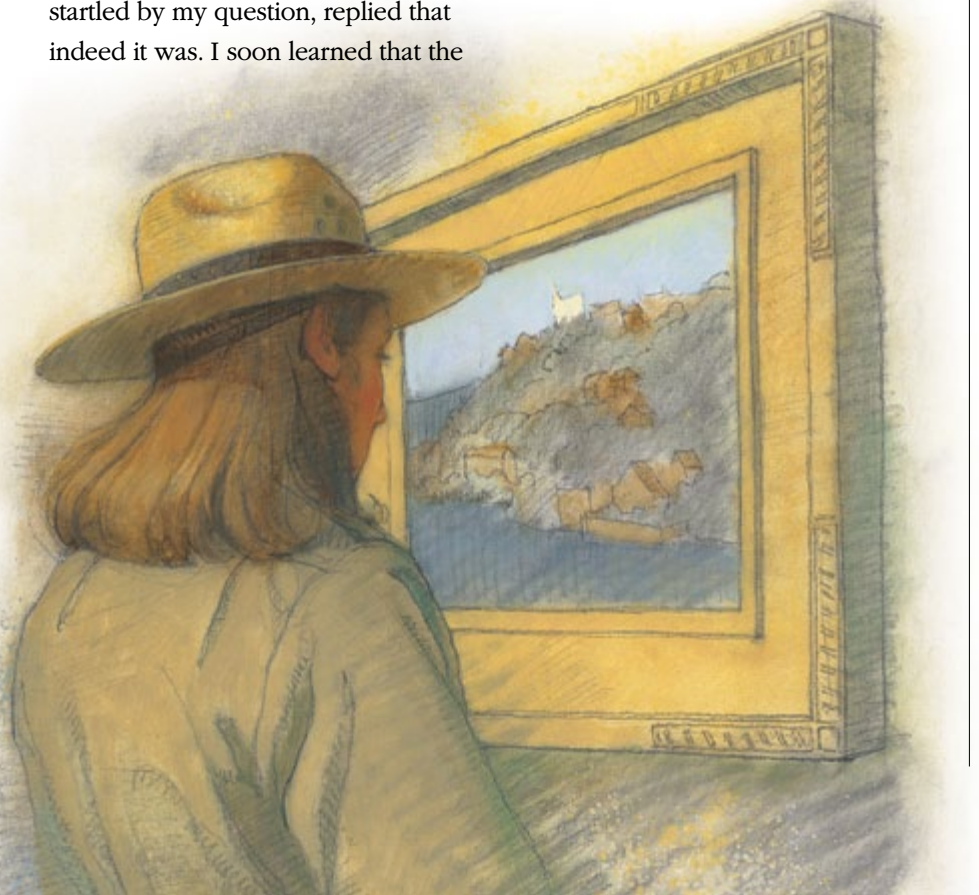
I asked if the painting was a depiction of Nauvoo. My supervisor, startled by my question, replied that indeed it was. I soon learned that the

painting had been purchased by one of the home's later owners because presumably it had been painted during the mid-19th century and the river scene coincided nicely with the Natchez landscape.

The Saints who passed through Natchez amid persecution must have felt a great sense of relief and gratitude when they finally arrived at Nauvoo. Similarly, I felt comforted when I saw the painting of Nauvoo in the mansion in Natchez. Seeing the painting helped me know that Heavenly Father was aware of my situation and would bless me with the strength to overcome my homesickness, fear, and doubts. I knew that the painting of Nauvoo was a tender mercy of the Lord. ■

Tiffany Taylor Bowles, Illinois, USA

As we climbed the grand staircase, an oil painting of a townscape caught my attention. Could the scene really be what I thought it was?



Small & Simple Things

“By small and simple things are great things brought to pass” (Alma 37:6).

TEMPLE SPOTLIGHT

Vancouver British Columbia Temple

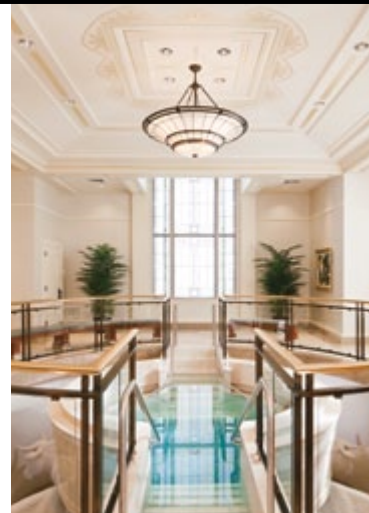
On May 2, 2010, the Vancouver British Columbia Temple became the 131st temple to be dedicated in this dispensation. The temple covers 28,165 square feet (2,617 m²) and contains a baptistry, a celestial room, two endowment rooms, and two sealing rooms. Inside, the color scheme features green, light blue, and gold, honoring the majesty of the forests, sea, and sky of the Pacific Northwest. The Pacific dogwood, the provincial flower of British Columbia, is portrayed in paintings and fabrics throughout the building.

The night before the dedication, more than 1,200 youth participated in a cultural celebration. Titled “A Beacon to the World,” the show portrayed the history and people



of Canada. At the beginning of the celebration, President Monson changed the opening hymn to the national anthem of Canada, saying, “We are here to enjoy Canada with you.”

In the dedicatory prayer, President Monson said: “May all who enter have clean hands and pure hearts. May their faith increase as they labor here for those who have gone before. May they depart with a feeling of peace, praising Thy holy name.”¹



From top: A look at the baptistry, decorative details, and celestial room of the Vancouver British Columbia Temple.

NOTE

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Dedicatory Prayer,” ldschurchtemples.com/vancouver/prayer.

Fasting Journal

Fasting used to be difficult for me—until I began keeping a fasting journal. Now, before I begin each fast, I write down a specific purpose for my fast. For example, I might write, “Because I am so nervous about my new calling as Beehive adviser, I am fasting and praying that the Lord will bless me to be calm, confident, and composed tomorrow when I teach my first lesson.”

Throughout my fast, I jot down relevant things that transpire; thoughts, feelings, and impressions that come into my mind and heart; and scriptural references that especially pertain to the purpose of my fast.

As I share my desires with Heavenly Father, He often blesses me in ways I had not imagined. What might otherwise seem to be random events in my life are clearly linked when I write them down and see how they all contribute to my growth and development. Since 1996, when I first began keeping a fasting journal, I have seen how Heavenly Father has blessed my life. I testify of the incredible spiritual power of fasting and praying and consider fasting an opportunity for “rejoicing and prayer” (D&C 59:14).

Renee Harding, North Carolina, USA

Mary Fielding Smith

Mary Fielding Smith, a faithful Latter-day Saint woman, was left with several young children while her husband was in Liberty Jail during the winter of 1838–39. Mobs raided her home, and her son was nearly killed as a result of the attack. As the wife of Hyrum Smith, Mary was left a widow when her husband was assassinated at Carthage Jail on June 27, 1844. She and Emma Smith endured many trials along with their husbands, Hyrum and Joseph Smith. Today, Mary is admired as one of the most stalwart pioneers of the early Church.

Mary married Hyrum Smith on December 24, 1837. Hyrum’s first wife, Jerusha, had died in childbirth, and Mary cared for Hyrum’s small children as her own. Hyrum and Mary also had two children together, including Joseph F. Smith, who later became the sixth President of the Church.

When the Saints left Nauvoo for the Salt Lake Valley after Joseph and Hyrum were martyred, Mary resolved to make the journey. She and her family were assigned to a traveling group, and the captain told her that she would be a burden to others and shouldn’t attempt the difficult journey. Mary responded, “I will beat you to the valley and will ask no help from you either.”¹ The trek proved difficult, but she arrived with her family in Salt Lake on September 23, 1848, a day ahead of the captain who had doubted her.

Mary Fielding Smith remained faithful to the end of her life. She paid tithing, even in her poverty. When someone inappropriately suggested she not contribute a



Top: Mary Fielding Smith crossing the plains.

Above: Joseph F. Smith with family members at Mary Fielding Smith’s Salt Lake City home, about 1910.

tenth of the potatoes she had grown that year, she responded, “You ought to be ashamed of yourself. Would you deny me a blessing? . . . I pay my tithing, not only because it is a law of God, but because I expect a blessing by doing it.”² She established a farm in the Salt Lake Valley and taught her children the gospel. President Joseph F. Smith later said, “She taught me honor, and virtue, and truth, and integrity to the kingdom of God, and she taught me not only by precept but by example.”³

NOTES

1. See Don Cecil Corbett, *Mary Fielding Smith: Daughter of Britain* (1966), 228.
2. Mary Fielding Smith, quoted by Joseph F. Smith, in Conference Report, Apr. 1900, 48.
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (1998), 36.

News of the Church

Visit news.lds.org for more Church news and events.

Sign Language Materials Help Deaf Community Come unto Christ

By Hikari Loftus

Church Magazines

Although the Church has been providing American Sign Language (ASL) translation for more than 30 years, it is increasing its efforts to provide Church documents, pamphlets, manuals, and videos in ASL to aid the Deaf¹ in their gospel learning.

“ASL is considered a foreign language by the Church, so we follow the same process we do to translate into any other language,” said Kimberly Day, manager of sign language translation. “It’s been wonderful to have the production of ASL materials be part of translation services.”

Although many Deaf people read and understand written English, ASL does not follow the same sentence structure that English does. Rather, it follows the pattern of most romantic languages. For this reason, printed material and closed captioning services do not always provide the Deaf with clear understanding.

“Some Deaf people read English just fine. Some prefer to have materials in their native language, just like speakers of any other language,” said Joseph Featherstone of the Church Translation Division, who is Deaf. “Having these products in ASL allows Deaf people more access to the gospel and more access to feeling the Spirit.

“The Book of Mormon translation into ASL has made a huge impact on the Deaf community in terms of being able to learn and have access to the gospel,” Brother Featherstone continued. “When I read the Book of Mormon in English, I read it and understand it, but when

I see it expressed in ASL, it does something different. It is completely personal to me, and it touches me.”

ASL is just one of many sign languages used throughout the world. Most languages—and even countries—have their own sign language.

Such diversity makes translation a significant task. And

while the Translation Division aims to translate material into the various sign languages worldwide, the division is first focusing on establishing patterns with ASL that will make the transition to other languages efficient and smooth.

In a few cases, products offer different sign language options, such as the movie *Legacy*, which offers ASL, Japanese Sign, and British Sign.

“We are still growing and learning,” Sister Day said. “It’s a balancing

act to meet the needs of all people in a worldwide church and do it with limited resources. Sometimes you have to choose what will reach the most people.”

To begin, translators transform English sentences into a series of keywords and symbols. The symbols indicate what types of emotions and movements that the signer should make to convey the meaning of the words. This translated piece is called a *gloss*.

The gloss is then put on a teleprompter, and a native Deaf signer is filmed signing what is indicated on the screen. The end result is a visual product that Deaf people can watch.

The growing list of materials available in ASL includes items like the Book of Mormon, selected hymns, the

“When I read the Book of Mormon in English, I read it and understand it, but when I see it expressed in ASL, it does something different. It is completely personal to me, and it touches me.”

—Joseph Featherstone,
ASL translator



PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTINA SMITH © IRI

To view a *Church News and Events* video report on ASL, visit news.lds.org and search “ASL.”

The Church, which has been providing American Sign Language translation for 30 years, is increasing its efforts to provide material in ASL.

Gospel Principles manual, general conference, and many other faith-building films, pamphlets, and documents. The ASL page on LDS.org (<http://lds.org/asl>) also provides translated materials and broadcasts.

These products, while useful to Deaf members of the Church and their families, are also important to missionaries who teach Deaf investigators.

“If we can understand the message, that makes it easier to feel the Spirit,” Sister Day said. “By providing these products, we are enabling the Deaf to focus on the message and feel the Spirit. It helps them come to Christ. That is the point—to bring souls unto Christ.” ■

NOTE

1. The word *Deaf* is capitalized when it refers to the distinct linguistic and cultural group of people whose primary language is ASL.

Mission Boundaries Realigned; Mission Presidents Begin Service

To better align resources and to meet changing needs, the Church created five new missions and combined others with neighboring missions in 2011. The number of missions worldwide is now 340. To see maps of the realigned missions, please visit <http://lds.org/church/news/2011-mission-boundary-changes->.

In addition to these changes, 127 mission presidents have been called. The majority will begin their three-year calling this month.

MISSION	NEW PRESIDENT	MISSION	NEW PRESIDENT
Alaska Anchorage	N. Warren Clark	Chile Concepción South	Oswaldo Martínez Carreño
Albania Tirana	Andrew M. Ford	Chile Osorno	John E. Rappleye
Alpine German-Speaking	Richard L. Miles	Chile Santiago North	Fred D. Essig
Argentina Buenos Aires West	Douglas B. Carter	Colombia Cali	Jonathan M. Prince
Argentina Mendoza	Sergio E. Avila	Colorado Colorado Springs	J. Patrick Anderson
Argentina Resistencia	Raymond S. Heyman	Colorado Denver North	Jerry M. Toombs
Argentina Rosario	Hugo L. Giuliani	Cote d'Ivoire Abidjan	Z. Dominique Dekaye
Argentina Salta	Juan J. Levrino	Democratic Republic of Congo Kinshasa	Brent L. Jameson
Arizona Phoenix	R. Scott Taylor	Dominican Republic Santo Domingo East	Heriberto Hernandez
Arizona Tucson	Roger E. Killpack	Dominican Republic Santo Domingo West	Raul Rodriguez Morel
Arkansas Little Rock	Daniel Bay Gibbons	Ecuador Guayaquil North	Lizardo H. Amaya
Baltic	Jeffrey G. Boswell	Ecuador Quito	Bruce E. Ghent
Benin Cotonou	Robert F. Weed	El Salvador San Salvador	David L. Glazier
Bolivia Cochabamba	Dan L. Dyer	El Salvador Santa Ana/Belize	I. Poloski Cordon
Brazil Brasília	Helcio L. Gaertner	England Manchester	Robert I. Preston
Brazil Florianopolis	J. Joel Fernandes	Fiji Suva	Kenneth D. Klingler
Brazil Fortaleza	Francisco A. Souza	Finland Helsinki	Douglas M. Rawlings
Brazil Maceió	Mauricio G. Gonzaga	Florida Fort Lauderdale	Donald E. Anderson
Brazil Manaus	H. Moroni Klein	France Paris	Franck Poznanski
Brazil Recife	Rubens C. Lanius	Georgia Atlanta North	Mark A. Wolfert
Brazil Rio de Janeiro	Geraldo Lima	Germany Frankfurt	Lehi K. Schwartz
Brazil Salvador	James W. Hart	Ghana Accra	Daniel K. Judd
Brazil São Paulo Interlagos	R. Pacheco Pinho	Ghana Cape Coast	Jeffrey L. Shulz
Brazil São Paulo North	Marcus H. Martins	Guatemala Guatemala City Central	M. Joseph Brough
Brazil São Paulo South	John S. Tanner	Guatemala Guatemala City North	Edward D. Watts
Brazil Vitória	J. Araújo Bezerra	Guatemala Guatemala City South	Larry Stay
California Anaheim	Bradford C. Bowen	Guatemala Quetzaltenango	Lewis Bautista
California Arcadia	Jorge T. Becerra	Honduras Tegucigalpa	Carlos A. Hernandez
California Fresno	Larry Gelwix	Japan Kobe	Richard G. Zinke
California Riverside	Larry Gelwix	Japan Sapporo	Eric C. Evans
California Roseville	Paul F. Smart	Japan Sendai	Gary D. Rasmussen
California Roseville	Paul F. Smart	Kentucky Louisville	W. Richards Woodbury
California Sacramento	John G. Weston	Korea Busan	Lynn A. Gilbert
California San Diego	John G. Weston	Louisiana Baton Rouge	Jim M. Wall
California San Jose	H. Benson Lewis	Mexico Mexico City North	J. Dana Call
California San Jose	Paul N. Clayton	Mexico Mexico City Southeast	Raymundo Morales Barrera
California Ventura	W. Lincoln Watkins	Mexico Oaxaca	Enrique Leyva Jimenez
Canada Vancouver	Fernando R. Castro	Mexico Puebla	Robert C. Reeves
Cape Verde Praia	Karl M. Tilleman	Mexico Tijuana	Armando Carreón Rivera
	Roberto F. Oliveira	Mexico Torreón	David Flores Villaseñor
		Mexico Tuxtla Gutiérrez	Juan G. Cardenas Tamayo
		Mexico Veracruz	Carlos W. Treviño
		Michigan Lansing	Stephen H. Hess
		Micronesia Guam	Stephen F. Mecham
		Minnesota Minneapolis	Jordan W. Clements
		Missouri Independence	Donald J. Keyes
		Mongolia Ulaanbaatar	Jay D. Clark*
		Nevada Las Vegas	Michael A. Neider
		New Jersey Morristown	Jon M. Jeppson
		New Zealand Auckland	Paul N. Lekias
		New Zealand Wellington	Michael L. Kezerian
		Nigeria Lagos	Edward K. B. Karkari
		Nigeria Port Harcourt	Philip K. Xaxagbe
		Ohio Columbus	Robert T. Nilsen
		Oregon Eugene	Mark A. Young
		Oregon Portland	C. Jeffery Morby
		Pennsylvania Pittsburgh	Clinton D. Topham
		Peru Chiclayo	Eduardo C. Risso
		Peru Lima East	Nelson Ardila Vásquez
		Philippines Angeles	David C. Martino
		Philippines Cebu	Evan A. Schmutz
		Philippines Davao	Ferdinand Pangan
		Philippines Manila	Lyle J. Stucki
		Philippines Olongapo	Roberto B. Querido
		Philippines Quezon City North	Dennis R. Sperry
		Philippines San Pablo	George E. Peterson
		Philippines Tacloban	Jose V. Andaya
		Romania Bucharest	Ned C. Hill
		Russia Novosibirsk	Steven M. Petersen
		Russia St. Petersburg	Jon Beesley
		Russia Yekaterinburg	E. Kent Rust
		Samoa Apia	Johnny L. Leota
		Slovenia/Croatia	Edward B. Rowe
		South Africa Cape Town	Mark I. Wood
		South Africa Johannesburg	S. Craig Omer
		South Carolina Columbia	Monte Holm
		Sweden Stockholm	Gregory J. Newell
		Tahiti Papeete	Benjamin T. Sinjoux
		Tennessee Knoxville	Richard A. Irion
		Tennessee Nashville	William L. McKee
		Texas Dallas	Devin G. Durrant
		Texas Houston	John C. Pingree
		Texas Houston East	Thomas J. Crawford
		Texas Lubbock	Arnold R. Augustin
		Ukraine Donetsk	Vladimir Campero
		Ukraine Kyiv	Jörg Klebingat
		Venezuela Caracas	Vianey R. Villamizar
		Washington Tacoma	Douglas W. Weaver
		West Virginia Charleston	Bruce G. Pitt
		Zambia Lusaka	Mikele R. Padovich ■

* Began serving in December 2010

Health Missionaries: Called to Serve Him

When most members think about missionaries, they picture those who proselytize. Less familiar are the Church's missionary doctors and nurses—men and women with medical training called to coordinate the health of proselytizing missionaries throughout the world.

The Missionary Department implemented the health missionary program in 1983; today approximately 80 health missionaries serve full-time health missions across the world.

“This is a calling that is really needed,” said Deanne Francis, chair of the Church's missionary nurse specialist committee. “There are so many who are qualified and interested in

something like this and just aren't aware of the opportunity.”

Health missionaries may include single registered nurses who are either seniors or are between the ages of 19 and 25, or retired couples where one spouse is a registered nurse or a medical doctor. Health missionaries are called to serve at their own expense for 18 months to two years.

While at the Missionary Training Center, health missionaries receive medical training in addition to language and teaching training.

“It's an opportunity to take that knowledge and that love for helping others and apply it in the mission field,” Sister Francis said. ■

Leaders Speak at Graduations, Other Events

Several Church leaders have delivered addresses in recent months. To watch and/or read coverage of these events, use the speaker's name and location in the search function on news.lds.org:

- President Thomas S. Monson speaks at Dixie State College graduation (May 6, 2011)
- Elder Russell M. Nelson and Elder Paul V. Johnson speak at BYU–Hawaii commencement (April 9, 2011)
- Elder Russell M. Nelson speaks at LDS Business College commencement (April 14, 2011)
- Elder Richard G. Scott speaks at BYU commencement (April 21, 2011)
- Elder David A. Bednar speaks at Women's Conference at BYU (April 29, 2011)
- Sister Julie B. Beck speaks at Women's Conference at BYU (April 29, 2011)
- Sister Rosemary M. Wixom speaks at May Church Educational System fireside (May 1, 2011) ■

In serving the missionaries and members, health missionaries face a range of challenges. Here baby Teni Keleitoni Temipale is pictured with his mother and the health missionaries who helped deliver him in Tonga.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF DEANNE FRANCIS

Church Magazines Celebrate 40 Years

This year, the *Friend*, *New Era*, and *Ensign* each celebrate 40 years of publication.

Before the magazines were the *Friend*, *New Era*, and *Ensign*, there was the *Young Woman's Journal* (first published in 1890), the *Improvement Era* (1898), the *Juvenile Instructor* (1901), the *Children's Friend* (1902), and the *Relief Society Magazine* (1915).

In 1971, Church leaders reorganized these publications into the magazines English-speaking Church members know and love today.

To view a video on the magazines or review a timeline of significant dates in the magazines' history, visit news.lds.org and search using the keyword "magazines."

New Website Invites Members to Share Talents

As Church membership grows, so do opportunities to serve in the Lord's vineyard. And while countless opportunities exist within wards, stakes, and local communities, a new corner of the vineyard is opening online.

Helping in the Vineyard—named for the analogy of the Lord's kingdom used frequently in the scriptures and available at vineyard.lds.org—is a new Church website created to house the growing number of volunteer projects members of the Church can assist with. Projects include translation, FamilySearch indexing, photography, tagging videos and images, and editorial work and are available from any location with Internet access. ■

Atlanta Temple Opens after Rededication

Following a weekend of cultural celebration and two Sunday sessions of rededication by President Thomas S. Monson, the Atlanta Georgia Temple opened its doors on May 3, 2011, for formal temple work to resume. In addition to President Monson, Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and Elders Walter F. González and William R. Walker, both of the Seventy, attended the rededication.

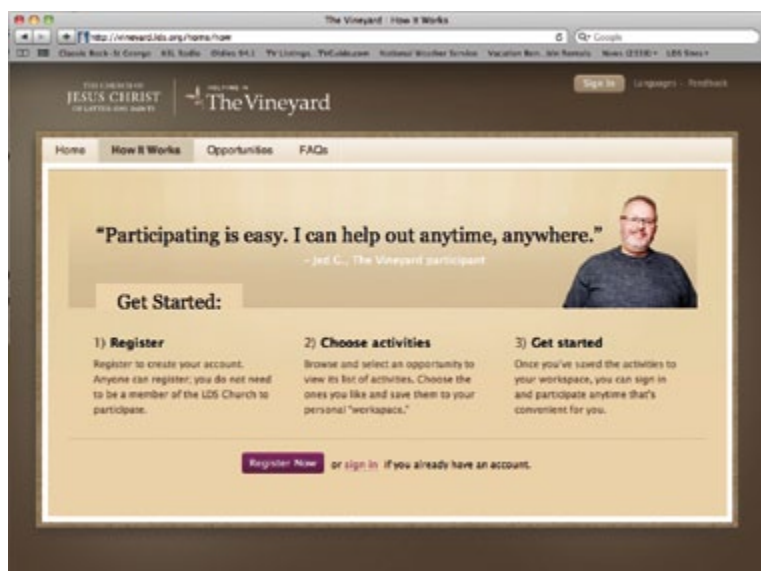
The temple, originally dedicated in 1983, closed on June 1, 2009, for extensive renovations.

Church Continues Recovery Efforts Following Tornadoes

Following the deadliest outbreak of tornadoes in almost four decades, Church members in the eastern half of the United States continue to assist in the recovery efforts.

All missionaries are safe and accounted for, and so far no Church members have been reported dead or injured, although several have reported total loss of or damage to their homes. Local Church leaders continue to assess member needs and provide recommendations on assistance in affected communities. ■

Vineyard.lds.org is a new Church website created to house the growing number of volunteer projects Church members can assist with online.



In Other Church Magazines

THE NEW ERA

Inspired to Share

When two missionaries in Russia felt prompted to give one man a Book of Mormon, they didn't know it was actually meant for another young man eager to learn about the gospel. See "One Man's Trash Is Another Man's Treasure" on page 16.

Paying Tithes Brings Blessings

Elder Cecil O. Samuelson of the Seventy teaches how obedience to the law of tithing brings blessings, as it has for generations in his family, in "My Grandfather's Testimony of Tithing" on page 40.



Answers in the Scriptures

Joseph Smith found his answer in James 1:5. Angelica Nelson found her answer three verses later—and it gave her the strength to remain active in the Church. See "The Answer in Verse Eight" on page 6.

THE FRIEND



Ideas for Journal Writing

On pages 24–25 of the July 2011 *Friend*, find entries from four journals that were kept more than 150 years ago by early pioneers. By looking carefully at the journal entries, you and your children may get ideas of what you can write in your own journals. You also can learn more about some of the important works of people like Eliza R. Snow and Thomas Bullock.

Conference Spotlight

Use the Conference Spotlight cards on page 11 to reinforce some of the important messages delivered by speakers at the April 2011 general conference. For more Conference Spotlight cards, see page 14 of the January 2011 *Friend*.



COMMENTS

Thanks for Shorter Articles

My husband and I have been in the Church over 40 years. When I was younger I couldn't wait for the *Ensign* to come so I could read it cover to cover.

In the last eight years I've had several surgeries. Perhaps because of them I've lost interest in reading and now only read the shortest stories.

I'm in my 70s and this month I read a short story and then found another, and another, and the next thing I knew I had read the whole *Ensign*. I was shocked. I looked through the *Ensign* again and realized that all the articles are short. I was thrilled to be able to read all of the magazine like I did when I was young.

Thank you again.

Theresa Skeen
Indiana, USA

CORRECTION

In March's *Ensign* there was a quiz about the members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles on page 71. The answer to statement K, "As a college student he worked as a radio announcer," was 7, Elder Dallin H. Oaks.

THIS YEAR IT'S A WEED— PULL IT

By Mont Poulsen

When I was growing up in Lehi, Utah, USA, my family had a garden large enough that we rotated the corn and potatoes every year. One day my father told me to weed the corn while he weeded the potatoes. As I worked my way down a row of six-inch-high (15 cm) corn, I found a solitary potato plant growing larger and more beautiful than any of the potato plants on Dad's side of the garden. I called to him and asked, "What should I do with this?"

Dad barely looked up. "Pull it."

Believing he hadn't realized I was pointing to a potato plant, I objected, "But Dad, it isn't a weed. It's a potato." Again, without looking up, he said, "Not this year. This year it's a weed. Pull it." So I did.

Since then I have often pondered the wisdom of my father's words. I have come to realize that obedience is not just making a right choice but making a right choice *in the right season*. When I consider all the things Heavenly Father would have me do in this life, doing them at the right time seems as critical



When I consider all the things Heavenly Father would have me do in this life, doing them at the right time seems as critical as doing them at all.

as doing them at all. For instance, serving a mission, dating, getting married, having children, gaining an education, and beginning full-time employment

are right choices. Yet when people do these good things in the wrong order, the consequences are often disastrous.

King Benjamin taught that we should "see that all . . . things are done in wisdom and order" (Mosiah 4:27). Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, "Faith also includes trust in God's timing, for He has said, 'All things must come to pass in their time' (D&C 64:32)."¹

I believe Satan deceives us by convincing us to do the right things in the wrong order: sexual intimacy before marriage, dating before age 16, becoming a parent and then getting married, and so forth. The greatest commandments of God, when compromised or polluted, become plants grown out of season—weeds. When I have been tempted to justify doing the right thing in the wrong season, I have been grateful for my father's important lesson: "Not this year. This year it's a weed. Pull it." ■

NOTE

1. Neal A. Maxwell, "Lest Ye Be Wearied and Faint in Your Minds," *Ensign*, May 1991, 90.



Women of All Nations Nurturing Peace, by Emma Allebes

"Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in

me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).



Victor Vasquez (above) and Ruth Lopez Anderson (front cover) are 2 of 24 Latin American Latter-day Saints who shared their inspiring conversion stories and testimonies for *Mi Vida, Mi Historia*—an exhibit that was recently displayed at the Church History Museum in Salt Lake City. Read about 9 of these Latter-day Saints on pages 34–39. You can view the whole show online in Spanish or English at lds.org/churchhistory/museum/exhibits/mividamihistoria.