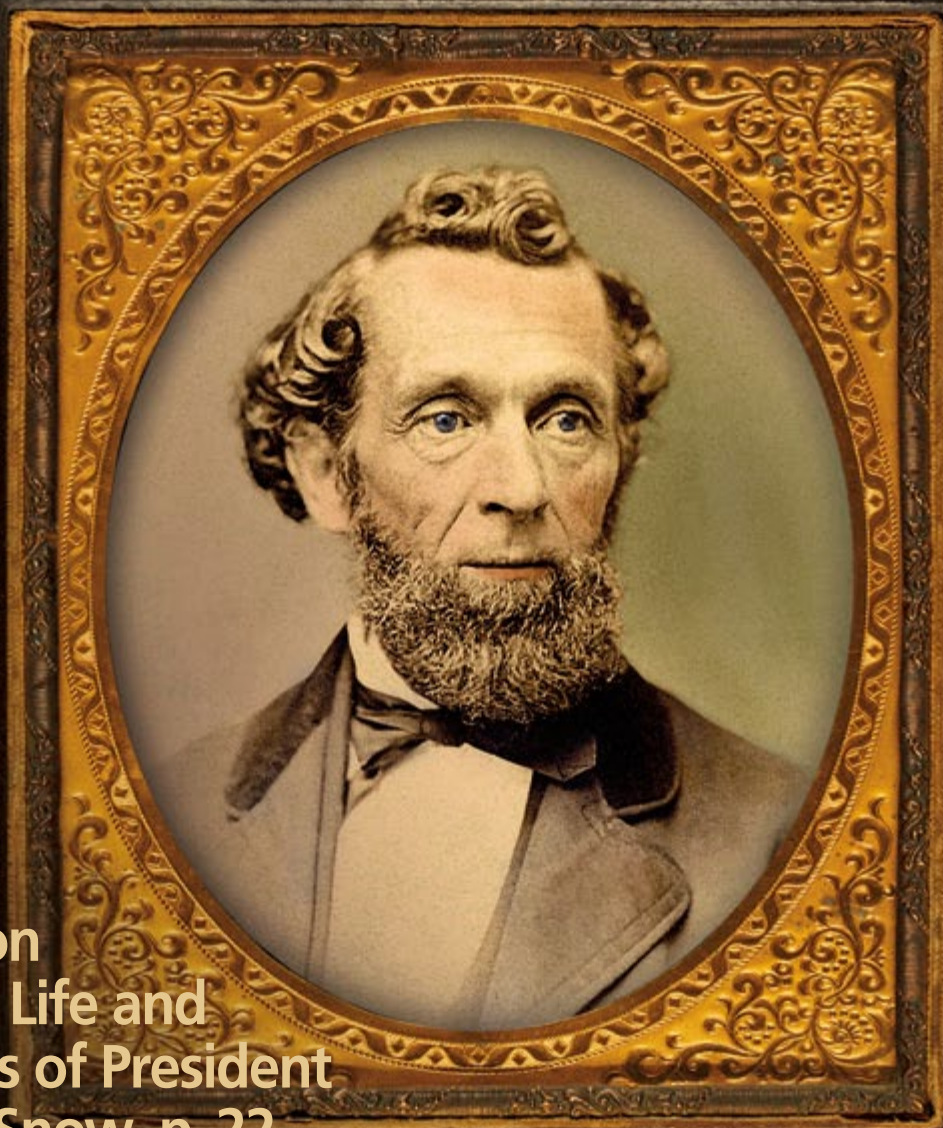


Ensign



**Inspiration
from the Life and
Teachings of President
Lorenzo Snow, p. 22**

**Young Women and Seniors:
The Mission Decision, pp. 16, 20**

New Youth Curriculum, p. 28

In Search of Wisdom, p. 32



*“Compared
to God, man
is nothing;
yet we are
everything
to God.”*

President Dieter F.
Uchtdorf, Second
Counselor in the
First Presidency,
“You Matter to
Him,” *Ensign*,
Nov. 2011, 20.

Contents January 2013

Volume 43 • Number 1



MESSAGES

FIRST PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

- 4** **The Voice of the Lord**
President Henry B. Eyring

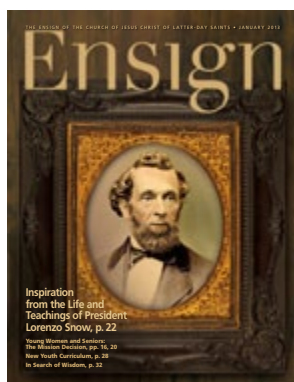
VISITING TEACHING MESSAGE

- 7** **Missionary Work**

ON THE COVER

Front: Photograph of President Lorenzo Snow by C. R. Savage, courtesy of L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University; frame courtesy of Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Back: Painting by John Willard Clawson © IRI.

Inside front cover: Photograph by Andrey Shumilin.



FEATURES

10 **Meaningful Teaching at Home**

Darren E. Schmidt

Four ways we teach our children the important lessons of life.

16 **Young Women and the Mission Decision**

These young adult women applied prophetic counsel regarding full-time missionary service.



20 **What Mission Would Be Best?**

No matter your circumstances, there are senior missionary opportunities for you.

22 **Pickles, Turnips, and Testimony: Inspiration from the Life and Teachings of Lorenzo Snow**

Aaron L. West

28 **Helping Youth Become Powerful Learners and Teachers**

Michael Barber

Four ways to help youth be effective learners and teachers.

32 **Reverence for God Is the Beginning of Wisdom**

Elder Neil L. Andersen

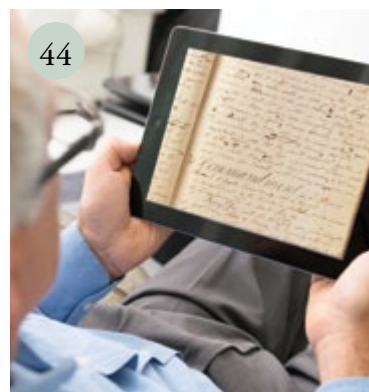
In today's information tidal wave, how desperately we need wisdom.

40 **Taught by the Spirit** *From the beginning, God has taught His faithful followers through the Holy Ghost.*

44 **Great and Marvelous Are the Revelations of God**

Gerrit Dirkmaat

Early members of the Church were willing to heed the revelations received by Joseph Smith, even when doing so required great sacrifice.





50 Faith and Intellect

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

When my teacher challenged me to rationally explain why I believed in the gospel, I didn't know how to respond.

54 Faith, Hope, and Relationships

Elder Michael T. Ringwood

How three components of faith can help your courtship and decision to marry.

58 God Will Pour Out a Blessing

Name withheld

I determined to pay my tithing on my small monthly disability check. The rest I would leave in God's hands.



61 On Gratitude

Sharon Nauta Steele

Striving to live with an ever-grateful heart.

62 Prayer for a Patient with AIDS

Connie Rachel Eisert

I knew the Spirit would give this patient the comfort he needed.

64 Embracing Ethan, Accepting Autism

Jeff Kornegay

If Ethan passed the sacrament, how would our ward react?

68 Exercise: The Mom Prescription

Jane McBride Choate

Wasn't I getting enough exercise caring for five children?

DEPARTMENTS

8 OCTOBER CONFERENCE NOTEBOOK

13 **TEACHING FOR THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH** The Value of Education

14 **WE TALK OF CHRIST** Whole Enough

Michele Reyes

69 FAMILY HOME EVENING IDEAS

70 LATTER-DAY SAINT VOICES

74 NEWS OF THE CHURCH

79 IN OTHER CHURCH MAGAZINES

80 **UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN** The Five-Minute Lesson

Christopher James Smith



The articles with this icon contain a sidebar or text that will help you answer questions from those not of our faith about the Church's practices and beliefs.

- Are Latter-day Saints required to serve a mission? p. 16.
- Why pay tithing? p. 58.

A MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
January 2013 Volume 43 • Number 1

The First Presidency: Thomas S. Monson, Henry B. Eyring, Dieter F. Uchtdorf

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Prepress: Joshua Dennis

Printing Director: Craig K. Sedgwick

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In this Mormon Message, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland encourages youth to be active and worthy to serve as the Lord's missionaries. Go to lds.org/youth/video/stay-within-the-lines.

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**By President
Henry B. Eyring**
First Counselor in the
First Presidency

THE VOICE OF THE LORD



The Doctrine and Covenants invites all people everywhere to hear the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ (see D&C 1:2, 4, 11, 34; 25:16). It is filled with His messages, warnings, and encouraging exhortations given by revelation to chosen prophets. In these revelations we can see how God can answer our prayers of faith with messages of instruction, peace, and warning.

In our prayers we seek to know what God would have us do, what we should do to find peace and happiness in this life and the next, and what lies ahead of us. The Doctrine and Covenants is filled with answers to such questions asked by ordinary people and by prophets in humble prayer. It can be a precious guide to teach us how to receive answers to questions about our temporal well-being and eternal salvation.

Humility and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are key. Oliver Cowdery received an answer from the Lord regarding his desire to help in the translation of the Book of Mormon: “Remember that without faith you can do nothing; therefore ask in faith. Trifle not with these things; do not ask for that which you ought not” (D&C 8:10).

Over and over in the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord requires faith and humility before He gives His help. One reason for this is that His answers may not come in the way we expect. Neither will they always be easy to accept.

Church history and the experiences of our ancestors illustrate this reality. My great-grandfather Henry Eyring prayed fervently to know what he should do when he heard the restored gospel taught in 1855. The answer came in a dream.

He dreamed that he was seated at a table with Elder Erastus Snow of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and with an elder named William Brown. Elder Snow taught the principles of the gospel for what seemed to be an hour. Then Elder Snow said, “In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to be baptized and this man [Elder Brown] . . . shall baptize you.”¹ My family is grateful that Henry Eyring had the faith and humility to be baptized at 7:30 in the morning in a pool of rainwater in St. Louis, Missouri, USA, by Elder Brown.

The answer to his prayer did not come in an audible voice from the Lord. It came in a vision and dream in the night, as it did with Lehi (see 1 Nephi 8:2).



Left: In this journal, Henry Eyring (photo on the left) recorded the events following the martyrdom of Elder Parley P. Pratt (photo beneath Henry Eyring's). The journal page on the left mentions the martyrdom. Under the journal is an 1890 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants.

The Lord has taught us that answers can also come as feelings. In the Doctrine and Covenants, He taught Oliver Cowdery, “Behold, I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you and which shall dwell in your heart” (D&C 8:2).

And He encouraged Oliver this way: “Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter? What greater witness can you have than from God?” (D&C 6:23).

The Doctrine and Covenants, Church history, and the history kept by Henry Eyring on his mission just after his baptism have taught me that answers can be felt as warnings as well as peace.

In April 1857, Elder Parley P. Pratt of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles attended a conference in what is now Oklahoma, USA. Henry Eyring recorded that Elder Pratt’s “mind was filled with gloomy forebodings . . . , not

being able to discern the future or any way of escape.”² Henry recorded the sad news immediately thereafter of the martyrdom of the Apostle. Elder Pratt had gone forward on his journey despite feelings of danger, just as the Prophet Joseph had done in going to Carthage.

It is my testimony that the Lord always answers the humble prayer of faith. The Doctrine and Covenants and our personal experience teach us how to recognize those answers and accept them in faith, whether they be direction, confirmation of truth, or a warning. I pray that we always will listen for and recognize the loving voice of the Lord. ■

NOTES

1. “The Journal of Henry Eyring: 1835–1902” (unpublished manuscript in author’s possession).
2. “The Journal of Henry Eyring: 1835–1902.”

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

1. Consider reading together the paragraphs about prayer in this message. As you read, ask family members to listen carefully for how God answers prayers. Consider testifying of the importance of prayer.

2. The Doctrine and Covenants is filled with answers to questions asked by people in prayer. What if the answers to their questions (the revelations) were never recorded? Encourage the family to learn to recognize and follow the promptings of the Spirit. They may want to record their thoughts regarding prayer in their journals.

PHOTOGRAPH OF PARLEY P. PRATT COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY LIBRARY; JOURNAL AND PHOTOGRAPH OF HENRY EYRING COURTESY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH MARRIOTT LIBRARY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS; PHOTOGRAPH OF ITEMS BY DAVID STOKER

YOUTH

Listening for the Promptings

By María Isabel Molina

One night my young cousin ran away from home, so I hurried to go look for her. As I drove, I prayed for the Spirit to help me. I knew that God would answer and direct me, and I tried to listen to the Spirit's promptings. But when I couldn't hear anything, I began to feel desperate and felt that the Spirit was not prompting me.

Although I wanted to go farther away to search, I felt that I should stay in the area around my cousin's home.

So I decided to drive around the area once more. As I stopped at an intersection, I saw the silhouette of a young girl walking. I had found my cousin!

As I got out of the car and ran to her, I realized that the Spirit had been directing me all along by helping me feel that I should stay in the same area. Because I had been listening for a quiet voice, I nearly ignored the Spirit's promptings. I then understood that many times we will not hear a voice, but we will feel

impressions in our hearts.

I was so thankful for the Spirit's guidance. Truly He is always there! As the scriptures say, "The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion" (D&C 121:46).

If we are worthy of the Spirit's guidance and we pay attention, we can be instruments in God's hands to do good for many people. With the constant companionship of the Spirit, we will know the way we should go.

CHILDREN

A Prayer Adventure

President Eyring teaches that prayers can be answered in many different ways. You can have an adventure searching the scriptures to find out some of those ways.

Use this map to begin your learning journey. Look up each scripture on the map. On the blank lines, write a few words to describe what the scripture says about answers to prayer.

Along the way, you can write in your journal about what you're learning as well as your own experiences with prayers being answered.



1 John 14:26

2

Doctrine and Covenants 6:22–23

3 Doctrine and Covenants 8:2

4

Doctrine and Covenants 9:8–9



X
Proverbs 8:10–11



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

Missionary Work

Latter-day Saints are sent forth “to labor in [the Lord’s] vineyard for the salvation of the souls of men” (D&C 138:56), which includes missionary work. We don’t need a formal mission call to share the gospel. Others whose lives will be blessed by the gospel surround us, and as we prepare ourselves, the Lord will use us. Visiting teachers can embrace their spiritual responsibilities and help “bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39).

When the Prophet Joseph Smith organized the Relief Society in 1842, he said that the women were not only to look after the poor but also to save souls.¹ This is still our purpose.

“The Lord . . . entrusts a testimony of the truth to those who will share it with others,” said President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency. “Even more, the Lord expects the members of His Church to ‘open [their mouths] at all times, declaring [His] gospel with the sound of rejoicing’ (D&C 28:16). . . . Sometimes a single phrase of testimony can set events in motion that affect someone’s life for eternity.”²



From the Scriptures

Doctrine and Covenants 1:20–23; 18:15; 123:12

NOTES

1. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 453.
2. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Waiting on the Road to Damascus,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 76–77.
3. See *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 92–95.



Faith, Family, Relief

From Our History

The story of Olga Kovářová of the former Czechoslovakia is an example of member missionary work from our Relief Society history. In the 1970s, Olga was a doctoral student and hungry for a deeper spiritual life. She noticed 75-year-old Otakar Vojkůvka, a Latter-day Saint. “He appeared to me seventy-five in his age but in his heart nearer to eighteen and full of joy,” she said. “This was so unusual in Czechoslovakia at that time of cynicism.”

Olga asked Otakar and his family how they found joy. They introduced her to other Church members and gave her a Book of Mormon. She read it eagerly and was soon baptized and confirmed. Since that time Olga has been an influence for good in a world of political oppression and religious persecution. She served as Relief Society president in her little branch and helped save the souls of others by bringing them to Christ.³

What Can I Do?

1. Do I follow the promptings of the Holy Ghost as I share my testimony with the sisters I visit?
2. How am I helping the sisters I watch over to learn the gospel?

OCTOBER CONFERENCE NOTEBOOK

“What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken; . . . whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same” (D&C 1:38).

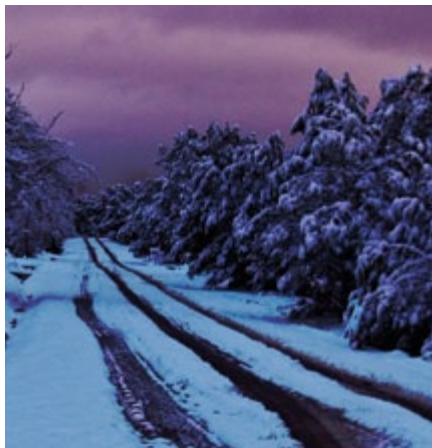
As you review the October 2012 general conference, you can use these pages (and Conference Notebooks in future issues) to help you study and apply the recent teachings of the living prophets and apostles and other Church leaders.

STORIES FROM CONFERENCE

Was It Chance That Our Paths Crossed?

On one extremely cold Saturday night during the winter of 1983–84, Sister Monson and I drove several miles to the mountain valley of Midway, Utah, where we have a home. The temperature that night was minus 24 degrees Fahrenheit (–31°C), and we wanted to make certain all was well at our home there. We checked and found that it was fine, so we left to return to Salt Lake City. We barely made it [a] few miles . . . before our car stopped. . . . We were completely stranded. . . .

Reluctantly we began walking toward the nearest town, the cars whizzing past us. Finally one car stopped, and a young man offered to help. . . .



This kind young man drove us back to our Midway home. I attempted to reimburse him . . . , but he . . . indicated that he was a Boy Scout and wanted to do a good turn. I identified myself to him, and he expressed his appreciation for the privilege to be of help. Assuming that he was about missionary age, I asked him if he had plans to serve a mission. He indicated he was not certain just what he wanted to do.

On the following Monday morning, I wrote a letter to this young man and thanked him for his kindness. In the letter I encouraged him to serve a full-time mission. . . .

About a week later the young man’s mother telephoned and advised that her son was an outstanding young man but that because of certain influences in his life, his long-held desire to serve a mission had diminished. She indicated she and his father had fasted and prayed that his heart would be changed. . . . [She] wanted me to know that she looked upon the events of that cold evening as an answer to their prayers in his behalf. I said, “I agree with you.”

After several months and more communication with this young man, Sister Monson and I were overjoyed to attend his missionary farewell prior to his departure for the Canada Vancouver Mission.

Was it chance that our paths crossed on that cold December night? I do not for one moment believe so. Rather, I believe our meeting was an answer to a mother’s and father’s heartfelt prayers for the son they cherished.

President Thomas S. Monson, “Consider the Blessings,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 88.

Questions to Ponder

- How can serving a mission strengthen you and those you teach?
- What can you do to prepare yourself to serve a mission?

Consider writing your thoughts in your journal or discussing them with others.

Additional resources on this topic: *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004); Russell M. Nelson, “Ask the Missionaries! They Can Help You!” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 18–21.



Prophetic Promise

“Our Heavenly Father is aware of our needs and will help us as we call upon Him for assistance. I believe that no concern of ours is too small or insignificant. The Lord is in the details of our lives.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Consider the Blessings,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 88.

CHANGE IN MISSIONARY AGE GUIDELINES

In the October 2012 general conference, President Thomas S. Monson announced: “All worthy and able young men who have graduated from high school or its equivalent

. . . will have the option of being recommended for missionary service beginning at the age of 18, instead of age 19. . . . Able, worthy young women who have the desire to serve may be

recommended for missionary service beginning at age 19, instead of age 21” (“Welcome to Conference,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 4, 5).

STUDY CORNER

Drawing Parallels: True Conversion

Some of the most important topics are addressed by more than one general conference speaker. Here is what four speakers said about true conversion. Try looking for other parallels as you study conference talks.

- “True conversion . . . includes a conscious commitment to become a disciple of Christ.”¹ —Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.
- “At baptism we promise to take upon us ‘the name of [Jesus] Christ, having [the] *determination* to serve him to the end.’ [Moroni 6:3; emphasis added.] Such a covenant requires

courageous effort, commitment, and integrity.”² —Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

- “We are followers of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Such conversion and confidence is the result of diligent and deliberate effort. It is individual. It is the process of a lifetime.”³ —Ann M. Dibb, second counselor in the Young Women general presidency
- “Only when our testimony transcends what is in our mind and burrows deep into our heart will our motivation to love and to serve become like unto the

Savior’s.”⁴ —Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

NOTES

1. David A. Bednar, “Converted unto the Lord,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 107.
2. Quentin L. Cook, “Can Ye Feel So Now?” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 9.
3. Ann M. Dibb, “I Know It. I Live It. I Love It,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 10.
4. M. Russell Ballard, “Be Anxiously Engaged,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 30.

To read, watch, or listen to general conference addresses, visit conference.lds.org.

Meaningful TEACHING AT HOME

*Four ways
we teach our
children the
important
lessons of life.*

**By Darren E.
Schmidt**

Taking advantage of teaching moments with our eight children has been both challenging and rewarding. But knowing that “the home is the first and most effective place for children to learn the lessons of life,”¹ my wife and I have tried to do all we can to help our children learn those lessons. Here are a few principles that have been helpful to us.

Do the Best Things

As our children have become involved in more activities, prioritizing has become more and more necessary. Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has reminded us that “just because something is *good* is not a sufficient reason for doing it. . . . Some things are better than good, and these are the things that should command priority attention in our lives.” He further said: “Parents should act to preserve time for family prayer, family scripture study, family home evening, and the other precious togetherness and individual one-on-one time that binds a family together and fixes children’s values on things of eternal worth. Parents should teach gospel priorities through what they do with their children.”²

This has proven good counsel for our family. As my wife and I have made our children’s activities outside the home a matter of pondering and prayer, some of the things we had thought to be important turned out to be unnecessary. I was

especially surprised when I asked our children if they wanted to participate on a basketball team with me as their coach. Their reply was, “I don’t think so,” along with, “Dad, we have a basket in the front yard, and we like when you play with us and we have games with the neighbors. We get the ball a lot more!”

Study and Act On the Scriptures

There is a big difference between *reading* the scriptures and *studying* them. The ancient prophet Joshua taught that success in studying the scriptures comes when we “meditate therein day and night” and “observe to *do according to all that is written* therein” (Joshua 1:8; emphasis added). During our family scripture study, we have been most successful when we give our children time to ponder specific questions and then extend to them an invitation to “do according to all that is written.”

One evening we were eating treats outside and reading in the Book of Mormon about the fall of the Nephites. I felt impressed to ask the children why they thought the Nephites had turned so wicked. Six-year-old Celeste said she thought the Nephites and Lamanites had stopped saying their daily prayers. We all agreed that the fall of the Nephites started with forgetting prayer and other seemingly little things. At that moment, the thought came to me to invite the children to pray with more thought and feeling.



The following day I asked them how their prayers went. This gave them a chance to share their experiences and gave me a chance to further share my testimony of prayer. Not every family scripture study experience has gone this well, but when we have had discussions and invitations to act as part of our study, the scriptures have become more meaningful.

Help Children Become Responsible

We have found great power in giving assignments to our children and letting them figure out the details for themselves. When we allow our children to be involved and help make some of the family decisions, they are more likely to be active participants. They also develop a sense of ownership and

During our scripture study, we have been most successful when we give our children time to ponder questions and then extend to them an invitation to act.

accountability and thereby learn to “do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness” (D&C 58:27). Here are a few things that have helped our children be more responsible:

- For family home evening, help them prepare a lesson, scripture, or talent of their own choosing.
- Allow them to choose a hymn for everyone to sing during family scripture study and then invite a child to say the prayer.
- Let them help plan and be responsible for a portion of a family trip.
- Hold a family council with them about money matters and let them help make decisions about purchases.

- Teach them how to do a particular job and put them in charge of that job for a week.
- Do a monthly family service project and let them decide whom the family will help.
- Let them take turns picking someone to visit on a given Sunday.
- Allow them to pick a family activity for a particular evening during the month.



got to bed a little later than usual, but the joy I experienced was well worth any sacrifice of sleep.

“One of our urgent opportunities is to respond to a child when he earnestly asks, remembering that they don’t *always* ask, that they aren’t *always* teachable, that they won’t *always* listen,” taught Elder Richard L. Evans (1906–71) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “And often we have

to take them on *their* terms, at *their* times, and not always on *our* terms, and at *our* times. . . . If they find they can trust us with their trivial questions, they may later trust us with the more weighty ones.”³

Shepherd Them

There have been times when my wife and I have felt like shepherders corralling our children for prayer or scripture study. But other times we have felt a sweet spirit that comes as we have truly shepherded and cared for our little flock. If we aren’t careful, we can easily miss these shepherding moments.

One such moment came while I was tucking our children into their beds. One of my sons asked, “Dad, what tempts you?”

I was startled by the question.

He then said, “We have been talking about what tempts us, and we wondered what things tempt you.”

I knew this would be a perfect time to teach them, but I was exhausted from a long day of work. I didn’t feel like having a deep conversation with two boys at such a late hour, especially on a school night.

However, into my mind came the story of the Savior at the well. Even after walking 30 miles (48 km) or more, He took time to teach the woman of Samaria (see John 4). I decided that this might be one of those “well” moments, so I sat down and asked them if they thought it was a sin to be tempted. There was a long pause, and then we began to talk and listen to each other. I taught them about the Savior’s encounter with Satan (see Matthew 4) and bore my testimony of the blessings that come from resisting temptation.

It was one of those special moments as a parent. We

Chosen and Assisted by the Lord

The responsibility to watch over God’s children is a heavy one. Whenever I feel inadequate as a parent, I remind myself of something Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles once said: “The same God that placed that star in a precise orbit millennia before it appeared over Bethlehem in celebration of the birth of the Babe has given at least equal attention to placement of each of us in precise human orbits so that we may, if we will, illuminate the landscape of our individual lives, so that our light may not only lead others but warm them as well.”⁴

This statement uplifts me when I am discouraged. It gives my wife and me courage in our abilities as parents, knowing that our children have been placed within our “orbit” for a reason and that Heavenly Father trusts us.

May He bless your family as you learn the gospel together, help your children become responsible, and take advantage of those precious teaching moments. ■

NOTES

1. David O. McKay, in *Family Home Evening Manual* (1968), iii.
2. Dallin H. Oaks, “Good, Better, Best,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 104, 105.
3. Richard L. Evans, “The Spoken Word,” *Ensign*, May 1971, 12.
4. Neal A. Maxwell, *That My Family Should Partake* (1974), 86.



THE VALUE OF EDUCATION

Education is a vital part of the gospel and of preparing to participate in society and provide for oneself and one's family.¹ Elder Craig A. Cardon of the Seventy talks about the importance of education on pages 18–19 of this month's *New Era*.

“In this increasingly complex world, education is one of the most important acquisitions of life,” he writes. “And while it is true that more education will generally lead to the opportunity for increased temporal rewards, the greater value of increased knowledge is the opportunity it affords us to be of greater influence in accomplishing the Lord's purposes.”

For the Strength of Youth states: “Your education should include spiritual learning. Study the scriptures and the words of the latter-day prophets. Participate in seminary and institute. Continue throughout your life to learn about Heavenly Father's plan. This spiritual learning will help you find answers to the challenges of life and will invite the companionship of the Holy Ghost.”²

Suggestions for Teaching Youth

- Read the education section in *For the Strength of Youth*. Share your own positive experiences with school and with gospel study. This will allow you to

discuss this standard with your teen and answer any questions he or she might have.

- Help your teen set occupational and educational goals based on his or her talents and interests. Help him or her identify some steps to start working on these goals.
- Consider holding a family home evening on the importance of education (a good resource is an article by Elder Dallin H. Oaks and Kristen M. Oaks, “Learning and Latter-day Saints,” *Ensign*, Apr. 2009, 22–27).
- Go to youth.lds.org and click on “For the Strength of Youth” under the Youth Menu. Under “Education,” you will find scriptures about education, videos (see, for example, “Surfing or Seminary?”), Mormon Channel radio programs, questions and answers, and articles, including talks by General Authorities.

Suggestions for Teaching Children

It's fun to learn new things, but learning can be difficult too. This month's *Friend* includes a story called “Ready to Read” (pages 42–43). The story describes a girl with dyslexia who struggles to read out

SCRIPTURES ON LEARNING

Proverbs 4:7

2 Nephi 9:29

Alma 37:35

Doctrine and Covenants 88:77–80

loud and how children in Primary encourage her to do her best. Consider reading this story with your children and talking together about the following questions:

- How did Mary feel when she was trying to do something difficult? Why is it important to keep learning even when it is hard?
- What did the other children do to help Mary? What can you do to help others learn at home, at church, and at school? ■

NOTES

1. See *For the Strength of Youth* (booklet, 2011), 9.
2. *For the Strength of Youth*, 10.

WHOLE ENOUGH

By Michele Reyes

How could I possibly change diapers, prepare dinner, or comfort my children with only one arm?

When I was 17 years old, I lost most of my left arm in a car accident. This experience would forever change my life. Though there have been difficult days and trying moments, this refiner's fire has given me an opportunity to witness the power of the Atonement in a unique way.

My life now is all about being a wife and a mother, two roles I love deeply. Before my children were born, I wondered about my adequacy to be a mother. How could I possibly change diapers, prepare dinner, or comfort my children with only one arm? Fifteen years later, I am in the middle of motherhood with five sweet children. I have adjusted well, and my children hardly notice that I am different from other mothers. My missing arm is no longer a hindrance but a symbol of love. It is a source of comfort for my children to hold when they cry or fall asleep at night. This attachment may be due to many things, but I see it as evidence of the Savior's ability to create something good out of something tragic.

I cannot describe the sweetness I feel when that part of me can

provide such comfort to my children. Motherhood has brought perspective to my physical limitation, and I have felt the Atonement already begin to heal me.

The daily demands of motherhood have sometimes been difficult. Tough times give me reason to reflect on the reality of the Resurrection and the Savior's ability to heal me. Thus the faith-promoting examples of healing found in the scriptures have special meaning to me. One of my favorites is when the Savior visited

the people in the Americas and healed their sick. I have imagined what it might have been like to be one of those healed by the Savior. The account begins with His loving invitation:

"Have ye any that are sick among you? Bring them hither. Have ye any that are lame, or blind, or halt, or maimed, . . . or that are afflicted in any manner? Bring them hither and I will heal them, for I have compassion upon you; my bowels are filled with mercy. . . ."



STRENGTH TO LIVE WITH YOUR CHALLENGE

"Some challenges in life will not be resolved here on earth. Paul pled thrice that 'a thorn in the flesh' be removed. The Lord simply answered, 'My grace is sufficient for thee' (2 Corinthians 12:7, 9). . . . He gave Paul strength to compensate so he could live a most meaningful life. He wants you to learn how to be cured when that is His will and how to obtain strength to live with your challenge when He intends it to be an instrument for growth. In either case the Redeemer will support you."

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "To Be Healed," *Ensign*, May 1994, 7.



“ . . . I see that your faith is sufficient that I should heal you.

“ . . . When he had thus spoken, all the multitude, with one accord, did go forth with their sick and their afflicted, and their lame, and with their blind, and with their dumb, and with them that were afflicted in any manner; and he did heal them every one” (3 Nephi 17:7–9).

For me, this is one of the most touching events described in the scriptures. But my perspective has changed as I have embraced motherhood with one arm. I once thought I was one of the people who most looked forward to the Resurrection and the idea of being made whole. But now I am not in so much of a hurry. Increasingly, I feel the Atonement working in my life *now*. I have realized that the healing power need not begin only when the Resurrection occurs. The wholeness has already begun when, every night, one of my children tenderly holds what remains of my arm and slips into slumber. This realization has been just as meaningful to me as any miracle of physical healing. I have decided that, for now, I am as whole as I need to be. ■

My missing arm is no longer a hindrance but a symbol of love. It is a source of comfort for my children to hold when they fall asleep at night.

WHY DID THIS HAPPEN TO ME?

Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Presidency of the Seventy answered this question in his April 2012 general conference talk, “Special Lessons”:

“This life is training for eternal exaltation, and that process means tests and trials. It has always been so, and no one is spared.

“Trusting in God’s will is central to our mortality. With faith in Him, we draw upon the power of Christ’s Atonement at those times when questions abound and answers are few. . . .

“Though we will face trials, adversities, disabilities, heartaches, and all manner of afflictions, our caring, loving Savior will always be there for us. He has promised:

“I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. . . .

“My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid’ (John 14:18, 27).”

In what ways can you seek the Savior’s comfort and peace in your trials?



Young Women and the Mission Decision

At the October 2012 general conference, President Thomas S. Monson announced that “able, worthy young women who have the desire to serve may be recommended for missionary service beginning at age 19, instead of age 21.” He said that while young women “are not under the same mandate to serve as are the young men,” they “make a valuable contribution as missionaries, and we welcome their service.”¹

How does a sister decide whether to serve? The following accounts share how sisters were guided by the Spirit in deciding what path was right for them. Though written before President Monson’s announcement, these comments illustrate principles that continue to be applicable.

The Missing Link

If someone had asked me when I was little if I would serve a mission, I would have said no. My heart softened toward the idea as I got older, partly because I had seen my older siblings serve. But I still never really thought of it as something I would do.

When I turned 21, I began to wonder if I should go on a mission, but I never prayed seriously about it. As time went on, I began to feel something was missing. I told my mother how I felt, and she suggested I reconsider a mission. She said that when she was my age, she felt the same emotions I was experiencing. Serving a mission was the answer for



How these young adult women applied prophetic counsel regarding full-time missionary service.

her, so maybe it was also my answer.

I was terrified to pray about a mission. One reason I never considered a mission before was that I didn’t think I was strong enough to do it. I would have to leave my comforts behind and perhaps learn a new language. Plus, I didn’t think I knew the gospel well enough to teach it. But as I prayed with purpose, I felt my fears melt away. The answer I received was overpowering: the Lord loved me, and He wanted me to serve a mission.

I was amazed by the confidence I felt after I received my answer. I no longer felt nervous or unqualified. Instead I was excited to share the gospel, and I began working on my mission papers. I was soon called to the Utah Salt Lake City Temple Square Mission.

Rebecca Keller Monson

A Missionary Life

When I was 17, people started asking me whether I was going to serve a mission. I hadn’t decided yet, so I always put them off.

But as my 21st birthday approached, I started thinking about it. I read my patriarchal blessing, talked to my parents, and prayed.

The desire never came; I never felt I needed to serve. I thought about the counsel of President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), who said that while sister



THE SPIRIT OF REVELATION

“When a choice will make a real difference in our lives . . . and when we are living in tune with the Spirit and seeking his guidance, we can be sure we will receive the guidance we need to attain our goal. The Lord will not leave us unassisted.”

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Revelation,” in *Brigham Young University 1981–82 Fireside and Devotional Speeches* (1982), 26.

missionaries are welcome, they “are not under obligation to go on missions.”² I was also reminded of the Lord’s words in the Doctrine and Covenants: “If ye have desires to serve God ye are called to the work” (4:3).

That scripture helped me decide not to serve a mission. When I told the Lord in prayer of my decision, I felt peace and a confirmation that there were ways I could be a missionary without full-time service. I have since found I can share my testimony in many ways—through a conversation about the Lord’s tender mercies, while visiting teaching, or in doing family history and temple work. I am dedicating myself to missionary work by striving to live the gospel and follow the inspiration of the Spirit.

Amy Simon

Good Courage

At the beginning of 2010, I was struggling with some trials and went on a walk to clear my mind. While on the walk, I felt the Spirit whisper that I should not worry about the past; instead, I should think about my future. Just as I began reviewing my goal of finishing school, I was prompted to think about serving a mission. I never thought about a mission before, but as the idea took hold, so did an excitement and a desire to serve. However, I decided that I wanted a little more time to think about such a big decision.

The next few months were filled with promptings to serve a mission. While I still felt that same desire and excitement when the promptings came, doubts and fears came as well. I knew that women are encouraged to serve if they so desire but are not obligated to do so. During this time, I received



priesthood blessings telling me the Lord would be pleased no matter what I chose.

The following summer I had a roommate who had served a mission. She said that she too felt fear before and even after she decided to serve. She helped me understand that the Spirit does not speak through doubt and fear (see 2 Timothy 1:7). As we talked, the Spirit touched me. I returned to my room and read a letter from a friend who was serving a mission. The letter encouraged me to read Joshua 1:9, and I felt the Spirit nudge me to look it up.

The words pierced my soul: “Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.” I felt as though the Lord was speaking directly to me. I knew that I could serve a mission. I didn’t need to fear—I wouldn’t be doing it alone; the Lord would be with me.

One month later I received my call to the Philippines Iloilo Mission, where Joshua 1:9 was the mission theme.

Kristen Nicole Danner

A Different Mission

I had planned my entire life to serve a full-time mission. But when I went to college at Brigham Young University (Utah, USA), I started to get nervous. How could I know whether I was really supposed to serve a

mission? I spent the year before my 21st birthday begging Heavenly Father to tell me if I should serve. Then one of my religion professors said something that changed my life: “The Lord can’t drive a parked car.” I decided to act.

I turned in my papers, received my call, bought missionary clothing, and drove home from Utah to North Carolina—all while preparing for my mission with earnest prayer, study, and fasting.

After I went home to North Carolina, a young man I had met at school flew out to visit me, and we talked seriously about our relationship.

My prayers became earnest and pleading again, but I continued to feel that the Lord trusted me to make my own decision. I felt the weight of responsibility but also the sweet assurance that as long as I chose in faith, the Lord would support my decision.

Ten days before I was to leave, my friend proposed. I postponed my mission to give myself time to think. When I decided to get engaged, the Spirit confirmed to my fiancé and me that it was right.

Although I didn’t serve a full-time mission, preparing for one changed my life. Drawing close to the Lord helped me become the person He needed me to be for my mission as a wife and mother.

Cassie Randall

Experiences of a Lifetime

I was blessed with a strong testimony of and love for the gospel at a young age, but I don’t recall one defining moment when I knew serving a mission was right. I just always knew I would go. I set a goal early to live in a way that would qualify me to serve a mission.

When I began preparing my mission application, I fasted, prayed, and attended the temple. As I worked with my bishop, I continued to feel the peace I had felt throughout my life about serving a mission.

The process was difficult at times: life seemed to suddenly get more expensive, and school and work became more demanding. I was at college away from my family, and it seemed as though all my friends were



getting married. It was scary to realize the people I cared about were going to continue changing while I was gone.

Because I didn’t have any singular spiritual event that confirmed my decision to serve, it was easy to doubt when things got hard. But the Lord blessed me after I received my call to the Chile Santiago East Mission to develop a love for the people in my mission, even before I left. I now have a lifetime of experiences that have borne testimony that a mission was a good choice for me. ■

Madeleine Bailey

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Welcome to Conference,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 5.
2. Gordon B. Hinckley, “To the Bishops of the Church,” *Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, June 2004, 27.

ANSWERING QUESTIONS

Are all Latter-day Saints required to serve a mission? No, all missionary service is voluntary. Young men are expected to serve, young women are welcomed, and seniors and married couples are encouraged to serve if they are able. Young men may begin service at age 18 and serve for two years. Young women may begin at age 19 and serve for 18 months. Retired seniors and married couples may serve in a wide variety of assignments from 6 to 23 months.

Church members consider it a privilege to show their love for other people and the Lord by following His directive: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations” (Matthew 28:19).

For more information, see mormon.org/faq, and click on the topic about missionaries.

For more information
about senior mission
opportunities, visit [lds.org](https://lds.org/service/missionary-service)
[/service/missionary-service](https://lds.org/service/missionary-service).

What Mission

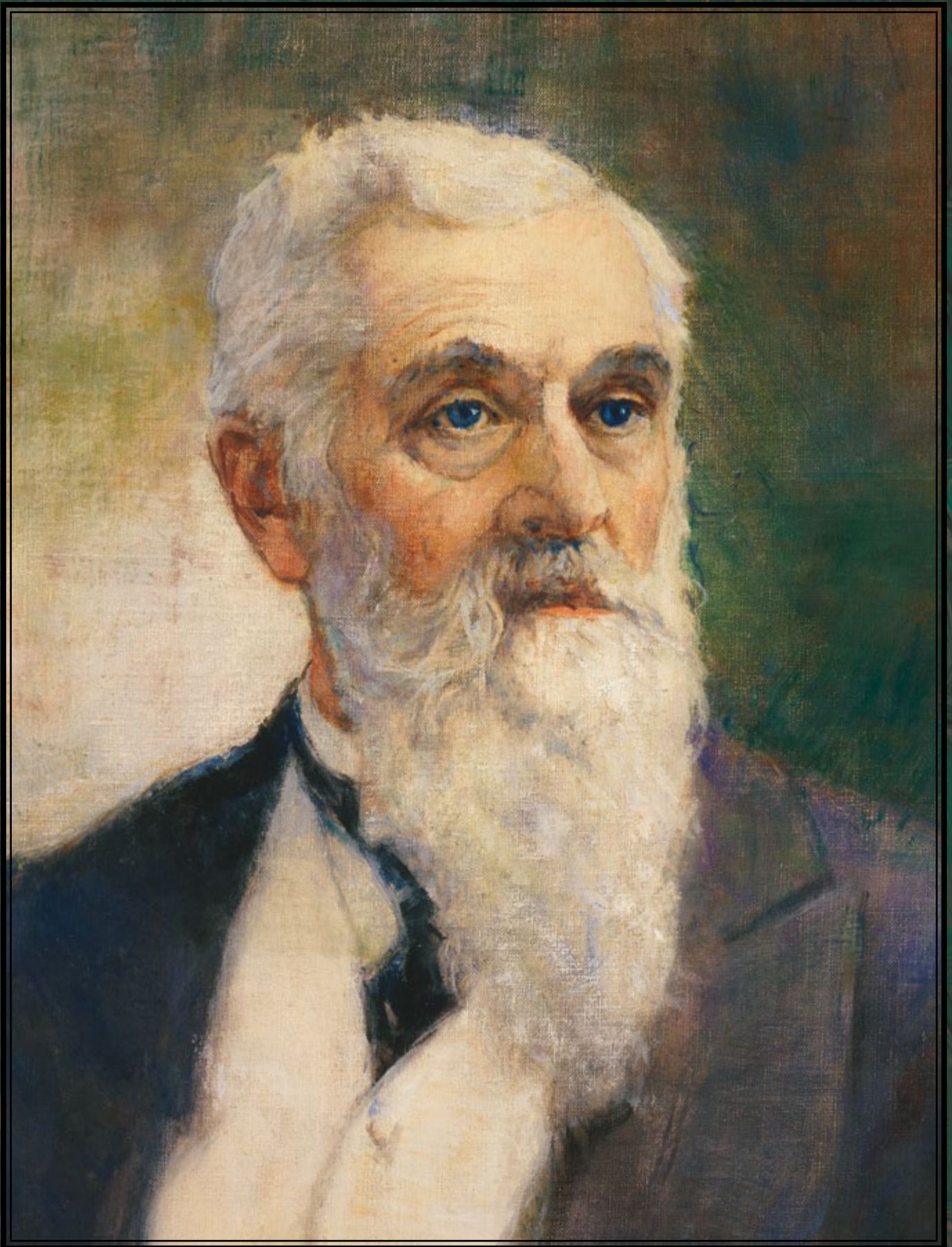


Would Be Best?

*No matter your circumstances,
senior missionary opportunities are available to you.*

	Full-time mission	Church-service mission	Long-term volunteer
Who can serve?	Senior couple, senior sisters	Senior couple, senior brothers, senior sisters	Anyone
Must be a temple-worthy member?	Yes	Yes	No
Time commitment	More than 32 hours a week	Between 8 and 32 hours a week	Less than 8 hours a week
Duration of commitment	6–23 months	6–24 months (can serve longer with stake president's approval)	Any length
Still working in career	Generally retired	Can be retired or still working	Can be retired or still working
Location	Away from home	Close to home or at home	At home
Finances	Must be able to afford the mission called to. Must pay for housing (up to \$1,400 per month for couples), medical and dental insurance, transportation once in mission, personal expenses	Must be able to afford the mission called to. Must pay for housing, medical and dental insurance, transportation, personal expenses	Must provide for own expenses

Please see your priesthood leader for more information or approval of possible exceptions to the guidelines listed above.



Pickles, Turnips, and Testimony

INSPIRATION FROM THE LIFE AND
TEACHINGS OF LORENZO SNOW

As you study President Lorenzo Snow's teachings this year, you will come to know him as a prophet, seer, and revelator whose counsel is remarkably relevant today.

If you have ever seen a portrait of Lorenzo Snow, the fifth President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, you probably remember his long white beard and his kind face. And if you have paused for a few minutes to examine such a portrait, you may have been drawn to President Snow's eyes—tired but not weary, aged but full of energy and light.

You may have heard that President Snow was inspired to preach about tithing, and you might recall reading something about a sacred experience he had in the Salt Lake Temple.

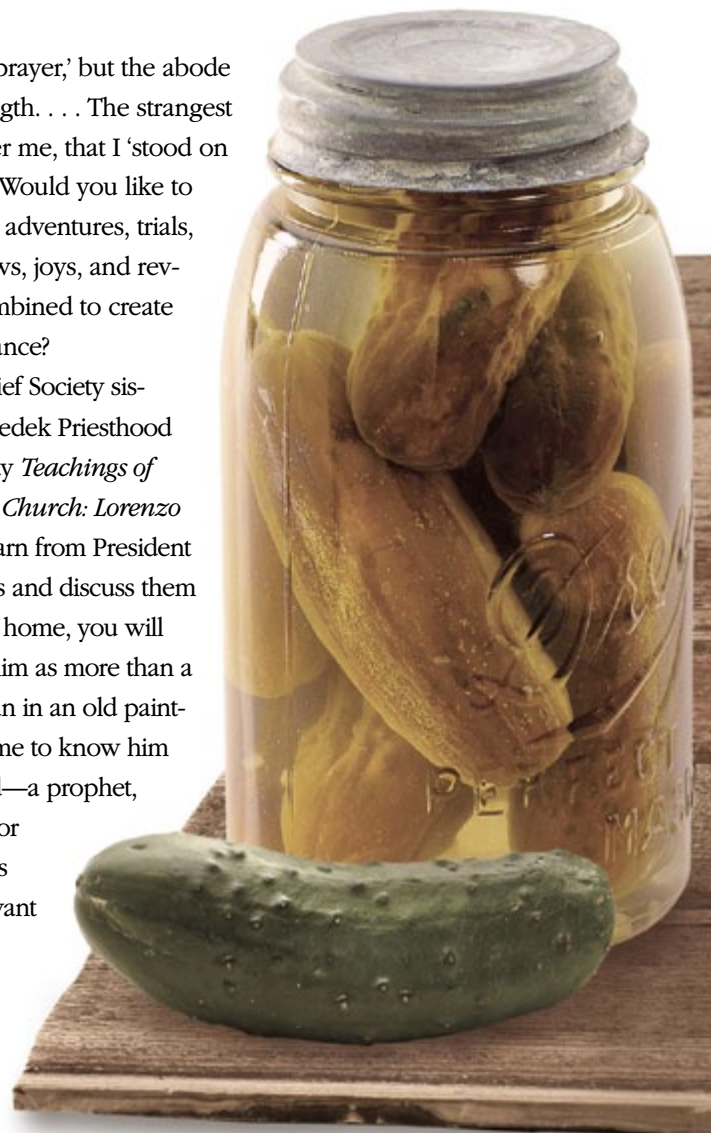
But do you know what led to his temple experience and what resulted from it? Are you curious to know the story about the revelation he received on the law of tithing?

And what about his eyes and his face? After meeting President Snow, a minister of another faith wrote: "His face was a power of peace; his presence a benediction of peace. In the tranquil depths of his eyes were not only the

'home of silent prayer,' but the abode of spiritual strength. . . . The strangest feeling stole over me, that I 'stood on holy ground.'"¹ Would you like to know about the adventures, trials, triumphs, sorrows, joys, and revelations that combined to create such a countenance?

This year, Relief Society sisters and Melchizedek Priesthood holders will study *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Lorenzo Snow*. As you learn from President Snow's teachings and discuss them at church and at home, you will come to know him as more than a kind-looking man in an old painting. You will come to know him as a man of God—a prophet, seer, and revelator whose counsel is remarkably relevant today.

Just to whet your appetite, here are a few samples of the



BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Lorenzo Snow was born on April 3, 1814, in Mantua, Ohio, USA. His parents, Rosetta and Oliver Snow, raised him and his six siblings in a home dedicated to faith, hard work, service, and education. These foundational principles prepared him to embrace the restored gospel. In June 1836 he joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Kirtland, Ohio, influenced by the promptings of the Holy Ghost and some gentle prodding from his sister Eliza, who had already joined the Church. A little less than a year later, he was called to serve as a full-time missionary.

Over the next 12 years, he served several other missions in the United States, and he also led a group of Latter-day Saint pioneers to the Salt Lake Valley. He was a devoted, energetic missionary, laboring in Italy, the Hawaiian Islands, and the western United States. He was ordained an Apostle on February 12, 1849. He also participated in other areas of Church leadership, including more than 5 years of service as the first president of the Salt Lake Temple. On October 10, 1898, he was set apart as President of the Church. He died on October 10, 1901, in Salt Lake City, Utah.



teachings and stories you will find in this year's course of study. In the following paragraphs, the chapter and page numbers refer to *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Lorenzo Snow*.

You might remember an interesting general conference address in which Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles compared the process of conversion to the process of pickling a cucumber.² Elder Bednar wasn't the first Apostle to make this comparison. President Snow shared a similar insight 150 years earlier:

“Place a cucumber in a barrel of vinegar and there is but little effect produced upon it the first hour, nor in the first 12 hours. Examine it and you will find that the effect produced is merely upon the rind, for it requires a longer time to pickle it. A person's being baptized into this church has an effect upon him, but not the effect to pickle him immediately. It does not establish the law of right and of duty in him during the first 12 or 24 hours; he must remain in the church, like the cucumber in the vinegar, until he becomes saturated with the right spirit.”³

When President Snow spoke of conversion, he spoke from experience. He often told of two events—one that occurred before he joined the Church and one that occurred shortly after his baptism and confirmation—that helped him become “saturated with the right spirit.” You can read accounts of these experiences on pages 1, 3, 59, and 61–62.

“Why is [a] man called to act as president over a people?” President Snow once asked. “Is it in order to acquire an influence and then to use that influence directly for his own aggrandizement? No, but on the contrary, he is called to act in such a position on the same principle as the priesthood was given to the Son of God, that he should make sacrifices. For himself? No,



President Snow preached that paying tithing brought blessings. Tithing used to be received at offices like the one shown here (Salt Lake City, 1880s). Left: In preparation for hosting some friends, President Snow made candle holders out of turnips to illuminate his log home.

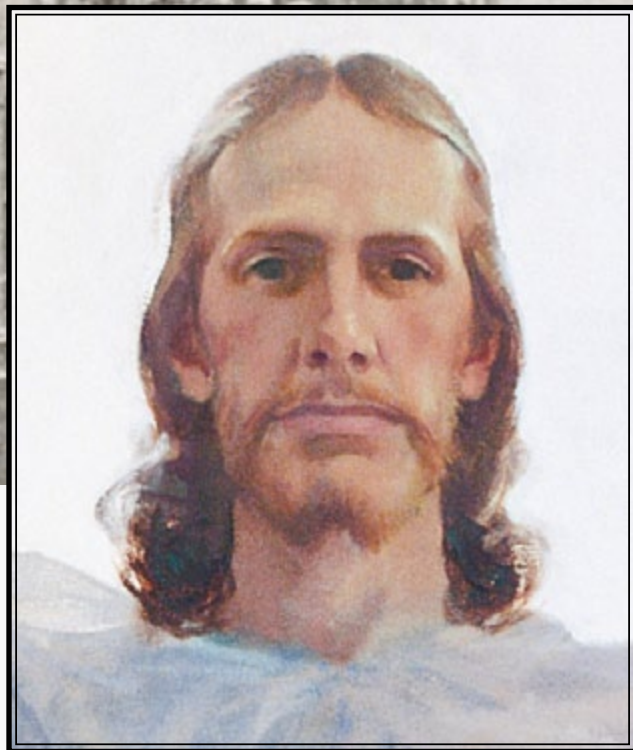
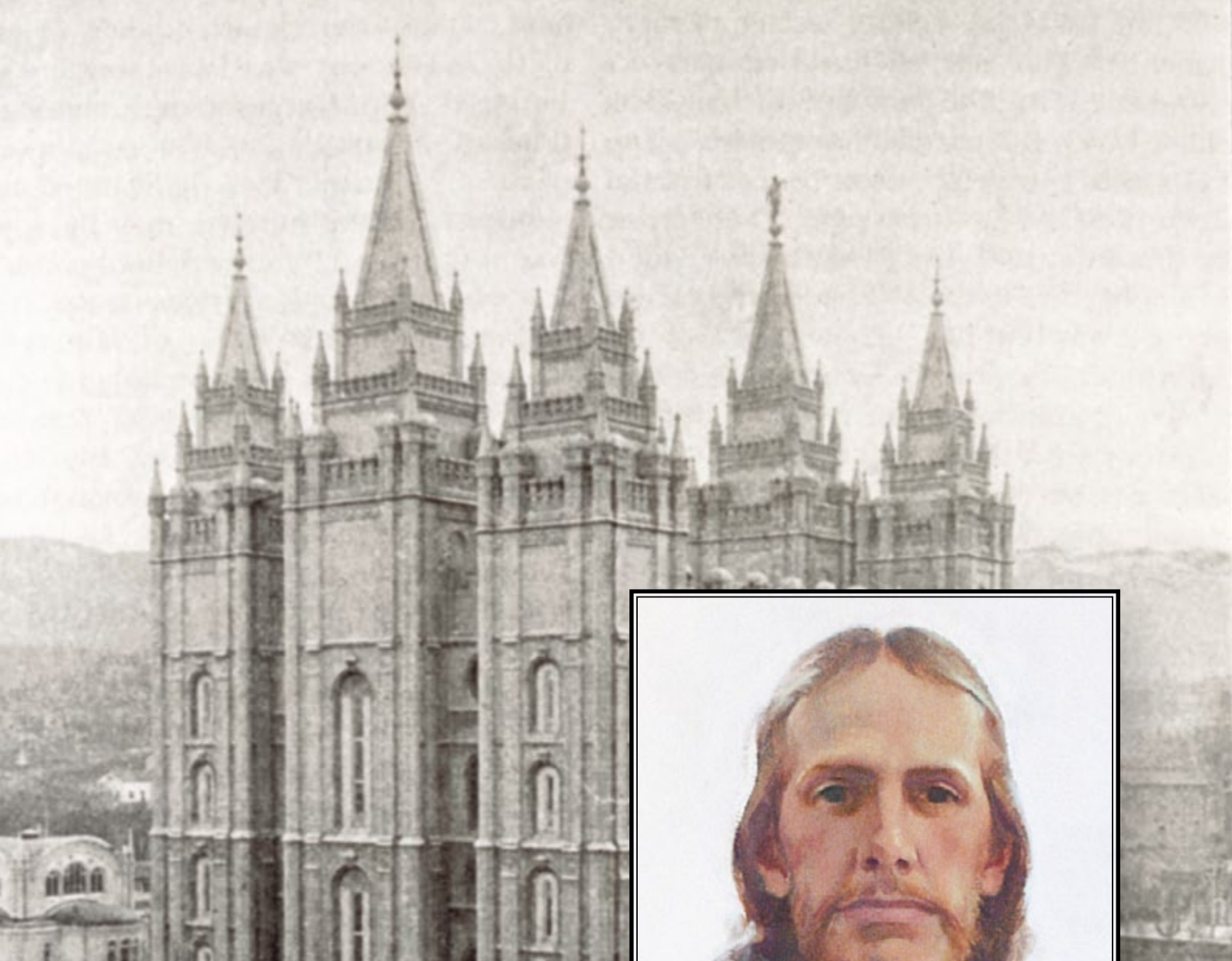
but in the interests of the people over whom he presides. . . . To become the servant of his brethren, not their master, and to work in their interest and welfare.”⁴

As a Church leader, President Snow practiced this principle, and sometimes he found creative ways to do so. For example, he once used turnips, bedsheets, and straw to lift the spirits of a group of suffering Saints. This account is found in chapter 7. To read some of his teachings about leadership in the Church, see chapter 18.

President Snow was a powerful, creative, and effective leader because he knew who the real Leader is. He taught, “The great work now being accomplished—the gathering of the people from the nations of the earth had not its origin in the mind of any man or any set of men; but it emanated from the Lord Almighty.”⁵ In response to a gathering of Church members who honored him on his 85th birthday, he said, “I feel that whatever I have accomplished that it is not Lorenzo Snow, and the scenes that have brought me to this position as President of the Church—it is not Lorenzo Snow, but the Lord has done it.”⁶

He taught this truth throughout his ministry, but he was reminded of it in a sacred and personal way just before he became President of the Church. He became the senior Apostle in the Church at the death of President Wilford Woodruff on September 2, 1898. Considering himself inadequate to carry this responsibility, he went alone to a room in the Salt Lake Temple to pray. He pleaded for guidance but felt no answer to his prayer, so after a time he left the room and entered a large hallway. It was there that the answer came. The resurrected Savior stood before him, about three feet (1 m) off the floor, and told him how to go forward with the leadership of the Church. To learn more about this experience, see chapter 20.

President Snow is well known for receiving a revelation on the law of tithing. For members of the Church in 1899, this revelation began with a bold declaration: “The time has now come for every Latter-day Saint, who calculates to be prepared for the future and to hold his feet strong upon a proper foundation, to do the will of the Lord and to pay his tithing in full. That is the word of the Lord to you.”⁷



Lorenzo Snow had the sacred experience of seeing the resurrected Lord in the Salt Lake Temple.

Latter-day Saints responded faithfully to their prophet's counsel, and the Lord blessed them individually and collectively as a result. The influence of that revelation continues today, as Church members all over the world receive spiritual and temporal blessings through obedience to the law of tithing. To read about the experience that led to this revelation and the blessings that followed it, see chapter 12.

Like every prophet, President Snow bore a powerful witness of Jesus Christ. He taught: "We are all dependent upon Jesus Christ, upon his coming into the world to open the way whereby we might secure peace, happiness and exaltation. And had he not made these

exertions we never could have been secured in these blessings and privileges which are guaranteed unto us in the gospel."⁸ He testified of the Savior's birth, mortal ministry, Atonement, personal involvement in His restored Church, and Second Coming. For more words of testimony about Jesus Christ, see chapter 24.

Of course, this short article can give you only a taste of President Snow's life and ministry. In your study of

Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Lorenzo Snow, you will find many other inspiring stories, including accounts of his first teaching opportunity as a missionary, his complete surprise at being called to serve in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, his feelings when he was on a ship in the Atlantic Ocean during a terrible storm, and four instances of the power of the priesthood saving people (including Lorenzo Snow himself) from death. You can learn much from his teachings on a variety of subjects, including unity, humility, covenants, temple work, family relationships, striving for perfection, priesthood, Relief Society, and the joy of sharing the gospel.

If you have taken time to read and ponder some of the accounts and teachings mentioned in this article—or even if you have determined that you will read them sometime soon—you can be assured that President Snow would be pleased with your effort. He was a lifelong learner, and he taught that we should “exert ourselves” so we can “advance in the principles of truth” and “increase in heavenly knowledge.” He urged, “Each last day or each last week should be the best that we have ever experienced, that is, we should advance ourselves a little every day, in knowledge and wisdom, and in the ability to accomplish good.”¹⁰

May your life be enriched this year through your study of *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Lorenzo Snow*. As you study, you can have an experience similar to that of the good minister who met President Snow face to face. Seeing beyond that kind face and those tranquil eyes, you too can feel that you stand on holy ground—not because you know Lorenzo Snow but because you have drawn nearer to your Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, of whom he was a witness. ■

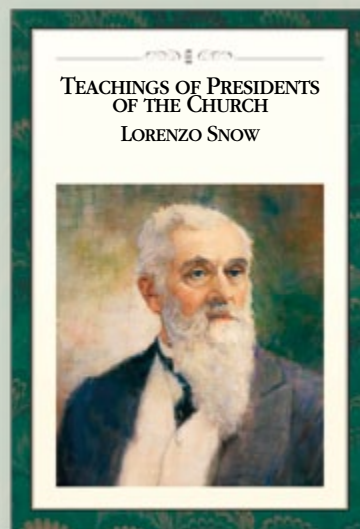
NOTES

1. Reverend Prentiss, quoted in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Lorenzo Snow* (2012), 30.
2. See David A. Bednar, “Ye Must Be Born Again,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2007, 19–22.
3. *Teachings: Lorenzo Snow*, 68.
4. *Teachings: Lorenzo Snow*, 219.
5. *Teachings: Lorenzo Snow*, 153.
6. *Teachings: Lorenzo Snow*, 148.
7. *Teachings: Lorenzo Snow*, 157.
8. *Teachings: Lorenzo Snow*, 280–81.
9. *Teachings: Lorenzo Snow*, 65.
10. *Teachings: Lorenzo Snow*, 103.

FEATURES OF *TEACHINGS OF PRESIDENTS OF THE CHURCH: LORENZO SNOW*

This book is the next addition to your personal and family library of *Teachings of Presidents of the Church*. There are now 11 books in the series, which gives inspired understanding on many gospel topics. Here are some of this book’s key features:

- Inspiring statements from President Lorenzo Snow on more than 75 gospel topics.
- New artwork and photographs from Lorenzo Snow’s life that most members have never seen.
- Three types of teaching and learning aids in each chapter: thought-provoking questions, scriptures related to the chapter’s topic, and teaching helps to improve class participation and discussion.
- Three pages of instructions to help members enhance their study of the book and teach with inspiration at home or at church.



The book is also available online at LDS.org and in the Gospel Library app (in English) at mobile.lds.org.

Helping Youth

BECOME
POWERFUL
LEARNERS &
TEACHERS

The new youth curriculum, Come, Follow Me: Learning Resources for Youth, emphasizes four ways parents, teachers, and leaders can effectively help youth become converted to the gospel.

By Michael Barber

Curriculum Developer, Priesthood Department

In a scriptural account about Jesus Christ's youth, we learn that the 12-year-old Savior was found "in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, and they were hearing him, and asking him questions.



“And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers” (Joseph Smith Translation, Luke 2:46–47 [in Luke 2:46, footnote c]).

From a young age the Savior actively participated in learning and teaching the gospel. In the temple, the Savior taught gospel principles to those who were considered far more learned and experienced than He was. Yet He understood that learning and teaching the gospel were part of His “Father’s business” (Luke 2:49) and central to His divine mission on the earth.

Without question, Jesus Christ was an exceptional gospel learner and teacher, even at a young age; yet He grew in His capacity to understand and teach doctrine. The scriptures tell us that He “continued from grace to grace, until he received a fulness” (D&C 93:13). As youth today consistently align their lives with what they know to be true, they too can become truly converted to the Savior and His gospel and increase in wisdom “line upon line, precept upon precept” (2 Nephi 28:30).

In a guide to the new youth curriculum materials, the First Presidency states, “You are called by the Lord to help youth become converted to the gospel.”¹ As we study and emulate the Savior’s ministry, we will be able to effectively support our youth in their journey to learn, live, and teach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Like the Savior, we can prepare ourselves spiritually, respond to the needs of our youth, encourage them to discover gospel truths, and challenge them to become converted as they act in faith.

Prepare Spiritually

Prior to beginning His mortal ministry, the Savior prepared Himself spiritually through diligent study, prayer, and fasting. He was “led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be with God” and “fasted forty days and forty nights” (Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 4:1–2 [in Matthew 4:1, footnote b]). At the conclusion of His fast, the Savior faced a series of temptations from the adversary. Prior scripture study helped as Jesus countered each temptation with verses from the scriptures. (See Matthew 4:3–10.) Spiritual preparation enabled Him not only to combat temptation successfully all His life but also to teach the gospel powerfully throughout His ministry.

Teaching youth requires more preparation than quickly glancing through a manual moments before we begin teaching. The Lord commanded, “Seek not to declare my word, but first seek to obtain my word” (D&C 11:21). We prepare spiritually by prayerfully studying the scriptures and the words of living prophets to learn true doctrine. As we prepare in this way, the Holy Ghost confirms the truth of the doctrine and prompts us to remember experiences living the doctrine that we can share.

When teaching the young women about the importance of personal revelation, Estefani Melero from the Lima Peru Surco Stake was prompted to share her experience seeking a testimony at age 14. She testified to the young women that as she fervently prayed to know the truth of the gospel, a voice seemed to whisper to her heart words she has never forgotten: “You know it is true, Estefani. You’ve always known.”

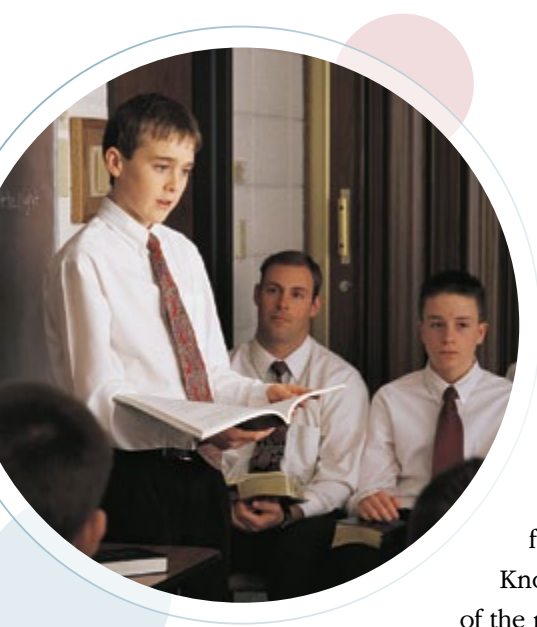
As we study and live the doctrine that we teach, we become more than teachers—we become witnesses of the truth.

Questions to Ponder: *What other scriptures show how the Savior prepared Himself to teach? How have your efforts to prepare to teach influenced the effectiveness of your message?*

Focus on Needs

In His interactions with a rich young ruler, the Savior showed that He understood the needs of those He taught. The ruler began with a question: “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” After the Savior taught the importance





of obeying the commandments, the young ruler replied, “All [the commandments] have I kept from my youth up.”

Knowing that the heart of the ruler still lacked

“one thing,” Jesus challenged

the man to sell all he had, give it to the poor, and follow Him. (See Luke 18:18–23.) When we pray for revelation and become aware of the interests, hopes, and desires of the youth, we will—as the Savior did—know how to teach and challenge them to live the gospel in personally meaningful ways.

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has stated that our “young people are being raised in enemy territory.”² As parents and teachers, we must understand the difficulties our youth face. Kevin Toutai, a youth Sunday School teacher in the Columbine Colorado Stake, stated, “The challenges that the youth face can’t be taught out of a manual. That’s personal revelation we receive as teachers to go forth and be able to prepare our youth to battle Satan each day. I’ve seen that you can’t just show up on Sunday with a manual and give a lesson.”

Helping youth learn and live the gospel involves the combined efforts of parents, leaders, advisers, and teachers. As we seek inspiration from the Holy Ghost, we can effectively teach the doctrine that will prepare the youth for the temptations and challenges they face.

Questions to Ponder: *How is the world different today than when you were a youth? What challenges do you see confronting the youth? Which doctrines of the gospel, when understood, will help them successfully face challenges?*

Invite Youth to Discover Gospel Truths

The Savior taught His disciples in ways that encouraged them to discover truth and gain personal testimonies. When teaching the Nephites, He said:

“I perceive that ye are weak, that ye cannot

understand all my words which I am commanded of the Father to speak unto you at this time.

“Therefore, go ye unto your homes, and ponder upon the things which I have said, and ask of the Father, in my name, that ye may understand, and prepare your minds for the morrow” (3 Nephi 17:2–3).

Christlike teaching involves more than just imparting information. It involves guiding the youth to understand doctrine for themselves. While we may be tempted to lecture them about the gospel, we will be more effective when we help them find answers for themselves, enable them to gain their own testimonies, and teach them how to find answers when they have other questions. As emphasized by the new youth curriculum, *Come, Follow Me: Learning Resources for Youth*, we can also invite them to share their experiences living the gospel and to testify to their peers of the things they know to be true.

Elder Kim B. Clark, Area Seventy and president of BYU–Idaho, recently related a story about a deacons quorum whose adviser was discussing prayer with them. Unexpectedly, the deacons quorum president raised his hand and said, “I would like to ask the quorum a question. How many of you would be willing to commit to praying morning and night every day this week?” All the quorum members raised their hands except one young man, who was not confident he could follow through with the challenge. The adviser sat back and watched as the quorum members taught and testified to their peer about prayer, helping him gain the confidence to accept the challenge.



Questions to Ponder: *In what ways have you noticed teachers encourage class members to take an active role in learning? How can you help the youth you work with to develop gospel study habits? Besides discussions, what are other ways to involve the youth in learning the gospel?*

Encourage Conversion

Conversion is a lifelong process that involves both learning and living the gospel every day. More than just knowing about the gospel, conversion “requires us to *do* and to *become*.”³ After teaching His disciples about the compassion of the good Samaritan, the Savior challenged them, “Go, and do thou likewise” (Luke 10:37). He encouraged them to be more than just hearers of the word and to act in faith on His teachings.

We must encourage the youth to live the gospel diligently because conversion does not usually occur during one teaching moment. Conversion best occurs when youth understand true doctrine and establish patterns of gospel study and righteous living, as we encourage them to do in *Come, Follow Me*.

Krista Warnick, a president of the Young Women in the Arapahoe Colorado Stake, said, “Youth today face an onslaught of challenges that I hadn’t even heard about until I was much older in life. I developed my testimony mostly when I moved out on my own and was able to work on and implement the things I had learned in Young Women classes. Giving youth challenges and opportunities to exercise their faith will help them develop the fundamentals of their testimonies at a much younger age.”

The challenge of conversion is not only that we learn the gospel but also that we change because of what we learn. We need to help our youth understand that their “mighty

change” (Alma 5:14) of heart may not occur immediately, but it will come gradually as they develop consistent study habits, pray always, and keep the commandments. As they do these things, they will notice that their desires, attitudes, and actions change to reflect Heavenly Father’s will.

Questions to Ponder: *What role did your efforts to learn and live the gospel play in your own conversion? How have you been strengthened by parents and Church teachers and leaders?*

Supporting Our Youth

Come, Follow Me represents only a part of the effort to support the youth. In addition to the individual responsibility of each youth to become more fully converted, “parents have the primary responsibility for helping their children know Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.”⁴ We who work with youth are able to support parents and follow the Savior’s example when we prepare spiritually, focus on the needs of the youth, invite them to discover gospel truths, and give them opportunities to act in faith and become converted. As we strive to emulate Jesus Christ, we become better learners and teachers, and we help the future leaders of our communities and our Church to become powerful learners and teachers themselves. ■

NOTES

1. *Teaching the Gospel in the Savior’s Way* (a guide to *Come, Follow Me: Learning Resources for Youth*, 2012), 2.
2. Boyd K. Packer, “Counsel to Youth,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 16.
3. Dallin H. Oaks, “The Challenge to Become,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 33.
4. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 1.4.1.



For more information about the new youth curriculum, visit lds.org/youth/learn.



**By Elder
Neil L. Andersen**
Of the Quorum of
the Twelve Apostles

REVERENCE FOR GOD IS THE BEGINNING OF

Wisdom

*The wisdom
of the world is
most valuable
when it humbly
bows to the
wisdom of God.*

We live in a world of information overload. Perhaps symbolic of this world is the amazing Wikipedia, the world's largest online encyclopedia. To give you its scope, as of 2012 it had over 2.5 billion words in English alone and more than 22 million articles across some 284 languages. There are more than 70 language versions of Wikipedia that have at least 10,000 articles each. There are more than 4 million articles in the English version.¹

Our information overload is evidenced as well in the explosive use of social networking sites such as Facebook, founded in 2004 and topping 1 billion active users worldwide in 2012,² or YouTube, launched in 2005, where some video clips have reportedly been viewed more than 100 million times.

In this information tidal wave, how desperately we need wisdom, wisdom to sort through and discern how to apply what we are learning. T. S. Eliot, a believing Christian writing years ago, speaks to our world today:

*O world of spring and autumn, birth
and dying!
The endless cycle of idea and action,
Endless invention, endless experiment,
Brings knowledge of motion, but not
of stillness;
Knowledge of speech, but not of silence;
Knowledge of words, and ignorance
of the Word.
All our knowledge brings us nearer to our
ignorance,
All our ignorance brings us nearer to death,
But nearness to death no nearer to God.
Where is the Life we have lost in living?
Where is the wisdom we have lost in
knowledge?
Where is the knowledge we have lost in
information?
The cycles of Heaven in twenty centuries
Bring us farther from God and nearer to
the Dust.³*

Where are you on the wisdom scale?
Some might relate to the young lady,
excited about her upcoming marriage, who



exclaimed to her parents, “Oh, I’m getting married. I’m at the end of all my troubles.” And her mother whispered to her father, “Yes, but she doesn’t know at which end.”

The more I learn about the wisdom of God, the more I believe I am only at the beginning end of wisdom. It humbles me as I realize how much I have to learn. Today, I hope to increase our desire to acquire wisdom and specifically the wisdom of God.

The Blessings of Wisdom

I want to emphasize several principles of wisdom. First, in our age of information and knowledge, we must seek after wisdom. Wisdom is multidimensional and comes in different sizes and colors. Wisdom gained early brings enormous blessings. Wisdom in one area may not be transferable to another. And finally, the wisdom of the world, while in many cases very valuable, is most valuable when it humbly bows to the wisdom of God.

The scriptures describe two types of wisdom: the wisdom of the world and the wisdom of God. The wisdom of the world has both a positive and a negative component. In the darkest description, it could be described as a partial truth, mixed with intelligence and manipulation, to achieve selfish or evil purposes.

An example from the Book of Mormon is the man Amlici. The scriptures say that “a certain man, being called Amlici, he being a very cunning man, yea, *a wise man as to the wisdom of the world* . . . [drew] away much people after him.” The scriptures go on to describe Amlici as a “wicked man, . . . [whose] intent [was] to destroy the church of God” (Alma 2:1–2, 4; emphasis added). We are not interested in this kind of wisdom.

There is another kind of wisdom of the world that is not nearly so sinister. In fact it is very positive. This wisdom is consciously

acquired through study, reflection, observation, and hard work. It is very valuable and helpful in the things we do. To good and decent people, it comes as we experience our mortality.

You will remember American author Mark Twain’s comment: “When I was a boy of 14, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be 21, I was astonished at how much he had learned in 7 years.”⁴ If we are observant, if we are thoughtful, time can teach us much.

I remember at the time of my graduation from college. I traveled from Brigham Young University to Preston, Idaho, USA, where my grandmother, Mary Keller, lived.

She was then 78 years old and frail. She passed away two years later. She was a marvelous lady, and I knew that if I would listen and learn from her experiences, I could learn wisdom that would help me along the way.

We can pole-vault over many of the sad experiences that come to some in life by obtaining wisdom early—wisdom beyond our age. Seek after this wisdom—be reflective, observe carefully, think about what you experience in life.

We can also learn wisdom in our specific professional and personal pursuits. Let me give you two examples.

Dr. DeVon C. Hale is a physician in Salt Lake City who grew up in Idaho Falls, Idaho. I have marveled at his knowledge and his wisdom as it concerns tropical diseases. It is not just Dr. Hale’s knowledge but also his understanding of how to apply that knowledge, sorting through several layers and judging one against the other. It is a blessing to have that kind of medical wisdom for missionaries across the world.

A second example: When our oldest son began elementary school in our home in

*We can
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come to some in
life by obtaining
wisdom early.*



Tampa, Florida, USA, we were anxious to meet his kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Judith Graybell. She was a woman in her 50s and had an amazing ability with young children. She knew just how to motivate them, when to praise them, and when to be firm with them. She had the knowledge to teach them, but she had much more. We worked hard to get each of our children into her kindergarten classroom.

These two people demonstrate selective wisdom in the world. Their wisdom is a help to many and allows them to be successful in their professions.

However, we should realize the limitations of this wisdom. The wisdom in one area may not necessarily carry into wisdom in another. For example, I may not want Mrs. Graybell diagnosing tropical diseases, and I may not want Dr. Hale teaching my child's kindergarten class.

More important, the wisdom that brings success in the world must be willing to step behind the wisdom of God and not think that it can substitute for it.

Remember: all wisdom is not created equal. The Psalmist said, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Psalm 111:10). What the scripture means is that a "profound reverence"⁵ for the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. That profound reverence comes because our Heavenly Father "has all wisdom, and all power, both in heaven and in earth" (Mosiah 4:9). His wisdom is perfect. It is pure. It is unselfish.

This wisdom, at times, will be opposite the wisdom of the world, meaning the wisdom of God and the wisdom of the world will come in direct conflict one with another.

Remember the words of the Lord in Isaiah? "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8-9).

The wisdom of God will not come to us by entitlement; we must be willing to seek after it. "If any of you lack *wisdom*, let him *ask* of God, that giveth to all men liberally,

The wisdom that brings success in the world must be willing to step behind the wisdom of God and not think that it can substitute for it.

and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (James 1:5; emphasis added).

The wisdom of God is a spiritual gift. “*Seek not for riches but for wisdom*, and behold, the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto you, and then shall you be made rich” (D&C 6:7; emphasis added).

Seeking for the wisdom of God is always accompanied by obedience to the commandments.

Generally, the spiritual gift of wisdom comes step by step as we honestly and diligently seek it. “I will give unto the children of men line upon line, precept upon precept, . . . and blessed are those who hearken unto my precepts, . . . for they shall learn *wisdom*; for unto him that receiveth I will give more” (2 Nephi 28:30; emphasis added).

Joseph Smith said this: “The things of God are of deep import; and time, and experience, and careful and ponderous and solemn thoughts can only find them out.”⁶ There is no instant gratification in seeking for the wisdom of God.

Finally, the source of the wisdom of God is different from that of the world. The wisdom of God is found in the scriptures, in the teachings of the prophets (such as during general conference), and, of course, in our prayers (see D&C 8:1–2). And always, *always* this wisdom distills upon us with the power of the Holy Ghost. The Apostle Paul said:

“For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. . . .

“Which things also we speak, not in the words which *man’s wisdom* teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth” (1 Corinthians 2:11, 13; emphasis added).

With the wisdom of God, we see beyond our current circumstances because, as the scripture says, “the Spirit . . . speaketh of things as they really are, and of things as they really will be” (Jacob 4:13).

The wisdom of God is found in the scriptures, in the teachings of the prophets (such as during general conference), and, of course, in our prayers.

The wisdom of God is wisdom worthy of our devoted attention.

Wisdom and Tithing

Perhaps the most important point is that not all wisdom is created equal. We need to learn that when there is conflict between the wisdom of the world and the wisdom of God, we must yield our will to the wisdom of God.

We are the sons and daughters of God. We are spiritual beings on a mortal mission. We who are devoted to learning the wisdom of the world and the wisdom of God must not become confused with which wisdom is more important.

Let me share an experience from a noble Latter-day Saint in São Paulo, Brazil. She tells of her struggle between paying her tithing or her tuition. Here are her words:

“The university . . . prohibited the students that were in debt [or who had not paid their tuition] from taking tests.

“I remember a time when I . . . faced serious financial difficulties. It was a Thursday when I received my salary. When I figured the monthly budget, I noticed that there wouldn’t be enough to pay [both] my tithing and my university. I would have to choose between them. The bimonthly tests would start the following week, and if I didn’t take them, I could lose the school year. I felt great agony. . . . My heart ached.”

Here was a direct conflict between the wisdom of the world and the wisdom of God. Even though you are very good and righteous, you will find in your life, if you are truthful with yourself, that your heart will ache as you feel some of these conflicts coming up before you.

I return to her story. First, she paid her tithing on Sunday. The following Monday she recounted what happened:

“The working period was ending when my employer approached and gave the last orders of the day. . . .

Suddenly, he halted, and asked, ‘How is your college?’ [She described him as a harsh man, and all she could say was:] ‘Everything is all right!’”

He then left. Suddenly the secretary entered the room. She said, “The employer has just said that from today on, the company is going to pay fully for your college and your books. Before you leave, stop at my desk and inform me of the costs so that tomorrow I can give you the check.”⁷

If you are perceptive, you will find that you are confronted with these types of tests many times throughout your life. Where will you put your trust? Listen to the Lord’s warning directly to us:

“O the vainness, and the frailties, and the foolishness of men! When they are learned [in the wisdom of the world] they *think* they are *wise*, and they hearken not unto the counsel of God, for they set it aside, supposing they

know of themselves [the wisdom of the world], wherefore, their *wisdom* is foolishness and it profiteth them not. And they shall perish.

“But to be learned [in the wisdom of the world] is good if they hearken unto the counsels of God” (2 Nephi 9:28–29; emphasis added).

Now from Paul:

“Where is the wise? . . . hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?” (1 Corinthians 1:20).

“Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.

“For the *wisdom of this world* is foolishness with God” (1 Corinthians 3:18–19; emphasis added).

The test is often whether we will allow the wisdom of God to be our guiding course when it moves opposite the wisdom of the world.

Think of the wisdom of God on personal finances. We put money in its proper role by paying an honest tithe and being generous in our offerings.



Ammon lamented, “For they will not seek wisdom [the wisdom of God], neither do they desire that she should rule over them” (Mosiah 8:20). When thinking of those who have been willing to let the wisdom of God rule over them, I think of a friend of mine from mainland China, Xie Ying, who made significant sacrifices to join the Church and served a mission in New York. I think of my two daughters, both very intelligent with master’s degrees but who have chosen the blessings of motherhood and children. I think of a friend from South America who left his lucrative employment when he learned taxes were being illegally evaded. All have put the wisdom of God above the wisdom of the world.

Sadly, the wisdom of the world can deceive capable people. Joseph Smith said it this way: “There are a great many wise men, and women too, in our midst who are too wise to be taught; therefore they must die in their ignorance, and in the resurrection they will find their mistake.”⁸

Wisdom and Finances

With the difficulties in our economy, let me raise the issue of personal finances. In our current condition we are all more humble and teachable—but think back on the last few years.

The world teaches that if we want something, we should have it. We should not have to wait for it. Debt can allow us to have it now. That debt can come through credit cards, or it might come through overextending the leverage on a house that we own. We can leverage what we have, even our education. Values will always go up, and we will prosper. The wisdom of the world is that the amount of the monthly payment becomes more important than the size of the loan. Our obligations are somewhat discretionary, and if all fails, bankruptcy is our last option.

Now let’s think of the wisdom of God on personal finances, constantly taught by the prophets. The foundation is self-reliance and work. We put money in its proper role by paying an honest tithe and being generous in our offerings. We live on less than we earn, and we differentiate between our needs and our wants. We avoid debt except for the most fundamental of needs. We live within a budget. We put away some savings. We are honest in all our obligations.

About 14 years ago, President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) warned: “I am suggesting that the time has come to get our houses in order. So many of our people are living on the very edge of their incomes. In fact, some are living on borrowings. . . . There is a portent of stormy weather ahead to which we had better give heed.”⁹

Several years ago at the peak of our prosperity, President Thomas S. Monson said:

“My brothers and sisters, avoid the philosophy that yesterday’s luxuries have become today’s necessities. They aren’t necessities unless we make them so. Many enter into long-term debt only to find that changes occur: people become ill or incapacitated, companies fail or downsize, jobs are lost, natural disasters befall us. For many reasons, payments on large amounts of debt can no longer be made. Our debt becomes as a Damocles sword hanging over our heads and threatening to destroy us.

“I urge you to live within your means. One cannot spend more than one earns and remain solvent. I promise you that you will then be happier than you would be if you were constantly worrying about how to make the next payment on nonessential debt.”¹⁰

Can you see how the wisdom of God can conflict with the wisdom of the world? The choice was *not* so obvious when all looked

There is much we can learn right now about wisdom. I promise you that the Lord’s blessings will attend you as you seek for wisdom—the wisdom of God.



prosperous. Many members of the Church wish they had listened more closely.

This is the wisdom of God.

I suggest you take some of the issues facing you. Put a line down the middle of a piece of paper. List the wisdom of the world on the left side and the wisdom of God on the right side. Write the issues in conflict one with another.

What choices are you making?

In section 45 of the Doctrine and Covenants, which speaks of the events leading up to the Second Coming of the Savior, the Lord again tells the story of the ten virgins and then leaves us with these words: “For they that are wise, and have received the truth, and have taken the Holy Spirit for their guide, and have not been deceived—verily I say unto you, they shall not be hewn down and cast into the fire, but shall abide the day” (D&C 45:57).

Let us seek after the wisdom of God. We are currently in difficult economic times across the world, and it brings some concern as we plan for jobs, careers, and income. But

there are many good and prosperous days ahead. There is much we can learn right now about wisdom. I promise you that the Lord’s blessings will attend you as you seek for wisdom—the wisdom of God. ■

From a commencement address delivered on April 10, 2009, at Brigham Young University–Idaho. For the full text in English, visit <http://web.byui.edu/DevotionalsAndSpeeches>.

NOTES

1. See Andrew Lih, *The Wikipedia Revolution* (2009), xv–xvi; see also http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Size_comparisons; <http://wikimediafoundation.org/wiki/FAQ/en>; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Wikipedia.
2. See Ramona Emerson, “Facebook Users Expected to Pass 1 Billion in August: iCrossing,” *The Huffington Post*, Jan. 14, 2012, www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/01/13/facebook-users-1-billion-icrossing_n_1204948.html.
3. “Choruses from ‘The Rock,’” in *T. S. Eliot: The Complete Poems and Plays, 1909–1950* (1980), 96.
4. *Mark Twain Laughing: Humorous Anecdotes by and about Samuel L. Clemens*, ed. P. M. Zall (1985), xxii.
5. See Marion G. Romney, “Converting Knowledge into Wisdom,” *Ensign*, July 1983, 5.
6. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 267.
7. In Gordon B. Hinckley, “We Walk by Faith,” *Ensign*, May 2002, 73, 74.
8. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 202.
9. Gordon B. Hinckley, “To the Boys and to the Men,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 53.
10. Thomas S. Monson, “True to the Faith,” *Ensign*, May 2006, 19.

Take some of the issues facing you. Put a line down the middle of a piece of paper. List the wisdom of the world on the left side and the wisdom of God on the right side. Write the issues in conflict one with another.

Abraham and the Three Angels, by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo. After Abraham and his wife Sarah made a covenant with God, the Lord sent three angels to tell the couple that they would have a son, Isaac (see Genesis 17–18).

COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM



I Did Raise My Voice That It Reached the Heavens, by Walter Rane. Enos "hungered" and cried unto God in "mighty prayer" (see Enos 1).



TAUGHT BY THE SPIRIT

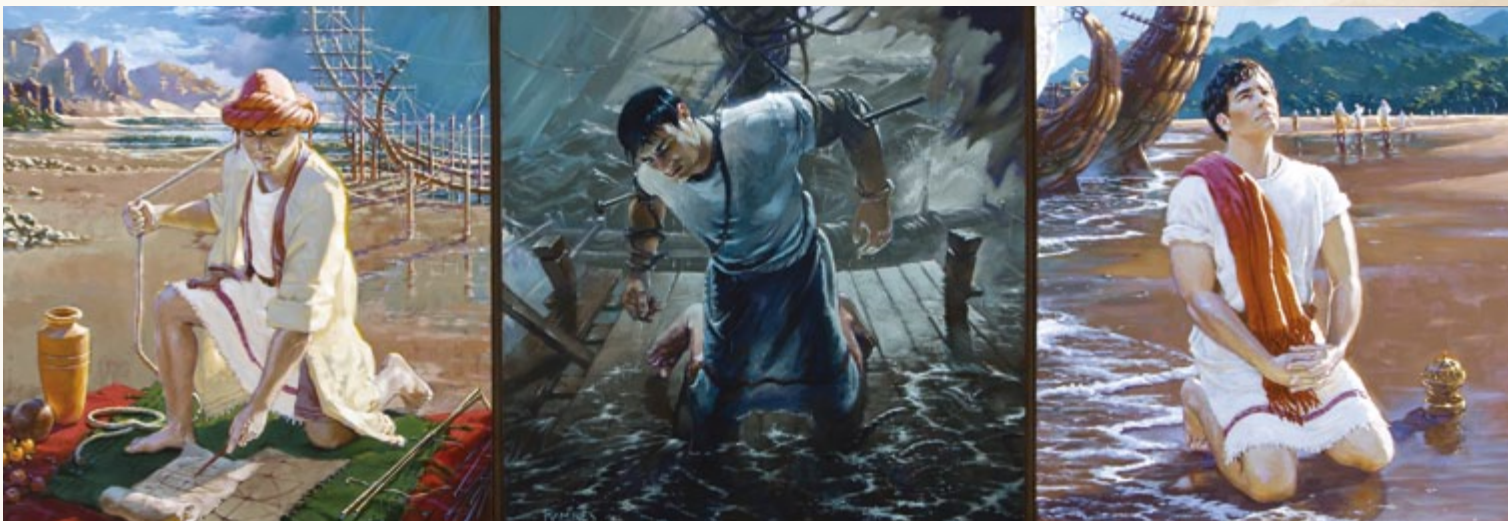
From the beginning, God has taught His faithful followers through the Holy Ghost. Often referred to as the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of the Lord, the Comforter, or simply the Spirit, the Holy Ghost teaches us in a variety of ways. Our scriptures are filled with dramatic examples of visions, dreams, or the appearances of angels as a means of teaching prophets and others. More often, however, the Spirit communicates to us through less dramatic but still powerful ways—promptings; a still, small voice; or a feeling of warmth, peace, and comfort.

We see in the scriptures that those who were taught by the Spirit first prepared themselves by opening their heart and mind to receive divine inspiration in their lives. We must do the same as we seek answers to our prayers. Setting aside a time and



SCALA/WHITE IMAGES / ART RESOURCE, NEW YORK / MUSEE DES BEAUX-ARTS, ROUEN, FRANCE

Saint Paul Writing, by Jacob Adriaensz Backer. After Paul's dramatic spiritual experience on the road to Damascus and subsequent conversion (see Acts 9:3–18), he spent the rest of his life writing epistles of support and preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout Asia Minor.



The Spirit of Prayer, by Claudio Roberto Aguiar Ramires. The Spirit taught Nephi, son of Lehi, how to build a ship (left) that would take Lehi's family to the promised land (right)—though Laman and Lemuel bound Nephi with cords during the journey (center). The story is found in 1 Nephi 17–18.



Mary's Visit to Elizabeth, by Carl Heinrich Bloch. When Elizabeth heard Mary's salutation, "the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost" and knew that Mary would be the mother of the prophesied Messiah (see Luke 1:39–45).

The Conversion of Alma the Younger and the Sons of Mosiah, by David Linn. Alma and the sons of Mosiah flattered the people to do iniquities (left). An angel of the Lord appeared unto them and said, "I come to convince thee of the power and authority of God" (center). Their hearts were changed, and they became instruments in the hands of God in bringing many to the knowledge of the truth (right). (See Mosiah 27:8–37.)



a quiet place to pray invites the Spirit and allows us to hear and feel His inspiration. We can take an active role in being taught by the Spirit by often exerting ourselves spiritually, mentally, and physically, and then listening for an answer. ■

John the Revelator Shown the Heavenly City, by Innes Fripp. The Apostle John wrote, "Behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard . . . said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter" (Revelation 4:1).



COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM



Jacob's Dream, by Jusepe de Ribera. The Spirit taught Jacob in a dream: "Thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, . . . and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (see Genesis 28:11-18).



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GREAT AND MARVELOUS ARE THE

Revelations of God

By Gerrit Dirkmaat

Church History Department

In April 1831, early Church convert Thomas B. Marsh wrote to close family members in Massachusetts and urged them to join him and his wife in their newfound faith. Brother Marsh implored his family, “Are you willing to suffer affliction with the people of God rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season? If so, come and take part, for great and marvelous are the revelations of God.”¹ Brother Marsh, like other early members of the Church, regarded the revelations received by Joseph Smith to be the word of God and followed the directions given in them.

The ongoing Joseph Smith Papers Project at the Church History Library has highlighted the essential role that Joseph Smith’s revelations played in building the faith of early members of the Church. They understood that the process of revelation was not static and that the Lord sometimes commanded Joseph to revise, update, or correct the written revelations. These members believed that such revelations came from God and were willing to heed them, even when doing so required great sacrifice.

Joseph Smith Received Revelations through the Power of God

Those who believed that Joseph Smith’s revelations contained the voice of the Lord speaking to them also accepted the miraculous ways in which the revelations were received. Some of the Prophet Joseph’s earliest revelations came through the same means by which he translated the Book of Mormon from the gold plates. In the stone box containing the gold plates, Joseph found what Book of Mormon



prophets referred to as “interpreters,” or a “stone, which shall shine forth in darkness unto light” (Alma 37:23–24). He described the instrument as “spectacles” and referred to it using an Old Testament term, Urim and Thummim (see Exodus 28:30).²

He also sometimes applied the term to other stones he possessed, called “seer stones” because they aided him in receiving revelations as a seer. The Prophet received some early revelations through the use of these seer stones. For example, shortly after Oliver Cowdery came to serve as a scribe for Joseph Smith as he translated the plates, Oliver and Joseph debated the meaning of a biblical passage and sought an answer through revelation. Joseph explained: “A difference of opinion arising between us about the account of John the Apostle . . . whether he died, or whether he continued; we mutually agreed to settle it by the Urim and Thummim.”³ In response, Joseph Smith received the revelation now known as section 7 of the Doctrine and Covenants, which informed them that Jesus had told the Apostle John, “Thou shalt tarry until I come in my glory” (D&C 7:3).

Records indicate that soon after the founding of the Church in 1830, the Prophet stopped using the seer stones as a regular means of receiving revelations. Instead, he dictated the revelations after inquiring of the Lord without employing an external instrument. One of his scribes explained that process: “The scribe seats himself at a desk or table, with pen, ink, and paper. The subject of inquiry being understood, the Prophet and Revelator inquires of God. He spiritually sees, hears, and feels, and then speaks as he is moved upon by the Holy Ghost.”⁴



Joseph Smith realized that, according to the will of the Lord, new revelations could come that would clarify and expand upon previous revelations from the Lord.

Many Revelations Were Later Revised by Joseph Smith through Inspiration

Over the course of the first five years of the Church, Joseph and others under his direction made changes and corrections to some of the early revelation texts in an attempt to more closely portray the intent of the revelation. Other times, especially as the revelations were being prepared for publication, Joseph was inspired to update the contents of the revelations to reflect a growing Church structure and new circumstances. At times this process resulted in substantial additions to the original text.⁵ As early as November 1831, a Church conference resolved that “Joseph Smith Jr. correct those errors or mistakes which he may discover by the Holy Spirit while reviewing the revelations and commandments and also the fullness of the scriptures.”⁶

Some of the needed changes stemmed from errors made by scribes as Joseph dictated the revelation to them. Other changes were made as later revelations incorporated more teachings that had not been a part of the initial revelation. The revelation now known as Doctrine and Covenants section 27 is an example. Joseph Smith’s history explained that the first part of the revelation was received and written down in August 1830 and “the remainder in the September following.”⁷ In the earliest manuscripts, only verses 1–5 and parts of 15 and 18 were included, but as the text of the revelation was being prepared for publication in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants, the second portion of the revelation was added, nearly tripling the size of the revelation.

In fact, most of the changes to the revelations were made as they were prepared for publication, particularly in 1833 and 1835. Many of these changes made the revelations

easier to read and understand; others clarified and expanded upon ideas in the previous revelations as a result of continued revelation on the topic. For instance, when the revelation explaining multiple priesthood offices now found in Doctrine and Covenants section 107 was initially received in late 1831, the office of the Seventy had not yet been restored to the Church. By the time the revelation was first published in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants, the office of the Seventy had been revealed, and numerous verses were added to section 107 in order to explain and define the duties of that office (see D&C 107:93–98).

While many members today may look at the revelations as being static and unchanging, the Prophet Joseph Smith saw the revelations as living and subject to change as the Lord revealed more of His will. Members of the Church relied upon Joseph to receive continued revelations for the Church. As former Church Historian Elder Marlin K. Jensen of the Seventy has explained: “Joseph seemed to regard the manuscript revelations as his best efforts to capture the voice of the Lord condescending to communicate in what Joseph called the ‘crooked, broken, scattered, and imperfect language’ of men”⁸ (see also D&C 1:24).

Church Members Changed Their Lives in Response to Joseph Smith’s Revelations

Early Church members accepted the revelations Joseph Smith received as the literal voice of God speaking to them, despite the fact that those revelations sometimes required great personal and financial sacrifice. For individual members, the revelations often led to life-changing decisions. In 1831, John Whitmer was asked to be the Church historian but hesitated because he did not want to take on the difficult responsibility. The Prophet Joseph Smith received a revelation a short time later that declared in the voice of the Lord: “Behold, it is expedient that my servant John should write and keep a regular history” (D&C 47:1). After hearing the word of God through the revelation, Brother Whitmer embraced his calling. Many of the earliest records of the Church exist today because of Brother Whitmer’s willingness to lay his own will aside



Above: A representation of King Mosiah translating the Jaredite record using the Urim and Thummim. **Right:** Soon after the organization of the Church in April 1830, Joseph Smith began dictating revelations without the use of seer stones.





The Joseph Smith Papers Project at the Church History Library is in the process of making the project's documents available to readers either in printed volumes or online (in English). At JosephSmithPapers.org, readers can see images and transcriptions of hundreds of Joseph Smith's documents, including revelations, letters, and journals.



Depiction of Joseph Smith reviewing the printing of the revelations.

and follow the commandment of God.

Levi Hancock, an early convert in Ohio, also shared a story of the power of the revelations to change attitudes and motivate actions. In June 1831, following a special conference, Joseph Smith received a revelation instructing a few dozen men, including Brother Hancock, to go on missions to Missouri and preach. Brother Hancock recalled: "This was a trial indeed. I had not thought of being called upon to go so far." Brother Hancock had spent nearly all of his money supporting other elders, had paid for and moved into a new residence, and had also recently made a "promise to a young lady," suggesting he was engaged to be married. However, after anguishing over his financial and personal circumstances, Brother Hancock made a decision: "I said I will let all things go and do as I am told in the revelation. As soon as I formed this conclusion, I felt better. I was determined to do the best I could and immediately started."⁹

Revelations directed to the entire Church also produced amazing results as members sought to follow the counsel despite the difficulty of the way. In the winter of 1830–31, as opposition intensified against Church members in New York, Joseph Smith received several revelations in which the Lord commanded all of the members to leave their homes and move nearly 300 miles (480 km) to Ohio (see D&C 37; 38). One nonmember observer wrote, “This command was at first resisted by such as had property, . . . but after a night of fasting, prayer and trial, they all consented to obey.”¹⁰ Newel Knight, one of the members from Colesville, New York, explained, “As might be expected we were obliged to make great sacrifices of our property.”¹¹

Because the members in New York quickly followed the instructions given to them in the revelation, they were present in Kirtland, Ohio, for a special conference on June 3 during which the office of high priesthood was first conferred upon members of the Church. Newel Knight later wrote that “the power of the Lord was displayed in our midst, . . . and the hearts of the Saints rejoiced in the rich blessings bestowed upon them.”¹²

Members reacted to the revelations with faith that the process of continuing revelation would guide them along the way. They resolutely stepped into the unknown in order to follow the commandments of God.

The Blessing of Joseph’s Revelations

The Lord’s revelations to Joseph Smith were given in miraculous ways. The knowledge conveyed in those revelations transformed the lives of thousands of people in the early days of the Church. In the revelations the voice of the Lord rebuked the unrighteous,

reassured the faithful, and revealed His will to the Church and to the world. The Prophet himself reiterated the divine origin and importance of the revelations only months before he was martyred at the hands of a mob, in part for the controversial nature of the truths he had revealed: “I never told you I was perfect; but there is no error in the revelations which I have taught.”¹³

As it was with early members of the Church, so it is for members today: following the teachings of the prophet may require making personal sacrifices and taking steps into an unknown future with faith in the promised blessings. As members do so, they will gain greater resolve to follow the commandments, and they will receive the blessings therefrom. ■



Levi Hancock accepted a call to serve a mission at great personal sacrifice—and was blessed for it.

NOTES

1. Thomas B. and Elizabeth Marsh to Ann and Lewis Abbott, Apr. 11, 1831, MS 23457, Church History Library, Salt Lake City; punctuation and capitalization modernized.
2. See *Histories, Volume 1: 1832–1844*, vol. 1 of the Histories series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, ed. Karen Lynn Davidson and others (2012), 15, 222–23; see also Russell M. Nelson, “A Treasured Testament,” *Ensign*, July 1993, 61; the Urim and Thummim was also described as “two stones in silver bows” (Joseph Smith—History 1:35).
3. *Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831*, vol. 1 of the Documents series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, ed. Michael Mackay and others (2013), account of John, Apr. 1829 (see Doctrine and Covenants 7).
4. William McLellin, ed., *The Ensign of Liberty* (Aug. 1849), 98.
5. For instance, a major addition was made to the August 1830 revelation (Doctrine and Covenants 27) before it was published in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants; see *Documents, Volume 1*, Revelation, Aug. 1830.
6. Far West Record, LR 7874, 16, Church History Library.
7. Joseph Smith, in “Manuscript History of the Church,” vol. A-1, 51, Church History Library.
8. Marlin K. Jensen, “The Joseph Smith Papers: The Manuscript Revelation Books,” *Ensign*, July 2009, 46–51.
9. Autobiography of Levi Ward Hancock, MS 570, 27–28, Church History Library; punctuation modernized.
10. *Palmyra Reflector*, Feb. 1, 1831, 94.
11. Newel Knight Autobiography and Journal, MS 767, 28, Church History Library.
12. Newel Knight Autobiography, MS 19156, 290, Church History Library.
13. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 522.



Faith & Intellect

When my teacher challenged me to explain rationally why I believed in the gospel, I didn't know how to respond.

By Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

PhD in Chinese History

One day when I was a senior in high school, a teacher challenged me to explain rationally how I knew what I believed was true. I responded that I wasn't sure, but I really loved my family, and since everything I loved about my family was inextricably tied to the Church, something had to be right. At the time, my inability to come up with a more "rational" explanation troubled me.

I knew the Church was important to me, but I had been struggling with questions about the restored gospel that seemed difficult to answer. I sought to have a simple faith, but some things didn't seem simple.

My questions left me confused and apprehensive. Sometimes it seemed like I might have to choose between being smart and having faith. My testimony, though still developing, was very precious to me. I was afraid of losing it in the process of becoming educated.

Faith and Intellect Are Not Exclusive

After graduating from high school, I attended Harvard University (Massachusetts, USA), where I made a wonderful discovery. Although my college classes placed a clear priority on critical thinking over religious belief, in the Latter-day Saint community that included university students, professors, and institute teachers from the Boston area, I met people who excelled in their academic work and still remained active, committed members of the Church.

I looked up to these Latter-day Saints because they were sympathetic to my intellectual questions—many of them had grappled with similar questions



GROUND ED IN FAITH

“Fear not; ask questions. Be curious, but doubt not! Always hold fast to faith and to the light you have already received. Because we see imperfectly in mortality, not everything is going to make sense right now. . . . It’s true that ‘faith is not . . . a perfect knowledge’ (Alma 32:21), but as you exercise your faith, applying gospel principles every day under any circumstances, you will taste the sweet fruits of the gospel, and by this fruit you will know of its truth (see Matthew 7:16–20; John 7:17; Alma 32:41–43).”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “The Reflection in the Water” (Church Education System fireside for young adults, Nov. 1, 2009); available at mormonchannel.org/ces-devotionals.

themselves—and because of their cheerful faith. Their examples taught me that faith and intellect are not mutually exclusive. I began to realize that it was God who gave His children intelligence—described in Doctrine and Covenants 93:36 as “the glory of God”—and who instructed us to “seek . . . out of the best books words of wisdom” (D&C 88:118).

In this spirit and with some mentored guidance, I pursued my desire to learn more about Church history. As I studied histories written by renowned scholars who were also believing Latter-day Saints, I came to appreciate the fact that the early Saints in Nauvoo, the pioneers who had crossed the plains, and other significant figures in Church history had been real people with strengths and weaknesses. This understanding ultimately strengthened my faith. The more I realized that the early Saints weren’t superhuman—that they were people just like me and other Church members I know today—the more I understood how God uses imperfect people to accomplish a divine work. God had led them, blessed them, and spoken to them just as God leads, blesses, and speaks to us today.

The Gospel Changes Lives

Between my third and fourth years of college, I served a mission in Taiwan. During my mission I saw how the restored gospel of Jesus Christ changed people’s lives in ways that could truly be described as miraculous. The greatest and most miraculous change I observed on my mission occurred in me as I learned important lessons about humility and love. These mission experiences made a deep impression



on me. They expanded my perception of what is real, what is worthwhile, and what God can do.

Spiritual Experiences Confirm Gospel Truths

Shortly after returning from my mission and graduating from college, I began doctoral studies in history and religion at Harvard. This pursuit of learning supported my pursuit of faith. I studied Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and American religious history, including Latter-day Saint history; I graduated after writing a dissertation on the history of Christian churches in China. This broad scholarly context for understanding religious beliefs and systems deepened my appreciation for the value of the restored gospel and the ways the Church gives us opportunities to learn to follow Jesus Christ. I also came to see that different forms of knowledge have different methods by which things are known (see 1 Corinthians 2:10–14). Religious questions cannot be addressed satisfactorily through scholarly inquiry alone.

Realizations such as these have helped me to understand that although I will probably

always have some unresolved questions, these intellectual issues are no longer central concerns for me. I have had too many experiences that have convinced me that the gospel of Jesus Christ is real and worthwhile. Even during times when I have wrestled with serious doubts, I have experienced firsthand the fruits of the Spirit as I have kept the commandments and served in the Church. These experiences have confirmed my faith. As Alma says, “Is not this real?” (Alma 32:35).

The Fruits of the Spirit Are Precious

The fruits of the restored gospel in my own life *are* real. I think of my family, still closely knit even as it grows larger and larger. I think of Guo Lingjun, an investigator from my mission to Taiwan, whose face on the day of her baptism shone with such radiance. I recall the times when I heard the prophet speak and felt in my heart that he truly spoke words that God wanted me to hear. I think of how I have felt the powerful, transformative awareness that God exists and is mindful of me.

I still think that it is healthy to ask questions and to pursue answers. However, not having all the answers no longer troubles me. This is because I have chosen to value above all other experiences the many times when I have seen the blessings of the Spirit at work in my life and in the lives of others.

I have come to some important realizations since high school. First, I have learned that faith and intellect are not incompatible. Second, I have come to rely chiefly on spiritual experiences, not intellectual deliberations, as a basis for my testimony. For me, it is the personal experiences of the good fruits of the Spirit that are the most precious, the most difficult to come by, and the most real. ■

ENCOUNTERING GOD ON HIS TERMS

T. S. Eliot wrote a poem, “Little Gidding,” that has had deep significance for my perspective on intellect, experience, and faith. At one point in “Little Gidding,” the poet describes a place where one might set aside rational, critical purposes and focus solely on the experience of the spiritual:

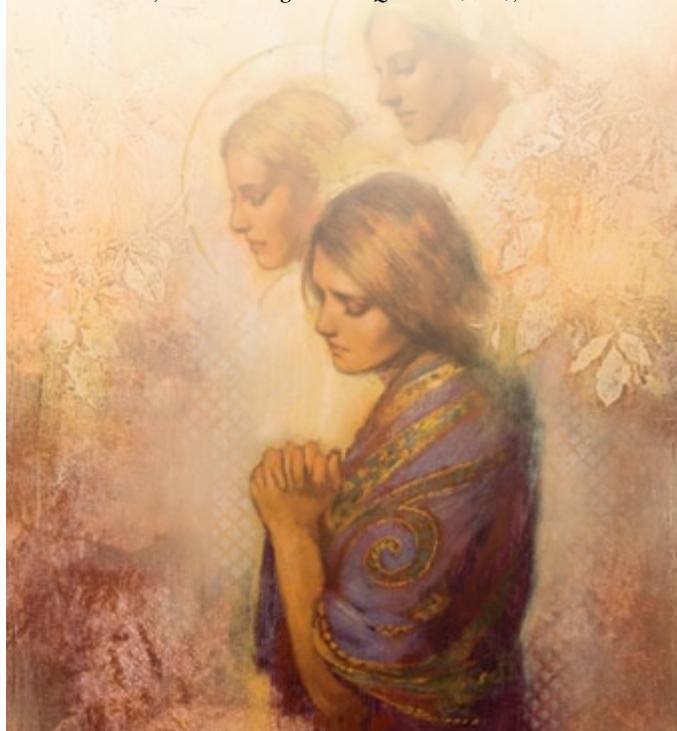
*You are not here to verify,
Instruct yourself, or inform curiosity
Or carry report. You are here to kneel
Where prayer has been valid.*¹

In such a place, we lay aside the critical means by which we evaluate the things of the world and prepare to encounter God on His terms. In such a place, we base our ultimate trust not in reasoning but in experience. Here, we find that “prayer has been valid.”

—Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

NOTE

1. T. S. Eliot, “Little Gidding” in *Four Quartets* (1971), 51.





By Elder Michael T.
Ringwood
Of the Seventy

Faith, Hope, and Relationships

*Desire, belief,
and hope
should prompt
us to develop
relationships
that lead to
marriage.*

Did you really make a pro-and-con list?" The question my teenage son asked in an amazed tone referred to a list he found in one of my journals. It wasn't just any old pro-and-con list; it was the list I had made 30 years ago, before I proposed to his mother. I don't know how many men make a list like mine, but when I pondered the idea of marriage as a 24-year-old college student, it just seemed the right thing to do.

I don't remember any other questions that day from my son about our courtship; he was too fixated on the list. I can still see him in my mind's eye, yelling to his siblings, "Dad made a list about Mom! Come see it!" However, as I look back, I can think of many questions he *could* have asked.

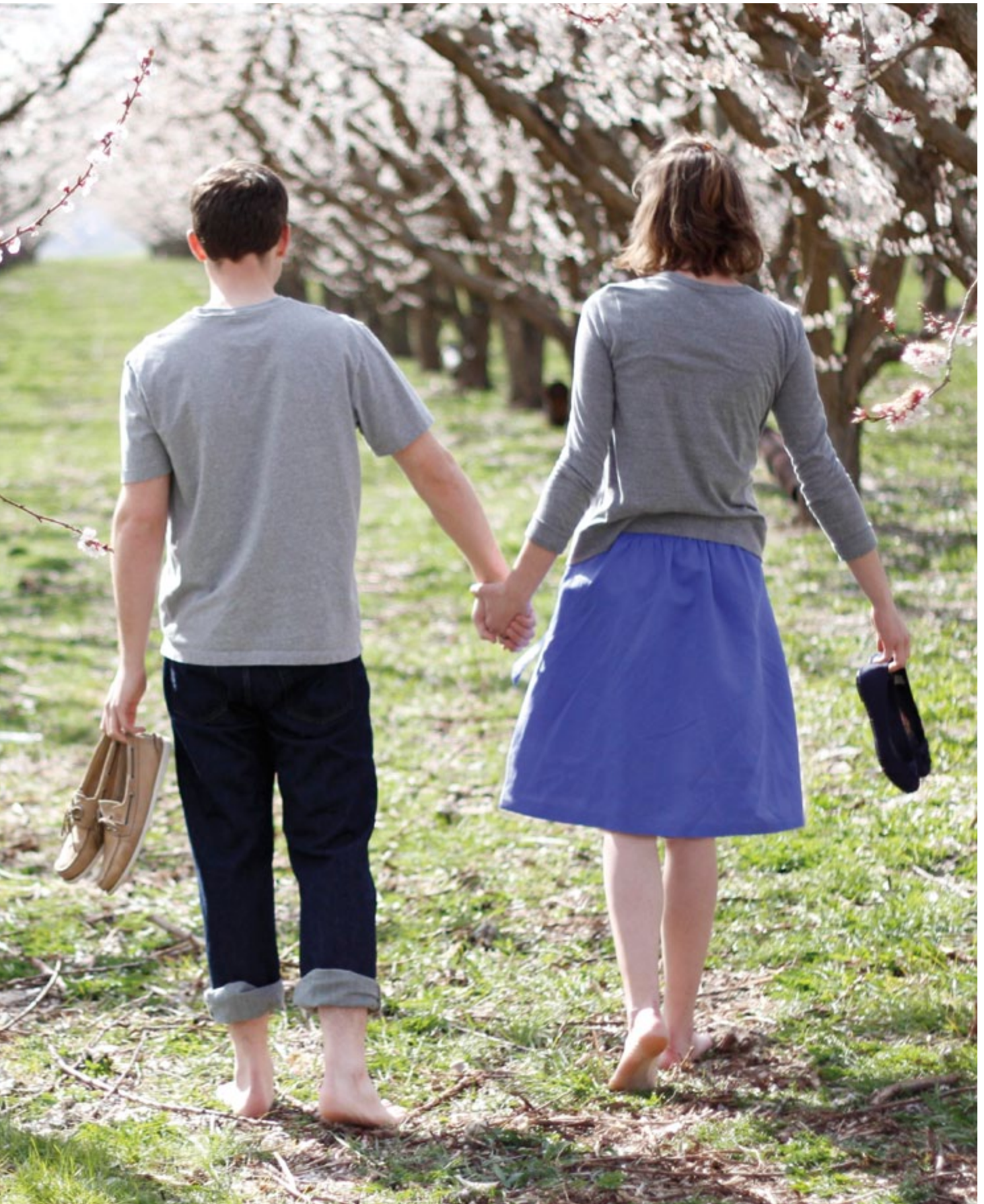
Didn't you love her? This question should have been his first. My answer would have been yes; that is why I made the list. I really did love her, and I *desired* more than anything for

her to be happy. The list was more about seeing if I could make her happy than it was about whether or not I loved her.

Didn't you have fun together? Again, my answer would have been yes; that is why I made the list. It was a way to see if my *hope* that she would always have fun with me could become reality.

Didn't you think she was the right one? Perhaps this is the most intriguing question of all. I would have answered yes; I did *believe* she was "the one," but I wanted to make sure my belief would inspire action on my part to make things work.

I don't think I fully realized at the time the impact my mission president's teachings on faith and its components of desire, belief, and hope were having on my courtship. With a clearer view from the passage of time, I am very grateful to President F. Ray Hawkins for his influence on me. I still have the notes I took as a 20-year-old missionary as my young



mission president opened the scriptures and explained the elements of faith that would later figure into making the most important decision of my life.

Alma's Teachings on Faith

Among the things President Hawkins shared about faith were Alma's teachings to the poor among the Zoramites. Alma identified the need to have a particle of faith, which he described as *desire* (see Alma 32:27). A desire for something to happen is a powerful influence for us to take the necessary steps to increase our faith.

A second particle of faith is what Alma taught comes from desire: *belief*. He instructed the Zoramites to let their desire work in them until they believed in a manner that they could give place for his words in their hearts (see verse 27). This combination of desire and belief begins to swell in our hearts, and we recognize it as good. It begins to enlarge our souls and enlighten our understanding. It begins to be delicious. (See verse 28.)

Hope is another important particle of faith. Alma told the humble Zoramites that faith was not a perfect knowledge of things. It was a "*hope* for things which are not seen, which are true" (Alma 32:21; emphasis added). Mormon likewise taught that hope is a necessary particle of faith when he said to Moroni, "How is it that ye can attain unto faith, save ye shall have

hope?" (Moroni 7:40). Hope can be described as the ability to see something better in the future.¹ My list was my way of looking into the future with an eye of faith and, like Abraham, determining that "there was greater happiness and peace" (Abraham 1:2) for me in being married to my wife.

Having the *desire* particle of faith, I needed *belief* and *hope* to complete my faith, and I needed to take action by asking Rosalie to marry me. The list—my manifestation of desire, belief, and hope—was important in giving me the courage to take the action necessary to complete my faith. James taught that faith without works is dead (see James 2:17). No amount of desire, belief, or hope would have helped me find the greater happiness and peace I have found in marriage if those particles hadn't led me to ask the big question. (Sadly, the first time I proposed, Rosalie's answer was no, but that is a story for another time. In such circumstances—when things don't go according to our plan or timing—faith still plays an integral role in our lives.) It took some perseverance and patience for both of us, and we did later marry on a snowy day in December 1982.

Faith is important in all we do, including dating and courting. Desire, belief, and hope that there is indeed greater happiness and peace waiting for us should incite us to action to develop relationships that lead to marriage. Do you *desire* to follow the plan of happiness? Do you *believe*



that following the plan will lead to greater happiness and peace? (Believe me when I tell you that following the plan and marrying in the temple does lead to greater happiness and peace.) Do you hope for a happy marriage? Does your hope allow you to see yourself in a better place in the future? If your answers to these questions are yes, then you must complete your faith by taking action. Ask someone on a date! Accept an invitation to go on a date! Put yourself in situations that could lead to meeting other like-minded young adults. In short, pursue a course that will lead to greater happiness and peace.

Joseph Smith's Example of Faith

Let's look at Joseph Smith as an example of faith and of demonstrating the particles of desire, belief, and hope.



Joseph wanted to find the true Church of Jesus Christ. His desire was so strong that it led him to the scriptures, where he read, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God” (James 1:5). He thought about this scripture. He *desired* to have wisdom, and he *believed* that he would receive it if he asked God. He did the only logical thing: he prayed and asked God. Now think about this for a minute. Joseph had the desire to know the truth. He believed the words of James. He hoped for an answer. But if he had stopped there, we would not be here today. Exercising faith meant he had to enter the grove and pray. I believe that when Joseph went into the grove to pray, he expected to walk out with an answer. He might not have expected to see Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, but he did

expect an answer. What a great example of faith! He had desire, he believed, he hoped, and he took action.

The faith of a 14-year-old boy changed the world. Because of Joseph’s prayer in the Sacred Grove, the heavens were opened and God spoke again to His children through a prophet.

One of Your Opportunities to Demonstrate Faith

The Lord continues to speak through His prophet today. Just over a year and a half ago, President Thomas S. Monson said:

“There is a point at which it’s time to think seriously about marriage and to seek a companion with whom you want to spend eternity. If you choose wisely and if you are committed to the success of your marriage, there is

nothing in this life which will bring you greater happiness.

“When you marry, . . . you will wish to marry in the house of the Lord. For you who hold the priesthood, there should be no other option. Be careful lest you destroy your eligibility to be so married. You can keep your courtship within proper bounds while still having a wonderful time.”²

Your desire, belief, and hope may not be manifested in the form of a list, as they were for me, but however you demonstrate these qualities, they will help you complete your faith by following the Lord’s prophet to seek a companion with whom you can find greater happiness. Your desire, belief, and hope will also help you choose wisely.

The blessings of choosing to pursue and nurture eternal marriage will lead us to experience the fruits of the gospel, which Alma described as “most precious, . . . sweet above all that is sweet, and . . . pure above all that is pure.” He continued, “Ye shall feast upon [these fruits] even until ye are filled, that ye hunger not, neither shall ye thirst” (Alma 32:42). Instead of fearing the future, exercise the faith that will allow you to lay claim to the promises of the Lord. ■

NOTES

1. See Dennis F. Rasmussen, “What Faith Is,” in Larry E. Dahl and Charles D. Tate Jr., eds., *The Lectures on Faith in Historical Perspective* (1990), 164.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “Priesthood Power,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 67–68.



GOD
WILL
POUR
OUT
A
BLESSING

Name withheld

When I was a little girl, my parents taught me about tithing. During my childhood and much of my adult life, I did not think a lot about tithing and its importance, even though I paid it consistently. Not until after the breakup of my 25-year marriage and an onslaught of trials that encompassed every aspect of my life did I understand what the Lord meant when He said, “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (Malachi 3:10).

In December 2001, just as I was beginning to feel grounded after my devastating divorce, I was diagnosed with stage IV non-Hodgkin lymphoma. This cancer of the lymph system affects the bone marrow and blood. The

doctors said I had just six months to live unless I underwent chemotherapy, radiation, and a bone marrow transplant. This came as a great shock, but I received inspiring and comforting priesthood blessings that helped me decide to undergo the medical treatments.

Because of the intensity of these treatments, I was often absent from work. When my own leave and vacation time ran out, my co-workers compassionately donated theirs. Despite these absences, the company kept me on its payroll at full salary and continued to do so until I was out of the hospital.

Ultimately, I had to leave my job so I could recover. This created a terrible financial hardship. However, I determined to pay tithing on my small monthly disability check. I also decided to pay as generous a fast offering as I could and make a small monthly contribution to each of the other categories on the tithes and offerings slip. I decided to leave the rest of my financial worries in God’s hands.

I determined to pay tithing on my small monthly disability check. I would leave the rest in God’s hands.



ANSWERING QUESTIONS

Why pay tithing?

The principle of tithing, or voluntarily giving one-tenth of our income to God's work, has been known since Old Testament times. Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek (see Genesis 14:18–20).

"Tithing is not so much a matter of dollars as it is a matter of faith," said President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008). "It becomes a privilege and an opportunity, and not a burden."¹ As we follow the word of God and pay our tithes and offerings, the Lord will open the windows of heaven and pour down blessings that there will not be room enough to receive them (see Malachi 3:8–10).

NOTE

1. "Messages of Inspiration from President Hinckley," *Church News*, Dec. 6, 1997, 2.

Proving the Lord

Blessings came, and the windows of heaven were truly opened to me. My immediate family and my large extended family rallied around me and offered many forms of help, including financial assistance. I received get-well cards from friends, ward and community members, and anonymous senders, and I often found gifts of money tucked inside.

When my health and strength were restored, I returned to work as a part-time English tutor at a local community college. This led to a better-paying position at the high school where I had formerly taught. Once again I had full-time employment and benefits. I thanked Heavenly Father for meeting these financial and emotional needs.

From 2001 to 2007, I experienced more tests of faith regarding my health and family finances. Through it all, I continued to pay my tithing. Knowing I was obedient to this principle, I approached the Lord with confidence to ask for His blessings. I felt His calming Spirit. He gave me strength to endure under intense pressures.

In 2006, the cancer returned. My only chance for survival was to undergo another transplant.

Windows of Heaven

I had much to live for. I had full-time care of a grandchild, and my grown children needed me even more since their father had recently died. I did not know if I could withstand another round of chemotherapy, radiation, and transplantation while meeting my family's financial needs. I prayed for the Lord's help and to know His will. I received priesthood

blessings that comforted me and promised a recovery that would allow continued life.

Having faith in this guidance, I proceeded with the transplant. Though it was difficult, I was blessed with minimal side effects. At the end of 2007, I met with my bishop for tithing settlement. When I saw my statement, I was tearful. I realized I had received financial gifts from others that equaled nearly one-third more than my income. I attributed this to my Heavenly Father and to donations from those who cared enough to share my burdens.

Today ongoing medical care allows me to enjoy good health. I continue to receive love and support from my family, friends, ward, and community. I see the Lord's hand in the lives of my children and grandchildren.

Throughout these years, the Comforter has given me peace of mind and heart. The kindness of a loving Father in Heaven and the tender mercies of the Savior, working through the hands and sacrifices of others, frequently cause me to "stand all amazed at the love Jesus offers me."¹ I know that all will be well according to God's will for me.

I do not completely comprehend these miracles in my life, but I *do* recognize the fulfillment of the Lord's promise that paying tithes allows Him to "open . . . the windows of heaven, and pour . . . out a blessing" as it promises in Malachi. I do not know what is in store for me, but I *do* know that obeying God-given principles brings promised blessings. I am confident these blessings will come as I continue to pay my tithes and offerings. ■

NOTE

1. "I Stand All Amazed," *Hymns*, no. 193.

On Gratitude

By Sharon Nauta Steele

*In a certain village, on a certain day,
ten lepers stood far off
and lifted up their voices unto Christ:
“Have mercy on us, Master, please,
take our infirmities away.”*

*And it was done. According to the grace
of the Savior, Father’s Son,
they showed themselves unto the priest
and were cleansed.*

*And one of them, on finding he was whole,
paused moments on a grassy knoll,
turned his back
upon the path he would have trod,
and fell upon his face in praise of God.*

*But of the other nine, no word of thanks
escaped their tongues;
no hymns of praise were sung.
Too busy in their haste
to get on with their lives—
to publish joyous tidings
to their children and their wives—
perhaps without intending to be rude,
they overlooked the sacrament of thanks
and lost the sacred blessing bought
by showing gratitude.*

*Oh, that I might
from this parable be taught
and practice well the part
of living with an ever-grateful heart.*

Sharon Nauta Steele lives in Utah, USA.



Prayer

FOR A PATIENT WITH AIDS

I wanted to say the words that would give him the most comfort, and I knew the Spirit would give him the comfort he needed.

By Connie Rachel Eisert

Working as a nurse in the operating room of a trauma hospital, I learned to expect anything—from scheduled surgery patients who are bathed and well groomed to trauma surgery patients who arrive at the hospital in any condition. This particular night was no different from others.

As I was getting my next assignment, I saw a trauma patient lying on an emergency room gurney in the hall. As I walked to my assigned room, I kept thinking of the patient waiting for surgery. He was probably in his early 30s. He lay there shivering. Instead of preparing for the next surgery, I went and got a warm blanket. If nothing else, he would be warm while waiting.

With a friendly voice and a tone of reassurance, I told him my name and offered the blanket. He immediately accepted. As I covered him, I looked at him more closely. He was very thin, as though he had not eaten for

days. I remembered someone saying earlier that he had AIDS.

His left eye had a patch of white gauze covering it in preparation for surgery. This man's skin was quite dirty and his hair was a tangled mass of dirty blond. He asked for a tissue. I turned, got several, and handed them to him. As I looked at his anguished face, I noticed he kept his right eye closed. A tear slowly ran down his cheek and fell to the pillowcase below, leaving a trail of moistened dirt on his face. He took the tissues and quickly wiped his right eye before another tear marred the sheets.

I stood there feeling helpless for him. A warm blanket and a few tissues seemed so inadequate. A look of fear engulfed his face. Gently, I asked him if he had family waiting for him after surgery. His reply was a quiet "no," spoken between short gasps.

I gently took his right hand in mine and asked him if he would like me to say a prayer. He slowly nodded his head. I remember



how tight his grip became as I spoke the words. He was stronger than I had expected. In the past I had offered prayers for patients without difficulty, yet this time I felt the Spirit more strongly than during those other prayers. Tears ran down my cheeks, and a swelling in my throat made it more difficult to speak. I tried to keep my voice calm and steady, pausing between words. I wanted to say the words that would give him the most comfort, and I knew the Spirit would give him the comfort he needed. As I closed the prayer I quickly wiped my tears dry so he would not see and wonder if his condition was worse than he had been told.

Still holding his hand, I looked into his face. His breathing slowed, but his silent tears continued to fall freely. He had opened his right eye, and there was a distant look in it. It was as though he was seeing something that no one else could see. I smiled and held his hand



PRAYING FOR OTHERS

"Petitioning Heavenly Father for the blessings

we desire in our personal lives is good and proper. However, praying earnestly for others, both those whom we love and those who despitefully use us, is also an important element of meaningful prayer. . . . Praying for others with all of the energy of our souls increases our capacity to hear and to heed the voice of the Lord."

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Pray Always," *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 43.

tightly to give him reassurance. I told him that everything would be OK and that he would do fine—simple words that I could only hope would comfort him.

As I went to free my hand from his, his grip became stronger. Calling me by name, he thanked me for saying the prayer. I said it was my pleasure and that his surgery would go well—though in my mind, the words of my charge nurse kept repeating, "He will probably be blind in the injured eye." I touched him gently on the shoulder as I started to leave.

Later that night I learned he was already blind in the right eye; now he was totally blind. There was nothing surgery could do. I now understood his distant look.

Looking back, I can understand why the prayer was comforting to him. I am thankful I listened to the Spirit, which

guided me to comfort another through prayer. ■

Connie Rachel Eisert lives in California, USA.



Embracing Ethan,

ACCEPTING AUTISM

We were used to Ethan's behavior—but if he passed the sacrament, how would the ward react?

By Jeff Kornegay

Ethan walked through the door at the rear of the chapel, turned up the aisle, and made the long walk to the front. As he raised his arm, his fingers flicked quickly, tickling the air in a wave to the bishopric on the stand. Ethan's dress pants were buckled awkwardly around his thin waist, his belt holding them tight against his body, his shoes tied in a tangle of knots. Though his pants were the right length, a compulsive need kept them pulled snug, providing a welcoming feeling of security.

Ethan has autism, a complex developmental disability that can cause problems with social interaction and communication. He is considered high-functioning, which for him means that he has good motor skills and can speak.

My wife, Evie, and I have sometimes worried about Ethan's interactions at church. One of our greatest fears is his offending people or interfering with their ability to worship. A major step in the process of working through that fear occurred one evening when our bishop came to visit our home to discuss the decision to ordain Ethan a deacon.

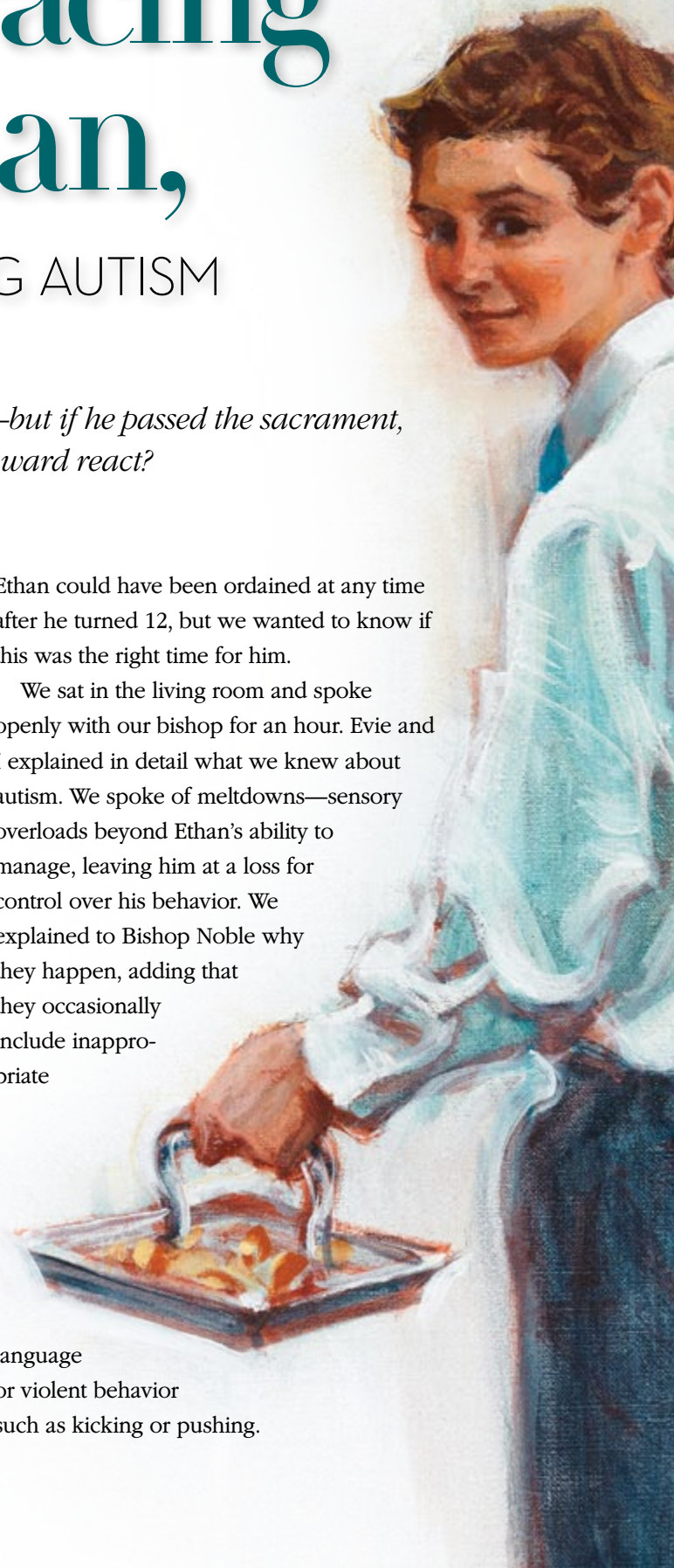
The Decision

Just like the decision about Ethan's baptism, deciding to ordain him was a process—one we didn't take lightly. Bishop Noble's visit was well before Ethan's 12th birthday so that the decision would not be haphazard or rushed.

Ethan could have been ordained at any time after he turned 12, but we wanted to know if this was the right time for him.

We sat in the living room and spoke openly with our bishop for an hour. Evie and I explained in detail what we knew about autism. We spoke of meltdowns—sensory overloads beyond Ethan's ability to manage, leaving him at a loss for control over his behavior. We explained to Bishop Noble why they happen, adding that they occasionally include inappropriate

language
or violent behavior
such as kicking or pushing.



CHURCH GUIDELINES REGARDING MEMBERS WITH DISABILITIES

“When considering whether to perform ordinances for a person who has an intellectual disability, priesthood leaders follow the guidelines in *Handbook 1*, 16.1.8.

“Many members with disabilities can serve in nearly any Church assignment. Priesthood and auxiliary leaders prayerfully consider the abilities and desires of each person and then provide appropriate opportunities to serve. Leaders also counsel with the person’s family and consider the effects of a Church calling on the person and his or her family or caregiver. . . .

“Leaders and teachers should include members with disabilities in meetings, classes, and activities as fully as possible. Lessons, talks, and teaching methods should be adapted to meet each person’s needs” (*Handbook 2: Administering the Church* [2010], 21.1.26).

The three of us consulted the *Church Handbook of Instructions* as we each prayed silently for direction. Evie and I told the bishop that we believed Ethan would live in our home indefinitely—his limited comprehension, without drastic improvement, would make serving a mission, getting married, or holding a job unlikely.

Finally, Bishop Noble received inspiration that was right for this specific family and this specific ward. He said, “I think we should ordain Ethan—not just for him, but for the ward. I think it would be a great thing for the ward to be able to see him passing the sacrament. In fact, I hope he *does* have a meltdown while passing the sacrament.”

Evie openly gasped.

“Are you kidding me?” I thought. Ethan’s having a meltdown while passing the sacrament was one of our biggest fears.

The bishop continued, “It would be a blessing for the members to witness firsthand Ethan’s special needs because it would help them realize what matters most, and it could create a greater bond between Ethan and the ward members as he served them.”

Through this experience, members of our ward and visitors alike would see him exactly as he is: his personality, his quirks, his limitations, his abilities, and most of all, his innocence. The bishop hoped that members would recognize the purity of Ethan’s service and learn that the value and the message of the sacrament could not be diminished.

After the bishop spoke, we sat in silence for a moment. A simple feeling of peace settled over my wife and me, and we knew it was the right choice for our specific situation. We felt right about the decision to ordain Ethan a deacon.*

Service

Ethan was ordained a deacon and began fulfilling his priesthood responsibility of passing the sacrament. As the weeks and months have passed, our ward members have had their share of interesting experiences with him.

During the sacrament, he has wandered off while passing the trays to give a hug to a dear friend several rows away, patted kids on the head, and waved to people he recognized across the chapel. He has been frustrated when a small child didn’t put the water cup back in the tray, and he has marched like a soldier up and down the aisles. And yes, he even had a meltdown.

Evie and I have done a lot of apologizing for our son’s actions, but the members’ reactions are almost always the same. They express their love of having Ethan in the ward and then share a heartfelt story about a positive interaction they have had with him.

Acceptance and Love

Members of the ward, particularly his priesthood quorum, have come to know Ethan better and have become his friends. One deacon in particular, Garrett, has been a good friend to Ethan, walking with him to Sunday School, teaming with him as they empty trash cans and pick up debris after church, and helping him in other ways.

Other members of the ward have followed Garrett’s quiet example of acceptance. Fellow quorum members plan activities that are specific to Ethan’s needs, including movie nights with him at our home, where they watch his favorite movie in the company of every stuffed animal he owns. Though there was some initial awkwardness, the young men are now accustomed to receiving hugs,

holding a hand, or responding with kindness when Ethan has a meltdown.

Lessons Learned

For my wife and me, there is still a lingering fear that something will happen that will interfere with another member's ability to worship. However, as we continue to trust in the answer we received about Ethan's ordination, we see members young and old interact with Ethan as he serves in his way, just as the bishop said would happen.

Ethan's honesty, innocence, and kindness have touched many members' hearts. They see that Ethan lives a life of love. There is nothing in his actions that is judgmental; he sees everybody equally, and he renders help without hesitation. As other members observe these qualities, they find themselves contemplating their own willingness to be as open, accepting, dedicated, and loving.

Interacting with Ethan has offered ward members a glimpse of what Bishop Noble described as the things that matter most. ■

Jeff Kornegay lives in Arizona, USA.

One deacon in particular, Garrett, has been a good friend to Ethan. Others have followed Garrett's example of acceptance.

INCLUDING MEMBERS WITH DISABILITIES

Sometimes it can be difficult to know how to reach out to people with disabilities; many people worry about saying or doing the wrong thing. Here are a few ideas for reaching out to members with disabilities:

- Relax. When in doubt of what to say or do, simply ask the person with a disability or a family member.
 - Remember that a disability does not define who a person is. Every person with a disability is a person first. We are all children of God.
 - Treat the person with respect and dignity, the same way you would treat someone his or her age without a disability.
 - Take time to get to know the person.
 - If you are a teacher of a class or the leader of a program, ask the individual or a member of his or her family what you can do to help him or her feel included.
 - Don't be afraid to talk to the person with a disability. Start by saying hello and asking how he or she is doing.
- Don't be afraid to engage in conversation, regardless of the individual's ability to respond.

** The same decision is not made for all members with disabilities. Each individual and situation is different. When making these decisions, prayerfully talk to your bishop and consult Handbook 1 and Handbook 2.*



EXERCISE: THE MOM PRESCRIPTION

By Jane McBride Choate

As a mother of five children, I rarely took time for myself. Physical fitness fell far down on my to-do list. After all, I reasoned, wasn't I getting enough exercise chasing active toddlers through the house?

As the children grew, I noticed that my energy lagged. I was often physically and emotionally exhausted. So when several friends started walking together in the morning, I asked if I could join them. With their encouragement, I began rising early and walking for 45 minutes before the rest of my family awoke. The exhilaration of moving and knowing I was doing something positive for myself showed up in the rest of my life. I had more energy, more patience, and a new respect for myself and my needs.

I recognize that early-morning walking is not the answer for many women. Each must find her own road to physical fitness. Following are a few ideas for finding the time and the commitment to make exercise a part of your life:

- Before you begin any exercise program, have a physical checkup and discuss your goals with your doctor.
- Decide that you are important and need to take care of yourself.
- If your time is limited (and whose isn't?), prayerfully review your activities and determine what you can let go to make time for physical activity.
- Enlist your family's support. Ask for help with housework

and other chores you typically do yourself so that you can take time for exercise. Explain that when you take time for yourself, you will have more energy to take care of others.

- Inquire at a community center or a local college about physical fitness classes, frequently offered at a low cost.
- Poll your friends to see if they would like to form a walking or aerobics group with you.
- If circumstances prevent you from taking time to exercise away from home, look for opportunities to squeeze in short bursts of activity. Put your toddler in the stroller and walk around your neighborhood. Take advantage of exercise videos (sometimes available at libraries) and work out in front of the television. Involve your children. Chances are they'll be enthusiastic about "playing" with Mommy.
- Invest in the proper equipment. Many activities require only a good pair of walking shoes.
- Experiment with different activities. Alternating exercises is good for different parts of your body and prevents boredom.
- Have fun and find what you enjoy. Whether you take a dance class, jump rope with your children, or play tennis with friends, the important thing is that you choose something that you can maintain.

Remember: you need to take care of yourself in order to take care of your family. ■

Jane McBride Choate lives in Colorado, USA.



OUR FAMILY'S IRON ROD



Our family wanted a place to hang art and photographs. One evening after reading about Lehi's dream (see 1 Nephi 8), we decided to make a space by hanging our own "iron rod." I fastened a curtain rod to a prominent wall in our home, and a friend helped me put "Hold to the Rod" in vinyl lettering above

the rod. Then we had a family home evening to discuss the importance of our family's iron rod. We decided to hang items that would help us stand firm and choose the right. Our four-year-old wanted to hang pictures of her grandparents, and our 11-year-old hung the Articles of Faith she was memorizing. We have since used

our rod to hang pictures of General Authorities before general conference, visual aids used for family home evening, gospel art pictures, and more. At the center of our family's iron rod remains a picture of Christ to remind us whom we are striving to follow. ■

Jennifer Crooks, Michigan, USA

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN LUKE

HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

"Pickles, Turnips, and Testimony: Inspiration from the Life and Teachings of Lorenzo Snow," page 22: Discuss as a family what you think President Snow meant when he said that in order to be converted we should

be "saturated with the right spirit" (page 23). You might want to share some of his conversion experiences in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Lorenzo Snow* (see pages 1, 3, 59, and 61–62) and then take turns sharing your testimonies.

discussing the section on "Tithes and Offerings" from the *For the Strength of Youth* booklet. Consider challenging your children to begin paying tithing and fast offerings if they aren't already.

GOD
WILL
POUR
OUT
A
BLESSING

What's in a Blessing? We know that a blessing gets its power from the words of the one who blesses and the faith of the one who is blessed. The words of the one who blesses are important, but the faith of the one who is blessed is equally important. The words of the one who blesses are important, but the faith of the one who is blessed is equally important. The words of the one who blesses are important, but the faith of the one who is blessed is equally important.

"God Will Pour Out a Blessing," page 58: You may wish to share the story of how this sister had the faith to pay her tithing. Consider reading and

"Embracing Ethan, Accepting Autism," page 64: Share the story of how Ethan's ward welcomed his priesthood service and discuss ways you can relate to people with special needs. Consider the people in your ward, school, and community who might benefit from your help and set goals to reach out to them.

SHARING MY LIGHT

It was an unusual day for Southern California, USA, with thunder, lightning, pouring rain, and oppressive heat. I looked forward to relaxing and watching a movie in my air-conditioned home. But just as I sat down, I felt that I should call my friend Sherrill.

When I called, I learned that she had been without power since that morning. She was concerned that her frozen food would thaw and her milk

would spoil, so we moved her food to my refrigerator.

The next evening Sherrill and I stood in front of her home. Every house on her side of the road was in total darkness, while those across the street had power. One house in particular caught my attention. Directly across the street, the home blazed with light as people sat on the porch talking, laughing, and enjoying themselves.

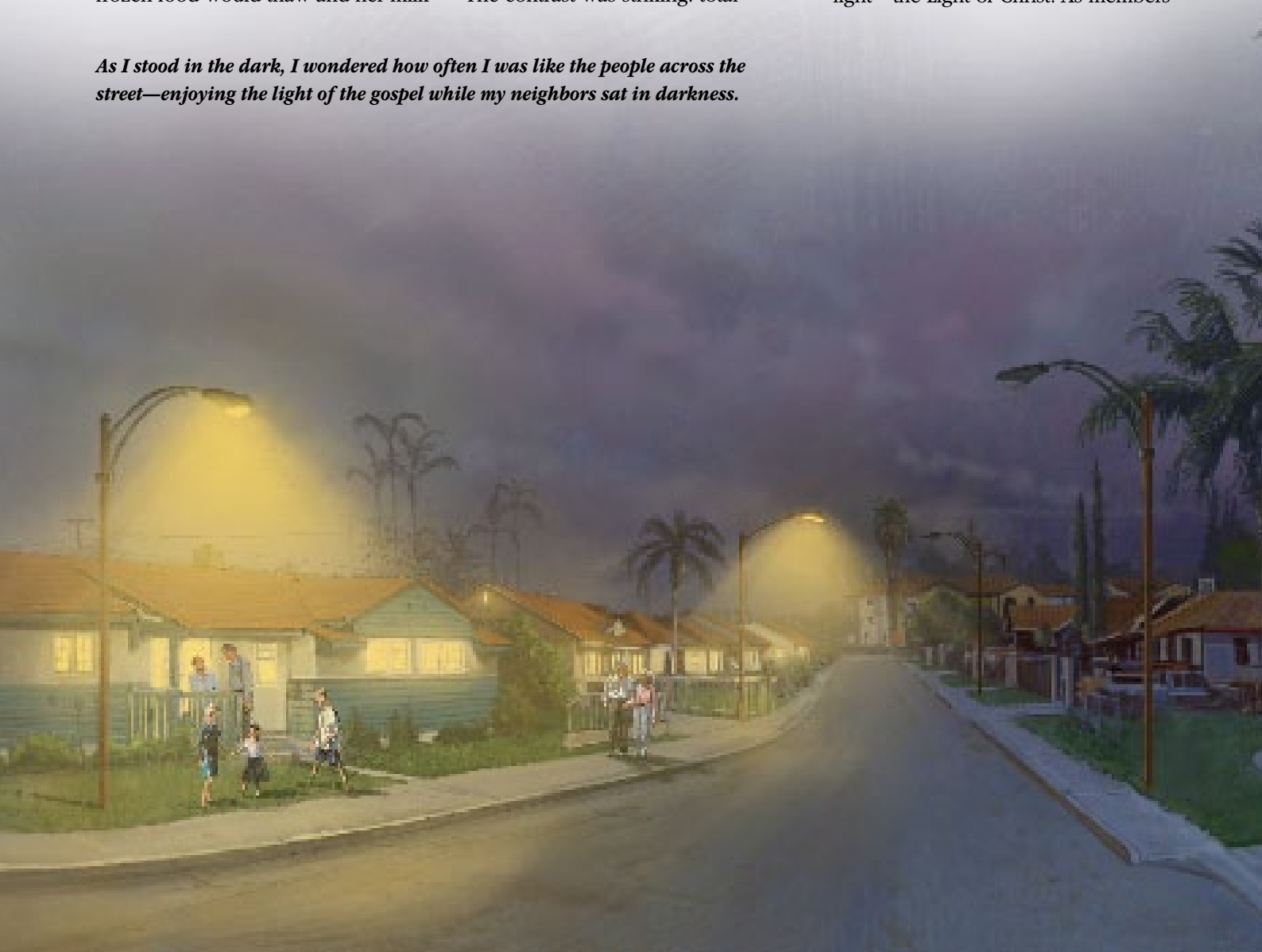
In the days that followed, I could not get that scene out of my mind. The contrast was striking: total

darkness on one side of the street and bright lights on the other; people sitting in darkness while their neighbors were enjoying light.

The image made me wonder how often I was like those people across the street—enjoying the light of the gospel while others sat in darkness. I imagined myself sitting on my porch with a few friends from church, enjoying the light of the gospel without sharing it with others.

Everyone in the world is born with light—the Light of Christ. As members

As I stood in the dark, I wondered how often I was like the people across the street—enjoying the light of the gospel while my neighbors sat in darkness.



of the Church, we have the privilege of adding to that light by sharing the gospel. The Savior taught:

“Behold, do men light a candle and put it under a bushel? Nay, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light to all that are in the house;

“Therefore let your light so shine before this people, that they may see your good works and glorify your

Father who is in heaven”

(3 Nephi 12:15–16).

As members of the Church, we have the responsibility to let our testimonies of Christ shine for all to see—especially for those in spiritual darkness. After this experience, I determined to be the kind of person Heavenly Father can trust to come away from the comfort of my porch and carry the light of the gospel to my neighbors who are in darkness. ■

Dolores Sobieski, California, USA

MY FIRST PRAYER ABOUT THE FIRST VISION

When I decided to get baptized, it was because some of my troubles were resolved while I was taking the discussions. It wasn't because I had prayed and received a testimony that the Book of Mormon was true or that Joseph Smith saw Heavenly Father and his Son, Jesus Christ. The missionaries had invited me to pray about these things, but I never did. I simply believed what the missionaries had taught me.

Three years after my baptism, a sister stood at the chapel podium and shared her testimony of the Book of Mormon and Joseph Smith. She asked everyone to ponder this question: “Have we truly prayed about the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon and about the experience Joseph Smith had?” This question hit me hard, and I thought to myself, “I

have never prayed about these things, but I should and I will.”

I was motivated to take action because my faith at the time was weak and my testimony of the scriptures was shallow. That night I prayed to my Father about Joseph Smith and the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon.

I didn't feel anything the first time I prayed, nor the second time. Not to be discouraged, I opened the scriptures to Joseph Smith—History 1:14–17, where it describes how Joseph went to the grove to have a personal prayer:

“I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me.

“It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered. . . . When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages.”

As I read the words, I started shaking as if an electric current had gone through my whole body. Instantly I knew that Joseph Smith had indeed seen Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ. I knew that we had the Book of Mormon because God had it translated through His prophet.

I'm grateful that Heavenly Father granted me this witness of the truthfulness of the First Vision. I realized that if the gospel had not been restored, I would not have known my Redeemer. I know the fulness of the gospel is true, and I know I will receive God's promises if I endure faithfully to the end. ■

Jing-juan Chen, Taiwan



CAN I HAVE A BLESSING?

Many years ago I accompanied a brother I home taught, Brother Schaaf, to the hospital to give his wife a priesthood blessing before her surgery. Sister Schaaf shared her hospital room with a woman named Annie Leddar, a long-term patient with terminal cancer who was not expected to live much longer.

I reached out to pull the dividing curtain between the two hospital beds before beginning the blessing, but I stopped. Not wanting to exclude Annie, I explained what we were about to do and asked if she would

like to witness the blessing. She said she would like to watch. Her husband, who had passed away, had been a minister in another faith, and she was interested in what we believed. Brother Schaaf and I proceeded with the blessing while Annie listened.

A few days later, before Sister Schaaf went home from the hospital, Annie asked if she could receive a priesthood blessing as well. Brother Schaaf and I gladly returned to the hospital to give her a blessing. Annie was not cured of her cancer, but her health greatly improved.

She was interested in learning more about the gospel, so I asked the missionaries to stop by the hospital to teach her. She listened to the gospel message with an open heart and chose to be baptized. Every week after her baptism we came to the hospital to take Annie to church in her wheelchair.

Because Annie was ill, it was difficult for her to get around, but she soon found her own way to serve the Lord. We brought her a typewriter, and she spent hours every day in the hospital doing family history work. Annie lived three years longer than expected and prepared hundreds of family names for the temple before she passed away.

After Annie's death, Sister Schaaf did proxy temple work for many of Annie's female ancestors.

As far as I know, Annie was the only member of her family to join the Church. Her living family was never enthusiastic about her involvement with the Church, but I am sure many of her deceased family members were grateful for the vicarious work that was done for them.

We never know if people we meet are ready to receive the gospel. I am grateful that I was able to see a seed—planted in Annie's heart after she witnessed a priesthood blessing—flourish and bless hundreds of Heavenly Father's children. ■

Art Crater, New York, USA

I reached out to pull the dividing curtain between the two hospital beds before beginning the blessing, but then I stopped, not wanting to exclude Annie.



MY BIRTHDAY WISH

When I accepted the gospel at age 18, I recognized that I had tasted the sweetest fruit above all. I felt great joy, but I thought about the members of my family, who were lost and wandering. I felt great sorrow from being the only member of the Church in my family, but I didn't know how to open others' eyes and ears to the truth.

I attempted in many ways to convince my family to listen to the missionaries. But the more I tried, the more hesitant they became.

I became discouraged, and so I thought about not going to church anymore. But as I prayed, a scripture came to my mind: "After this should [you] deny me, it would have been better for you that ye had not known me" (2 Nephi 31:14). I prayed harder, read the scriptures, attended my Church meetings, and focused on the blessings in my life. As a result, the pain began to vanish.

As my birthday approached, I felt inspired to have a birthday party at my house and to invite all of my Church friends, including the full-time missionaries. I wanted my family to have closer interaction with members of the Church, who seem to me to be the happiest people in the world. For me, the party felt just like family home evening.

After that day, things changed. The missionaries were welcome in



As my birthday approached, I felt inspired to have a birthday party at my house and to invite all of my Church friends, including the full-time missionaries.

our house and became great friends with my family. One day my father announced that he wanted all of our family to listen to the missionaries and go to church. I was shocked.

Three years after my baptism, my family was all baptized. At the baptismal service, my mother bore her testimony, and my father thanked the missionaries. Ward members were amazed at their conversion.

How did it happen? All of the

tears I shed and the goals I set played a part. But most of all, the heart of my father was softened by the love and friendship of the missionaries and ward members. All of the members were missionaries because of their examples of living the gospel of Jesus Christ. I am grateful for them and for Heavenly Father's plan, which allows families to be together forever. ■

Angelica Carbonell Digal, Philippines

NEWS OF THE CHURCH

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

Church Encourages Members Worldwide to Serve Local Communities

By Heather Whittle Wrigley

Church News and Events

For the last year the Welfare Department of the Church has placed a renewed emphasis on members around the world giving aid in their own communities.

The Humanitarian Service section of LDS.org suggests, “What needs or challenges do you see or hear about? . . . If you identify a need in your community but cannot find an established program that addresses this need, take the initiative to find a solution” (on LDS.org, click on **Resources, Welfare, Humanitarian Service**).

Lynn Samsel, director of emergency response for the Church, pointed out some benefits of humanitarian response at the local level: “It’s faster, we have fewer issues with customs, it allows the Church to purchase local products the members in the area are familiar with, it supports the local economy, and it helps build relationships.”

Supplying Aid Efficiently

Each year the Humanitarian Center of the Church ships, on average, eight million pounds of shoes and clothing, 500,000 hygiene and

school kits, and 20,000 quilts to more than 50 countries. But acquiring supplies in one part of the world and shipping them to another is an expensive and time-consuming process. When members see a need for quilts or clothing or other supplies in their area and can supply those needs locally, the response is much faster.

In 2002 Boston, Massachusetts, USA, resident Jennifer Ashley was looking for a way to serve when she discovered that in her state one in 12 households struggles with putting food on the table daily, and the local food pantries were in need of canned goods and other basic supplies.

She came up with the idea to organize a 5K race that required canned food donations as the entry fee. Today, “Feed the Need” raises nonperishable food items for food pantries throughout the state by organizing several races each year.

“One of the benefits is that we know we are feeding our neighbors,” Sister Ashley said. “In my mind, when there’s a need, it’s really nice for people to receive it right away.”

Members of all ages and abilities can find ways to serve locally. In some instances individual members may initiate their own service projects. In other cases the branch, ward, or stake can organize opportunities for members and others to serve.

In situations that require more involved service projects, area welfare managers often work with the area office to identify needs, request Church humanitarian funds, and organize service efforts.

Local Needs, Local Solutions

Local solutions, explained Gustavo Estrada of the Welfare Department, often meet needs better than solutions thought up hundreds of miles away.

Working in the St. George, Utah, USA, Deseret Industries’ humanitarian service room in February 2012, Church-service missionaries Lamont and Celia Royer had a problem. People were donating items for which there was no immediate need. At one point they were storing nearly 600 knit hats.

When the service room closed in April, the Royers were asked to lead

the way in first identifying what the local needs were and then finding ways to serve.

Today, St. George's stake presidents and stake Relief Society presidents each receive the monthly "Community Service Newsletter" the Royers put together. It lists volunteer opportunities, including "wish lists" that highlight certain organizations' specific needs.

One facility in the area had a list of needs they thought would take a few years to complete because of their lack of funds. In the six weeks after their wish list was published in the newsletter, five young men who were looking for a way to fulfill their Eagle Scout requirements completed all the work.

"It's about awareness," Sister Royer said. "People want to serve; they just need a starting place."

Building Community and Testimony

"Too often we notice the needs around us, hoping that someone from far away will magically appear to meet those needs," President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, said during October 2011 general conference. "When we do this, we deprive our neighbor of the service we could render, and we deprive ourselves of the opportunity to serve" ("Providing in



The Church is encouraging members to find opportunities to serve in their own communities, as these members in Chile did in 2010 when they gathered materials and packaged thousands of hygiene kits following a massive earthquake that devastated their country.

the Lord's Way," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 54).

In 2011, 300 members in Kenya spent 1,800 hours distributing tens of thousands of flyers and posters offering information about immunizations and the availability of vaccines.

Another project in 2012 saw LDS volunteers in Ghana send 1.5 million text messages to fellow citizens notifying them of an immunization drive sponsored by a Church partner. The

service project was part of an effort to decrease the rate of childhood deaths in developing countries.

"[Now], when some other problem comes along in the future, there is a foundation laid to cooperate again," explained Sharon Eubank, director of Church Humanitarian Services. "Serving together builds understanding and develops real Christian brotherhood faster than anything else I can think of." ■

Members Asked to Tie Family History to the Temple

In October 2012 the First Presidency issued a letter calling for members to use their own family names for temple work and outlining five main points to help members find greater fulfillment in doing family history and attending the temple.

Members can respond to the call to find, prepare, and share names for the temple by utilizing the tools and resources offered on LDS.org and FamilySearch.org. The points outlined in the First Presidency letter are:

1. “When members of the Church find the names of their ancestors and take those names to the temple for ordinance work, the temple experience can be greatly enriched.”

On LDS.org, learn more about why we are asked to prepare names from our own families to take to the temple

by clicking on **Resources, Family History**, and **Why should we do temple work for our own ancestors?** (video located under **Why Do We Do Family History Work?**).

2. “Members with limited ability to do their own family history research are encouraged to perform vicarious ordinances with names provided by other members or by the temple.”

Members are asked to do what they can—whether by pursuing family history research or by taking the family names of other members to the temple.

3. Youth and young single adults are especially encouraged “to use for temple work their own family names or the names of ancestors of their ward and stake members.”

“Do you young people want a sure

way to eliminate the influence of the adversary in your life?” Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles asked. “Immerse yourself in searching for your ancestors, prepare their names . . . and then go to the temple” (“The Joy of Redeeming the Dead,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 94).

Also in the Family History section of LDS.org, under **Getting Started**, find five steps to prepare family names for the temple.

4. Priesthood leaders should ensure that all members “learn the doctrine of turning their hearts to their fathers and the blessings of temple attendance.”

Ward and stake leaders can play an important role in helping members secure the blessings promised to them. Explore leader resources on LDS.org by clicking on **Resources, All Callings, Family History**, and **Leader Resources**.

5. Those with “large numbers of family names reserved [are encouraged] to release these names in a timely manner so the necessary ordinances can be performed.”

Currently, 12 million names on FamilySearch.org have been reserved by family members who intend to perform their ancestors’ ordinances themselves. Many names, however, have been reserved for years.

In the **Getting Started** section mentioned above, under **I Want to Share Names with Others**, click on **Watch Video**, and watch **Releasing Names for Temple Work** for information about sharing reserved names. ■

Church leaders have asked members to understand the reasons for preparing family names for the temple and to use Church resources to participate in this important work.



President Thomas S. Monson Visits Germany

By Grace Thomas

Europe Area Public Affairs

Recently President Thomas S. Monson traveled to Germany to meet with members of the Church in Hamburg, Berlin, Munich, and Frankfurt, where the heart of his message was his exhortation to follow Jesus Christ.

“My prayer today is that we will have listening ears, that we might in turn hear His knock, appreciate the invitation of our Lord, and have the wisdom to open wide the doorway to our hearts and the portals to our minds, that Jesus Christ might come in unto us,” President Monson said in Hamburg.

To the audience in Berlin, President Monson explained that those who have felt the touch of the Master’s hand cannot explain the change that somehow comes into their lives. There is a desire to do better, to serve faithfully, to walk humbly, and to live more like the Savior, he said.

President Monson reminded members in Munich that when Jesus Christ ministered among men, He called fishermen at Galilee to leave their nets and follow Him, declaring that He would make them fishers of men. “May we join the ranks of the fishers of men and women, that we might provide whatever help we can,” the prophet encouraged the Saints.

Jesus taught by example, President Monson told members in Frankfurt. “Jesus, throughout His ministry, blessed the sick, restored sight to the blind, made the deaf to hear and the halt and maimed to walk,” he said. “He taught forgiveness by forgiving. He taught compassion by being compassionate. He taught devotion by giving of Himself.”

Home to over 38,000 Latter-day Saints, Germany holds a special place in President Monson’s heart, in part because of his travels and Church service in the region.

Shortly after being called as an Apostle in 1963, he was assigned to preside over the European



missions of the Church, which included Germany. During the difficult years following World War II, President Monson promised the country’s struggling Saints, “If you will remain true and faithful to the commandments of God, every blessing any member of the Church enjoys in any other country will be yours” (“Thanks Be to God,” *Ensign*, May 1989, 51).

Over the years he made many trips to Germany for the purpose of building relationships with government leaders and strengthening the members there.

“As President Monson visits Germany, we all recognize and we are witnesses that his prophetic promise has been fulfilled,” Elder José A. Teixeira, President of the Europe Area, said during President Monson’s most recent visit. “Clearly, President Monson is a man [with] deep affection for the German people, and that love is returned by the people in Germany.” ■

President Monson holds a picture of himself he received from a young Austrian girl following a meeting with members in Munich, Germany.

Share the Gospel Online through Vineyard

The Helping in the Vineyard website (vineyard.lds.org) recently added a Sharing the Gospel category (sign in with your LDS Account username and password and click on **My Activities** to find it), where members can highlight their local meetinghouses, publish their testimonies online, and share Mormon Message videos.

Since its launch in early 2011, Vineyard has helped members worldwide perform thousands of acts of service. Each activity includes detailed step-by-step instructions, and volunteers can use the feedback feature to get help on specific tasks.

Church Seeking Media Professionals Worldwide

In an effort to better capture the story of the Church around the world, the Publishing Services Department has created the Media Professional Database (mediapro.lds.org), a directory for media professionals interested in creating and producing film, video, broadcast, live events, and digital media for the Church.

“Our goal . . . is to get experienced media professionals associated with the Church’s database so when a project arises in any part of the world, we can reach out to them and hit the ground running,” said Scott Olson, project manager for the database.

Interested individuals should send their name, email address, and a brief biography to mediapro@ldschurch.org.

Tabernacle Choir Announces 2013 Tour

The Mormon Tabernacle Choir and Orchestra at Temple Square will visit six cities in America’s heartland next summer—Columbus, Ohio; Indianapolis, Indiana; Chicago, Illinois; Milwaukee and Madison, Wisconsin; and Minneapolis, Minnesota—from June 12 through June 20, 2013. Learn more at mormontabernaclechoir.org.

Buenos Aires Temple Rededicated

On September 9, 2012, following three years of renovation, the Buenos Aires Argentina Temple was rededicated, and it is once again open for tens of thousands of Saints in Argentina to attend.

The reach of the temple, temple president Carlos Fernandez said, is growing. Many families are coming

who have never been inside a dedicated temple before, and young people are eager to do their part and serve.

“The Spirit can be felt throughout the country,” he said. “There is so much enthusiasm to return to the house of the Lord.”



The Brigham City Utah Temple, the Church’s 139th and the 14th in Utah, was dedicated on September 23, 2012, by President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Brigham City Temple Dedicated

In September 2012, on the same site where he once attended grade school, President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, dedicated the Brigham City Utah Temple—the 139th temple worldwide and the 14th in Utah.

In recognition of the local orchards in the community—similar to those which pioneers sent by Brigham Young to settle the city planted—round windows on the temple feature art-glass peach blossoms, and 26 fruit trees are planted on the temple grounds.

The temple now serves more than 40,000 Latter-day Saints from 13 stakes in northern Utah and southeastern Idaho.

IN OTHER CHURCH MAGAZINES

THE NEW ERA



STANDING ON HIGHER GROUND

By David S. Beck
 The 2013 Mutual theme is about how Doctrine and Covenants 87: "Whoso standeth in holy places, and be not moved, until the day of the Lord come." The question I hope every young man will ponder throughout this coming year is, "Am I standing in holy places?"

As I have met with vibrant young men all around the world, I have witnessed firsthand how thousands of you are doing this already in many ways. You stand in the holiest of places when you enter the temple to perform baptisms for the dead. I encourage you to take every opportunity available to enter the temple and to always be ready to do so.

Each day as you fulfill your duty to God, you stand in holy places and are in a position to be able to "stand in holy places and be not moved" until the day of the Lord. You stand in holy places as you prepare, learn, and pass the sacrament each Sunday. You stand in holy places as you do the general conference and when you are at a meeting somewhere—one who is always able, willing, and ready to serve and strengthen others.

As an Atonement, President and Patriarch have been given the charge to warn, reprove, correct, teach, and exhort all to come unto Christ (see D&C 20:70). President Russell M. Nelson (1989-2012) said, "The canon 188 another real need was to stand in holier ground than he..." You cannot fight a fire in a secular and cold culture in a burning "spirit" sense. "Young men, this message you should

HOLY PLACES IN YOUR LIFE

By Elaine S. Dutton
 The 2013 Mutual theme invites you to step out of the world and into the kingdom of God. As President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has taught, we live in a "holy sanctuary" "based in holy places" or the holy to be attained.

This theme invites important questions: What is a holy place? Where is a holy place? How can we stand in holy places? How do we make places we regularly inhabit more holy? As you work answers to these questions, your answers will guide your associations, your choice of activities, and your dress, work, and activities.

You have committed to strengthen your home and family. Some to make your home a holy place. Blessed with the Spirit of the Lord, you can support family prayer and scripture study.

Your room can be a holy place that invites the Spirit of the Holy Ghost. The Lord Himself promised you, "For whoso I say unto you, that great things shall come upon you, shall come upon you" (D&C 90:2). I agree and testify that this is true!

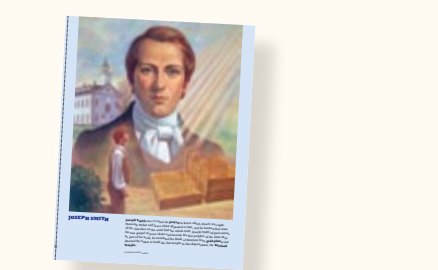
Do not simply live the scriptures. "Walk into the Lord's work" to always stand in holy places. As you live the scriptures, pray daily, and read the scriptures—especially the Book of Mormon—you will feel the responsibility of the Holy Ghost. The Lord Himself promised you, "For whoso I say unto you, that great things shall come upon you, shall come upon you" (D&C 90:2). I agree and testify that this is true!

2013 Mutual Theme

Members of the Young Women and Young Men general presidencies share messages for youth about this year's Mutual theme, "Stand Ye in Holy

Places" (page 6). You'll also find a Mormonad (page 9) and a "Line upon Line" article (page 8) related to the Mutual theme.

THE FRIEND



Portraits of Prophets

Starting this year, look on the inside back cover of the *Friend* for the "Prophet Portrait" series. These portraits by artist Robert Barrett will help your children learn about the lives and special accomplishments of Presidents of the Church. The January *Friend* features the Prophet Joseph Smith.



On the Trail

This year, help your youngsters learn about Church history by using the "On the Trail" map on pages 24 and 25 of the January *Friend*. Each month as the *Friend* highlights a different Church history site, your children can add a new picture to the map! The first site, Palmyra, is featured on pages 4 and 5.



Word of Wisdom

President Boyd K. Packer gives counsel for living the Word of Wisdom on page 48. A young woman talks about how she was blessed by living the Word of Wisdom on page 40.

I Hope They Call Me on a Mission

Page 11 of the January *Friend* features the first of a series of pages that can help children prepare for a mission or adult life in general. The series will feature simple recipes and explanations of basic skills, and it will run every other month throughout the year.

THE FIVE-MINUTE LESSON

By Christopher James Smith

At the end of my final year of university, I was to attend a graduation ceremony where all new graduates, dressed in traditional cap and gown, received degrees from a visiting dignitary. I looked forward to this moment, a celebration of four hard years of study. The morning of the ceremony, I received a letter from the university but didn't take time to open it.

The ceremony started at 1:30 p.m., and I had arranged for a portrait photo to be taken before it began. Unfortunately, there was a queue for photos, and I watched the clock tick closer and closer to commencement. But I had waited for so long that I was determined to get my photo taken. Finally finishing 10 minutes before graduation began, I ran to the hall.

When I got there, however, the doors were closed and protected by security guards. I asked to go in, but the guards refused, telling me I had to arrive 15 minutes early for seating. That was the first I had heard about this requirement, so I protested. But the guards did not move. I had worked four years to obtain this degree, and I could not collect it at the ceremony. I had to sit in the galleries with the spectators.

When I returned home and opened the letter I had received that morning, I read a clear instruction to be seated at least 15 minutes early or be refused entry. I felt like one of the foolish virgins in the Savior's parable:

"And while [the foolish virgins] went to



I missed the seating cutoff by just five minutes. Surely that much time wouldn't keep me from attending my university graduation.

buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

"Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

"But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not" (Matthew 25:10–12).

Although being barred from an important celebration may seem a serious consequence for what might be considered a minor mistake, I have come to realize that so it is with choices and consequences. When I pick up one end of a stick from off the ground, I also pick up the other end. Likewise with any choice, I choose not only the action but also the associated consequence—however unforeseen the consequence happens to be.

It is Satan who wants us to concentrate on choices without regard for consequences. He often does so by enticing us to focus on the physical appetite, "the will of the flesh" (2 Nephi 2:29), and immediate gratification.

Our Father in Heaven, on the other hand, desires us to focus on happiness and eternal blessings. He expects us to consider consequences when we make decisions and for consequences to be part of our motivation: "They are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death" (2 Nephi 2:27).

While I am not grateful to have missed formally receiving my degree, I am grateful for what this experience taught me in the eternal sense—that I never want to make a choice that would bar me from being welcomed into the Bridegroom's presence. Rather than being shut out with "I know you not," I strive to make choices that will allow me to hear Him say, "Enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matthew 25:21). ■

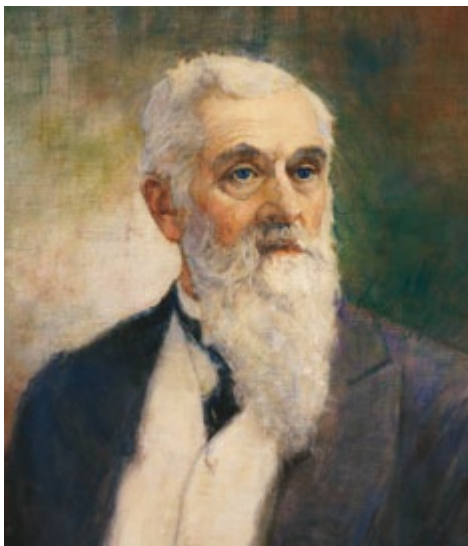
INSIGHTS



What is the relationship between marriage and parenthood?

“The creation of life is a great responsibility for a married couple. It is the challenge of mortality to be a worthy and responsible parent. Neither man nor woman can bear children alone. It was meant that children have two parents—both a father and a mother. No other pattern or process can replace this one.”

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “And a Little Child Shall Lead Them,” *Ensign*, May 2012, 8.



*A*fter meeting President Lorenzo Snow, a minister of another faith wrote: “His face was a power of peace; his presence a benediction of peace. In the tranquil depths of his eyes were not only the ‘home of silent prayer,’ but the abode of spiritual strength. . . . The strangest feeling stole over me, that I ‘stood on holy ground.’” See “Pickles, Turnips, and Testimony: Inspiration from the Life and Teachings of Lorenzo Snow,” page 22.