

Ensign



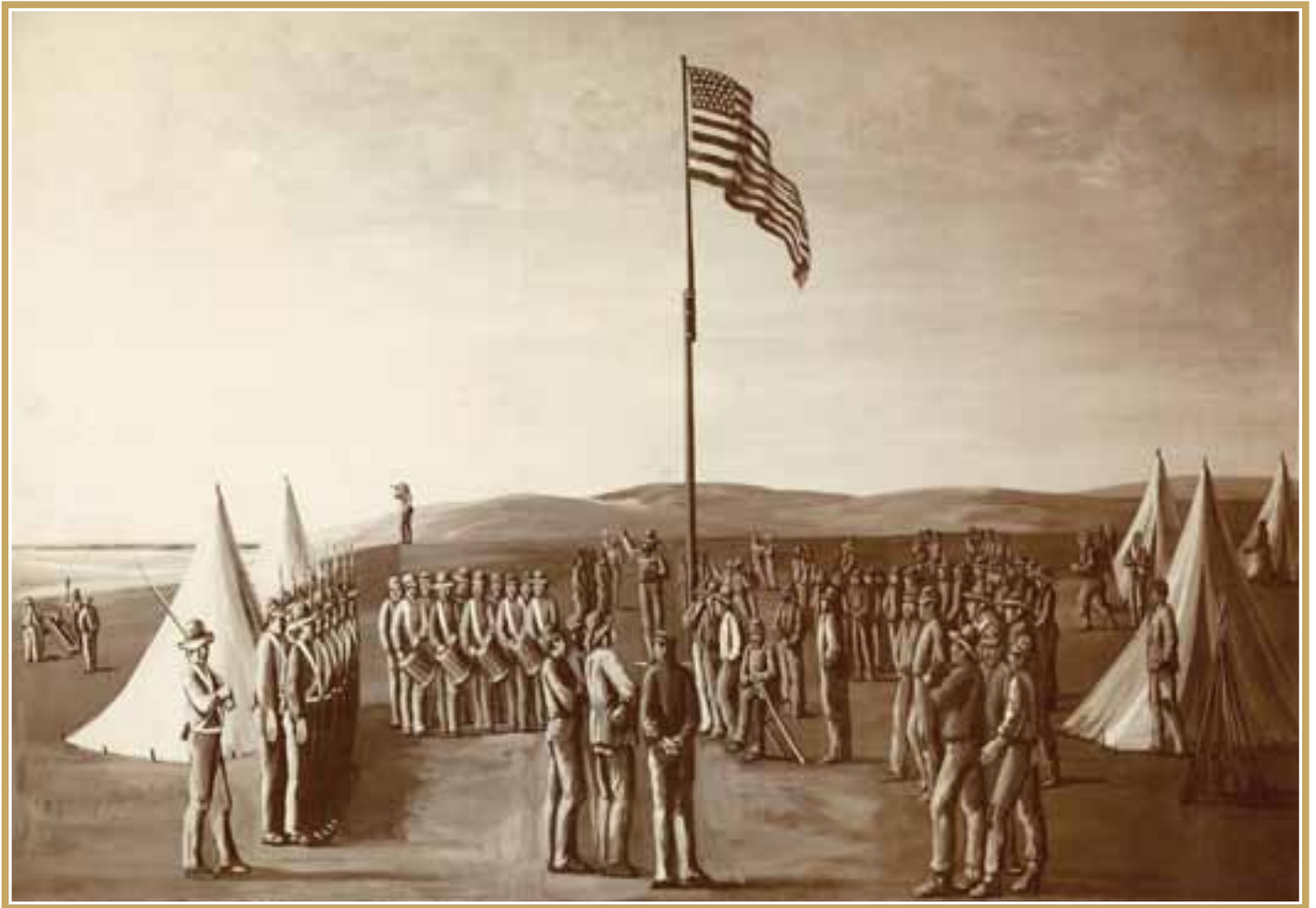
COVER STORY

The Mormon Battalion

**From Iowa to Immortality:
A Tribute to the Mormon
Battalion, p. 22**

**Talking to Youth about
Pornography, p. 48**

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COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES

***Celebration on July 4, 1847, Los Angeles, California,
by Charles Brent Hancock***

Pioneer artist Charles Brent Hancock designed and created this image of the Mormon Battalion as part of a diorama. From July 20, 1846, to January 29, 1847, the battalion trekked some 2,000 miles from Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, to Los Angeles, California.

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Back: Mormon Battalion cloth banner and personal gear backpack, courtesy of the Museum of Church History and Art.



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DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO TELL?

The Ensign invites you to share your experiences with literacy in the Church. How have you or others been blessed from learning to read or write or from teaching someone to read and write? Please label submissions "Literacy" and send them by August 17.

We also welcome other submissions that show the gospel of Jesus Christ at work in your life. Publication criteria are posted on the Ensign home page at www.lds.org.

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USING THIS ISSUE

Teaching in the home, through the home. In “Three Tools to Build a Sacred Home” (p. 44), Shirley R. Klein points out that “everyday routines have great power in our lives.” In your next family council or family home evening, discuss ways your family can experience the significance of these patterns.

Managing household finances. “Before You Lose It All . . .” (p. 62) includes several tips for avoiding and eliminating debt. For additional information, review the new online course “Peace in Your Hearts,” available at www.providentliving.org.

Learning eternal truths. After reading “Lay Hold upon the Word of God” (p. 12), consider how the formula of “study, ponder, and pray” has helped you withstand the attacks on faith that are common today. Consider why all three components are essential to the process.

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- Look for articles on:**
- Overcoming feelings of inadequacy.
 - Becoming equal partners in marriage.
 - The global effort to index family history names online—and how you can help.



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FIRST PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

The Peril of Hidden Wedges

BY PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON

First Counselor in the First Presidency

In April 1966, at the Church’s annual general conference, Elder Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles gave a memorable address. He quoted an account written by Samuel T. Whitman titled “Forgotten Wedges.” I too wish to quote from Whitman’s account, followed by examples from my own life.

Whitman wrote: “The ice storm [that winter] wasn’t generally destructive. True, a few wires came down, and there was a sudden jump in accidents along the highway. . . .

Normally, the big walnut tree could easily have borne the weight that formed on its spreading limbs. It was the iron wedge in its heart that caused the damage.

“The story of the iron wedge began years ago when the white-haired farmer [who now inhabited the property on which the tree stood] was a lad on his father’s homestead. The sawmill had then only recently been moved from the valley, and the settlers were still finding tools and odd pieces of equipment scattered about. . . .

“On this particular day, [the lad found] a faller’s wedge—wide, flat, and heavy, a foot or more long, and



splayed from mighty poundings. [A faller's wedge, used to help fell a tree, is inserted in a cut made by a saw and then struck with a sledgehammer to widen the cut.] . . . Because he was already late for dinner, the lad laid the wedge . . . between the limbs of the young walnut tree his father had planted near the front gate. He would take the wedge to the shed right after dinner, or sometime when he was going that way.

"He truly meant to, but he never did. [The wedge] was there between the limbs, a little tight, when he attained his manhood. It was there, now firmly gripped, when he married and took over his father's farm. It was half grown over on the day the threshing crew ate dinner under the tree. . . . Grown in and healed over, the wedge was still in the tree the winter the ice storm came.

"In the chill silence of that wintry night, . . .

one of the three major limbs split away from the trunk and crashed to the ground. This so unbalanced the remainder of the top that it, too, split apart and went down. When the storm was over, not a twig of the once-proud tree remained.

"Early the next morning, the farmer went out to mourn his loss. . . .

"Then, his eyes caught sight of something in the splintered ruin. 'The wedge,' he muttered reproachfully. 'The wedge I found in the south pasture.' A glance told him why the tree had fallen. Growing, edge-up in the trunk, the wedge had prevented the limb fibers from knitting together as they should."¹

Wedges in Our Lives

There are hidden wedges in the lives of many whom we know—yes, perhaps in our own families.



There are hidden wedges in the lives of many whom we know—yes, perhaps in our own families.

Let me share with you the account of a lifelong friend, now departed from mortality. His name was Leonard. He was not a member of the Church, although his wife and children were. His wife served as a Primary president; his son served an honorable mission. His daughter and his son married companions in solemn ceremonies and had families of their own.

Everyone who knew Leonard liked him, as did I. He supported his wife and children in their Church assignments. He attended many Church-sponsored events with them. He lived a good and clean life, even a life of service and kindness. His family and indeed many others wondered why Leonard had gone through mortality without the blessings the gospel brings to its members.

In Leonard's advanced years, his health declined. Eventually he was hospitalized, and life was ebbing away. In what turned out to be my last conversation with Leonard, he said, "Tom, I've known you since you were a boy. I feel persuaded to explain to you why I have never joined the Church." He then related an experience of his parents many, many years before. Reluctantly, the family had reached a point where they felt it was necessary to sell their farm, and an offer had been received. Then a neighboring farmer asked that the farm be sold to him instead—although at a lesser price—adding, "We've been such close friends. This way, if I own the property, I'll be able to watch over it." At length Leonard's parents agreed, and the farm was sold. The buyer—even the neighbor—held a responsible position in the Church, and the trust this implied helped to persuade the family to sell to him, even though they did not realize as much money from the sale as they would have if they had sold to the first interested buyer. Not long after the sale was made, the neighbor sold both his own farm and the farm acquired from Leonard's family in a combined parcel, which maximized the value and hence the selling price. The long-asked question of why Leonard had never joined the Church had been answered. He always felt that his family had been deceived.

He confided to me following our conversation that he felt a great burden had at last been lifted as he prepared to meet his Maker. The tragedy is that a hidden wedge had kept Leonard from soaring to greater heights.

Choosing to Love Instead

I am acquainted with a family that came to America from Germany. The English language was difficult for them. They had but little by way of means, but each was blessed with the will to work and with a love of God.

Their third child was born, lived but two months, and then died. The father was a cabinetmaker and fashioned a beautiful casket for the body of his precious child. The day of the funeral was gloomy, thus reflecting the sadness they felt in their loss. As the family walked to the chapel, with Father carrying the tiny casket, a small number of friends had gathered. However, the chapel door was locked. The busy bishop had forgotten the funeral. Attempts to reach him were futile. Not knowing what to do, the father placed the casket under his arm and, with his family beside him, carried it home, walking in a drenching rain.

If the family were of a lesser character, they could have blamed the bishop and harbored ill feelings. When the bishop discovered the tragedy, he visited the family and apologized. With the hurt still evident in his expression, but with tears in his eyes, the father accepted the apology, and the two embraced in a spirit of understanding. No hidden wedge was left to cause further feelings of anger. Love and acceptance prevailed.

The Spirit must be freed from tethers so strong and feelings never put to rest so that the lift of life may give buoyancy to the soul. In many families there are hurt feelings and a reluctance to forgive. It doesn't really matter what the issue was. It cannot and should not be left to injure. Blame keeps wounds open. Only forgiveness heals. George Herbert, an early seventeenth-century poet, wrote these lines: "He that cannot forgive others breaks the bridge over which he himself must pass if he would ever reach heaven; for everyone has need to be forgiven."

Beautiful are the words of the Savior as He was about to die upon the cruel cross. Said He, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."²

Forgiving

There are some who have difficulty forgiving themselves and who dwell on all of their perceived shortcomings. I quite like the account of a religious leader who went to the side of a woman who lay dying, attempting to comfort her—but to no avail. "I am lost," she said. "I've ruined my life and every life around me. There is no hope for me."

The man noticed a framed picture of a lovely girl on the dresser. "Who is this?" he asked.

The woman brightened. "She is my daughter, the one beautiful thing in my life."

"And would you help her if she were in trouble or had made a mistake? Would you forgive her? Would you still love her?"

"Of course I would!" cried the woman. "I would do anything for her. Why do you ask such a question?"

"Because I want you to know," said the man, "that figuratively speaking, Heavenly Father has a picture of you on His dresser. He loves you and will help you. Call upon Him."

A hidden wedge to her happiness had been removed.

In a day of danger or a time of trial, such knowledge, such hope, such understanding will bring comfort to the troubled mind and grieving heart. The entire message of the New Testament breathes a spirit of awakening to the human soul. Shadows of despair are dispelled by rays of hope, sorrow yields to joy, and the feeling of being lost in the crowd of life vanishes with the certain knowledge that

our Heavenly Father is mindful of each of us.

The Savior provided assurance of this truth when He taught that even a sparrow shall not fall to the ground unnoticed by our Father. He then concluded the beautiful thought by saying, "Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows."³

Some time ago I read the following Associated Press dispatch in the newspaper. An elderly man had shared, from early manhood, a one-room cabin near Canisteo,



New York, with his brother. At the funeral for his brother, he disclosed that following a quarrel in their young manhood, they had divided

Beautiful are the words of the Savior as He was about to die upon the cruel cross. Of those who crucified Him, He said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

Who will subordinate ego, pride, and hurt—then step forward with “I am truly sorry! Let’s be as we once were: friends”?

the room in half with a chalk line, and neither had crossed the line or spoken a word to the other since that day—62 years before. What a powerful and destructive hidden wedge.

As Alexander Pope wrote, “To err is human; to forgive, divine.”⁴

Taking the Initiative

Sometimes we can take offense so easily. On other occasions we are too stubborn to accept a sincere apology. Who will subordinate ego, pride, and hurt—then step forward with “I am truly sorry! Let’s be as we once were: friends. Let’s not pass to future generations the grievances, the anger of our time”? Let’s remove any hidden wedges that can do nothing but destroy.

Where do hidden wedges originate?

disappointments, jealousies, arguments, and imagined hurts. We must solve them—lay them to rest and not leave them to canker, fester, and ultimately destroy.

A lovely lady of more than 90 years visited with me one day and unexpectedly recounted several regrets. She mentioned that many years earlier a neighboring farmer, with whom she and her husband had occasionally disagreed, asked if he could take a shortcut across her property to reach his own acreage. She paused in her narrative and, with a tremor in her voice, said, “Tommy, I didn’t let him cross our property but required him to take the long way around—even on foot—to reach his property. I was wrong and I regret it. He’s gone now, but oh, I wish I could say to him, ‘I’m so sorry.’ How I wish I had a second chance.”

As I listened to her, words written by John Greenleaf Whittier came to my mind: “Of all sad words of tongue or pen, / The saddest are these: ‘It might have been!’”⁵

From 3 Nephi in the Book of Mormon comes this inspired counsel: “There shall be no disputations among you. . . .

“For verily, verily I say unto you, he that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another.

“Behold, this is not my doctrine, to stir up the hearts of men with anger, one against another; but this is my doctrine, that such things should be done away.”⁶



Some come from unresolved disputes which lead to ill feelings, followed by remorse and regret. Others find their beginnings in

Let me conclude with an account of two men who are heroes to me. Their acts of courage were not performed on a national scale but rather in a peaceful place known as Midway, Utah.

Closing the Gap

Long years ago Roy Kohler and Grant Remund served together in Church capacities. They were the best of friends. They were tillers of the soil and dairymen. Then a misunderstanding arose which became somewhat of a rift between them.

Later, when Roy Kohler became grievously ill with cancer and had but a limited time to live, my wife, Frances, and I visited Roy and his wife, and I gave him a blessing. As we talked afterward, Brother Kohler said, “Let me tell you about one of the sweetest experiences I have had during my life.” He then recounted to me his misunderstanding with Grant Remund and the ensuing estrangement. His comment was “We were sort of on the outs with each other.”

“Then,” continued Roy, “I had just put up our hay for the winter to come when one night, as a result of spontaneous combustion, the hay caught fire, burning the hay, the barn, and everything in it right to the ground. I was devastated,” said Roy. “I didn’t know what in the world I would do. The night was dark, except for the dying embers of the fire. Then I saw coming toward me from the road, in the direction of Grant Remund’s place, the lights of tractors and heavy equipment. As the ‘rescue party’ turned in our drive and met me amidst my tears, Grant said, ‘Roy, you’ve got quite a mess to clean up. My boys and I are here. Let’s get to it.’” Together they plunged to the task at hand. Gone forever was the hidden wedge which had separated them for a short time. They worked throughout the night and into the next day, with many others in the community joining in.

Roy Kohler and Grant Remund have passed away. Their sons have served together in the same ward bishopric. I truly treasure the friendship of these two wonderful families.

May we ever be exemplary in our homes and faithful in keeping all of the commandments that we may harbor no hidden wedges but rather remember the Savior’s admonition: “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”⁷ ■

NOTES

1. In Conference Report, Apr. 1966, 70.
2. Luke 23:34.
3. Matthew 10:31.
4. *An Essay on Criticism* (1711), part 2, line 525.
5. “Maud Muller,” *The Complete Poetical Works of Whittier* (1892), 48.
6. 3 Nephi 11:28–30.
7. John 13:35.

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

After prayerfully studying this message, share it using a method that encourages the participation of those you teach. Following are some examples:

1. Have a family member try to tie a shoe with one hand. Discuss how holding grudges is like using only one hand and refusing help. Share some of President Monson’s examples of how people’s lives improved when they forgave one another. Invite another person to help tie the shoe. Testify how forgiving others enables us to receive greater blessings.
2. Summarize the story of the wedge and the tree. Ask how withholding forgiveness is like leaving a wedge in the tree. How does failing to forgive make us weaker? How does forgiving lead to healing? Read one of President Monson’s accounts to illustrate the need for forgiveness. Testify of the blessings that have come to you from following the Lord’s example of forgiving.
3. Bring a piece of string to divide the room in half. Have some family members stand on one side of the room and the rest on the other. Recount the story of the two brothers. Remove the string, and discuss ways to avoid the spirit of contention. Read John 13:35, and challenge family members to show love for each other.



Believe



BY VICKI F.
MATSUMORI

Second Counselor
in the Primary
General Presidency

***It is possible for us
to “be not faithless,
but believing,” even
in times of trial.***

The risen Christ appeared to Mary Magdalene near the garden tomb and later that same evening to His disciples. Thomas, however, was not with the group when the Savior appeared and did not believe the others when they told him of the experience. Eight days later as the disciples again gathered, this time with Thomas in attendance, Jesus Christ stood in their midst and bid them peace. Then to Thomas the Savior said, “Be not faithless, but believing” (see John 20:11–27).

Our Belief Gives Us Hope

The Lord’s counsel to Thomas holds true for each of us. When we encounter the loss of loved ones or experience trials and adversity, it is our faith, belief, and understanding of the

Atonement and the Resurrection that give us perspective and hope.

Over the years I have had grandparents and uncles leave this mortal life. I have put my arms around grieving aunts who do not share my beliefs and have been able to assure them that they can see their husbands again. Then, a few years ago, my own faith was put to the test.

My father lay quietly in bed asleep from the pain medication administered to him. Yet as I entered his bedroom, he opened his eyes and asked, “What did you do today?”

I sat next to him on the bed and told him of my visit to the Salt Lake Temple. My father was an ordinance worker in the Jordan River Utah Temple and loved the spirit he felt when he was there. I described the soft, pale colors, the



Above: Sister Matsumori when she was seven years old with her father, George Y. Fujii; the Jordan River Utah Temple, where Sister Matsumori's father was an ordinance worker; Sister Matsumori when she was four years old with her father.

brilliant light, and the peaceful spirit of the celestial room. He listened with a half smile and closed eyes. I reflected on how much I would miss him.

The following day he awakened from a deep sleep, smiled, and said his final words to me: "I was dreaming about the celestial room." This simple statement comforted me. I knew we would be together again someday.

It is possible for us to "be not faithless, but believing," even in times of trial and when our hearts are heavy.

Blessed Are They Who Believe without Seeing

On a visit to the Holy Land once, I stepped into the tomb thought to be the place where Jesus Christ was laid after His Crucifixion. As I stepped into the tomb, it occurred to me that it was not important if this was the exact place where His Resurrection transpired. What was important was that Jesus Christ had risen. He had conquered death. And because He was "the firstfruits of them that slept," all mankind would "be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:20, 22).

My testimony of the Resurrection did not come by visiting a far-off land. It came from reading accounts of the ancient apostles and hearing testimony from modern-day prophets. It has come as I've studied and prayed and taught my own children about the reality of the Resurrection.

One Easter Sunday many years ago, we quizzed our then

four-year-old daughter, Jessica, about what she had learned in Primary. She reported, "An angel rolled the stone away, and Jesus came alive." On another occasion I recall listening to our son, Dustin, bear testimony to his dying grandfather about the reality of the Resurrection. Surely this is what the Lord meant when he said, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20:29).

Believe That Jesus Is the Christ

We are, unfortunately, like Thomas at times. We feel we need physical evidence. Yet the counsel still remains: "Be not faithless, but believing." President Gordon B. Hinckley said, "Be not faithless, but believing in yourselves, in your capacity as a son or daughter of God, to do great and good things."¹

This understanding of who we are—children of God—helps us remember that a loving Heavenly Father has provided a way for us to return to live with Him. That way is through the Savior Jesus Christ.

To those who struggle with challenges and troubles of life or to those who mourn because they have lost a loved one due to age, accident, or illness, the Lord reminds, "Believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:31). ■

NOTE

1. "'Grab Life by the Horns,' President Hinckley Tells Saints in Southern States," *Ensign*, June 2003, 74.

LAY HOLD *upon the* WORD OF GOD



Three simple steps—study, ponder, and pray—enable us to learn eternal truths so they are anchored to our souls by the power of the Holy Ghost.

BY ELDER GARY L. POCKOCK

Area Seventy
Utah South Area

The Apostle Paul said the following about our day: “In the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils” (1 Timothy 4:1). We see fulfillment of this prophecy in the nightly news. Paraded before us is a steady stream of those who have fallen prey to false doctrine.

It seems apparent that “the cunning plans which [the devil] hath devised to ensnare the hearts of men” (Alma 28:13) are having an ever more powerful effect. We are enticed by sophisticated arguments enhanced by appealing images and music. Many people are swayed by those who “call evil good, and good evil” (Isaiah 5:20; 2 Nephi 15:20). Paradoxically, those who are guilty of gross sin point their fingers scornfully at the righteous, accusing them of being intolerant, while they themselves are prejudiced against those who sustain God’s moral code.

How do we remain steadfast in the face of this escalating onslaught? The Book of Mormon, written specifically for our day, has the answers, as explained by President Ezra Taft Benson:



“There is a power in the book which will begin to flow into your lives the moment you begin a serious study of the book. . . . You will find the power to avoid deception. You will find the power to stay on the strait and narrow path.”¹ The words of Mormon reinforce this promise: “Yea, we see that whosoever will may lay hold upon the word of God, which is quick and powerful, which shall divide asunder all the cunning and the snares and the wiles of the devil, and lead the man of Christ in a strait and narrow course . . . and land [his soul] . . . at the right hand of God in the kingdom of heaven” (Helaman 3:29–30).

As we study the Book of Mormon, it will provide vital doctrine and spiritual strength to overcome the attack on righteousness. When we “lay hold upon” the word of God,



His words sink deeply into our minds and hearts, strengthening us against deception and temptation.

Moroni explains the pattern to follow in our study: “When ye shall read these things, . . . ponder [them] in your hearts. . . . Ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost” (Moroni 10:3–4).

These simple steps—study, ponder, and pray—enable us to learn eternal truths so they are anchored to our souls by the power of the Holy Ghost.

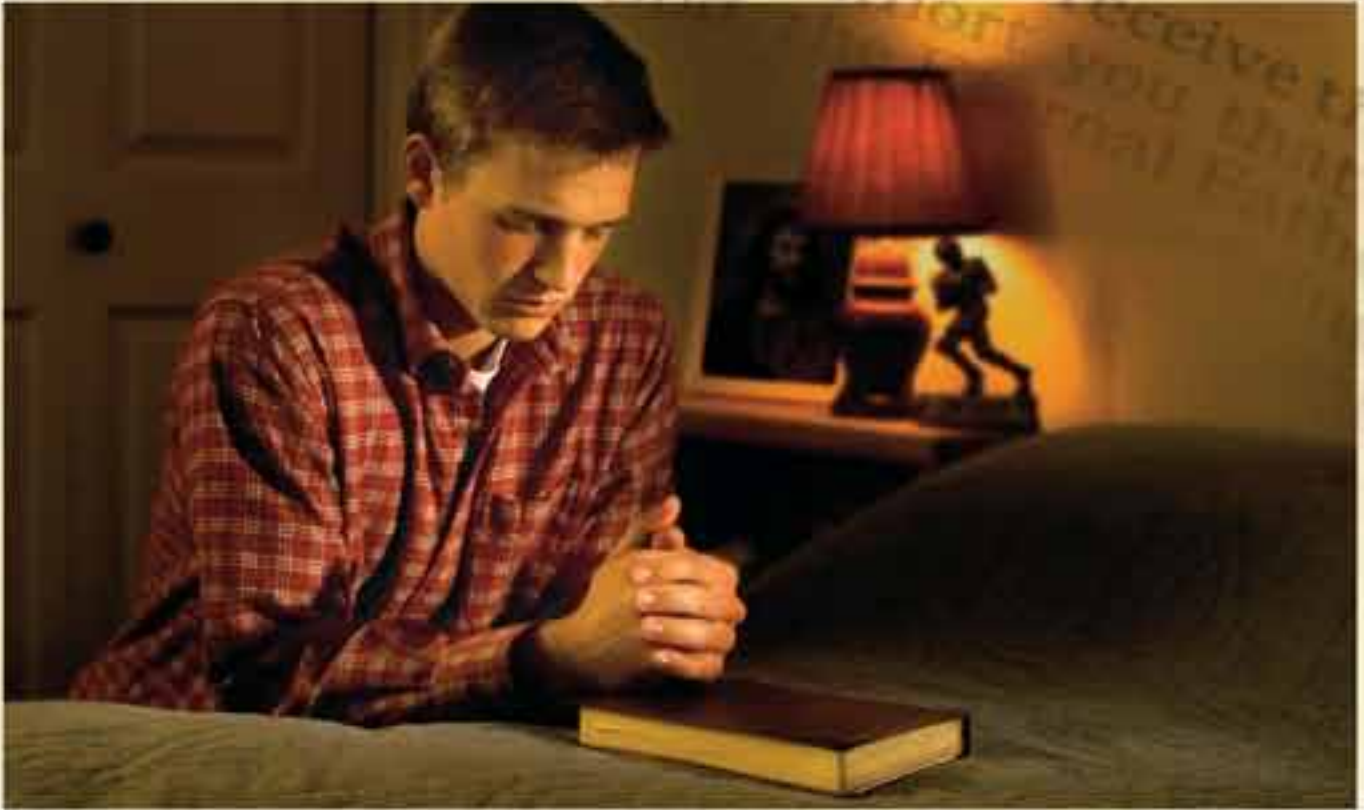
Study

The scriptures are a pure source of spiritual truths. The Lord said, “These words [of scripture] are not of man . . . but of me” (D&C 31:13). As we lay hold upon the word of God, it is essential that we study the scriptures, and the

Book of Mormon should be the centerpiece of our study.² The quantity of our study is not as important as the quality. However, it is crucial that we set aside a specific time each day to drink of the “living water” found in the scriptures (see John 4:10–14).

Our spirits, like our bodies, need daily nourishment. An occasional scriptural feast with frequent periods of fasting from the word will leave us spiritually malnourished. The Book of Mormon is particularly powerful in providing spiritual sustenance. In fact, its reference to the names or titles of the Savior—an average of once per 1.7 verses³—is a clear sign of its highly concentrated spiritual value.

In our study, it is essential that we “liken all scriptures unto us” (1 Nephi 19:23). Likening is the process by which we allow the scriptures to transform our character. If our object in studying the scriptures is to enable ourselves to answer questions in Church classes, little lasting benefit will result. Being able to quickly find the scriptural answer



to a gospel question is an admirable skill. But of greater worth is to consistently apply the scriptures to our lives and steadily become *living scripture*. We must daily sup at the table of the Lord, “feasting upon the word of Christ” (2 Nephi 31:20). As we properly assimilate this spiritual food, it will be transformed into Godlike character.

Ponder

Pondering the scriptures is indispensable to laying hold upon the word. Pausing occasionally during our study affords us a chance to focus more fully on the spiritual feelings that often accompany, affirm, and augment the truths we have read. It provides access to our hearts for doctrinal truths that may otherwise dwell only in our minds.

In His powerful sermon to the Nephites, the Savior taught the importance of pondering: “I perceive that ye . . . cannot understand all my words . . . at this time. Therefore, go ye unto your homes, and ponder upon the things which I have said” (3 Nephi 17:2–3). It is vital that we ponder so that we may be receptive to the Holy Ghost and more fully comprehend and internalize what we have studied.

Many great revelations through the ages have come to those who were pondering upon spiritual truths (see, for

example, 1 Nephi 11:1; Helaman 10:2; D&C 138:1). When studying, take time to ponder.

Pray

Prayer quite naturally accompanies and enhances studying and pondering. It is an indispensable means by which to invite the Spirit. For example, Ammon and his fellow missionaries “waxed strong in the knowledge of the truth” by “search[ing] the scriptures diligently” and through “much prayer, and fasting; therefore they had the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation, and when they taught, they taught with power and authority of God” (Alma 17:2–3).

The absence of pondering and prayer would essentially leave spiritual learning to the intellect. However, reason alone will not secure the blessings available from the scriptural “well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14). For instance, in rejecting the inspired preaching of Samuel the Lamanite, “the people began to harden their hearts, . . . saying: . . . It is not reasonable that such a being as a Christ shall come” (Helaman 16:15, 18). Reasonable or not, Christ did come! Hence, unaided logic is shown to be “the foolishness of men” (2 Nephi 9:28).

The Lord taught Oliver Cowdery this sequence for

spiritual learning: “You must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right” (D&C 9:8). Study and pondering must be accompanied by prayer because “the things of God knoweth no man, except he has the Spirit of God” (Joseph Smith Translation, 1 Corinthians 2:11).

During my missionary service, a minister responded to an invitation to pray about the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon by saying that eternal truths are not revealed by the Spirit. He believed that truth is received through the mind alone. Indeed, as Nephi foresaw, we live in a day when some “priests [and others] . . . teach with their learning, and deny the Holy Ghost” (2 Nephi 28:4). Those not taught by the Holy Ghost and unaccustomed to thoughtful pondering and humble prayer are left at the mercy of “the precepts of men” (2 Nephi 27:25; 28:14, 26, 31; D&C 45:29).

Those who seek the learning of spiritual things through reason alone will forever chase a pot of spiritual gold at the end of a vanishing intellectual rainbow. Without the Spirit, men will never be “founded upon a rock” (Matthew 7:25; see also Jacob 4:14–17), though they may stumble over it from time to time. Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “Study and reason can *find* the truth . . . , but only revelation can *confirm* it.”⁴ To learn the truth by the Spirit is to feel its power in the heart and soul.

Without the confirming witness of the Spirit, an intellectual conviction of sacred truths could easily be shaken by a persuasive argument,

just as sunlight is swallowed by nightfall. However, prayer can bring a celestial sunrise, shining eternal light on critical doctrine. As President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) stated, “Through the Holy Ghost the truth is woven into the very fibre and sinews of the body so that it cannot be forgotten.”⁵



HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

1. The following activity or one similar to it could help your family remember the principles found in the article. Consider creating the “three steps” from the article using stairs, rocks, or levels of a hill. Indicate the first step as “study.” Give each person a treat to “feast upon” with a scripture reference from the article attached and have them read the scripture. Move to the next step and pause for a minute to ponder the scripture just “feasted upon.” Move to the prayer step. Read the first sentence of the prayer section. Discuss what blessings can come from the scripture and what can be learned by following this pattern.

2. Read together the same verse of scripture. Share with one another what you found or how you felt about this scripture. Invite family members to search for guidance from the scriptures as you study during the coming week.

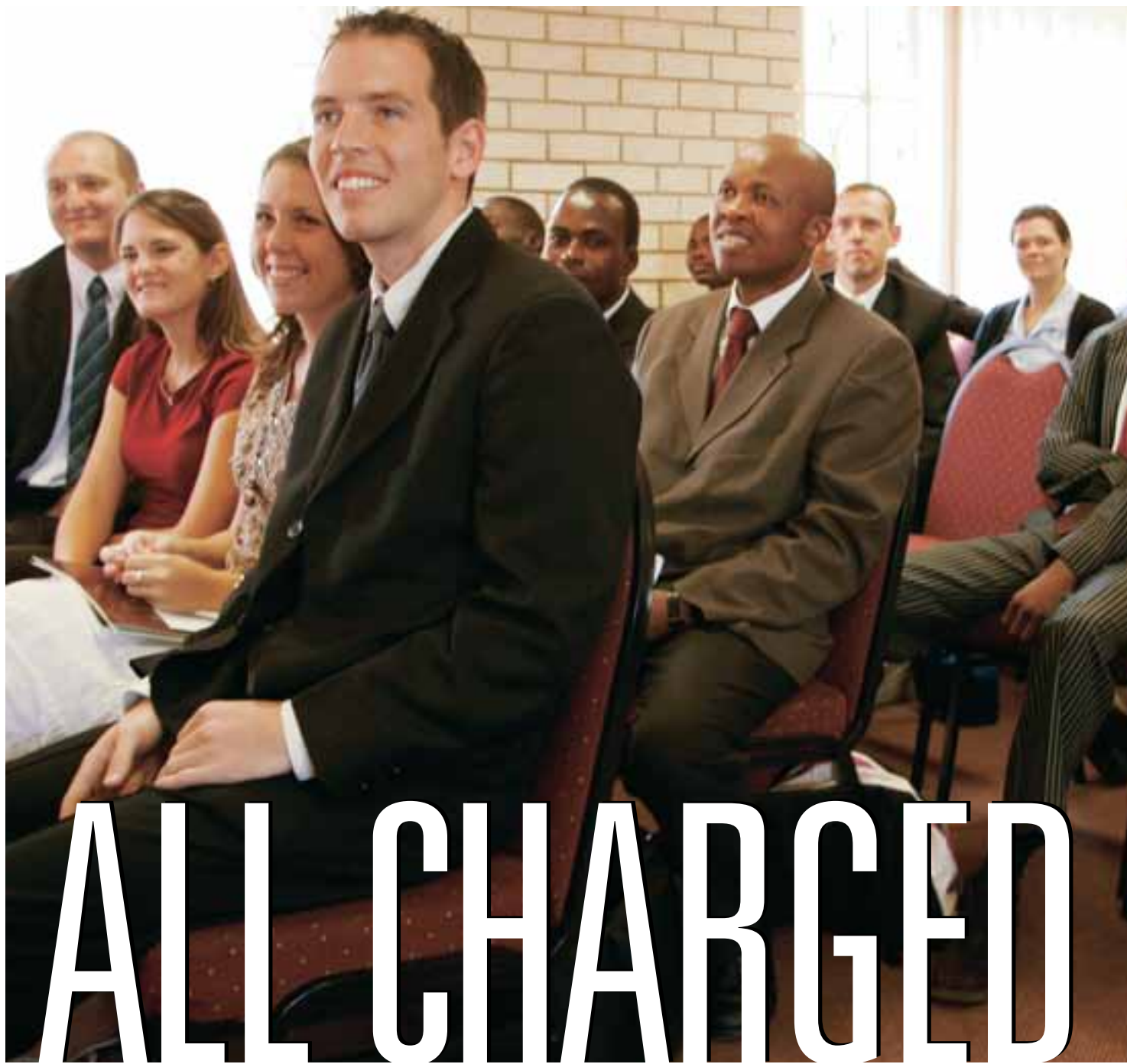
Blessings

When we learn eternal truths through the power of the Spirit, they will sink deeply into our hearts, making them “an anchor of the soul” (Hebrews 6:19). Such learning helps to firmly fasten our fortress of faith to “the rock of our Redeemer” (Helaman 5:12).

As we “lay hold upon the word of God,” it lays hold upon us, guiding our thoughts, words, and deeds, drawing us ever closer to the Great Source of those inspiring words. We need now, perhaps more than ever before, to “lay hold upon the word of God” so that we can quickly and powerfully overcome the “cunning and the snares and the wiles of the devil” and his followers. May we do so through our daily study, pondering, and prayer. I testify that as we follow these steps, enduring to the end, our souls will “land . . . at the right hand of God in the kingdom of heaven” (Helaman 3:30). ■

NOTES

1. *The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* (1988), 54.
2. See Ezra Taft Benson, “Cleansing the Inner Vessel,” *Ensign*, May 1986, 5.
3. See Susan Ward Easton, “Names of Christ in the Book of Mormon,” *Ensign*, July 1978, 60–61.
4. *The Lord’s Way* (1991), 65.
5. “The Sin against the Holy Ghost,” *Instructor*, Oct. 1935, 431.



BY PAUL VANDENBERGHE
Church Magazines

The electricity in the air is palpable—literally. In fact, the spectacular electrical storms that occur regularly in and around Johannesburg, South Africa, are so prevalent that the city is an international center for lightning research. Some people believe the reason lightning storms hit this area so often has to do with high levels of gold and other mineral deposits in the ground. But no one is really sure.

Inside the Daveyton meetinghouse, about 28 miles

(40 km) east of Johannesburg, there's an obvious reason for the electricity in the air: it's the Benoni Second Branch. The excitement is generated because this is the first young single adult (YSA) unit in Africa, and these young adults are charged up.

"There was a lot of buzz going around" as word of a possible YSA branch spread throughout the Benoni South Africa Stake, says branch president Stuart Taylor. "The excitement was definitely there." The excitement has only grown since the branch was created in February 2006.



Left: Members of the Benoni Second Branch, the first young single adult unit in Africa, attend Sunday School. Above: The Daveyton meetinghouse, where the branch meets.

understand each other.” The sense of unity and integration among these young adults of mixed ethnic backgrounds is something extraordinary, especially when one considers South Africa’s not too distant political history of apartheid. But the gospel has brought these young people together as friends and fellow Saints.

President Taylor likes to point out that the young adults completely staff this branch. They are the ones who make it what it is. The lessons are from their peers. The comments are from their peers. The experiences are from their peers. “I remember the first Relief Society meeting; it was just wonderful,” says Lee-Anne Holmes. “It was so geared toward us, for this time in our lives, and for our age group.”

It is the attitude and spirit of the members that make this branch stand out. “I enjoy the testimony meetings,” says Bonyani Dukhele. “It is so uplifting to hear someone of the same age bearing testimony. It is wonderful to know that this person is going through what I am going through, yet he can do it. It gives me strength.”

Branch members draw strength from their similarities. “We face the same challenges and the same trials,” explains Phumzile Ndala. “So we face them together, and then we help each other overcome the challenges when we discuss them.”

Opportunity to Grow

The Benoni Second Branch is a powerful example of putting the words of the Savior into practice when He commanded the Saints, “I say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine” (D&C 38:27). The unity in

UP

Members of the Benoni Second Branch—South Africa’s first young single adult unit—are excited about their opportunities for unity.

“It’s a mind-boggling experience,” says Vincent Mabena, speaking about being part of the new branch. “I feel it will be a great opportunity for us to grow.” These young single adults are thrilled to accept the responsibilities that come with their new callings. They look forward to making a difference in a branch they feel is unique.

What’s the Difference?

Young single adults enjoy attending this branch, says Edward Soll, because “we feel more comfortable. We

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL VANDENBERGHE, EXCEPT AS NOTED; INSET, LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF CAREL R. HEYDENRYCH

the branch goes beyond the obvious fact that its members share so much in common; they truly look out for each other and desire to help one another.

“Everyone notices if you’re not here,” says Markus Botha. “I’ve heard a lot of people say something like, ‘So-and-so is not here this week,’ and they’ll call them.” This kind of awareness was happening before the home and visiting teaching programs were organized, but now the members are even more conscientious about each other. They realize that if something is going to get done, they are the ones who have to do it.

Our Responsibility

President Taylor excitedly tells of how things have come together under the auxiliary presidencies’ leadership. “Knowing that we are responsible for everything that is going to happen here is exciting,” says Harry Mnisi.

Kirsten Taylor, President Taylor’s daughter, puts it this way: “I think it helps us grow spiritually now that it’s our responsibility. It’s not like when we were in our home wards and we would think, ‘Oh, it’s our parents’ responsibility.’ We never really thought, ‘Look how few there are today. We have to do something about this.’ But now we do.”

“Not all of us are active,” she continues. “We have a lot of work to do. But it’s so great that we can help each other grow together and be a great example to other African countries.”

“It tells us that we need to do more missionary work now,” adds Harry. “We’ve got to do more. We can do more!”

Missionary Work

Shortly after the branch’s creation, President Taylor challenged the members to bring their friends who were not coming to church. “I was actually a bit surprised how

many people did pitch up the next Sunday,” he says. “I was excited at the response.”

The heart of President Taylor’s challenge is essentially about friendship. “Missionary work, to me, is being a friend,” he says. “That’s the most important way to reach others.” He lets the branch members know that true missionary work is not something to do out of obligation or to keep the stake presidency happy; it’s about loving others.

Taryn Morritt says the excitement generated by the new branch has created opportunities to take up President Taylor’s challenge in several ways. First, many young adults have been motivated to action. “When we were in our home wards, we were in our comfort zones,” Taryn explains. “Now we want this branch to grow, so we are constantly thinking of other people we can bring and whom we should invite.”

Simply gathering together as young adults

for Sunday services and other activities provides the second way President Taylor’s vision of missionary work is bringing results. Taryn says that before the branch was organized, the young adults didn’t have many chances to get together. And when they did have an activity, it was too easy to stick by an existing group of friends. “Now we tend to make friends with people we never would have before.”

Making a Difference

The initial buzz that spread through the Benoni stake when word of a young single adult branch surfaced has not diminished. In fact, the excitement seems to be building. “I like hearing people saying ‘the ward’—but we’re not a ward yet. We’re looking in that direction,” says President Taylor. “We’re progressing. These young people are very enthusiastic about their callings, and they’re already making a difference.” ■



Bearers of the priesthood clear the sacrament table after sacrament meeting. “These young people are very enthusiastic about their callings,” says branch president Stuart Taylor. “They’re already making a difference.”

BURBANK BLVD.

A LESSON IN UNIMPORTANT DIFFERENCES

BY J. ROBERT NELSON

When I was growing up in California's San Fernando Valley, Burbank Boulevard was a dividing line. To the north lay hundreds of post-World War II tract homes. They were small and tightly bunched with virtually identical architecture. In contrast, the streets south of the boulevard were lined with large oak trees. Citrus groves and large lawns surrounded sprawling homes. The demographics of the two areas also were different. North of Burbank Boulevard was mainly a blue-collar area. The homes to the south were occupied by the more affluent.

Burbank Boulevard was also a dividing line of sorts for me personally. I didn't venture across the line very often. The school I attended, the stores I frequented, the parks in which I romped, and the friends with whom I associated were all in my immediate vicinity. Although our ward encompassed both sides of Burbank Boulevard, I had few associations with members "across the line" other than in meetings on Sundays. Even then, the contacts seemed forced—with one significant exception. My best friend happened to live on the other side of the boulevard. There were differences between us. He was a recent convert. I came from pioneer stock. One of our homes was quite lavish. The other was very basic. But when we would participate together in athletics, discuss gospel subjects, contemplate our eagerly anticipated missions, and reflect on whether we would serve in the Vietnam War, Burbank Boulevard was not a dividing line. Nearly 40 years later, I reflect on that friendship and the large hole that was left in my life when my best friend failed to return from the battlefields in Southeast Asia.

Since the days of my youth I have moved from coast to coast and have been a member of many different wards. Each ward has had its own Burbank Boulevard. In some it has been an actual geographical dividing line. In others it has been a dividing line of ethnicity, family background, socioeconomic status, political preference, or affluence.

Dividing lines are nothing new. The scriptures are replete with examples. The Book of Mormon chronicles the division between Nephites and Lamanites. For hundreds of years, that division was marked by physical separation, prejudice, and conflict. The Book of Mormon also illustrates what happens when people put aside divisions and related preconceptions and prejudices. In particular, the account of the Lamanites who took upon them the name Anti-Nephi-Lehies is instructive (see Alma 24–27). These Lamanites fled their own people and took refuge with their former enemies, the Nephites. The backgrounds and traditions of these two peoples could not have been more different. They undoubtedly came to their union with certain prejudices. But from every indication, these two groups lived together harmoniously, the Nephites providing protection to their Lamanite brothers and sisters, and the Lamanites helping sustain their Nephite protectors with a portion of their crops and, more important, with the strength of their conversions and convictions.

There certainly was no Burbank Boulevard for the Savior. His message was for saint and sinner, rich and poor alike. The men He chose as Apostles had diverse backgrounds. In His parable of the good Samaritan (see Luke 10:30–37), His refusal to judge the woman taken in sin (see John 8:3–11), and His blessing for the servant of a hated Roman centurion (see Matthew 8:5–13), the Savior was a powerful example of love and acceptance, particularly for those who take upon them His sacred name. There are and always will be differences in our skin color, our nationalities, our careers, our houses, and our material possessions. A fundamental message of the Savior, however, is that these

PHOTOGRAPH PROVIDED BY THE AUTHOR



Left to right: Ginger Daines; Walter Stranding, the author's best friend who died in the Vietnam War; Dianne Whitelock; and Jeff Willardson, 40 years ago at the author's postmission celebration.

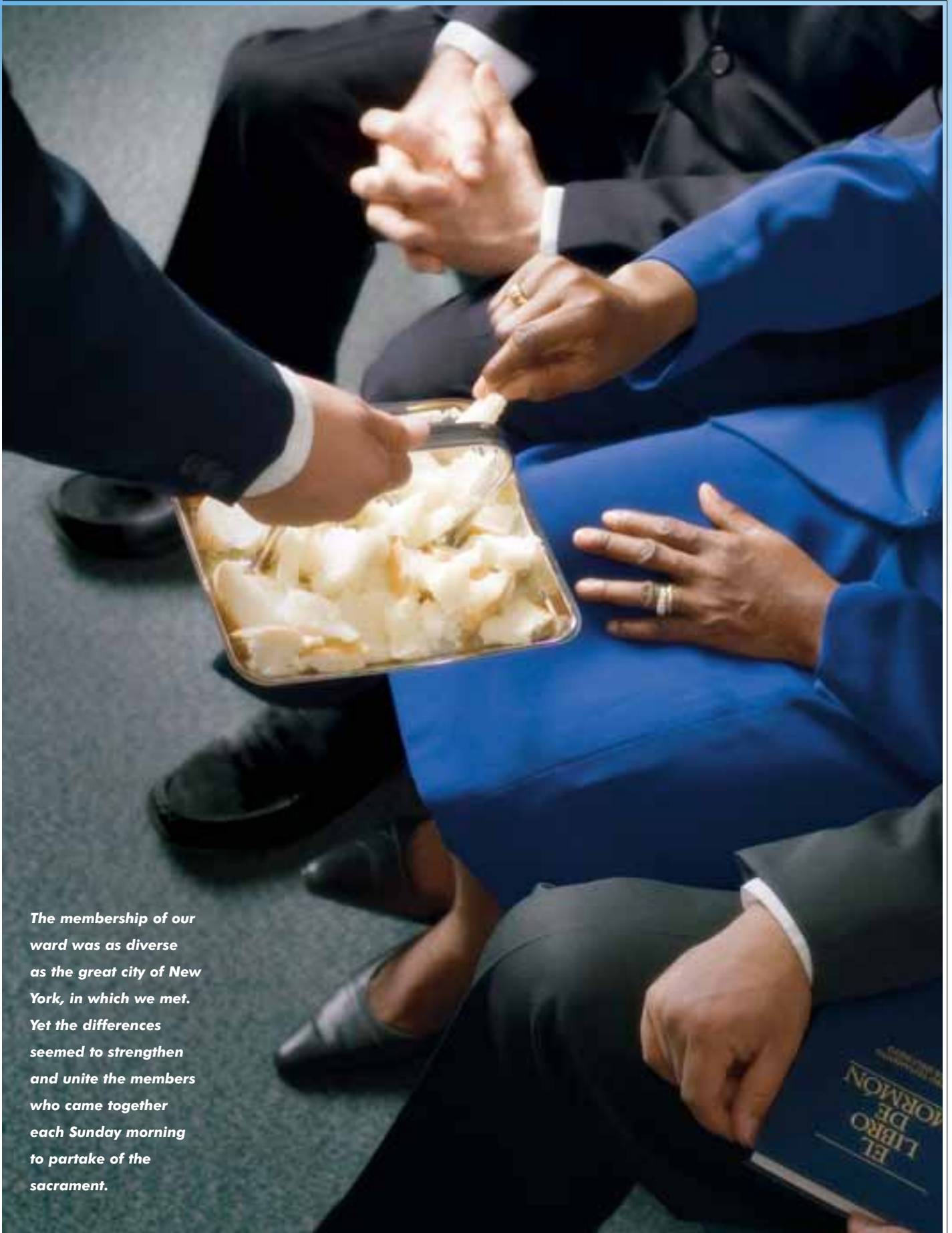
are differences without substance.

Not long ago my work took me for a year to New York City. There is arguably no more diverse city in the United States. Its five boroughs encompass such ethnically diverse elements as Little Italy, Chinatown, an orthodox Jewish community, and a large group of Russian immigrants. Puerto Ricans, Jamaicans, South Americans, Asians,

and transplants from virtually every European country call New York City home. Daily I was exposed to the whole economic spectrum—from extreme wealth to grinding poverty, from fancy midtown brownstones to beggars bedding down for the night on a hard sidewalk.

The membership of our ward was as diverse as the great city in which it met. There were corporate executives, television personalities, diplomats, doctors, lawyers, teachers, students, secretaries, and salespeople. Our ward was a virtual United Nations, with members from Africa, Europe, Latin America, and Asia. Although English was the common language, conversations went on in numerous other tongues. The ward had some lifelong members. There also were converts of only a few weeks. The residences of members covered the spectrum. Some occupied luxury condominiums overlooking Central Park. Others lived in one-bedroom apartments in south Harlem. In short, the ward in Manhattan was diverse on every level. Yet I never detected division. To the contrary, the differences seemed to strengthen and unite the members who came together each Sunday morning to partake of the sacrament.

With this diversity came new and often exciting perspectives and discussions. Most important, the shared understanding of and appreciation for the restored gospel, the common commitment to its principles, the joy from learning of other members' lives, and the service we gave one another drew us together and made the obvious outward differences irrelevant. That experience was a wonderful reminder that in the Savior's Church there really is no place for Burbank Boulevards. ■



The membership of our ward was as diverse as the great city of New York, in which we met. Yet the differences seemed to strengthen and unite the members who came together each Sunday morning to partake of the sacrament.



From Iowa to IMMORTALITY

A TRIBUTE TO THE MORMON BATTALION



BY ELDER LANCE B. WICKMAN
Of the Seventy

In January 1993, as the Church prepared for the open house and dedication of the San Diego California Temple, I found myself thinking about the men of the Mormon Battalion, who had arrived in San Diego in January 1847 after one of the longest, most torturous marches in military history. I am not sure why my thoughts turned to them. I had no ancestor who marched in their ranks. Perhaps it was my own experience as a combat infantryman that brought this feeling of kinship. Perhaps it was something more. Whatever the reason, I felt we could not dedicate this temple without doing something to remember the sacrifice of the Mormon Battalion. I called a friend who was active in one of the Mormon Battalion commemorative associations. I asked him if on the morning of the first day of the open house we could have a color guard of men in battalion uniform and a solitary bugler playing “To the Colors” as the American flag was raised for the first time over these sacred premises. “No band and no speeches,” I said, “just the bugler and the color guard.”

The morning dawned cool and blustery in the wake of a Pacific storm. A few of us

gathered at the base of the flagpole and watched the Stars and Stripes flutter into full expanse as it caught the freshening breeze. The mesmerizing notes of the bugle floated across the tranquil temple grounds. In that moment I felt them there—the men of the battalion—formed one

The Mormon Battalion was unlike any other unit ever formed in the history of the United States Army—a battalion of Saints.



last time in silent ranks as the flag of the land they had served so valiantly rose above the temple that represented the Zion they had sought so earnestly. Tears filled my eyes. Truly, San Diego in winter can seem like paradise.

It must have seemed like paradise on that January day in 1847 to the half-starved 335 men and 4 women—many bare-foot or shod only in rags or rough cowhide—who straggled into the little mission of San Diego. Daniel Tyler, Third Sergeant, Company C, Mormon Battalion, U.S. Army of the West, recorded his first impression: “Traveling in sight of the ocean, the clear bright sunshine, with the mildness of the atmosphere, combined to increase the enjoyment of the scene before us. . . . January there, seemed as pleasant as May in the northern States, and the wild oats, grass, mustard and other vegetable growths were as forward as we had been used to seeing them in June. The birds sang sweetly and all nature seemed to smile and join in praise to the Giver of all good.”¹

An Incongruous Story

The column of unkempt, shaggy-faced men must have seemed strangely out of place in such charitable surroundings. How could anyone be so threadbare and bedraggled in the natural cornucopia that was southern California in that time and season? It was inconsistent.

But, then, the whole saga of the Mormon Battalion is filled with contrasts: its origin as a military unit drawn

from destitute refugees struggling for survival on the Iowa prairies; its roster formed from the unlikely—even bizarre—combination of hard-bitten Regular Army officers and the peace-seeking adherents of a despised and misunderstood religious sect; the willingness of these men to leave wives and families bereft in an untamed wilderness to serve a country that had turned its back on them when the Saints were persecuted in Missouri and Illinois; their long, long walk in the sun across prairie, mountain, and trackless desert; their willingness to suffer unspeakable privations; their vibrant faith in their God, their prophet, and, eventually, in their tough and austere army commander—Lieutenant Colonel Philip St. George Cooke. The entire drama is incongruous—incongruous and inspiring.

As out of place as these men may have appeared upon their arrival at San Diego, as exhausted and subdued as they may have seemed in taking those last few agonizing steps in a trek of 2,000 miles, theirs is a story of courage and sacrifice that has few equals.

The U.S.–Mexican War was a long time ago. Military victories by American Generals Zachary Taylor and Winfield Scott, plus the payment of \$15 million by the United

It was the physical hardships that were so difficult for the Mormon Battalion to bear: searing sun, cold winds, hunger, thirst, rock, sand, always more sand and more thirst.





President Brigham Young told the men they were needed, so they enlisted on July 16, 1846.

States, ultimately acquired the territory that later became the states of Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah. Yet history must also testify that equal, if not greater, honor belongs to an unheralded band of “citizen soldiers” recruited on the plains of Iowa. Theirs was unlike any other unit ever formed in the history of the United States Army—a battalion of Saints. This band of 500 men and a few women and children fired not a shot in anger, except at a herd of rampaging bulls. True to the prophetic promise made to them by President Brigham Young, not one of them was lost to hostile action, although 20 lost their lives due to the privations they suffered. But their work in carving out a wagon road with picks, shovels, and even their bare hands across the barren deserts of the American Southwest—a road which thousands would later follow en route to the fabled riches of California—did as much to secure these vast territories to the United States as all the storied military deeds of the war with Mexico.

The Mormon Battalion

The story of the organization of the Mormon Battalion is a tender one. June of 1846 found 15,000 Latter-day Saints strung out across Iowa in a half dozen or more makeshift encampments. Forced to leave their comfortable homes in their own city, Nauvoo the Beautiful, they had endured a tragic exodus across Iowa. Many had died of starvation, exposure, and disease during the cold winter and wet springtime. They had no homes, no property, and no clothing except what they carried in their wagons or wore upon

Below: Two days after the men enlisted, a dance was held in the bowery at Council Bluffs, with music by William Pitt’s Brass Band.



The Mormon Battalion made one of the longest treks in United States history—2,000 miles one way.

their backs. Food was scarce. Some were bitter at the disinterest shown by the U.S. government in their plight. By crossing the Mississippi River, these pioneers had left the United States, following their leaders west to a destination they knew not, to a place where they hoped to live in peace.

Into such desperate circumstances rode Captain James Allen, a cavalry officer, on June 26, 1846. The United States had declared war on Mexico, and President James K. Polk was calling for 500 Mormon volunteers to march to Fort Leavenworth, in present-day Kansas, and then to California on a one-year U.S. Army enlistment.

The Saints camped at Mount Pisgah were incredulous when they heard Captain Allen’s request. Surely, after all the governmental disinterest, even disdain, they had endured, this same government could not now be serious in such a

ABOVE, FAR LEFT, ILLUSTRATION BY DALE WILBOURN; ABOVE LEFT, MORMON BATTALION ROLL, BY C. C. CHRISTENSEN; COURTESY OF MUSEUM OF CHURCH HISTORY; ABOVE RIGHT, SUGAR CREEK, BY C. C. CHRISTENSEN; COURTESY OF MUSEUM OF CHURCH HISTORY; AND ART, RIGHT, BELOW, ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL MANN

preposterous proposal! Not only did they feel they owed nothing to the United States, but what would wives and children do if their husbands and fathers marched away on such an extended journey? How could they possibly face such an uncertain future?

But President Brigham Young, then at Council Bluffs, saw things differently. For one thing, the soldiers' pay and uniform allowances would provide a much-needed source of income to purchase necessary food and supplies for the trek west. More than that, their country had called. Despite the government's indifference to their plight, the Saints were still Americans, and America needed them. Touching is this personal account by Daniel B. Rawson: "I felt indignant toward the Government that had suffered me to be raided and driven from my home. . . . I would not enlist. [Then] we met President Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball and [Willard] Richards . . . calling for recruits. They said the salvation of Israel depended upon the raising of the army. When I heard this my mind changed. I felt that it was my duty to go."²

It was as simple as that. The prophet of the Lord had said they were needed, so they enlisted. On Saturday, July 18, 1846, the recruits were brought together by the rattle of snare drums. President Young and members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles met with the officers, commissioned and noncommissioned, in a grove of trees. Brother Brigham admonished them to be "fathers to

their companies and manage their men by the power vested in the priesthood."³ A merry dance was held, accompanied by William Pitt's brass band. Then the mood grew more somber as a young woman with light hair and dark eyes and a beautiful soprano voice sang the poignant and melodic words,

*By the rivers of
Babylon we sat
down and wept.
We wept when we
remembered
Zion.⁴*

Many eyes glistened with tears. The next day was Sunday. On Monday morning they marched away—soldiers on an odyssey from which some would not return for a year, some for two or three years, some for almost a decade. A few would not return at all.



MORMON BATTALION TIME LINE

February 4, 1846
Latter-day Saint exodus from Nauvoo begins (below).

May 13, 1846
The United States declares war on Mexico.



June 26, 1846
Captain James Allen of the First U.S. Dragoons meets with Latter-day Saints camped at Mount Pisgah, Iowa, and asks for volunteers for the Mormon Battalion.

July 1, 1846
Captain Allen assures President Brigham Young that the Saints may encamp on U.S. lands, and President Young agrees to the formation of the battalion.

July 18, 1846
A dance is held at Council Bluffs, with music by William Pitt's Brass Band.

July 20, 1846
The Mormon Battalion begins its march.

August 23, 1846
James Allen, newly promoted to lieutenant colonel and the battalion's first commander, dies at Fort Leavenworth; Lieutenant A. J. Smith is acting commander.

Left: Soldiers left their loved ones, some not to be seen for years to come.

October 9, 1846

General Alexander Doniphan (right), commander of American forces at Santa Fe, orders a 100-gun salute to honor the arrival of the Mormon Battalion in Santa Fe.



October 14, 1846

Lieutenant Colonel Philip St. George Cooke (above) assumes command of the Mormon Battalion.

January 13, 1847

The Treaty of Cahuenga is signed between John Charles Fremont and General Andrés Pico, ending the conflict in California.

January 29, 1847

The Mormon Battalion arrives in San Diego.

July 24, 1847

The Latter-day Saint pioneer company, led by President Brigham Young, arrives in the Salt Lake Valley.

September 6, 1847

A letter from the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles directs the former battalion members to find work in California and to come to Salt Lake in the spring. Nearly half go to Sutter's Mill (right), and some are present when gold is discovered there on January 24, 1848.

February 2, 1848

The treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ends the Mexican War; Mexico cedes territory including Utah to the United States.

April 12, 1848

The members of the Mormon Battalion who reenlisted for an additional six months are discharged; they pioneer the southern route to the Salt Lake Valley.

Trials and Suffering

The trials suffered by the members of the Mormon Battalion cannot be captured adequately by the written word. For one thing, the men of the battalion were ordered to march in virtual tandem with a group of Missourians under the command of the infamous Colonel Sterling Price—the same Colonel Price who had driven the Saints from their homes in Missouri a decade earlier. The Missourians refused to share rations until the battalion's acting commander, Lieutenant Andrew Jackson Smith, threatened to “come down upon them with artillery.”⁵

Then there was the battalion members' suffering at the hands of the medically incompetent army doctor George B. Sanderson, whose remedy for every ailment was a large dose of calomel. The men soon learned that



the supposed cure was invariably worse than the disease. They would either suffer in silence or refuse to swallow the calomel, spewing it out once out of Dr. Sanderson's sight.

The changing leadership of the battalion presented yet another set of challenges. Shortly after they left Fort Leavenworth, the men learned that their beloved Captain Allen—who had recruited them and who had been a kindly and beneficent commander—had died. They were left under the temporary command of Lieutenant Smith, a man whose imperious and autocratic manner visited much misery upon them. In Santa Fe they received a new commander, Lieutenant Colonel Philip St. George Cooke, another cavalryman. He also was stern, and at first the men were dismayed. But with time they learned that, though he was tough as rawhide, Colonel Cooke cared for their welfare, and it was his toughness that helped them survive.

But most of all, it was the physical hardships that were so difficult to bear: searing sun, thirst, cold winds, hunger, thirst, sand, always more sand, thirst, rock, thirst. Six months into their trek, most of the men had traded away any spare clothing in exchange for food. Rags and pieces of hide took the place of shoes. Hair and beards were unshaven and uncombed. Skin was darkened to a deep, leathery brown. Bones and ribs of man and beast protruded through stretched flesh. The 339 survivors who at last struggled into San Diego that lovely midwinter day in January 1847 each bore a wild but strangely holy countenance. They had made it. They had come through for their country and for Zion. On the morning after their arrival, Colonel Cooke wrote: “The Lieutenant-Colonel commanding congratulates the Battalion on their safe arrival on the shore of the Pacific Ocean and the conclusion of their march of over two thousand miles. History may be searched in vain for an equal march of infantry.”⁶

TOP LEFT TO RIGHT: COLONEL PHILIP ST. GEORGE COOKE. USED BY PERMISSION OF UTAH STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED; ALEXANDER DONIPHAN, USED BY PERMISSION OF INTELLECTUAL RESERVE, INC.; BOTTOM LEFT: GOLD DISCOVERED AT SUTTER'S MILL, BY VALOY EATON; TOP RIGHT: MORMON BATTALION, BY JOHN FARRANKS; COURTESY OF MUSEUM OF CHURCH HISTORY AND ART; ABOVE RIGHT: MELISSA CORAY, COURTESY OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF UTAH PIONEERS

A March into History

The story of the Mormon Battalion does not end with its arrival in San Diego. Securing California for the United States, building the first courthouse in San Diego and building Fort Moore in Los Angeles, discovering gold shimmering in the mill race at Sutter's Mill near Sacramento and thus bringing on the California gold rush of 1849—all of these were contributions of the Mormon Battalion. But the men of the battalion were not much interested in gold. Most just wanted to go home.

Significantly, the person who has come to best represent them was not a soldier at all, but a woman—Melissa Coray, the 18-year-old bride of Sergeant William Coray. Melissa was one of four women who marched all the way to San Diego



Melissa Coray was the youngest of the four women who made the entire march with the Mormon Battalion.

with the battalion. Her odyssey continued as she and William migrated to Monterey, California, after William's discharge, where she gave birth to a son, William Jr., on October 2, 1847. William Jr. died within a few months after his birth and was buried in Monterey. The couple then went to San Francisco and eventually on to the Salt Lake Valley, traveling more than 4,000 miles in all. When they arrived in Salt Lake City on October 6, 1848, Melissa was expecting their second child. William was ill with tuberculosis he had contracted in California but hoped to live long enough to see their child born. Happily, he did. Baby Melissa was born on February 6, 1849, about one month before William's death.⁷

Years later Melissa returned to California for a meandering trip through her own hall of memories. In 1901, when asked by a reporter about walking with the battalion, she simply said: "I didn't mind it. I walked because I wanted to. My husband had to walk and I went along by his side."⁸ In 1994 the United States government dedicated a mountain in the Sierra Nevada Mountains east of Sacramento in her honor—Melissa Coray Peak, a fitting and permanent

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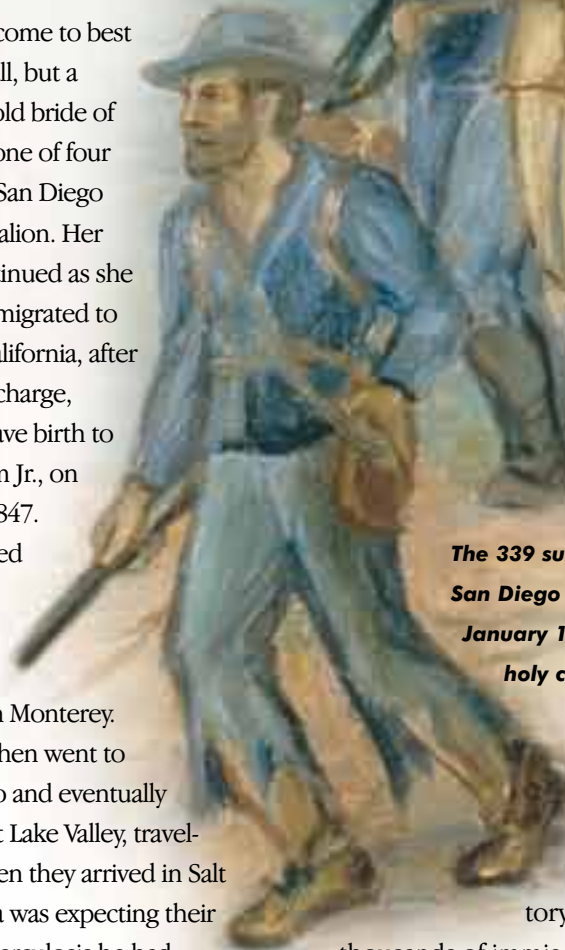
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memorial to the men and women of the Mormon Battalion.

In every sense, they of the battalion had marched into history. Behind them would come many

thousands of immigrants who would follow the trail they so painstakingly—and painfully—pioneered. They had raised "Old Glory," the flag of their country, on the Pacific shore. And they had raised the ensign of Zion. ■

NOTES

1. Daniel Tyler, *A Concise History of the Mormon Battalion in the Mexican War* (1881, 1969), 253.
2. The Diary of Daniel B. Rawson, as quoted in Norma Baldwin Ricketts, *The Mormon Battalion: U.S. Army of the West 1846–1848* (1996), 13.
3. *The Mormon Battalion: U.S. Army of the West 1846–1848*, 16.
4. *The Mormon Battalion: U.S. Army of the West 1846–1848*, 16.
5. *The Mormon Battalion: U.S. Army of the West 1846–1848*, 55.
6. *A Concise History of the Mormon Battalion in the Mexican War*, 254.
7. Norma B. Ricketts, *Melissa's Journey with the Mormon Battalion: The Western Odyssey of Melissa Burton Coray, 1846–1848* (1994), 81–82.
8. *The Mormon Battalion: U.S. Army of the West 1846–1848*, 274.

IT'S ALL BEEN

Done



BY LORETTA EVANS

Do you think your family history has all been done? Think again.

Church members who have several generations of Latter-day Saint ancestors may feel there is nothing they can do when it comes to family history. When you know your relatives have worked on genealogy, it's tempting to assume that all of it has been done.

If your family lines have been researched extensively, there are still many meaningful ways you can contribute to family history. Following are some questions to get you started.

Have you made records of your own life?

If you don't write your own life story, who will? Your life has been blessed by reading stories of your ancestors. Keeping a journal and writing your own personal history will bless the lives of your children and grandchildren for generations.

My mother, who is 92 years old, enjoys rereading her own autobiography. It helps her remember good times from the past. She shares these stories with other people who live in her nursing home.

Do you have accurate records of your immediate family?

Parents should regularly document the life events of their children and grandchildren. It is surprising how

quickly records become outdated, and it is much easier to record events as they happen rather than trying to reconstruct information later. If you record information about your immediate family using Personal Ancestral File (PAF) software, you will easily be able to share your data with other family members.

Recent disasters, such as floods, fires, and earthquakes, have underscored the importance of making duplicate copies of important papers and electronic files. Make duplicate copies of your family records, and keep them in a separate location to ensure they are preserved.

Do you have copies of your ancestors' records?

If your relatives have worked on family history, do you have copies of their records? If they are not already computerized, one of the best ways for you to contribute is to enter family information onto a PAF database. A family history consultant in your ward can help you get started with this.

After you have entered information about your living family members, you can begin downloading data on deceased ancestors from the FamilySearch™ Web site (<http://www.familysearch.org>). It is useful to begin with just a few generations. When you are familiar with those families, you can download additional generations from FamilySearch.

If you don't write your own life story, who will? Your life has been blessed by reading stories of your ancestors. Keeping a journal and writing your own personal history will bless the lives of your children and grandchildren for generations.



If you have computer files that were given to you by a relative, you should periodically check to see if they are still readable. Electronic files on floppy disks and even CDs and DVDs are not permanent. They can be damaged by changes in heat and humidity. Magnetic fields can erase or disturb data that were stored on floppy disks.

In addition, it is important to update information as computer technology changes. Today, it is difficult to find a computer that can read 5 1/4-inch floppy disks. The 3 1/2-inch disks will soon be obsolete.

Have you checked your genealogy for completeness and accuracy?

Once you have a Personal Ancestral File database, check each name to make sure that all needed temple ordinances have been completed. Your family history consultant can help you do this using FamilySearch. You can also check your records for accuracy, one family at a time. FamilySearch is only as accurate as the information submitted, and some files have obvious, correctable errors.

- Look for any information that appears inaccurate. Check with relatives and compare your information with information from public documents. Record sources as you collect information; this will make it easier to evaluate conflicting data.



- Use PAF to create a “possible problems” list to quickly analyze your data and point out possible mistakes. Not every event in such a list is incorrect. The computer looks for possible errors, like a marriage for someone younger than 16 or older than 60. Although such marriages are uncommon, they may be accurate for your ancestor.

- If you find families with only one child, consider doing some research to look for additional children. Sometimes people stop doing genealogical research when they find their ancestor’s parents. They forget to look for brothers and sisters.

Have you found your ancestors in original documents?

Your relatives may have done all the research they could, but newly available sources on the Internet, on microfilm, or in books might enable you to learn more. Even when you know that their temple work has been completed, there is a thrill in seeing your ancestor’s name in an original document.

I found a microfilm of my grandparents’ marriage record. W. Ray Luce and Rachel Olsen were married on April 8, 1907. When Rachel signed the marriage record, she signed “Mrs. Ray Luce.” It touched my heart. Here was the bride, trying out her new name for the first time. I

could relate to her as a real person, not just as a name on a family group sheet.

Do you have a family organization?

A family organization is a good way to coordinate family history research.

These groups may hold reunions, publish newsletters, host Internet sites, and sponsor research. Your family organization can coordinate submissions to Pedigree Resource File to share family information.

Some descendants of early LDS ancestors have excellent family organizations, while others do not. If no organization exists, you might want to contact other relatives about creating one. If you have one, pay your dues and offer to help.

Have you considered descendency research?

Your ancestors may have joined the Church, but many of their family members probably did not. Those who research only their direct-line ancestors may have overlooked an important way to find other relatives who need temple ordinances. When you find your ancestors who first joined the Church, look for their children, siblings, aunts, and uncles who did not.

Cousins and other more distant relatives may also need their temple work completed. In general, you may submit names of deceased individuals related to you who were born more than 95 years ago. You may also submit the names of immediate family members who have been deceased for at least one year. Your family history consultant can help you learn which names to submit.

What do you know about your ancestors’ lives?

Read published biographies of your ancestors if any are available. In addition, family members may have collected

I*f you own copies of family photographs or documents, you can share them with extended family members. One good way is to scan the pictures into a computer file, add a caption to identify everyone, and create a CD to share with your relatives.*

unpublished stories. You can add to these by recording and sharing stories that you remember about your parents and grandparents.

As you learn more about your ancestors, they will become more than names on a family group sheet. They will become people you love whose experiences can influence your life and the lives of your descendants. Your hearts will be turned to them even more.

Do you have family photographs or documents?

If you own copies of family photographs or documents, you can share them with extended family members. One good way is to scan the pictures into a computer file, add a caption to identify everyone in the photograph, and create a CD to share with your relatives. If you are generous with the information you have, other cousins might give you copies of pictures and documents they own. Photographs can be linked to family names in PAF.

Do you own family heirlooms?

Heirlooms should be protected from damage by heat, light, humidity fluctuations, or natural disasters. If they are stored away for protection, many descendants won't even know they exist. Take photographs of any family heirlooms you own or have access to and attach a brief history of the owner and why the object is meaningful. Such a file is useful for insurance purposes, but more

WHERE CAN I GET HELP?

- A family history consultant in your ward can guide you as needed.
- The FamilySearch Web site (<http://www.familysearch.org>) is the way to access the family history information stored by the Church. You can also download the Personal Ancestral File software there.
- Your local family history center offers many helpful resources. FamilySearch.org can help you locate a family history center near your home.
- Consider joining a genealogical society near your home. Many publish newsletters with helpful information. They may offer classes or conferences where you can learn more about researching your ancestors.

important, your family members will learn the stories behind these items.

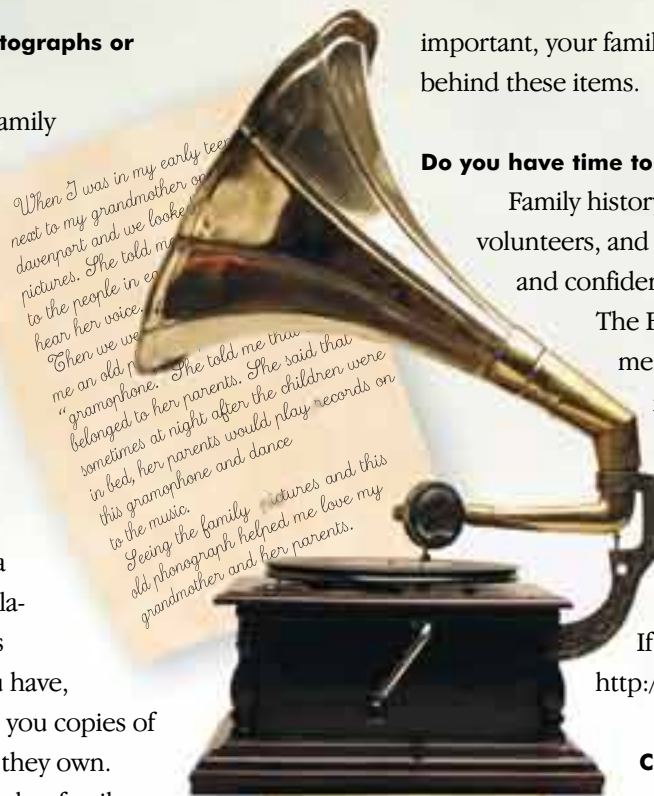
Do you have time to serve others in family history?

Family history centers throughout the world need volunteers, and this is a good way to gain experience and confidence in doing family history work.

The Family and Church History Department is in the process of digitizing its microfilmed genealogical records so they can be freely posted on the Internet. Volunteers are needed to help create indexes for these records. You can do this at home if you have an Internet connection. If you would like to help, register at <http://www.familysearchindexing.org/>.

Creating an eternal bond

Family history is much more than filling out family group sheets and building computer files; it is about turning our hearts to our fathers. As you find your ancestors' names in original records, read about their lives, or hold the items they once owned, you will create eternal bonds with them. As Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said: "You are not just gathering names. Those you never met in life will become friends you love. Your heart will be bound to theirs forever" ("Hearts Bound Together," *Ensign*, May 2005, 79). ■



Take photographs of any family heirlooms you own or have access to and attach a brief history of the owner and why the object is meaningful.

PHOTOGRAPH BY GETTY IMAGES

TOURS & TESTIMONIES



PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRISTINA SMITH, EXCEPT AS NOTED



As they teach visitors about Church history, missionaries on Temple Square invite people to come unto Christ.

BY ANDY CARGAL

Sister Krista Cockerill felt like pulling her hair out. Children were running all over the Temple Square North Visitors' Center, dashing through doors and displays, and in the midst of the chaos, she and her missionary companion were attempting to teach a group of people about God's plan for families. In an effort to create order, she had the group sit down and began teaching them about prophets. "I then bore my testimony about the light of Christ that prophets bring and about the guidance they give us," says Sister Cockerill. "And the kids actually sat and listened."

After the presentation one family stayed to speak with the sisters. During their conversation, a woman who had sat silently in the back while the sisters taught came up to Sister Cockerill, handed her a note, and walked away. Sister Cockerill waited until they were finished speaking with the family to read its message.

"I've been living in darkness for 13 years.

"I need the light in my life.

"Please, send them quickly."

Sister Cockerill and her companion, Sister Emily Brown, hurried downstairs, where they found the woman sitting

Below: Some of the 206 sister missionaries who serve on Temple Square pose in front of the nearby Beehive House, which was previously the office of President Brigham Young.



TEACHING ABOUT ETERNAL FAMILIES

By Sister Mable Shea, Zambia, Africa

I once had an experience with a woman named Christina. She and her family were visiting from Washington, and after we talked for a while, I asked them if they knew anyone I could call to share a little more about the Church. But they said they knew no one.

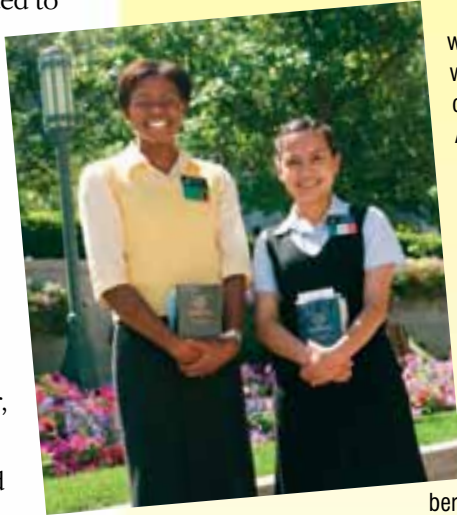
As we continued to speak, I felt prompted to tell them about my conversion. I had a sister who had died, and for many years we wondered what had happened to her. When the missionaries came to our home, they taught about eternal families, and I was happy because I realized I could be with my sister again. After I related this experience and shared my testimony, Christina told me that she wanted to refer her two sisters.

I called one of them the next week, and she agreed to visit with the missionaries, but the other sister was never home. After making several attempts, I felt prompted to send in the referral card without having spoken to her.

I reached her two weeks later, and she told me the missionaries had already been there. She said they came at the right time. Her ex-husband had died a week earlier, and as she looked at her current family mem-

bers, she wondered what would happen to them when *they* died. And then the missionaries showed up and taught her about eternal families. She said she was excited for the missionaries to come back, and she wanted her girls to be there to listen. I was so happy. ■

Above: Sister Mable Shea from Africa (left) with her companion, Sister Elizabeth Serna from Mexico.



on a sofa. She had not given her address, so they asked for it in order to send missionaries to her home. Although she desperately wanted to be taught, she was hesitant.

“They won’t come,” the woman said. “They won’t come and visit me.”

Confused, they asked why and discovered that she lived with her father, who wouldn’t allow it. Feeling prompted by the Spirit, Sister Brown said, “I promise you that if you ask your father with a sincere heart to let the missionaries visit you, he will open his doors.”

She *did* speak to her father, he opened his doors, the missionaries taught her, and she was baptized.

A Different Kind of Mission

Experiences such as this happen frequently for the approximately 185 missionaries who serve on Temple Square in Salt Lake City. Their mission is unique. They do not knock on doors, teach standard lessons, or baptize people. In fact, after contacting individuals just once, they usually never see or talk to them again. Yet they are still missionaries, set apart, armed with a message of hope, desiring to help people come unto Christ. Some say they are the “angels” on Temple Square.

Unlike other missions, the Utah Salt Lake City Temple Square Mission is entirely staffed by full-time sister missionaries who spend much of their time conducting tours for the millions who visit the historic temple grounds every year. Yet

their overall goal is the same as in other missions: to “invite others to come unto Christ by helping them receive the restored gospel through faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement, repentance, baptism, receiving the Gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end.”¹

“Even though we’re giving tours, we still want that ultimate goal for every single person we talk to,” says Sister Cockerill, from Scott City, Kansas. “That’s why we’re here. That’s why the prophet called us here.”

Teaching the Word of God

While the Temple Square mission is distinct from others in its operation, the sisters here share a common responsibility with other missionaries throughout the world—teaching. And they do a lot of it. For example, Sister Jessica Ling from Hong Kong once conducted a tour of 70 people, teaching them in her native language of Cantonese. And here—the people come to the missionaries! With an average of more than 5,000 people visiting Temple Square every day, the sisters get plenty of opportunities to teach.

“I love teaching,” says Sister Mable Shea, from Lusaka, Zambia. “We have the opportunity to speak to people of all faiths. We get to talk to kings and queens and magistrates. We can teach people even though we never get to see what happens to them.”

Although Temple Square missionaries do not teach standard missionary lessons, they strive to lead their tours by the Spirit, and their comments are laden with gospel principles and teachings. Typical tours take 30 minutes and can



begin and end from any location within Temple Square. The sisters generally spend a lot of time answering questions. They make it a point to teach about the Restoration through the Prophet Joseph Smith and also to visit the *Christus* statue in the North Visitors' Center. "That is one of our favorite spots, and also one of the most important ones, because people see that we have Jesus Christ at the center of all we do," says Sister Cockerill.

At the end of each tour the sisters ask the guests if they want to learn more about the Church. If the visitors are Church members, the missionaries ask them to refer their friends—and the responses are plentiful. Each year the sisters gather thousands of referrals and send them to states and nations around the world, making Temple Square the highest referring mission in the Church. "We really need the members," explains Sister Shea. "I know that if every member of the Church had a commitment to say, 'I will bring at least one soul to the kingdom of God,' so many

more people would be brought to know the truths of God."

Challenges

While some might perceive this to be an "easy" mission where the missionaries introduce Church movies, greet people, and teach all day long, the sisters say it has its own unique challenges.

Sister Shea says one of these is that they never know anything about the people they will teach before those visitors walk onto the grounds.

Sister Ling says that although teaching large groups is exciting, it is difficult to focus on what each person needs.

Teaching is also challenging, says Sister Cockerill, because the sisters rarely learn what happens to the people they met and referred to other missionaries. "We get to know these families and what's going on in their lives. And then we tell them that their lives are going to be



Sister Julie Vance (left) and her companion, Sister Lily Llamzon, talk to visitors at the April 2007 general conference.



FACTS AS OF JUNE 2006

Total missionaries: approximately 207
 Countries represented: 38
 Languages spoken: 34
 Mission size: 34 acres
 Sisters who speak another language in addition to English: 97
 Referrals generated: 54,000 in 2006

better if they start living the teachings of Jesus Christ. They write their names and addresses down on a referral card, and then we send it—and we just put our faith in God.”

The sisters say that one of the greatest challenges is that many members don’t fully understand the nature of what they do, believing either that they are merely tour guides or are simply seeking referrals. Sister Shea’s response typifies that of Temple Square missionaries. “When I was called as a missionary, I was called to be a representative of the Savior. I want to see everyone I talk to get baptized one day so they can have what we have. I want to go home knowing I was able to use every opportunity I was given, that I was able to magnify my calling as I reached out to people.”

Finding People Who Are Prepared

Sister Shea says that elders and sisters in conventional missions form a bond with those they teach, and they learn to love them. “When those they teach reject the gospel, it’s so hard. And when they accept it, it’s heaven on earth,” she says. “And those are some of the opportunities we miss here on Temple Square. But there is a reason we have this mission, and there is a reason each one of us has been called here. Our purpose is to find those people who have been prepared for us. So I’m happy. I’m happy to be on Temple Square.”

Because these sisters do not have the same routine as those in other missions, a program has been set up to give them a taste of what missionary work is like outside Temple Square. At about the midpoint of their missionary



Top left: Sister Unbyul Cho and Sister Mi-Jin Hwang, both from Korea, welcome visitors at the north gate of Temple Square. Top right: Sister Jenna Bond and Sister Ashley Tax, both from the United States, answer questions of a Temple Square visitor. Above: Sister missionaries identify their native language so that visitors can have a tour of Temple Square in the language they choose.

service, sisters are temporarily reassigned to another mission within the United States. Their assigned missions are chosen by the Missionary Department, and this service lasts for a period of 12–18 weeks, or 2–3 transfers.

“When the sisters return, they come back better missionaries because, for the first time, they get to see why what they do is so important,” says Utah Salt Lake City Temple Square mission president Milo LeBaron.

Sister Cockerill says her experience in the Colorado Denver South Mission taught her the importance of persistence. She says that prior to her reassignment, if people she contacted on Temple Square told her they didn’t want to talk to her, she would just let them pass by. Now, she says, “I can’t just let people walk by me. I have to talk to them. I have to see what they need. And if they say no to me again, then I say OK, it’s another sister’s turn. But I can’t let them go with one *no* and not say anything about the Church.”

Behind the Scenes

In the Temple Square mission, sisters change companions every six weeks. Unlike some missions where transfers can mean hours on a bus or train to a different city or even country, here, in the smallest mission in the world at just 30 acres (12 hectares), the change may mean simply moving down the hall to another apartment. Planning and leadership are also different. Whereas other missionaries generally plan out each day—where they will work, whom they will visit, what they will teach—the sisters here



Sister Nseabasi Ikpe from Nigeria, Africa.

have their schedules made for them. The assistants to the president carefully coordinate to ensure that there are enough sisters throughout the grounds to assist visitors at all times, every day. Each zone takes a dif-

ferent preparation day, sisters take meal breaks at varied times, and personal and companionship study often happens during the day rather than in the morning. Because the president, his counselors, and a few senior missionary elders are the only priesthood holders in the mission, all other leadership positions are staffed by the sisters.

“The Best Mission in the World”

The sisters on Temple Square, as most missionaries do, proclaim their mission to be the best in the world. They smile at, greet, and teach thousands of people at Utah’s most popular tourist destination every day. They are motivated by a desire to see all of God’s children come unto Christ. Sister Elisabeth Serna, from Leon Guanajuato, Mexico, says, “I don’t want anybody to say to me, ‘You were there, you saw me walking there, and you didn’t invite me to learn more about the gospel.’ Here we have the commission to invite others to come unto Christ. I want to go home every night and realize that I’ve done everything that I could do, that I have invited as many people as I could to come unto Christ.”

These sisters are much more than simply tour guides. They are a gateway to the gospel for millions of people every year. ■

NOTE

1. *Preach My Gospel* (2004), 1.



TIME LINE

May 1875—President Brigham Young commissions Charles J. Thomas to show tourists around Temple Square. Four thousand people visit Temple Square the first year.

August 1902—A Bureau of Information opens on Temple Square. One hundred and five men and women are called to serve as part-time volunteers. They distribute literature, give information, and conduct tours. More than 150,000 people visit Temple Square during the next year.

1922—Temple Square is designated an official mission of the Church.

1937—344,000 people visit Temple Square.

June 1960—The First Presidency announces that a new Bureau of Information will be built in the northwest corner of Temple Square.

1962—High-fidelity speakers are installed around the Temple Square grounds so tours can be conducted by microphone.

June 1978—South Visitors’ Center dedicated.

1981—Five couples are called as full-time missionaries on Temple Square.

June 1987—Leaders decide to use young sisters as visitors’ center missionaries.

1989—The mission becomes entirely staffed by full-time sister missionaries.

1995—Temple Square mission officially becomes the Utah Salt Lake City Temple Square Mission.



TOO BUSY

TO SHARE
THE
GOSPEL?

BY DONNA PIKE JONES

I thought we had no time for missionary work, but my husband knew better.

As our young family was preparing our home for sale and a move out of state, our stake presidency issued a request to all members to pray each evening to find families for the missionaries to teach. I dismissed the invitation, thinking that it did not apply to us since we were moving so soon. My husband did not share my doubts. Each evening he gathered us together amid the chaos of moving boxes and wet paint, and we prayed to find a family ready to accept the gospel.

Many times during those prayers I questioned why my husband continued to pray for missionary opportunities. Didn't he understand how busy our life was? We were caring for our four young children and packing for a move that was less than two weeks away. Didn't he realize that we just didn't have time to meet and then fellowship a family during this stressful move?

What I did not realize was just how much time Heavenly Father was going to give us. Right on schedule my husband started his new job out of state and 10 hours away, while I was left with the children and a house to sell. Unfortunately, it did not sell according to our schedule, and his temporary apartment was too small for our family.

Days turned into weeks as our family waited in limbo for our house to sell. I began to spend long afternoons at the park with the children to break the monotony of our days. It was there that my children and I met Dale, Ruth, and their daughter, Hannah. Soon Ruth and I developed a friendship and met regularly at the park. It was during one of those long afternoons that Ruth noticed a CTR ring that I was wearing. She told me that she and her family had been investigating the Church but had stopped attending. We talked openly about the gospel that day, and the following day at the park I brought *Ensign* articles and the invitation to come to church again.

I remember feeling bold and directed as I answered her questions and bore testimony of the truthfulness of the gospel. I also remember feeling worried that maybe I was

pushing too much, that maybe I would harm our new friendship if I talked too much about the Church. Then I remembered my husband's prayers and knew they were being answered. This family was so prepared. Many afternoons I would come home from the park feeling as if I had learned much more from Ruth than she could have possibly gained from me.

Dale and Ruth were baptized a few months later as our family continued to wait for our house to sell. During those months I felt privileged to be a witness to this family's conversion. I was able to witness their recognition of the Spirit, the growth of their testimonies, and the love of our ward members as they accepted and nurtured this family. Our family also gained friendships for life. I felt very grateful that Heavenly Father answered our family prayers even though I had doubted. I found new meaning in the Lord's admonition, "Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not" (D&C 6:36). ■



Ruth and I developed a friendship and met regularly at the park. It was during one of those long afternoons that Ruth noticed a CTR ring that I was wearing.

PARABLES OF THE

Master

*Jesus taught in parables
to veil their meaning.
In this way, hearers
of the parable
learn religious truth
in proportion to their
faith and discernment.*



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Above: Parable of the Pounds,
by Henry Coller. “His lord answered and
said unto him [who buried his one talent],
Thou wicked and slothful servant. . . .

“Take therefore the talent from him”
(Matthew 25:26, 28; see vv. 14–30).





Left: Parable of the Sower,
by George Soper. “Behold, a sower went
forth to sow; . . .

“And when he sowed, some seeds fell by
the way side, . . .

“Some fell upon stony places, . . .

“And some fell among thorns; . . .

“But other fell into good ground”

(Matthew 13:3-5, 7-8; see vv. 3-23).

Above: Rescue of the Lost Lamb,
by Minerva K. Teichert. “What man

of you, having an hundred sheep, if
he lose one of them, doth not leave
the ninety and nine in the wilderness,
and go after that which is lost, until he
find it?

“And when he hath found it, he layeth it
on his shoulders, rejoicing.

“And when he cometh home, he calleth
together his friends and neighbours, saying
unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have
found my sheep which was lost.

“I say unto you, that likewise joy
shall be in heaven over one sinner that
repenteth, more than over ninety and nine
just persons, which need no repentance”
(Luke 15:4-7).



Above: Five of Them Were Wise, by Walter Rane. *“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.*

“And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

“They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:

“But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. . . .

“And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh. . . .

“And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; . . .

“But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you” (Matthew 25:1–4, 6, 8–9; see vv. 1–13).

Right: The Enemy Sowing Tares, by James Tissot. *“The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:*

“But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat. . . .

“But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

“So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? . . .

“He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. . . .

“Let both grow together until the harvest: . . . Gather ye together first the tares . . . to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn” (Matthew 13:24–28, 30).



Right: The Pharisee and the Publican, by Robert T. Barrett.

“The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. . . .

“And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto

heaven, . . . saying, God be merciful to me a sinner:

“I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted” (Luke 18:11, 13–14; see vv. 9–14).



Above: The Good Samaritan, by Gustave Doré.

“But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,

“And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him” (Luke 10:33–34; see vv. 25–37).

Left: Prodigal Son, by Clark Kelley Price.

“And [the prodigal son] arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him” (Luke 15:20; see vv. 11–32). ■

Three Tools to Build a SACRED HOME

Everyday activities in our homes offer opportunities to practice love, service, obedience, and cooperation.

BY SHIRLEY R. KLEIN

Brigham Young University associate professor,
School of Family Life

For the pioneers, caring for their homes required heavy labor and protection from the harsh physical environment. Consider the story of Ann Howell Burt. She emigrated from Wales, married, and lived in a dugout in northern Utah during the summer of 1863. As a young mother she had to work hard to keep order and see to the needs of her family. She recorded in her journal:

“Some days ago, I killed a rattlesnake with my rolling pin, as he came crawling down the steps. I was just cooking supper and the baby was on the floor or rather the ground. . . . I was badly frightened. . . .

“ . . . A few days ago, while keeping the flies off the baby’s face as he slept . . . , I discovered . . . a large tarantula crawling toward the child. I seized the broomstick, thrust the end of it at the tarantula and when it took hold . . . I hurriedly put it into the fire.”¹

Though many of us may not have to worry about tarantulas and snakes invading our homes, we have even more dangerous influences threatening us. Our tarantulas and snakes are moral ones, and they are ever so subtle. They include disdain for household work, the difficulty of holding family mealtimes, changing roles for mothers and fathers, abortion, and the erosion of marriage through divorce, cohabitation, and same-sex marriage. It would be nice if we

could beat these invaders back with household implements, but we’ve lost many of our rolling pins and broomsticks.

Declining Home Life

Today it is normal to hear young women describe their goals for the future in terms of exciting career plans. These young women most likely also desire to be wives and mothers, but today it seems more appropriate to announce career goals first. Although we value these opportunities for women, motherhood and homemaking have almost disappeared from modern society as natural and valued pathways for women.

Instead the message seems to be that if mothers have access to modern conveniences to care for their homes and families, then they should be free to seek their own fulfillment. Home is often erroneously considered a place from which women need to break free. Some ideologies would even have women think that home duties limit their full potential, and women and men are tempted to disregard the important, everyday aspects of home life—thus the loss of our rolling pins and brooms.

While modern conveniences have delivered us from some of the work of caring for a home, they have led to a decline in home life. We are tempted to disregard the value of everyday home activities like having family meals, and in the process we lose important opportunities for individual and family growth. Author Cheryl Mendelson explains: “As people turn more and more to outside institutions to have their [everyday] needs met . . . , [our] skills and expectations . . . diminish, in turn decreasing the chance that people’s homes can satisfy their needs.”²



In general conference, President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) warned: “Many of the social restraints which in the past have helped to reinforce and to shore up the family are dissolving and disappearing. The time will come when only those who believe deeply and actively in the family will be able to preserve their families in the midst of the gathering evil around us.”³

Protecting Our Homes and Families

How can we successfully defend our homes from this “gathering evil” and progress toward our eternal goals?

First, we need to rediscover and preserve the sacred nature of the home and its purposes. In the Bible Dictionary we read, “Only the home can compare with the temple in sacredness.”⁴ If our homes compare to the temple, what is it about the home that makes it sacred? One dictionary defines *sacred* as “belonging to or dedicated to God; worthy of reverence; set apart for or dedicated to some person, object, or purpose; that [which] must not be violated or disregarded; properly immune, as from violence or interference.”⁵

Apply this idea of sacred to everyday activities in your home such as mealtime, music, recreation, laundry, and caring for your home and yard. Mundane activities can have a higher purpose and must not be disregarded; they give

us opportunities to develop and practice character virtues and ethical behavior. By doing these everyday activities, we can learn about moral truths and practice honesty, patience, charity, and brotherly kindness. Everyday work and recreation in the home provide rich contexts for children and adults to make choices and learn from them. For example, a child, a spouse, or even a roommate may choose to contribute in the home by seeing what needs to be done and doing it happily. Or he or she may wait to be asked and then complain about the inconvenience.

Everyday events in our home can seem so simple that we overlook their importance—like the children of Israel who were smitten by a plague of snakes. To be healed they had to just look at the brass serpent on a pole (see Numbers 21:8–9), but because it was so simple, many did not do it. “Because of the simpleness of the way, or the easiness of it, there were many who perished” (1 Nephi 17:41). Everyday activities in our homes may be simple, but *because* they are simple, frequent, and repeated, they offer important opportunities to build individuals and families.

Second, we need to make family mealtime a daily event. Today, many find it easier to graze individually in their kitchens, dine from their cars, or go to the nearest restaurant for a quick meal rather than prepare a meal



Even the smallest child can feel like a valued individual through something as mundane as folding laundry. Over the years as the tasks' complexity increases, the children gain confidence in their ability to choose and do worthwhile things.

and sit down together as a family.

What are we losing? Family meals have numerous beneficial effects. Evidence suggests that family meals help children have better nutrition,⁶ fewer psychological problems, and less risky or self-destructive behaviors.⁷ Family meals in a positive environment also play an important role in preventing unhealthy weight-control practices.⁸

The simple acts of creating a meal and enjoying it together help family members stay connected. The meal doesn't have to be elaborate to create a time to connect and get a feeling for each person's day. Outside distractions can be managed so that the emphasis is on passing food, talking, and interacting. Children learn to share family food instead of asking for individualized orders as they do in a restaurant. The regular family mealtime gives children a sense of security because they know what to expect at the end of each day. It is also a time to express gratitude to God in prayer for the meal and other blessings. Perhaps most important, the routine of family mealtimes can

promote informal gospel discussions.

Third, we need to recognize that family activities have temporal and spiritual effects. God has given us only spiritual commandments; none of them are temporal (see D&C 29:35). *Temporal* means lasting for time only. His commandments are everlasting. We can apply this to our homes by realizing that our actions on earth have eternal consequences. Our actions shape the person we become now and in the life to come. For example, as spouses "love and care for each other and for their children,"⁹ they foster the development of characteristics that enable them and their children to progress in eternity.

We learn lessons of life at home that build strong character. Family researcher Enola Aird reminds us that at home we learn how to work and how to govern ourselves, we learn manners and morals, we learn how to become self-reliant—or not.¹⁰ "Without parents' humanizing work, children may be quite smart, well-educated, and successful but so selfish, self-centered, and uncaring as to be essentially uncivilized—

not able to live in a spirit of community with others.”¹¹

If we realize the value of everyday life, we can see that even the smallest child can feel like a valued individual through something as mundane as folding laundry. Little children can match socks, sort colors, fold towels, and be recognized for their accomplishments. Over the years as the tasks' complexity increases, the children gain confidence in their ability to choose and do worthwhile things.

Lighting Our Homes

Family responsibilities are opportunities to practice gaining light and truth through obedience. Jesus Christ is the Light of the World. When we follow Him and keep His commandments, we walk in His light. The closer we follow, the more light and truth we have. We can model obedience for our children by paying attention to our responsibilities. For example, by learning to do chores regularly, parents and children can learn obedience and exactness in small things, which have less severe consequences. Then they are better prepared to keep commandments and make sacred covenants.

Among the important foundational instructions given when the Church was organized was the counsel to “attend to all family duties” (D&C 20:47, 51). Three years later some of the leading brethren of the Church were chastened for neglecting their family duties (see D&C 93:41–50). Today, in the family proclamation, we are reminded again of our sacred family duties.

We often think about family duties in terms of family prayer, home evening, and scripture reading, but we should also remember that activities like feeding and clothing ourselves help us practice love, service, obedience, and cooperation. These simple, everyday routines have great power in our lives.

Can we draw closer to the Lord through everyday living—through family meals and wholesome recreation? Absolutely. How much light do we want? The Lord promised, “He that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light” (D&C 50:24), and, “[I] will give unto the faithful line upon line, precept upon precept; and I will try you and prove you herewith” (D&C 98:12).



Prove faithful in the little things, and the bigger things will be added on. Opportunities to learn and practice in the home are sacred; they are times to grow spiritually and draw closer to the Savior. This process of growth is a life-long quest, and our home environment gives us repeated, sustained chances to practice becoming godlike individuals and families. ■

From a devotional address given at Brigham Young University on April 5, 2005.

NOTES

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3. “Families Can Be Eternal,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 4.
4. “Temple,” 781.
5. *The World Book Dictionary* (1984), “sacred,” 1830.
6. See Tami M. Videon and Carolyn K. Manning, “Influences on Adolescent Eating Patterns: The Importance of Family Meals,” *Journal of Adolescent Health*, May 2003, 365–73.
7. See Marla E. Eisenberg, Rachel E. Olson, Dianne Neumark-Sztainer, Mary Story, and Linda H. Bearinger, “Correlations between Family Meals and Psychosocial Well-Being among Adolescents,” *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*, Aug. 2004, 792–96.
8. See Dianne Neumark-Sztainer, Melanie Wall, Mary Story, and Jayne A. Fulkerson, “Are Family Meal Patterns Associated with Disordered Eating Behaviors among Adolescents?” *Journal of Adolescent Health*, Nov. 2004, 350–59.
9. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liabona*, Oct. 2004, 49; *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.
10. See “On Rekindling a Spirit of ‘Home Training’: A Mother’s Notes from the Front,” in *Taking Parenting Public: The Case for a New Social Movement*, ed. Sylvia A. Hewlett, Nancy Rankin, and Cornel West (2002), 13–28.
11. “On Rekindling,” 19.

Talking to Youth about Pornography

BY DAN GRAY
Licensed clinical social worker



As parents and priesthood leaders speak openly with youth about intimacy, they will be able to help them understand and avoid the spiritual, emotional, and physical dangers of pornography.

Today's youth are bombarded by explicit images—most of them carnal and lustful. But because of the complexity and delicate nature of sexual issues, many parents are reluctant or embarrassed to discuss the subject with their children. Consequently, many youth are schooled by misguided friends or corrupt media and often develop inaccurate views about sexuality. Those views may lead to inappropriate behaviors.

We want to teach our youth the law of chastity and help them avoid the pain of immorality. So what can parents and priesthood leaders do? We need to discuss with our youth the sacred nature of human intimacy and help them understand and bridle the feelings associated with that intimacy.

If we teach only about misused sexuality, our youth might become insecure and uncertain. We may inadvertently convey this confusing message: "Sexual thoughts and feelings are bad, sinful, and wrong—save them for someone you love." Youth who receive only negative messages about sexuality may conclude, "Since sexual feelings or urges are bad, and I feel them very strongly, I too must be bad." This kind of thinking can result in feelings of low self-worth, unworthiness, and shame, leaving the youth feeling distant from the Spirit.

Open conversation can prevent much of this confusion. As we talk to our youth about the sacred nature of our bodies and procreation, we'll be able to help them understand and avoid the spiritual, emotional, and physical dangers of pornography.

Our Bodies: Their Sacred Nature

The media often portray an unrealistic view of how our bodies should look and what they represent. This view leads people to see the body as an object rather than an essential part of a person's soul. Accepting this view can lead to near worship of the "perfect body" and, when one doesn't match up, to self-loathing.

Rather than let the media teach our youth this destructive worldly view, we can teach them that our bodies, in all their varieties, are wonderful, God-given gifts, created to provide joy and fulfillment. In 1913 Elder James E. Talmage (1862–1933) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles stated: "We have been taught . . . to look upon these bodies of ours as gifts from God. We Latter-day Saints do not regard the body as something to be condemned, something to be abhorred. . . . We regard [the body] as the sign of our royal birthright. . . . It is particular to the theology of the Latter-day Saints that we regard the body as an essential part of the soul."¹ This understanding can help youth look upon their own bodies and the bodies of others with deep respect.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles also articulated the sacred nature of our bodies:

"We simply must understand the revealed, restored Latter-day Saint doctrine of the soul, and the high and inextricable part the body plays in that doctrine.

"One of the 'plain and precious' truths restored to this dispensation is that 'the spirit *and* the body are the soul of man' [D&C 88:15; emphasis added]. . . .

". . . Exploitation of the body (please include the word *soul* there) is, in the last analysis, an exploitation of Him who is the Light and the Life of the world."²

Our Sexuality: A Gift

In addition to being blessed with physical bodies, we are also given the sacred power of procreation. Our Heavenly Father has sanctioned the act of sexual expression in marriage and allows married couples to experience pleasure, love, and fulfillment in that expression. President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) stated: "In the context of lawful marriage, the intimacy of sexual relations is right and

divinely approved. There is nothing unholy or degrading about sexuality in itself, for by that means men and women join in a process of creation and in an expression of love."³ Our sexual drives—when expressed appropriately—should therefore be seen as wonderful, sacred gifts.

President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, spoke to the youth of the Church on this topic. His powerful insights can help parents teach about the positive and sacred nature of these powers:

"There was provided in our bodies—and this is sacred—a power of creation, a light, so to speak, that has the power to kindle other lights. This gift was to be used only within the sacred bonds of marriage. Through the exercise of this power of creation, a mortal body may be conceived, a spirit entered into it, and a new soul born into this life.

"*This power is good.* It can create and sustain family life, and it is in family life that we find the fountains of happiness. It is given to virtually every individual who is born into mortality. It is a sacred and significant power, and I repeat, my young friends, that *this power is good.* . . .

"Much of the happiness that may come to you in life will depend on how you use this sacred power of creation."⁴

The Harmful Effects of Pornography

One of the things that can corrupt this sacred power is pornography. President Gordon B. Hinckley has said that through its use "the minds of youth become warped with false concepts. Continued exposure leads to addiction that is almost impossible to break."⁵

Many individuals, even some professional counselors, excuse or even condone viewing pornography as harmless behavior. They rationalize that it is "normal" and causes no harm when done in seclusion and privacy. This same rationale is used in excusing the accompanying practice of self-stimulation. So how do we respond when youth ask, "What is it about pornography and self-stimulation that is wrong?" The following four thoughts may be helpful in addressing this question.

It defiles souls—souls for which Jesus Christ atoned. The body is part of the soul; therefore, when we look upon the body of another person to satisfy our own lustful desires, we are disrespecting and defiling the very soul of that person as well as our own. Elder Holland warned us of the consequences of rationalizing or taking these things lightly: “In trivializing the soul of another (please include the word *body* there) we trivialize the atonement, which saved that soul and guaranteed its continued existence. And when one toys with the Son of Righteousness, the Day Star Himself, one toys with white heat and a flame hotter and holier than the noonday sun. You cannot do so and not be burned.”⁶ Pornography defiles and degrades the body and spirit. We need to respect the sacred nature of others and of ourselves.

It can keep us from reaching the fullest potential of our souls. Our Heavenly Father has created our bodies and our spirits. He knows how they work together best. He knows what will help us reach our potential and what will hinder our progress. He knows what we should take into our bodies and what we should leave out. Prophets have taught us that putting pornographic images into our minds is detrimental to our spirit and that in so doing, we jeopardize our ability to have happiness and joy. If, however, we follow the Lord’s directives from the scriptures and prophets, we will be able to experience the fullest potential of our souls.

It can become addictive. Repeatedly viewing pornography, especially when coupled with self-stimulation, can become habitual, even addictive. The addiction is established when a person becomes dependent on the “rush” of chemicals the body creates when one views pornography. He or she learns to depend on this activity to escape from or cope with life’s challenges and emotional stressors like hurt, anger, boredom, loneliness, or fatigue. This dependency becomes very difficult to break and sometimes escalates to sexual encounters outside the bonds of marriage.

It creates unhealthy expectations for marriage. When a person views pornography and becomes aroused, the body experiences the same arousal patterns as in a real

sexual encounter. When this behavior is repeated frequently, the body and the mind become conditioned to certain sexual images and behavior, which can create unrealistic and unhealthy expectations of what a sexual relationship should or will be. Such expectations carry over to marriage, creating pain, distrust, conflict, confusion, and betrayal of trust between spouses.

Unceasing Virtue

The Lord offers tremendous blessings to those who have clean and virtuous thoughts coupled with charity: “Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven. The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion” (D&C 121:45–46).

How does one maintain virtuous thoughts “unceasingly”? Those who succeed in overcoming inappropriate thoughts and behaviors are those who learn to engage in virtuous daily routines. These activities include the following:

- Listening to uplifting music.
- Enjoying God’s creations in nature.
- Keeping our bodies clean and healthy.
- Reading the scriptures and good literature.
- Delighting in laughter with good friends and family.
- Participating in conversation that is not demeaning or lewd.
- Giving thanks in prayer and pleading for power to resist temptation.
- Surrounding ourselves with virtuous things in our homes and workplaces, including pictures, paintings, gifts from loved ones, items that make us laugh, or things that help us recall meaningful memories.

All of these can become symbols of virtue, which can keep our minds focused and less susceptible to the cravings of the natural man. If youth can learn and implement these strategies in their lives, they will begin to experience the incredible blessings spoken of in Doctrine and Covenants 121.

It is also vital that they understand we all have weakness to overcome. Weakness does not make us unworthy of God's love. In fact, overcoming our weakness is part of the Lord's plan for us. When the Lord makes us aware of our weakness and we follow His directive to become humble and submissive (not distressed and hopeless), wonderful things



begin to happen. We can yield our hearts to the Lord in faith. Then, through His grace and power—not through our willpower alone—He will “make weak things become strong” (Ether 12:27) unto us.

We are not told that He will take our weakness away from us. We may continue to be tempted and troubled by our weakness, but as we are humble and maintain faith, the Lord will help us resist temptations.

When young people have problems with pornography, they need to know that they are not lost, that we and the Lord still love them, and that there is a way out. President Hinckley has said: “May you plead with the Lord out of the depths of your soul that He will remove from you the addiction which enslaves you. And may you have the courage to seek the

loving guidance of your bishop and, if necessary, the counsel of caring professionals.”⁷ Our youth should not feel ashamed of seeking parental, priesthood, and professional help.

As parents and leaders, we must be involved in our youths' lives, striving to create a safe environment for them. We need to be bold in our communication with them about these important issues, encouraging them to stay close to the principles of the gospel and to fortify themselves against the powers of the adversary. We need to be aware of and monitor our youths' activities—including their Internet use—and openly discuss the blessings and dangers of human sexuality, listening and giving sound direction and guidance.

Of course, we do not share personal accounts of our own intimate experiences. But using the principles discussed in this article, we can help our youth clearly understand the power and the potential of the sexual urges they have.

More important, we must set an example to our youth. They are watching how we cope with negative influences. Our youth need to know that *we* know the influence of the adversary is no match for the divine power and influence of the Lord, in whom we place our confidence. ■

NOTES

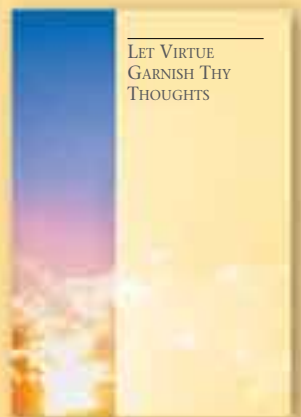
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2. *Of Souls, Symbols, and Sacraments* (2001), 11, 13.
3. *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball (1982), 311.
4. “Why Stay Morally Clean,” *Ensign*, July 1972, 111; emphasis added.
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HELP IN OVERCOMING PORNOGRAPHY

Let Virtue Garnish Thy Thoughts is a new pamphlet designed to help those struggling with pornography. It discusses how to:

- Recognize destructive media.
- Resist and avoid the temptation of pornography.
- Abandon pornography addictions.

Let Virtue Garnish Thy Thoughts (item no. 00460) also lists scriptures and other Church resources on repentance, the sanctity of the body, and overcoming worldly influences. Church leaders and family members can share the pamphlet with loved ones struggling with pornography.





This, the Greatest of All Dispensations

BY ELDER JEFFREY R. HOLLAND

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

I want to speak to you in the context of ongoing anxiety in the world and some of the challenges we face. Since September 11, 2001, we have been made more fearful and have been more alarmed by international events and the almost wholesale new use of the word *terror*. I know that many of you have wondered in your hearts what all of this means regarding the end of the world and your life in it. Many have asked, “Is this the hour of the Second Coming of the Savior and all that is prophesied surrounding that event?”

Indeed, sometime not long after 9/11, a missionary asked me in all honesty and full of faith, “Elder Holland, are these the last days?” I saw the earnestness in his face and some of the fear in his eyes. I said, “Yes, Elder, we are in the last days, but there is really nothing new about that. The promised Second Coming of the Savior began with the First Vision of the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1820. We can be certain that we are in the last days—years and years of them.” I gave him a friendly shake of the hand and sent him on his way. He smiled, seemed more reassured

to put all this in some context, and held his head a little higher as he left me.

I hasten to say that I *do* know what this young man was really asking. What he really meant was “Will I finish my mission? Is there any point in getting an education? Can I hope for a marriage? Do I have a future? Is there any happiness ahead for me?” And I say to you what I said to him, “Yes, certainly—to all those questions.”

As far as the timing of the triumphant, publicly witnessed Second Coming and its earthshaking events, I do not know when that will happen. *No one* knows. The Savior said that even the angels in heaven would not know (see Matthew 24:36).

We should watch for the signs, we should live as faithfully as we possibly can, and we should share the gospel with everyone so that blessings and protections will be available to all. But we must not be paralyzed just because that event and the events surrounding it are ahead of us somewhere. We cannot stop living life. Indeed, we should live life more fully than we have ever lived it. After all,



God expects you not simply to face the future; He expects you to embrace and shape the future—to love it, rejoice in it, and delight in your opportunities.



Above, from top:
Curitiba Brazil Temple
 under construction,
 December 2006.
Helsinki Finland
 Temple, dedicated
 on October 22, 2006.
Nauvoo Illinois
 Temple, dedicated on
 June 27, 2002. Today,
 124 temples are
 in operation, and
 11 more have been
 announced or are
 under construction.

this is the dispensation of the *fulness* of times.

Have Faith, Not Fear

I have just two things to say to you who are troubled about the future. I say them lovingly and from my heart.

First, we must *never* let fear and the father of fear (Satan himself) divert us from our faith and faithful living. Every person in every era has had to walk by faith into what has *always* been some uncertainty. This is the plan. Just be faithful. God is in charge. He knows your name and He knows your need.

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ—that is the first principle of the gospel. We must go forward. God expects you to have enough faith, determination, and trust in Him to keep moving, keep living, keep rejoicing. He expects you not simply to face the future; He expects you to embrace and shape the future—to love it, rejoice in it, and delight in your opportunities.

God is eagerly waiting for the chance to answer your prayers and fulfill your dreams, just as He always has. But He can't if you don't pray, and He can't if you don't dream. In short, He can't if you don't believe.

Two Scriptures of Comfort

Here are two scriptures, both directed at those who live in perilous times.

The first is from section 101 of the Doctrine and Covenants. This revelation came as the Saints who were gathered in Missouri were suffering terrible persecution. I suppose, at its worst, this was the most difficult and dangerous time—may I say “terror filled”—that the Church had yet known.

Yet in that frightening time the Lord said to His people:

“Let your hearts be comforted concerning Zion; for all flesh is in mine hands; be still and know that I am God.

“Zion shall not be moved out of her place, notwithstanding her children are scattered.

“They that remain, and are pure in heart, shall return, and come to their inheritances, they and their children, with songs of everlasting joy, to build up the waste places of Zion—

“And all these things that the prophets might be fulfilled” (D&C 101:16–19).

So let your hearts be comforted concerning Zion. And remember the most fundamental definition of Zion we have ever been given: those who are “pure in heart” (D&C 97:21). If you will keep your hearts pure, you and your children and your grandchildren shall sing songs of everlasting joy as you build up Zion—and you shall not be moved out of your place.

The other verse I refer to is from the Savior, spoken to His disciples as He faced His Crucifixion and as they faced fear, disarray, and persecution. In His last collective counsel to them in mortality, He said: “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

So, in a world of tribulation, let's remember our faith. Let's recall the *other* promises and prophecies that have been given, all the reassuring ones, and let's live life more fully, with more boldness and courage than at any other time.

Christ has overcome the world and made a path for us. He has said to us in our day: “Gird up your loins and be prepared. Behold, the kingdom is yours, and the enemy shall not overcome” (D&C 38:9).

More than 2,000 years or so ago there was one temple in the Old World and two or three temples in Book of Mormon history, but now temples are multiplying so rapidly we can hardly count them!

Three Prophetic Quotes

That leads to the second point I want to make about the day in which we live. We are making our appearance on the stage of mortality in the greatest dispensation ever given to mankind, and we need to make the most of it.

Here is a favorite quote of mine from the Prophet Joseph Smith (1805–44): “The building up of Zion is a cause that has interested the people of God in every age; it is a theme upon which prophets, priests and kings have dwelt with peculiar delight; they have looked forward with joyful anticipation to the day in which we live; and fired with heavenly and joyful anticipations they have sung and written and prophesied of this our day; . . . we are the favored people that God has [chosen] to bring about the Latter-day glory.”¹

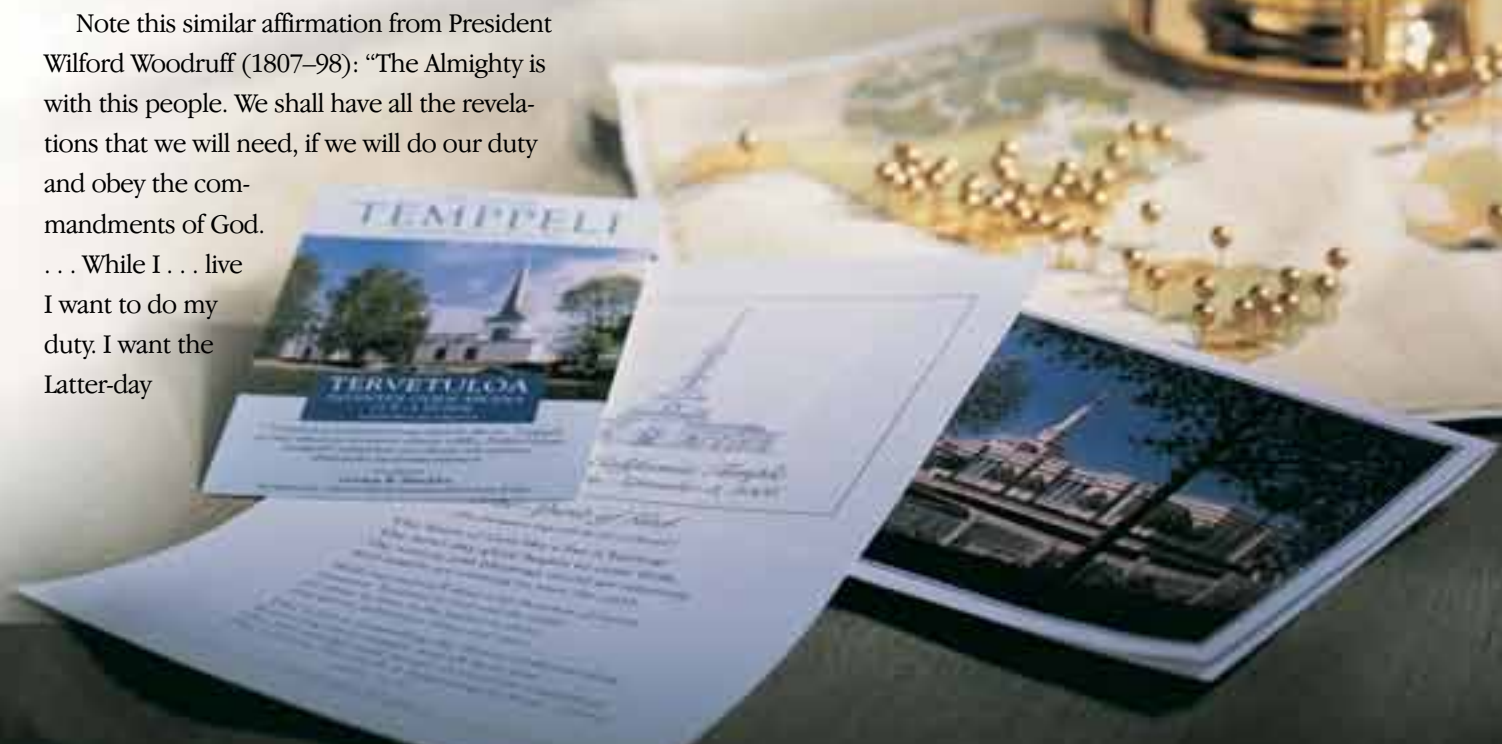
Note this similar affirmation from President Wilford Woodruff (1807–98): “The Almighty is with this people. We shall have all the revelations that we will need, if we will do our duty and obey the commandments of God. . . . While I . . . live I want to do my duty. I want the Latter-day

Saints to do their duty. . . . Their responsibility is great and mighty. The eyes of God and all the holy prophets are watching us. This is the great dispensation that has been spoken of ever since the world began. We are gathered together . . . by the power and commandment of God. We are doing the work of God. . . . Let us fill our mission.”²

Lastly, let me share this from President Gordon B. Hinckley, our modern prophet, who currently guides us through the challenging times of our present hour: “We of this generation are the end harvest of all that has gone before. It is not enough to simply be known as a member of this Church. A solemn obligation rests upon us. Let us face it and work at it.

“We must live as true followers of the Christ, with charity toward all, returning good for evil, teaching by example the ways of the Lord, and accomplishing the vast service He has outlined for us.

“May we live worthy of the glorious endowment of light and understanding and eternal truth which has come to us through all the perils of the past. Somehow, among all



who have walked the earth, we have been brought forth in this unique and remarkable season. Be grateful, and above all be faithful.”³

Over a representative period of time, our prophets have focused not on the terror of the times in which they lived and not on the ominous elements of the latter days, in which we are living, but they felt to speak of the opportunity and the blessing and, above all, the responsibility to seize the privileges afforded us in this, the greatest of all dispensations. I love the line from the Prophet Joseph Smith saying that earlier prophets, priests, and kings “have looked forward with joyful anticipation to the day in which we live; and . . . have sung and written and prophesied of this our day.” What were they so joyful about? I can assure you they weren’t concentrating on terror and tragedy. President Woodruff’s words were: “The eyes of God and all the holy prophets are watching us. This is the *great dispensation* that has been spoken of ever since the world began.” Let me repeat President Hinckley’s

words: “Through all the perils of the past, [s]omehow, among all who have walked the earth, we have been brought forth in this unique and remarkable season. Be grateful, and above all be faithful.”

I don’t know how all of that makes you feel, but suddenly any undue anxiety about the times in which we live dissipates for me, and I am humbled, spiritually thrilled, and motivated at the opportunity we have been given. God is watching over His world, His Church, His leaders, and He is certainly watching over you. Let’s just make sure we are the “pure in heart” and that we *are* faithful. How blessed you will be. How fortunate your children and grandchildren will be.

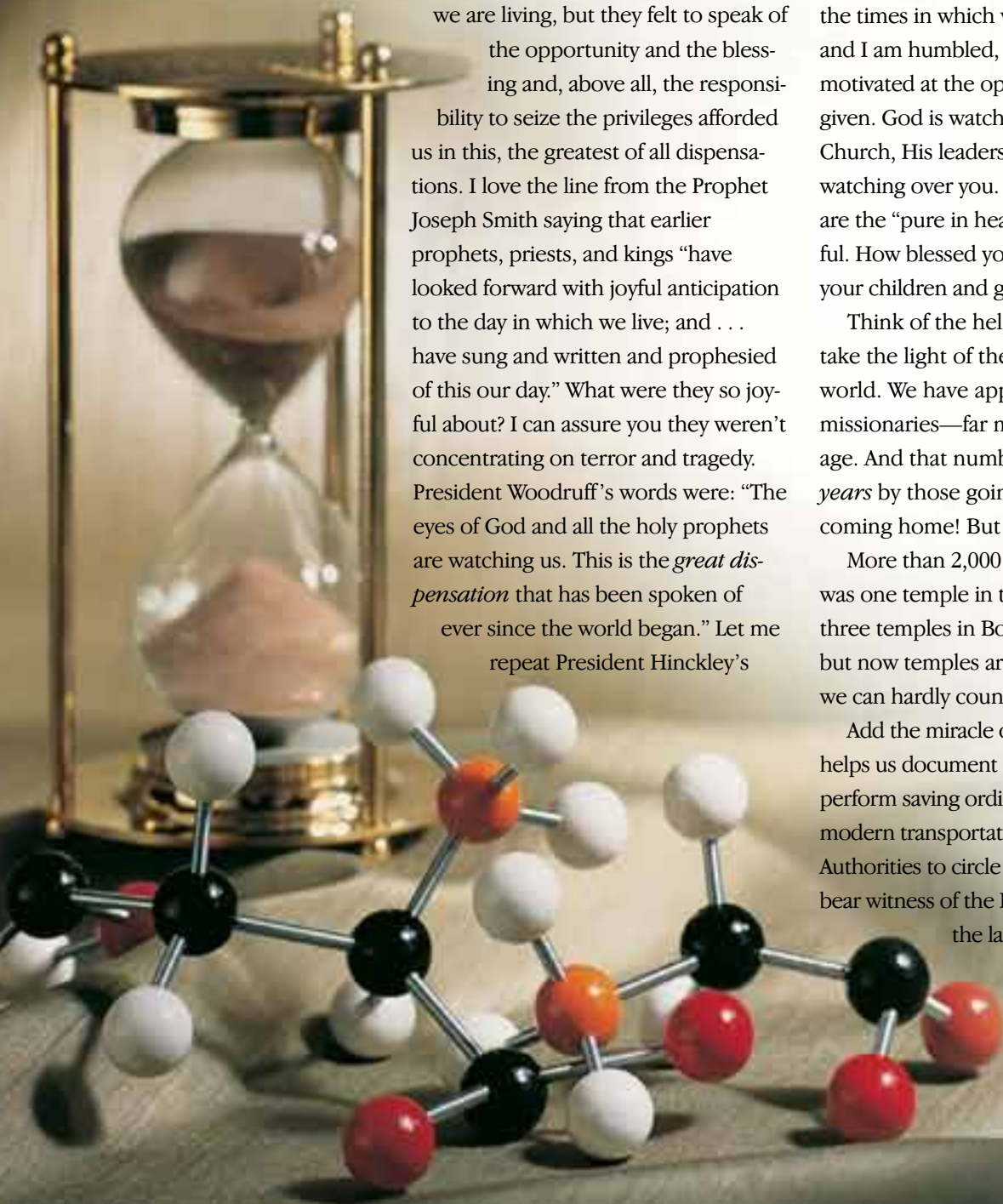
Think of the help we have been given to take the light of the gospel to a darkened world. We have approximately 53,000 missionaries—far more than in any other age. And that number is repeated *every two years* by those going out to replace those coming home! But we need even more.

More than 2,000 years or so ago there was one temple in the Old World and two or three temples in Book of Mormon history, but now temples are multiplying so rapidly we can hardly count them!

Add the miracle of the computer, which helps us document our family histories and perform saving ordinances for our dead. Add modern transportation, which allows General Authorities to circle the globe and personally bear witness of the Lord to all the Saints in all the lands. Add that where we

cannot go we can now “send,” as the scriptures say, with satellite broadcasts (see D&C 84:62).

Add *all* the elements of



education, science, technology, communication, transportation, medicine, nutrition, and revelation that surround us, and we begin to realize what the angel Moroni meant when he said repeatedly to the boy prophet Joseph Smith, quoting the Old Testament prophet Joel, that in the last days God would pour out His Spirit upon “*all flesh*” and that all

In the last days God will pour out His Spirit upon “*all flesh*,” and all humankind will be blessed by the light coming in all fields of endeavor as part of the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

humankind would be blessed by the light coming in all fields of endeavor as part of the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ (Joel 2:28; emphasis added; see also Joseph Smith—History 1:41).

We consider all these blessings that we have in our dispensation, and we pause to say to our Father in Heaven, “How *great* thou art.”⁴

A Wedding Feast

Let me add another element to this view of the dispensation. Because ours is the last and greatest of all dispensations, because all things will eventually culminate and be fulfilled in our era, there is, therefore, one specific responsibility that falls to those of us in the Church now that did not rest quite the same way on Church members in any earlier time. *We have a responsibility to prepare the Church of the Lamb of God to receive the Lamb of God*—in person, in triumphant glory, in His millennial role as Lord of lords and King of kings.

We have the responsibility as a Church and as individual members of that Church to be worthy to have Christ come to us, to

be worthy to have Him greet us, and to have Him accept, receive, and embrace us. The lives we present to Him in that sacred hour *must* be worthy of Him!

In the language of the scriptures we are the ones designated in all of history who must prepare the bride (the Church) for the Bridegroom (the Savior) and be worthy of an invitation to the wedding feast (see Matthew 22:2–14; 25:1–12; D&C 88:92, 96).

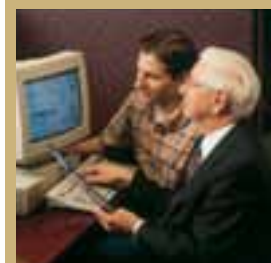
So, setting aside fear of the future, I am filled with an overwhelming sense of duty to prepare my life (and to the extent that I can to help prepare the lives of the members of the Church) for that long-prophesied day, for the time when we will make a presentation of the Church to Him whose Church it is.

I do not know when this singular day will come. I do not know who will be present to see it. But this *I do* know: when Christ comes, the members of His Church *must* be looking and acting like members of His Church are *supposed* to look and act if we are to be acceptable to Him. We must be doing His work, and we must be living His teachings. He must recognize us quickly and easily as truly being His disciples.

Surely that is why President Hinckley said: “It is not enough [for us, you and me, *now*, in our time] to simply be known as a member of this Church. . . . We must live as true followers of . . . Christ.” These are the *latter days*, and you and I are to be the best Latter-day *Saints* we can.

Live with Confidence

Is there a happy future for you and your posterity in these latter days? Absolutely! Will there be difficult times when those ominous



Among the knowledge and technology blessing humankind in these latter days are DNA research, computer-assisted family history research, and advanced medical treatments.



To be the best Latter-day Saints we can, we must be doing the Lord's work—building strong families, increasing personal spirituality, and serving others.

latter-day warnings and prophecies are fulfilled? Of course there will. Will those who have built upon the rock of Christ withstand winds, hail, and the mighty shafts in the whirlwind? You know they will. You have it on good word. You have it on His word! That “rock upon which ye are built . . . is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men [and women] build they cannot fall” (Helaman 5:12).

I leave you my love and my testimony that God not only lives, but He loves us. He loves *you*. Everything He does is for our good and our protection. There are evil and sorrow in the world, but there is no evil or harm in Him. He is our Father—a perfect father—and He will help us find refuge from the storm.

I testify not only that Jesus is the Christ, the holy and Only Begotten Son of God, but that He lives, that He loves us, that on the strength and merit of His atoning sacrifice, we too will live eternally.

This is the Church and kingdom of God on earth. Truth has been restored. Live with confidence, optimism, faith, and devotion. Be serious about life's challenges but not frightened or discouraged by them. Feel the joy of the Saints in the latter days—never crippling anxiety or destructive despair.

“Fear not, little flock. . . . Look [to Christ] in every thought; doubt not, fear not” (D&C 6:34, 36).

“Ye have not as yet understood how great blessings the Father hath . . . prepared for you. . . . Be of good cheer. . . . The kingdom is yours and the blessings thereof are yours, and the riches of eternity are yours” (D&C 78:17–18).

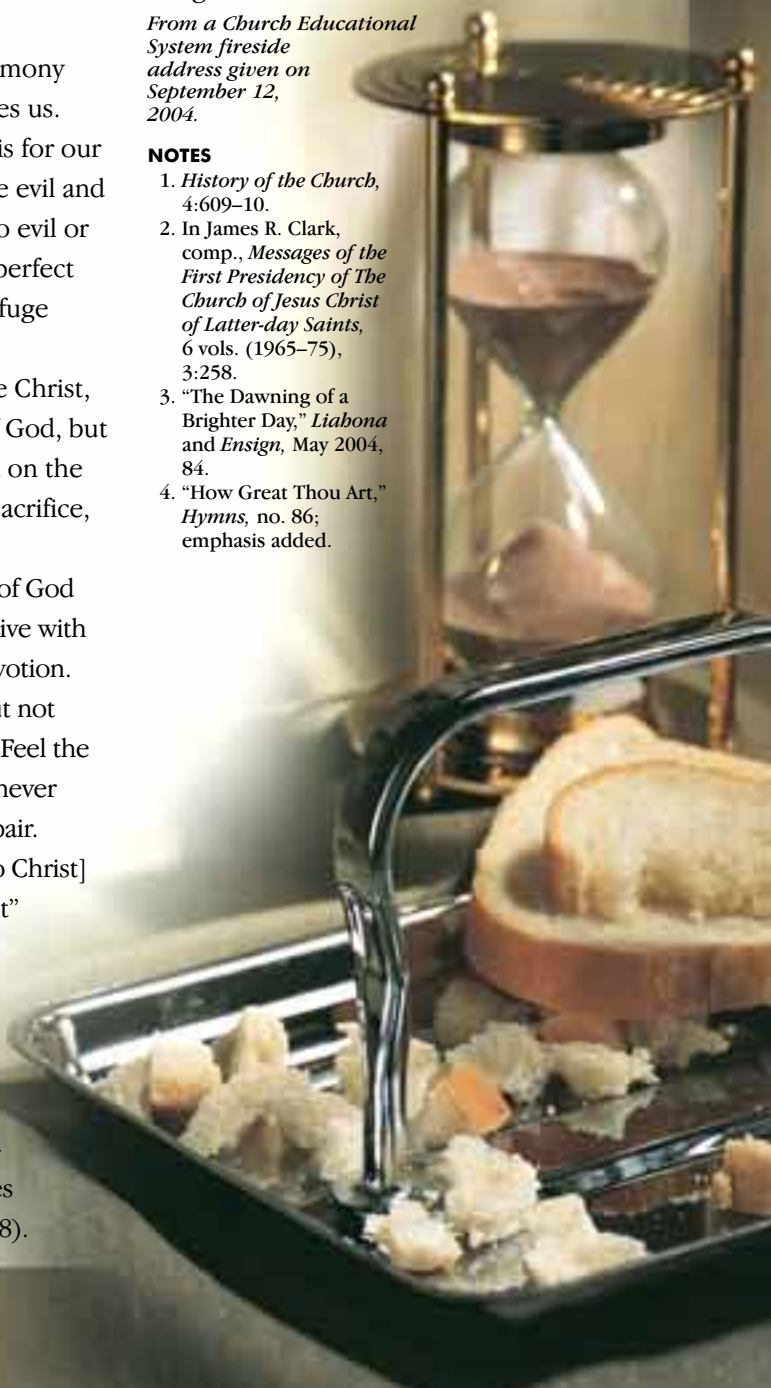
When Christ comes, the members of His Church must be looking and acting like members of His Church are supposed to look and act if we are to be acceptable to Him.

I leave you my blessing, my love, and an apostolic witness of the truthfulness of these things. ■

From a Church Educational System fireside address given on September 12, 2004.

NOTES

1. *History of the Church*, 4:609–10.
2. In James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (1965–75), 3:258.
3. “The Dawning of a Brighter Day,” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, May 2004, 84.
4. “How Great Thou Art,” *Hymns*, no. 86; emphasis added.



Become an Instrument in the Hands of God by Practicing Holiness



Prayerfully select and read from this message the scriptures and teachings that meet the needs of the sisters you visit. Share your experiences and testimony. Invite those you teach to do the same.

What Is Practicing Holiness?

President James E.

Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency:

“Holiness is the strength of the soul. It comes by faith and through obedience to God’s laws and ordinances. God then purifies the heart by faith, and the heart becomes purged from that which is profane and unworthy. When holiness is achieved by conforming to God’s will, one knows intuitively that which is wrong. . . .

“ . . . We should go to the temple, among other reasons, to safeguard our personal holiness and that of our families.

“In addition to temples, surely another holy place on earth ought to be our homes. . . .

“ . . . May the Lord bless each and all of us in our special responsibility to find holiness to the Lord by standing in holy places. That is where we will find the spiritual protection we need for ourselves and our families” (“Standing

in Holy Places,” *Liabona and Ensign*, May 2005, 62, 67–68).

Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“Developing Christlike attributes in our lives is not an easy task. . . . The reality check comes when

Christlike attributes need to become visible in our lives—as husband or wife, as father or mother, as son or daughter, in our friendships, in our employment, in our business, and in our recreation. We can recognize our growth, as can those around us, as

we gradually increase our capacity to ‘act in all holiness before [Him]’ (D&C 43:9)” (“Christlike Attributes—

the Wind beneath Our Wings,” *Liabona and Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 102).

How Can I Practice Holiness and Be an Instrument in the Hands of God?

Kathleen H. Hughes, former first counselor in the Relief Society general presidency: “Which one

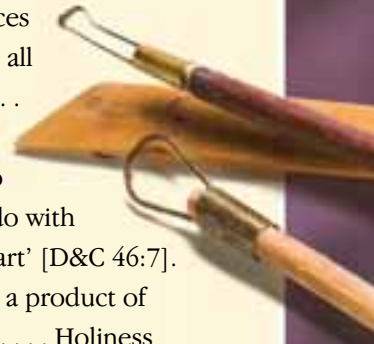
of us does not long to be cherished, watched over, comforted, and instructed in the things of God? How does it happen? One kindness, one expression of love, one thoughtful gesture, one willing hand at a time. But my message is not to those who receive such acts of charity but to all of us who must practice such holiness every day. To become like Jesus Christ, the Prophet Joseph taught, ‘you must enlarge your souls toward others’” (“That We May All Sit Down in Heaven Together,” *Liabona and Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 110).

Bonnie D. Parkin, former

Relief Society general president:

“Covenants—or binding promises between us and Heavenly Father—are essential for our eternal progression. Step-by-step, He tutors us to become like Him by enlisting us in His work. At baptism we covenant to love Him with all our hearts and love our sisters and brothers as ourselves. In the temple we further covenant to be obedient, selfless, faithful, honorable, charitable. We covenant to make sacrifices and consecrate all that we have. . . .

“The Lord has called us to do all that we do with ‘holiness of heart’ [D&C 46:7]. And holiness is a product of covenant living. . . . Holiness prompts the words ‘Here am I; send me’” (“With Holiness of Heart,” *Liabona and Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 103, 105). ■





Time Stood Still

BY JOYCE HANSON WALLIN

After our daughter died, I wondered if I could move forward and find happiness again.

When our daughter Cindy was seven years old, she had to have tubes put in her ears. On the day of the surgery my husband, Dave, and I went to the hospital and left our seven-week-old daughter, Linda, and our two boys with a friend. I hesitated to leave Linda because she had a cold but felt I needed to be with Cindy.

We returned home to total chaos, but all I wanted was to get the children fed and in bed. I would deal with the mayhem in the morning. Cindy asked if she could hold Linda. I explained that Linda wasn't feeling well and told her she could hold her in the morning.

I awoke abruptly at 7:00 a.m., realizing I had not heard

Linda all night. I got up to check on her. As I picked her up, I realized her face was discolored and she was cold. "Dave," I cried, "I think Linda is dead!" Time stood still. It seemed like forever before anyone came into the room. Dave called the paramedics, but I almost wished they wouldn't come because I knew in my heart that Linda was beyond being revived and when they took her from me, I would not be able to hold her again in this lifetime.

The fire engine came first, then a police car, then an ambulance, and then the coroner. Linda was dead. They wrapped her in a blanket and took her away.

I couldn't believe what was happening. In the midst

of the tears, our four-year-old son, Brian, reassured me, “It will be OK, Mama.” He was so sincere, and it touched me that he wanted to comfort me.

The bishop came to our home immediately, offering to do anything he could to help. He spent the day with us, and I appreciated his quiet strength. Ward members stopped by as the news spread. One sister offered to watch the children. The Relief Society presidency came and cleaned our home. And a brother mowed our lawn.

The coroner’s report indicated the cause of death to be sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)—an unexplained death of a normally healthy infant less than one year old. It was then I realized I wasn’t completely in control of my family’s well-being—an unsettling thought. I felt guilty.

As time passed, I felt as if a bubble were surrounding me, and I knew the Holy Ghost was protecting me from hurt I could not handle. I prayed more sincerely than

ever, staying on my knees for long periods of time.

I took care of my family’s necessities but was unable to concentrate on anything for a long time. One day I was spending a few minutes at the piano when our two-year-old son, Joel, came to me carrying an open Church book. My immediate reaction was to scold him for getting into the books. But I took it from him and looked at the page. It was Joseph Fielding Smith’s *Doctrines of Salvation*, opened to the section on exaltation: “Children who die in childhood will not be deprived of any blessing. When they grow, after the resurrection, to the full maturity of the spirit, *they will be entitled to all the blessings which they would have been entitled to had they been privileged to tarry here and receive them.* The Lord has arranged for that, so that justice will be given to every soul.”¹

I had read this once before, but suddenly I realized I was receiving a special message from the Lord sent by my little son, who could not have known what he was bringing me. I felt the reality that all was well with my baby. I felt peace and assurance and realized it was time to increase my focus on the precious children who were still with me. Linda was assured her eternal glory; the rest of us still had a long way to go.

I take peace and reassurance from Luke 22:42–43: “Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

“And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.”

If Jesus Christ received strength from an angel in His time of need, then certainly I could accept the strength given me in my sorrow to be able to move on with my life.

We were blessed with another daughter, Karen, the year after Linda’s death. Although the trials we experience are not easy, I know there is a strengthening power in the Holy Ghost. I know that with the blessings of the Atonement and the support of friends and family I can experience both

good and bad times with a joyful heart, knowing of the wonderful blessings that are to come. ■

NOTE

1. Comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. (1954–56), 2:54–55.



If Jesus Christ received strength from an angel in His time of need, then certainly I could accept the strength given me in my sorrow to be able to move on with my life.

BEFORE

Couples who rely on credit cards and home refinancing in order to maintain their lifestyle and make ends meet are building their homes on a faulty foundation that sooner or later will collapse amid the storms of growing expenditures.



YOU LOSE IT ALL...

BY JERRY MASON

Anxiety and depression dominate the lives of Bob and Ann Lane (names have been changed). Five years ago they refinanced their house so they could pay off credit card debt and an auto loan. But they continued to pile up credit card debt. Eighteen months ago they took out a home equity loan to again pay off card balances. Last fall they realized, after borrowing more money to buy a new vehicle, that their income didn't cover their outgo. Now they are considering bankruptcy.

Growing numbers of people are sucked into the black hole of easy credit. Interest-only loans allow families to buy larger homes than they can afford. Credit cards enable consumers to continue spending after they have exhausted their income. Easy credit enables too many to buy too much today instead of saving and waiting to make purchases in the future.

Laws of many nations allow their citizens the opportunity to file bankruptcy as a way to obtain relief from debt burdens that seem too heavy. While bankruptcy can give individuals and families what many consider a fresh start, anyone considering this needs to realize that the problems associated with bankruptcy often exceed the benefits.

Here are a few of the cons:

- Difficulty obtaining loans
- Elevated loan interest rates
- Higher insurance premiums
- Negative credit rating
- Problems obtaining employment because of poor credit rating

Think bankruptcy is your only option? Check out these tips for other ways of getting out of debt.

Do All You Can

Our integrity in keeping our agreements should be heavily considered. Before seriously considering bankruptcy, you need to be sure you have done everything possible to bring debts current. This certainly includes meeting with your bishop or branch president or a financial adviser assigned by the bishop. You may be asked to complete the Church's Needs Assessment form, which is designed to help you and your adviser identify your financial strengths and weaknesses, key to working out a plan you can follow to repay your debts.

Many events can result in an individual or family accumulating so much debt that bankruptcy may seem to be the only option. The idea is to get your finances in order so that bankruptcy is never an option. Church leaders have counseled that we should not leave ourselves unprotected against financial storms. The solution? Build up savings. We have all been counseled to accumulate a year's supply—and that includes money.

Church members have long been counseled to avoid unnecessary debt. President Hinckley has said: "So many of our people are living on the very edge of their incomes. In fact, some are living on borrowings. . . . Avoid debt to the extent possible. Pay off debt as quickly as you can."¹

Where to Begin

Be sure you have done all you can to pay back your creditors. This may seem impossible to some deep in debt, but here's where to start. First, with a pencil, make a list of all the expenditures you expect to make over the next year. List each expenditure in priority order with the most important (tithing) listed first and the least



HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

1. Think about an item your family desires to purchase. Discuss the three questions at the end of the section “A Balancing Act” in relationship to your desired purchase. After a few days decide as a family if your purchase still seems necessary. Discuss the benefits of making purchases based on needs rather than wants. Testify of the value of using money wisely.

2. Carefully list all of your expenditures, such as your receipts, credit card statements, bills, and other monthly purchases. Discuss expenses that can be decreased and ways to increase your income. Using suggestions from the “Cut Costs” section of the article, think of changing some of your spending habits to follow President Hinckley’s admonition on debt (page 63).

important last. Get out your charge card and bank statements for the last three to six months, and try to determine where you spend your money. Remember to include expenditures that may only occur quarterly or annually, such as insurance payments, taxes, and educational expenses. Also, don’t forget to include savings for retirement, missions, and when possible a year’s supply of money. Total these expenditures.

Next, list all sources of income. Compute the total for all income you expect to receive over the next year. Subtract total expenditures from total income. Chances are you will end up with a negative number. If income is larger than expenditures, you may have overlooked or underestimated some items.

A Balancing Act

The next step is to try to get your income to exceed your outgo. To do this, ask yourself the following questions:

- Can I increase my income by asking for a raise or seeking a higher paying job?
- What unneeded or extra items can I sell, such as an extra car?
- How much money could I raise in a garage sale?

For most people, the quickest way to get results is to reduce spending. When determining how best to do this, understand two points.

First, no expenditure is fixed. Yes, your mortgage payment is the same every month. But sometimes there are things you can do to lower the cost of your expenditures. For example, you can sell your current home and move into a less expensive one, or sell your car and get a cheaper one. Find ways to downsize costs.

Second, you don’t *need* everything. Most of the money we spend is to satisfy our wants. This applies even

to basics such as housing, food, and clothing. Look around your home. Count your pairs of shoes and articles of clothing. Organize them into two piles. Pile A is for items you have used at least once during the last year; pile B is for items you have not used in the last year. You may be surprised how much bigger pile B is than pile A. The amount of clothing you own is your own business, but it is one way to illustrate how we spend money on our wants. It is perfectly OK to spend money on wants, but spending too much

can create financial problems. I know a woman who asks her children three questions before buying them anything: “Is this a want or a need? What’s the worst thing that can happen if we buy it or don’t buy it? If we leave without buying it, will we still want or need it in a week or two?”

Cut Costs

Now, with an eraser, start trimming your expenditures. Begin with the lowest priority expenditure at the bottom of your list. Ask three questions of every expense. Can I eliminate this? If not, can I reduce it? If not, can I postpone it? Remember that only a few expenditures are strictly needs. Some, like food and clothing, include both wants and needs, but most, and hopefully those with the lowest priority, are exclusively wants.

Anyone confronting financial challenges is likely to find this exercise helpful. Many expenditures can be reduced or eliminated during this exercise. Many individuals and families that have completed this exercise find that by reducing their expenditures they reap an added bonus—by paying down their debts, they have simplified their lives. Completing this process can help you eliminate much of the financial clutter, and often much of the material clutter, that has trapped you.

It is better to control your expenditures than to depend on others to rescue you.

Break the Cycle

Another step in getting out of debt is to stop creating new debt. How do you do this? Every time you make a credit card purchase, log it in your check register just as you do your checks and debit transactions. Leave the space blank where the check number goes. Keep the balance in your check register current. When you reach a zero balance, stop spending until you receive income. When the credit card statement arrives, write one check, paying off the recent charges, and place that check's number next to each credit card purchase that you have recorded in your check register.

You also need to make a list of all your debts. For this exercise you will need a piece of paper divided into three columns: column 1: name of the lender; column 2: amount of the monthly payment; column 3: each debt's Annual Percentage Rate (APR). Make the minimum payment the lender will accept on all debts except the one with the highest APR. Make as large a payment as possible on the debt charging the highest interest rate. Once that debt has been paid in full, add the amount of that payment

to the payment of the debt with the next highest APR.

Ask for Help

It is important to know that lenders do not want to see anyone file bankruptcy, so be sure to contact each creditor, explain your situation, and see how they can help. In the Lanes' case, they started with the lender holding their first mortgage. If lenders are not willing to work with you, explore options with a credit counseling organization (such a visit is required by federal law in the United States).

Will you still need to file bankruptcy? This is not a decision to be made lightly. It will affect your entire family and your future. Carefully explore all your options for reducing and eliminating debt. Prayerfully consider inspired counsel from your bishop or branch president. Make sure you receive a comforting sense of peace regarding any strategy you select before taking action to improve your finances, especially something as drastic as filing for bankruptcy. ■

NOTE

1. "To the Boys and to the Men," *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 53–54.

To stop creating new debt, log your credit card purchases into your check register. When you reach a zero balance, stop spending. When the credit card statement arrives, write one check to pay off your credit card purchases and place the check number next to each credit card purchase in your check register.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTINA SMITH



MINE ERRAND FROM THE LORD



The Lord teaches us how to magnify our callings by giving us “errands” to perform, as He did with the prophet Jacob in the Book of Mormon.

BY ROWLAND E. ELVIDGE
London England Temple President

The fifth article of faith states, “We believe that a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof.”

A remarkable characteristic of the restored Church is that every member is invited to become involved. The miracle of the Church’s growth in both stature and recognition cannot be separated from the contributions of its members. Those not of our faith often find it hard to comprehend how we are able to enlist the participation of so many without giving them financial remuneration. But this phenomenon is not so hard to comprehend when we understand that we have received our callings from the Lord through His servants here on earth.


Jacob’s Errand

Jacob, younger brother of Nephi, spoke of his own calling: “Wherefore I, Jacob, gave

unto them these words as I taught them in the temple, having first obtained mine errand from the Lord. For I, Jacob, and my brother Joseph had been consecrated priests and teachers of this people, by the hand of Nephi” (Jacob 1:17–18). Jacob and Joseph not only received callings as priests and teachers through their brother Nephi, but Jacob also received an “errand” from the Lord to teach the people about certain commandments they had neglected. We might say that through this errand the Lord taught Jacob specifically how to magnify the calling he had already received. “And we did magnify our office unto the Lord,” Jacob continued, “taking upon us the responsibility, answering the sins of the people upon our own heads if we did not teach them the word of God with all diligence” (Jacob 1:19).

Being Taught from On High

How well I remember my first Church assignment—received shortly after I was converted to the gospel and baptized—when I was asked to give the closing prayer in



Despite his inadequacy, Moses accepted his "errand" from the Lord and was taught from on high until he became not only a powerful prophet of God but also one of the most prolific scripture writers in earth's history.



Guiding my fingers through the complicated array of wires, tubes, and equipment, I placed my hands upon her head and gave her a blessing.

Sunday School. At first I refused, being both nervous and self-conscious at having to stand at the pulpit in front of the members in our small branch. But a kind, persuasive Sunday School president who had helped me over previous hurdles got me to agree. I worried, and in my anxiety during the lesson, I did not hear much of what the teacher taught. I spent most of the time writing out a prayer on the palm of my hand. At the close of the lesson, I nervously walked to the front of the class, waited until heads were bowed, then read the prayer from my hand. That was an important step for me, one from which I grew.

The scriptures often remind me that men and women have become mighty in rising to a call, and by being obedient they have

accomplished what the Lord has asked of them. Consider how great a prophet Moses became, even though he lacked confidence when the Lord first called him. “Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue” (Exodus 4:10). Despite his inadequacy, he accepted his “errand” from the Lord and was taught from on high until he became not only a powerful prophet of God but also one of the

most prolific scripture writers in earth’s history.

A Hospital Visit

Many of the responsibilities and callings I have received have been stepping-stones in a pathway of progression. Sometimes in the course of fulfilling these responsibilities, I have received an errand from the Lord that has taught me about magnifying my calling.

Several years ago while serving as bishop, I worked in a busy London office. One day I suddenly felt the urge to seek a quiet place. There I was prompted to leave work and visit a widow who had been admitted to the hospital the day before with suspected heart and respiratory problems. On reaching the intensive care unit, I was informed of a series of complications and was told that she

was being prepared for an operation. After I explained my position, the doctors allowed me a few minutes alone at her bedside. Guiding my fingers through the complicated array of wires, tubes, and equipment, I placed my hands upon her head and gave her a blessing. The doctors and other staff members could not understand her rapid recovery over the next few days.

Becoming What the Lord Wants Us to Become

Church callings are part of the process the Lord uses to refine us and help us reach our full potential. Whether you are a Primary secretary, a Sunday School teacher, or an elders quorum president, the Lord wants you to become the best secretary, teacher, or president you can possibly be.

In October 2002 general conference Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: “The gospel of Jesus Christ challenges us to become converted. It teaches us what we should do, and it provides us opportunities to become what our Heavenly Father desires us to become. The full measure of this conversion to men and women of God happens best through our labors in His vineyard. . . . As an essential part of God’s plan for His children, the leadership and work of His Church are provided by His children who give their time freely for the service of God and their fellowmen. . . . This is the way men and women prepare for the ultimate blessing of eternal life.”¹

In our modern, diverse society, demands are placed on our time from many quarters. But if our eye is single to His

glory, we can find the right balance and become the son or daughter He wants us to become.

Our journey in life can be likened to steering a boat under sail. Those who have experienced being at the helm will understand the fine balance between being in control and allowing the elements to take control. We will be able to reach our destination if we set the sails properly (which can be likened to our personal preparation), keep a firm hand on the tiller (the steering device), remain sensitive to

external conditions, and fix our mind on our ultimate goal.

Responsibility and Accountability

Having received his errand from the Lord and having understood his divine commission as a teacher and priest, Jacob recognized that he had responsibility and accountability. “We did magnify our office unto the Lord, taking upon us the responsibility, answering the sins of the people upon our own heads if we did not teach

them the word of God with all diligence; wherefore, by laboring with our might their blood might not come upon our garments; otherwise their blood would come upon our garments, and we would not be found spotless at the last day” (Jacob 1:19).

As a convert to the Church, I have seen many changes in my life come through serving the Lord. By taking steps of faith in our Church service, my family and I have received many blessings. I am ever reminded that this is the Lord’s work, that we are on His errand, and that He grants us joy and happiness as we go forth and do His will. ■

NOTE

1. “I’ll Go Where You Want Me to Go,” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 69.



I Remembered the Pioneers

By Daniel Cisternas

When I was 19, I was called up to the Swedish army. As an artillery signalist, I served in the Eighth Company's staff and leading platoon.

At 4:00 one January morning, our officers ordered us to get dressed with full equipment and gather outside in 20 minutes. Tired and hungry from the previous day's activities, I felt like I had barely closed my eyes, and here I was again preparing to confront a new test. I still remember how it felt, stepping from the warmth of the barracks into an indescribable cold.

A huge military bus arrived to pick us up, and we were told we were going to Stockholm for a big test to see if we were qualified to continue our training. Arriving in the city, we were divided into three groups, with different maps and separate destinations.

We walked the streets of Stockholm, fully equipped with weapons, ammunition, and other gear. At each checkpoint we were required to perform a physical test, such as hostage confrontation, street battle, running through tunnels and buildings, and first-aid treatment. After every test we barely had time

to rest before moving on to the next checkpoint.

The freezing asphalt made my feet numb, and my shoulders ached from the heavy equipment. But I kept going and tried not to complain. Our group experienced bitter weather and difficult trials, but we were still marching as brothers. Along the route, we encountered shocked civilians who laughed, pointed fingers, and shouted at us.

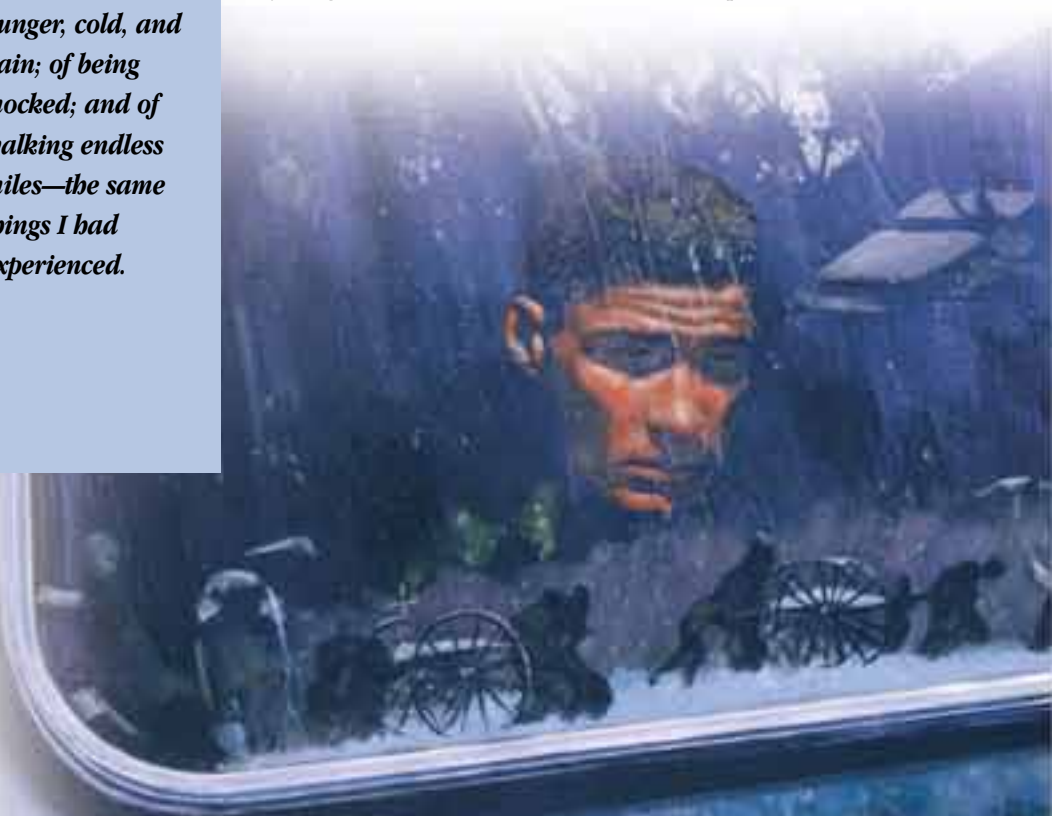
I was tired, cold, dirty, and in pain when we reached our final destination and the bus picked us up. During the trip back to the base, I reflected on the trials my platoon and

I had endured and asked myself if this training was worth anything besides the

medals awarded at the conclusion. I asked myself if anyone else besides us had gone through trials as we had that day.

Suddenly, I thought of the hardships and sacrifice of the pioneers of the early days of the Church. I recalled the stories of their hunger, cold, and pain; of being mocked; and of walking endless miles—the same things I had experienced that day. The big difference is that I had to endure this for only one day. The pioneers traveled in cold and snow, rain and heat, walking through mud and dust. They walked with little material security, having only faith that the Lord would protect them. The pioneers walked to find Zion because the Lord had a marvelous work for these members to perform.

I recalled the stories of the pioneers' hunger, cold, and pain; of being mocked; and of walking endless miles—the same things I had experienced.



Suddenly, without thinking, I started to sing “Come, Come, Ye Saints” (*Hymns*, no. 30), and right there on the bus I started to feel a difference within me. A great warmth and happiness flowed through my body. I was not active in the Church at that time and I had thought I would never come back, but suddenly a feeling came over me saying, “Come back to church.”

When I got to the base, I called my parents and told them I loved them and wanted to go back to church. The following Sunday was a huge test for me to see if I had the courage to return, because I had been away for so long. Going back wasn’t easy, but it was worth it. My family and the other members helped me feel welcome.

I began to prepare to serve a mission and two years later received a mission call to serve in the Cape Verde Praia Mission. When I arrived in Salt Lake City on my way to the Missionary Training Center, I saw the marvelous work performed by the pioneers in building a magnificent temple and planning a beautiful city. I said softly, “Thank you.”

Today, when I ask myself if that military test was worth anything, I answer that it was, in every way, because in that moment of great insight on a bus with a platoon of fellow soldiers, I realized how important the work of the Lord is. It was worth it because I came back to the Lord and am now doing His work and His will. ■



Get the Children Out of the Water!

By Janell Johnson

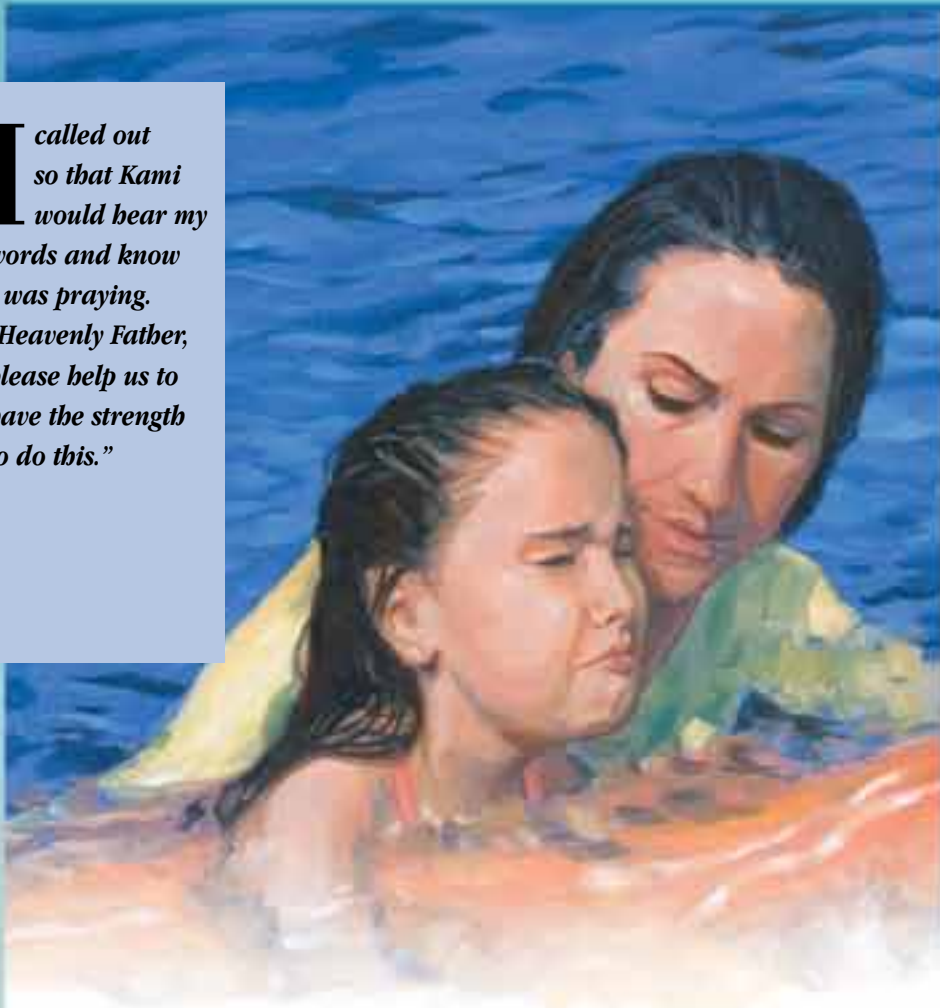
It was a pleasant day in June 2003. I drove my five children from our home in Logan, Utah, to Bear Lake to visit my sister’s family. Their home lies a few minutes’ walk from the water, and after visiting for a while I decided to take my children and their two cousins, Kami and Erin, to the beach to play.

The water near the edge was warm, and a gentle breeze stirred the air as I sat on a chair, reading and relaxing. I looked out toward the lake and noticed that Kami was about 50 yards (46 m) from shore,

floating on a high-density foam pad. Because the lake became very deep not far from shore, I waved to her and called for her to come closer, but she couldn’t hear my voice from that distance.

About that time I began to feel very uneasy and heard the Spirit whisper that the children needed to get out of the water. I called to them to come closer to shore, and reluctantly they wandered toward me. Suddenly the Spirit spoke loud and clear, “Get the children out of the water!” I turned toward the mountains behind

I called out so that Kami would hear my words and know I was praying. “Heavenly Father, please help us to have the strength to do this.”



us and saw dark clouds gathering. A bolt of lightning flashed brilliantly in the sky.

“Get out of the water,” I screamed. “There’s lightning coming!” I raced for Kami, who by now was floating about 75 yards (68 m) from shore. At that moment a blast of wind hit us. My eight-year-old son, Dallin, tried to carry another foam pad out of the water, but the wind hit it like a sail and threw him to the ground.

I tried to get to Kami as fast as I could, but the wind was driving her farther out on the water. I am not a strong swimmer, and with the waves rising around me, I continued to wade. I could see her kicking her feet as hard as she could while leaning over the side of the pad, but this

did little to combat the fierce wind. She was still being swept out to open water.

The water became deeper and deeper as I waded out, until it reached my shoulders. Then my feet came to a sharp drop-off in the lake bottom. I had to stop, but I was still 20 yards (18 m) from Kami. I opened my mouth to call her, but to my horror no sound came out. When it finally did, it was only choking gasps. It was then I realized how very cold the water was out this far. I realized that hypothermia was setting in. I wasn’t going to make it back either. We were both going to drown.

At that moment, using all the strength left in me, I called out so

that Kami would hear my words and know I was praying. “Heavenly Father, please help us to have the strength to do this.” In an instant a warmth flooded my body and my energy returned. My voice became clear and strong, and I called to her, “Kami, paddle with your hands!” Her little 10-year-old arms dog-paddled on the water in front of the pad. She was hardly strong enough to make a difference in the terrible wind, but it was as though a giant hand were behind her, gently propelling her toward my outstretched hand. I continued to call encouraging words to her until our fingers touched, and at that moment I knew that because Heavenly Father had brought her to me, we would make it.

On shore Dallin cried as wind and sand beat him cruelly. It took all my strength to get him, the other children, and the pads and toys into the car. In the distance the mournful wail of a loud siren filled the air, signaling a fire started by the lightning on the hills. It seemed to add to the trauma of the moment, yet we knew we had been preserved by divine assistance.

I told the children what had happened out on the water, and the instant we reached the house we gave thanks in prayer for His saving our lives. As we did so, I felt the overwhelming love of our Father in Heaven. I know that He is aware of His children, and I am very grateful that He was with us that day. ■

Will I Be Able to Talk Again?

By Javier Gamarra Villena

I had been on my mission in my home country of Peru for several months when I met Santiago. He attended a Sunday School class for new members, but he had not been baptized. Nor had he taken the missionary discussions. I learned that he had a speech impediment that made him feel insecure because he had difficulty communicating.

For most of his life, Santiago had been able to speak clearly and had been blessed with a beautiful singing voice. But then he suffered a stroke. After a long time in a rehabilitation center, he had learned to walk again, but he still had trouble speaking.

We were thrilled when Santiago decided to meet with us. During our first visit, he tried to talk, and we tried to understand. He especially enjoyed reading aloud from the Book of Mormon. We loved and admired him.

One day while we were discussing gospel ordinances, Santiago said he was ready for baptism and confirmation. After we had finished the discussion, he stood up, eyes shining, and with great difficulty asked, “Elders, after I’m baptized, will I be able to talk normally again?”

I was taken aback for a moment and at first didn’t know how to

answer. But responding to the influence of the Spirit, I said confidently, “Yes, if you have enough faith, the Lord will grant your desire.”

On the day of his baptism, I remembered Santiago’s question when he was asked to bear his testimony. Realizing that some of the Lord’s promises aren’t fulfilled immediately, I wondered if Santiago would feel disappointed if his ability to speak didn’t immediately improve. In the days that followed, he still struggled to talk, but he didn’t seem to be concerned.

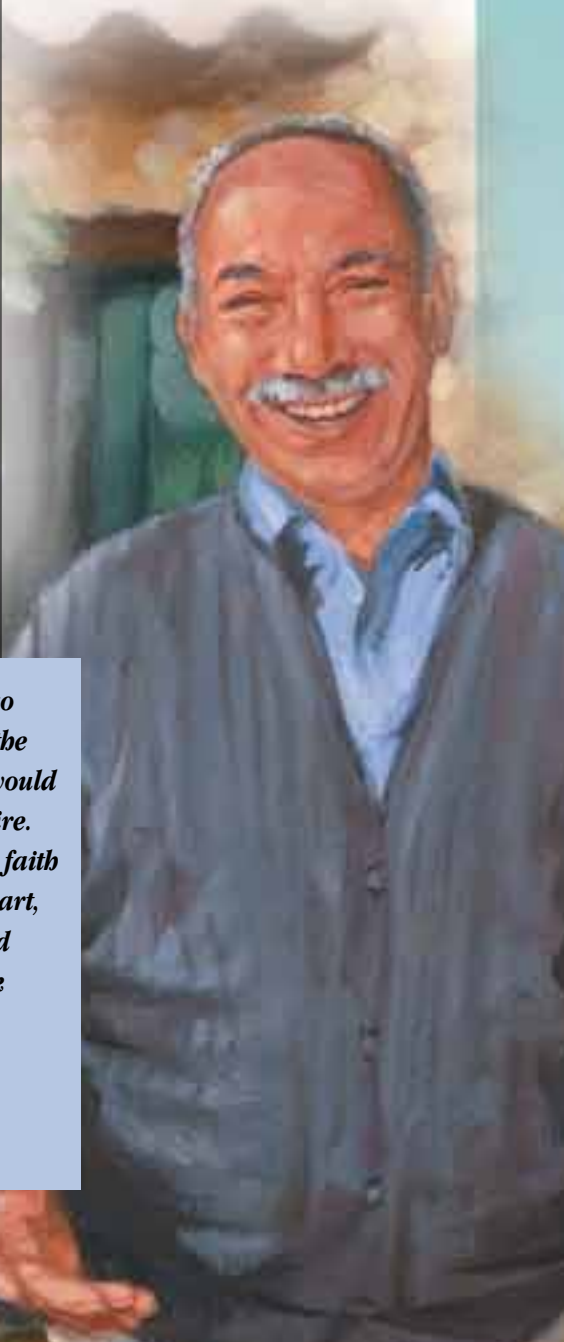
I was soon transferred and didn’t see Santiago again until the end of my mission, when I went to say goodbye before returning home. My companion and I didn’t find him home and started to leave, when suddenly we heard a strong voice calling to us. It was Santiago!

We entered his house, and he talked about how happy he had been as a member of the Church. After a few minutes I realized that he was speaking almost perfectly. Surprised, I said, “Santiago, you talk fine now!”

He said he knew the Lord would grant his desire. So he showed faith and did his part, reading aloud from the Book of Mormon and doing exercises his doctor

had recommended. “The Lord has seen my efforts and has given my voice back to me,” he said. “And it won’t be long before He blesses me with the ability to sing again.”

I could not hold back my tears. That day Santiago taught me a great lesson. The promises of the Lord aren’t always fulfilled quickly, but they are fulfilled nonetheless. ■



Santiago knew the Lord would grant his desire. So he showed faith and did his part, reading aloud from the Book of Mormon.

Family Reunion Story Time

Family history skits can help us, and especially our children, learn about our progenitors as we reenact their tales of courage and sacrifice. Before a family reunion, we wrote a simple story outlining an ancestor's life. To more easily identify his

family members, we prepared nametag posters for participants at the reunion to slip around their necks. We also made simple signs that designated cities and places relevant to the story and added a few props, such as a shawl and hat. Then, at the reunion, we asked one person to be the narrator and invited others to participate as the story unfolded. During one tender part, family members embraced, without prompting, to reenact when a young ancestor died and went to

“heaven,” where she was met by her sister who had died previously. For all of us, the experience was a beautiful way to pay respect to and remember those who have gone before us.

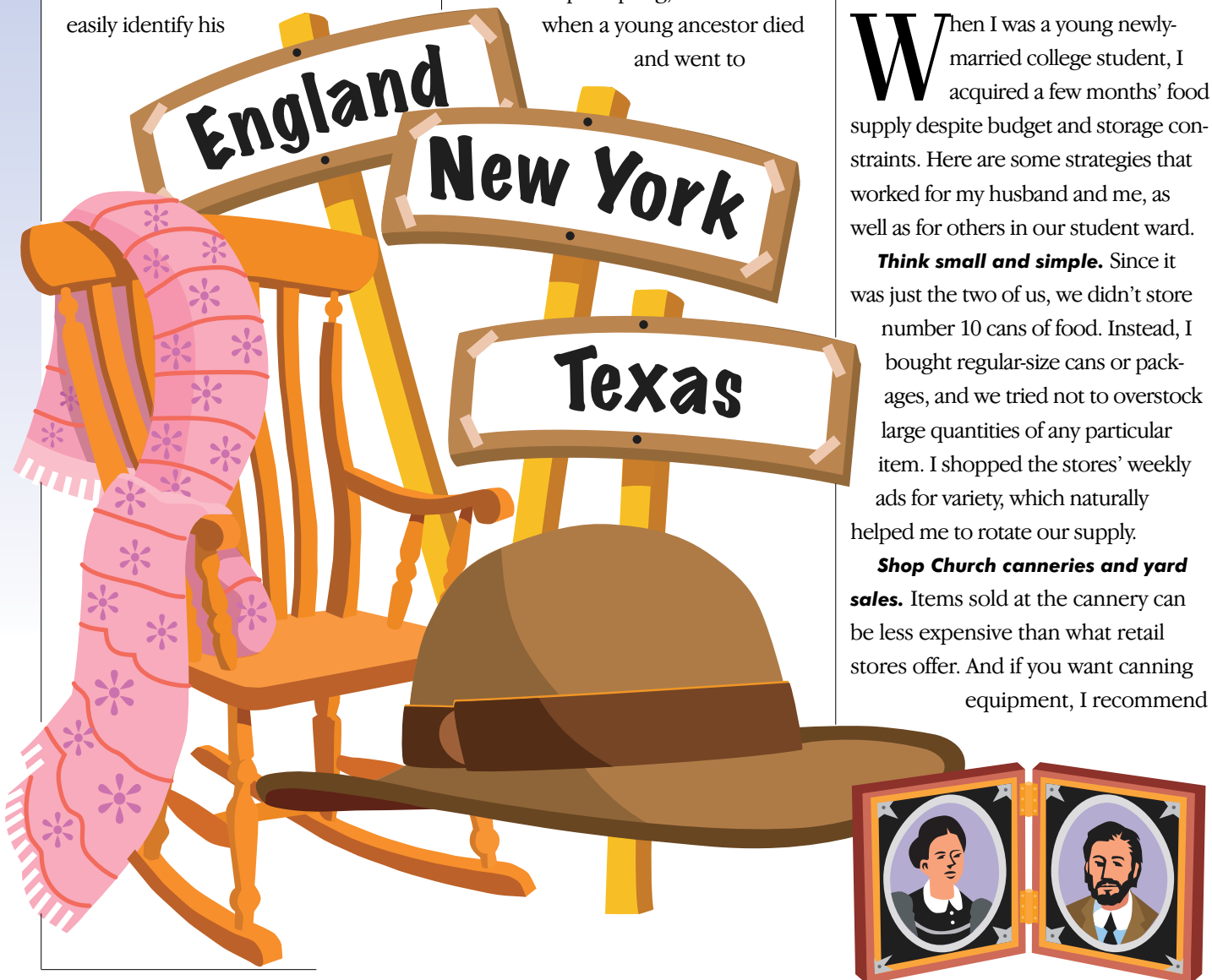
Nita Smart Facer, California

Food Storage for Beginners

When I was a young newly-married college student, I acquired a few months' food supply despite budget and storage constraints. Here are some strategies that worked for my husband and me, as well as for others in our student ward.

Think small and simple. Since it was just the two of us, we didn't store number 10 cans of food. Instead, I bought regular-size cans or packages, and we tried not to overstock large quantities of any particular item. I shopped the stores' weekly ads for variety, which naturally helped me to rotate our supply.

Shop Church canneries and yard sales. Items sold at the cannery can be less expensive than what retail stores offer. And if you want canning equipment, I recommend





Purposeful Family Home Evenings

We are to teach our children in a well-organized, regular family home evening,” said Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (“The Importance of the Family,” *Ensign*, May 2003, 42).

Regardless of how long we have been members of the Church, we can all benefit from holding

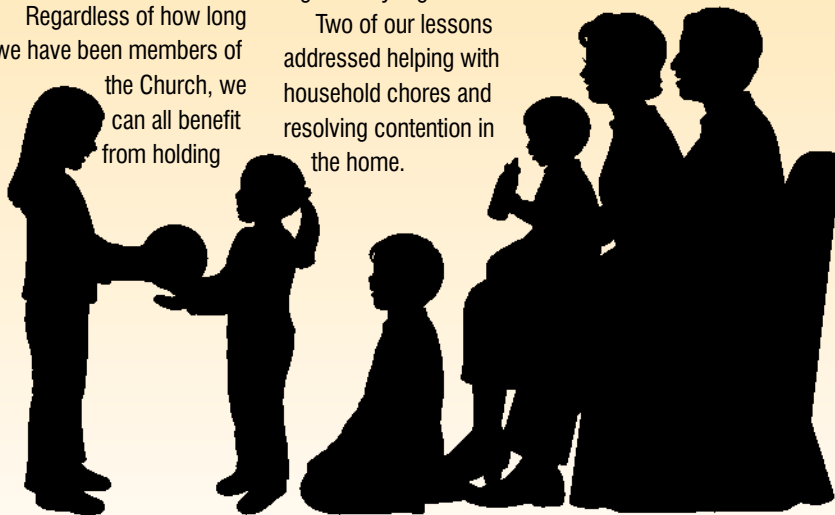
well-organized family nights. To strengthen our family’s activities and to better include our young children, my husband and I decided to plan activities with a purpose. So we gathered our family together for a planning meeting and brainstormed what we wanted or needed to learn. We listed anything that came to mind and then refined our list to focus on specific topics. Each family member then chose a subject to prepare for an upcoming Monday-night lesson.

Two of our lessons addressed helping with household chores and resolving contention in the home.

Together we found solutions, such as job charts and reward systems for encouraging better behavior. We also role-played appropriate ways for resolving sibling conflicts.

I know that as we prayerfully ponder what our families need to learn, we will more effectively use this important time each week to teach essential gospel principles and strengthen family relationships.

Stephanie Weight, Arizona



buying it secondhand. You may need to have pressure cookers checked for safety at your local county agricultural extension office.

Store items under the bed.

I obtained several flat boxes with two-inch sides from the grocery store. Then I grouped my canned goods by categories and identified the contents and purchase date on top of each can. When I pulled out a flat, I knew immediately if the item I wanted was there and which I should use first.

Periodically reorganize.

By restacking, consolidating, or tossing unused items, I could always make storage space in my cupboards or closets. And when I cleared extra space, I tried to store items where I would most likely use them.

Tell others.

Since my family and friends knew about my efforts to obtain food storage, they offered assistance. At the time, a ward member invited me to pick plums, and some family members gave me food storage items as presents.

MartaRae Northcutt, Tennessee

Primary Focus: Reverence

There are times when positive discipline is required in the classroom. Just as it is important to have a well-prepared lesson, we also need to plan ahead for classroom management. By using carefully constructed questions such as the

following, behavioral limits can be set while still honoring a child’s agency.

- *Would you like to continue sitting in that seat and remain quiet, or would it help you to be quiet if you moved to a new seat?* (The behavioral limit is remaining quiet, yet the child gets to choose where to sit.)

- *Would it help you to focus if you sat in a more secluded spot, or can you focus where you are?*

- *Do you need help remaining quiet, or can you handle it yourself?* (Children like to be independent, and most will

choose to handle it themselves.)

- *I will assume that if you are disruptive again you are telling me that you need some help, and I will then choose for you. Is that a fair assumption?* (You might then arrange for a parent, Church leader, or another adult to assist a child struggling with reverence issues.)

By facilitating a reverent classroom environment, teachers help to invite the Holy Ghost to bear witness of eternal truths.

F. Arthella Starke, Oregon

LEFT: ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT GREER; RIGHT: ILLUSTRATION BY BETH WHITTAKER

Revolutionary War, Other Records to Go Online As Part of New Program

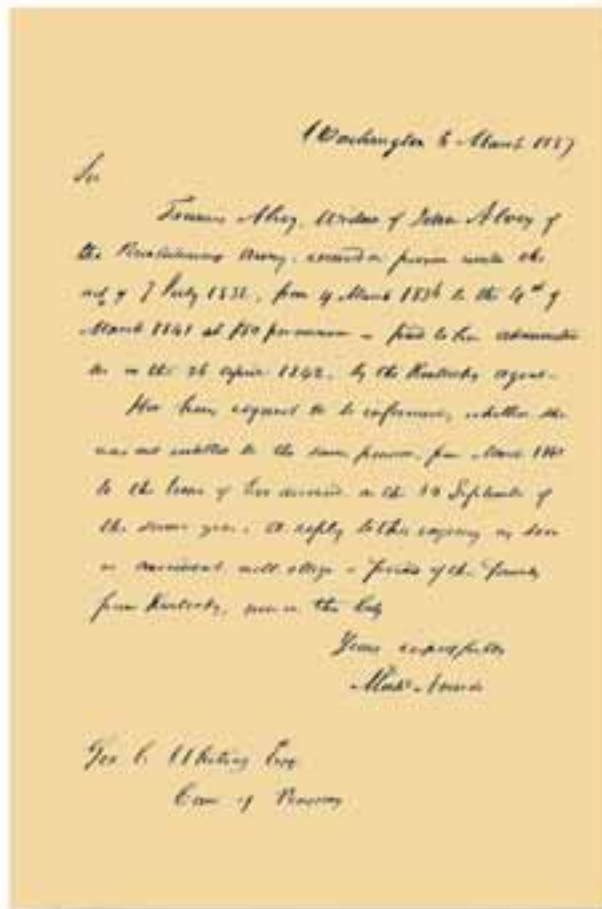
A treasure trove of U.S. Revolutionary War records will soon be at the fingertips of millions of family history researchers, thanks in large part to FamilySearch, a nonprofit genealogical organization sponsored by the Church.

A historic project to digitize and index the pension records of U.S. Revolutionary War veterans will make genealogical information readily available online, including to the millions of Americans who are descended from those soldiers who fought for independence.

According to researchers, the military pension records now being digitized and indexed are incredibly valuable due to the amount of detail and the variety of information they include.

The federal government and some state governments granted pensions to officers, disabled veterans, needy veterans, widows or orphans of veterans, and veterans who served a certain length of time, and access to such information about an ancestor is a researcher's dream.

The Revolutionary War began on April 19, 1775, at Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts, between the local militia and British troops and ended officially with the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1783. The eight-year military struggle generated a tremendous volume of



An example of an American Revolutionary War pension record. These records will soon be available through FamilySearch.org and Footnote.com.

records on the approximately 250,000 military participants.

When complete, the images and indexes of this vast collection of information will be viewable at the more than 4,500 Church-run family history centers around the world. They will also be available online at the Church Web site FamilySearch.org, as well as through project partner Footnote.com.

Footnote.com is a

genealogy Web site working with FamilySearch to preserve digitally, index, and publish the world's records in concert with archives around the world. As part of the agreement, FamilySearch will digitize the images currently held in the National Archives Record and Administration's (NARA) collection in Washington, D.C., and Footnote.com will create the electronic indexes.

The Revolutionary War Pension Records project is the first of many future projects the Church will undertake to expedite access to historical records. The new Records Access program initiated by FamilySearch will result in an increase of online databases around the world, according to FamilySearch officials.

"Records custodians worldwide are experiencing growing pressure to provide access to their records online while maintaining control and ownership," said Wayne Metcalfe, director of Records Services for the Family and Church History Department.

"At the same time, Web sites that provide digitizing and publishing services are struggling with the staggering costs. The new Records Access program takes advantage of FamilySearch's resources and creates an economical and effective forum where records custodians and genealogy Web sites can work together to accomplish their respective objectives."

FamilySearch's new Records Access program provides tools and assistance to records custodians who want to publish their collection using state-of-the-art digital cameras, software, and Web-based applications.

FamilySearch has representatives worldwide who can work with archivists to determine how FamilySearch and affiliates can help them meet their digital preservation and publication needs.

The Church's interest and commitment to records preservation dates back to the 1800s. ■

New Mission Presidents Now in Place Worldwide

Accepting assignments from the First Presidency, 117 new mission presidents began serving on or around July 1, 2007. The missions and their respective new presidents are:

Mission	President
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Alabama Birmingham	James R. Tate
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Argentina Buenos Aires North	Shane V. Argyle
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Argentina Buenos Aires South	Ronald W. Asay
-------------------------------------	----------------

Argentina Cordoba	Stephen L. Olsen
--------------------------	------------------

Arizona Mesa	W. Mark Bassett
---------------------	-----------------

Arizona Tempe	Robert C. Craig
----------------------	-----------------

Armenia Yerevan	Ronald J. Dunn
------------------------	----------------

Australia Brisbane	Grant S. Richards
---------------------------	-------------------

Australia Melbourne East	Corey B. Lindley
---------------------------------	------------------

Australia Melbourne West	Barry Lee
---------------------------------	-----------

Australia Perth	Carl R. Maurer
------------------------	----------------

Australia Sydney North	H. E. Scruggs Jr.
-------------------------------	-------------------

Bolivia La Paz	Ismael Mendoza Regino
-----------------------	-----------------------

Bolivia Santa Cruz	Kevin D. McCracken
---------------------------	--------------------

Brazil Campinas	Ildefonso de Castro Deus
------------------------	--------------------------

Brazil Curitiba	Paulo M. Araujo
------------------------	-----------------

Brazil Goiânia	Vaguiner C. Tobias
-----------------------	--------------------

Brazil João Pessoa	David G. Fernandes
---------------------------	--------------------

Brazil Londrina	Luiz M. Leal
------------------------	--------------

Brazil Santa Maria	Rodrigo Myrrha
---------------------------	----------------

California Carlsbad	Richard B. Brady
----------------------------	------------------

California Long Beach	Edwin A. Sexton
------------------------------	-----------------

California Los Angeles	Spencer (Tim) G. Blackburn
-------------------------------	----------------------------

California San Bernardino	David T. Sanchez
----------------------------------	------------------

Canada Edmonton	George F. Rhodes Jr.
------------------------	----------------------

Canada Montreal	Joel H. McKinnon
------------------------	------------------

Canada Toronto West	Jeffrey T. Simmons
----------------------------	--------------------

Chile Antofagasta	Juan A. Urrea Gomez
--------------------------	---------------------

Chile Concepción	Oscar W. Chavez Lopez
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Chile Rancagua	Esteban G. Resek
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Chile Santiago West	Paul A. Jones
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Colombia Barranquilla	Robin O. Roundy
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Colorado Denver South	Earl L. Christison III
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Czech Prague	Marvin J. Slovacek Jr.
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Democratic Republic of Congo Kinshasa	Donald H. Livingstone
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Denmark Copenhagen	Douglas J. Olason Sr.
---------------------------	-----------------------

Ecuador Guayaquil South	William S. Johns
--------------------------------	------------------

England Leeds	Wallace L. Stock
----------------------	------------------

Florida Jacksonville	Russell A. Newman Jr.
-----------------------------	-----------------------

Florida Orlando	John C. Darrington
------------------------	--------------------

Florida Tallahassee	Lynn L. Summerhays
----------------------------	--------------------

Florida Tampa	Kent W. Colton
----------------------	----------------

Germany Hamburg	Wesley B. Thompson
------------------------	--------------------

Hawaii Honolulu	Stephen N. Peterson
------------------------	---------------------

Honduras San Pedro Sula	Samuel Cruz Velasquez
--------------------------------	-----------------------

Idaho Boise	John W. Yardley
--------------------	-----------------

Illinois Chicago South	Richard B. Roach
-------------------------------	------------------

Illinois Peoria	Lynn G. Erickson
------------------------	------------------

India Bangalore	Melvin R. Nichols
------------------------	-------------------

Indiana Indianapolis	David L. Corey
-----------------------------	----------------

Indonesia Jakarta	Ross Hawkins Marchant
--------------------------	-----------------------

Iowa Des Moines	G. Lyle Talbot
------------------------	----------------

Ireland Dublin	Gordon W. Creer
-----------------------	-----------------

Italy Catania	James A. Toronto
----------------------	------------------

Italy Milan	J. Scott Dunaway
--------------------	------------------

Italy Rome	Jeffrey Acerson
-------------------	-----------------

Japan Nagoya	Bruce F. Traveller
---------------------	--------------------

Kenya Nairobi	William H. Taylor
----------------------	-------------------

Korea Daejeon	Alan G. Perriton
----------------------	------------------

Korea Seoul West	Craig P. Burton
-------------------------	-----------------

Mexico Chihuahua	Edgar Flores Prieto
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Mexico Culiacán	Marion R. Johnston
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Mexico Guadalajara	Robert J. Watkins
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Mexico León	Robert T. Cox
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Mexico Mérida	Victor M. Cardenas Lopez
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Mexico Mexico City East	Russell G. Bulloch
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Mexico Mexico City West	J. Francisco Fuentes Corpus
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Mexico Monterrey East	Daniel Mendoza Regino
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Michigan Detroit	Michael L. Rawson
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Missouri St. Louis	Milton S. Turley
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Mongolia Ulaanbaatar	D. Allen Andersen
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New Hampshire Manchester	Michael R. Jensen
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New Jersey Cherry Hill	Bruce H. Winegar
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New Mexico Albuquerque	Richard J. Anderson
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New York Rochester	Michael F. Hemingway
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Nicaragua Managua	Romel E. Fraatz
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Nigeria Port Harcourt	Loveday I. Nwankpa
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Nigeria Uyo	Joseph W. Sitati
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Ohio Cincinnati	Gregory V. Robbins
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Oklahoma Oklahoma City	James R. Gee
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Panama Panama City	Manuel Madrigal Romero
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Paraguay Asuncion North	Terry L. Wade
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Pennsylvania Philadelphia	Michael R. Murray
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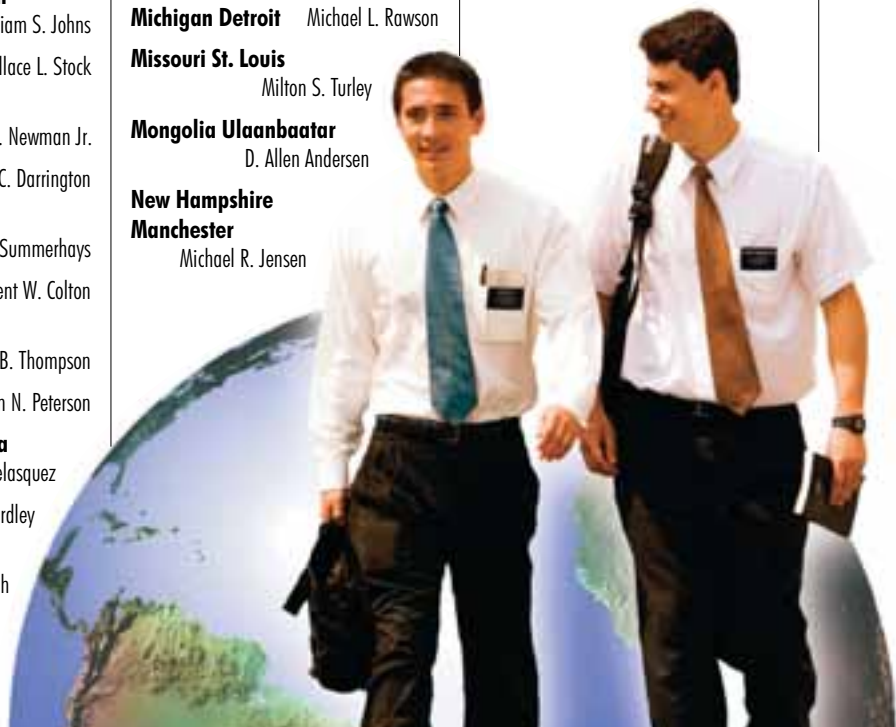
Perú Arequipa	David J. Davis
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Perú Lima North	Carlos A. Perez Basso
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Perú Trujillo	Alejandro Mora Arauco
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Philippines Cagayan de Oro	Remegio E. Meim Jr.
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Philippines Cauayan	Raul S. Villanueva
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Philippines Naga Mark A. Ferrin
Philippines Quezon City
 Beaver T. Ho Ching
Poland Warsaw Torben Engbjerg
Puerto Rico San Juan East
 Ralph L. Dewsnup
Puerto Rico San Juan West
 J. Stanley Martineau
Russia Moscow Charles D. Cranney
Russia Novosibirsk Hal E. Mickelsen
Russia Samara Randall K. Bennett
Russia Vladivostok Stanley E. Everett
Russia Yekaterinburg
 Stephen J. Allen

Sierra Leone Freetown
 Phillip L. Squires
South Africa Durban Steven H. Mann
Spain Málaga Robert L. Mellor
Switzerland Zürich
 Dietmar G. Matern
Taiwan Taichung Michael A. Hoer
Texas Fort Worth
 Wright Jenkins Thurston
Texas McAllen Gary F. Miller
Texas San Antonio Charles L. Cutler
Tonga Nuku'alofa Lynn C. McMurray
Ukraine Dnepropetrovsk
 Leonard M. Abraham

Uruguay Montevideo West
 Steven K. Peterson
Utah Salt Lake City W. Blake Sonne
Utah Salt Lake City South
 G. Steven Laney
Virginia Richmond Mark B. Millburn
Washington D.C. North
 L. Alma Mansell
Washington Everett
 Donald L. Showalter III
Washington Kennewick
 Paul M. Belnap
Washington Seattle Craig M. Moffat
Wisconsin Milwaukee
 William A. Barrett ■

Without it, there might have been complications. It was very exciting; the training puts everything else in perspective. As far as I am concerned, it instills confidence. I now know exactly what to do. There is no panic.”

Gaining confidence to respond in the critical seconds after birth is the stated goal of neonatal resuscitation, according to Deb Whipple, a nurse in the newborn intensive care unit at LDS Hospital in Salt Lake City and a frequent participant in the worldwide training initiative. “I know the procedures work,” Sister Whipple acknowledged. “I’ve seen them save lives within those first valuable 30 to 60 seconds.”

Sister Whipple uses her skills daily in the hospital delivery room but also shares her expertise internationally with other medical professionals. “The neonatal resuscitation course is taught to 50 students who . . . return to their clinics, hospitals, and neighborhoods to teach other birthing attendants,” she said.

Participating countries are selected based on infant mortality rates, according to Dean Walker of Humanitarian Services, manager of the newborn resuscitation initiative. Teaching clinics are scheduled through local ministries of health in the participating countries, and training kits—including practice mannequins, training manuals, and resuscitation equipment—are donated by the Church. In 2006, training courses were offered in 23 countries.

Church Teaching Life-Saving Techniques to Health Professionals around World

Dr. Bulane, a staff physician at the Makoanyane Military Hospital in Maseru, Lesotho, deals daily with a shortage of trained medical personnel and supplies. The people of Lesotho, a landlocked country in southern Africa, suffer from an HIV/AIDS infection rate of nearly 30 percent, a 34.4-year life expectancy, recurring drought, poverty, and a high infant mortality rate.

Because of his concern for infant mortality, Dr. Bulane registered for a training program in neonatal resuscitation conducted in his community by the Humanitarian Services Division of the Church.

This program, an attempt to reduce infant deaths from birth asphyxia (a lack of oxygen at birth), is conducted in many parts of the world as an ongoing humanitarian initiative of the Church and as a response to the World



An Egyptian doctor trains nurses on how to resuscitate an infant.

Health Organization’s concern for infant deaths.

Soon after participating in the June 2006 training session, Dr. Bulane saved a newborn baby boy by implementing his new techniques. “The mother had

excess water, and a cesarean section was performed,” he explained. “Her baby was born blue. Through neonatal resuscitation techniques, the baby was saved. He is doing great now. I used the time line I had been taught.

Physicians, nurses, respiratory therapists, and other medical professionals volunteer their time to staff the resuscitation trainings.

For Dr. Ted Kimball, an emergency room physician at the University of Utah Hospital in Salt Lake City and chair of the Humanitarian Services advisory committee, the role as a facilitator in addressing health issues in developing countries brings multiple rewards.

“These people live simple lives,” Dr. Kimball noted. “They don’t need flat-screen TVs or computers. They have three basic needs: a chance for education, a chance for health, and an opportunity for peace or freedom from political strife. Neonatal resuscitation plays a critical role in two of these needs: education and health. Our training makes a contribution.”

The minister of health in Uganda, a recent participant in neonatal resuscitation training, told Dr. Kimball that each infant death in his country creates an estimated U.S. \$100,000 deficit to his country’s economy. “In these areas where grinding poverty exists,” Dr. Kimball said, “they need a healthy, educated workforce to carry the people out of poverty. A healthy, self-reliant community is the key. Without loss of life at birth, there’s another back to carry the economic load of the country—another person leading the way out of poverty.”

The neonatal resuscitation training concerns in Ghana

mirror those of Lesotho and Uganda. Dr. David Gourley, a Salt Lake City physician and member of the Humanitarian Services advisory committee, reported that “a simplified course designed for rural midwives and community nurses will provide basic resuscitation skills and equipment necessary to lower Ghana’s infant mortality rate.”

Dr. Gourley related the following account from a recently trained midwife: “Dora attended a breech delivery. She thought the baby was dead because he

was floppy and not breathing. Dora went through the initial steps of resuscitation. She needed only to correctly position the baby’s airway and suction with a bulb syringe before the baby began breathing and tone improved. Today the baby is thriving.”

Based on local evaluations, Dr. Gourley noted that in the six months following the May 2006 Ghana training, 646 infants were successfully resuscitated using the basic equipment donated by the Church.

The equipment and the training contribute to the neonatal resuscitation program’s long-term goal that a qualified birth attendant be present at every delivery.

For Sister Whipple, a mother herself, the goal is broader. “I want all those babies to have a healthy body to experience life,” the nurse concluded. “Mothers have the same emotions worldwide—they all have the hope that their child will be healthy and have the opportunity to be happy, to be a part of a family.” ■

New Triple Combinations Available in Three Languages

For the first time, Tongan-, Haitian-, and Cambodian-speaking members of the Church will have a triple combination in their own language.

The triple combinations consist of complete editions of the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, and the Guide to the Scriptures. Maps and photographs are also included.

The Book of Mormon in Tongan has been available since 1946, and the Doctrine and Covenants and Pearl of Great Price since 1959, but the publication of the triple combination marks the first time that all three books have been bound together into one volume.

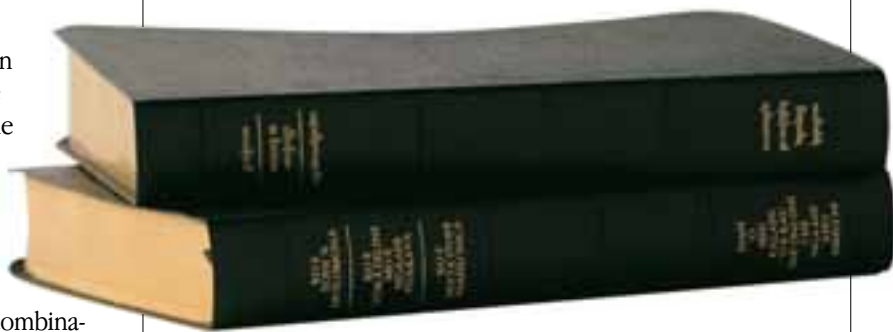
Although the Book of

Mormon in Haitian has been available since 1999, the Doctrine and Covenants and Pearl of Great Price were not available until the release of the triple combination.

In August 1982, Book of Mormon Selections was printed in Cambodian; then in November 2001 a version of the Book of Mormon without footnotes was printed.

Teams of translators, reviewers, and ecclesiastical leaders work together to translate the scriptures into a chosen language. The length of time it takes to complete the process varies.

The First Presidency has encouraged members to acquire their own scriptures to be used for regular study, Church meetings, and assignments. ■



The triple combination, containing complete editions of the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, and other study aids, is now available in Cambodian, Haitian, and Tongan.

New DVD Released for Children

A new Home and Family Collection DVD has recently been released. *Old Testament Stories for Children* contains the still images and narration from the *Old Testament Stories* book.



The Old Testament Stories book is now available on DVD for children.

The DVD includes English subtitles to aid new or beginning readers. The 48 stories contained on the DVD help introduce the teachings of the Old Testament. It can be used to supplement or reinforce Primary lessons, teach those with mental disabilities, and teach children at home, either as part of a lesson or for independent use by children.

Sold individually for U.S. \$4.50 (item number

00350) or U.S. \$75.00 for a case of 50 DVDs, the product is available at distribution centers. ■

Comment

Examples of Missionary Work

Thank you so much for the brief stories about missionary work (March 2007 Latter-day Saint Voices). Reading experiences that testify of Heavenly Father's tender mercies as we share the gospel brings me greater hope and encourages me to be sensitive to the Spirit. Sister Shannon Miller, New York Utica Mission

Teaching Children about General Conference

About two years ago a pre-conference issue of the *Ensign* contained an article by a single mother telling how she prepares conference baskets for her children when they spend general conference weekends at their father's house. (See "Random Sampler," *Ensign*, Oct 2005, 70–71.) One of her suggestions to help small



children focus on conference was to provide simple illustrations of the conference pulpit

so that the child could draw each speaker, write the speaker's name and topic, and write his or her own feelings during the talk.

As a Relief Society secretary, I shared this idea in our branch Relief Society the month before each general conference. Now as a Primary teacher, I make a similar sheet for the CTR 5 children. Several mothers commented to me that they were going to make extra copies of the sheets for their older children as well.

Thank you for providing a forum for sharing such practical ideas to help teach children the gospel. Tena L. Cook, Nebraska

General Conference and Family Home Evening

Thank you for converting general conference talks to materials for family home evening lessons. I was awaiting my *Ensign* to try and make up lessons when I received an e-mail telling me about the General Conference and Family Home Evening Page).

How wonderful to have this resource available to use without all the work! It's also nice to have this so soon after conference so we can start reinforcing the wonderful talks and lessons given. Thank you. Cheryl Lynn Bell, Missouri

A Note on Descendancy Research

I am writing concerning George Durrant's article, "Branching Out on Your Family Tree" (April 2007). I have been doing descendancy research for 30 years and am very careful to defer to living relatives. However, Brother Durrant failed to mention the factor that impels me most. I find



that many relatives died having never had children or having had their children die before reaching adulthood, leaving no descendant. Descendancy research is the only way their temple work will be done. Catherine H. Ellis, Arizona

Clarifications

The April 2007 issue listed information for Church pageants in 2007. The phone numbers given for information on the Oakland Temple Pageant were incorrect. The correct phone numbers are 510-531-0704 or 510-531-1475.

Also in that issue, the *Ensign* reported that Elder Parley P. Pratt died and was buried in Van Buren, Arkansas. The location of his grave is actually in nearby Alma, Arkansas, where Church members regularly care for the site.



MAY NOT BE COPIED

Looking at Sarah, by Lee Udall Bennion

Of motherhood, President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95) said: “Surely we need not look far to see the unnoticed and forgotten heroes of daily life. . . . I am referring to the uncommon valor of the mother who—hour after hour, day and night—will stay with and care for a sick child. . . . I am speaking of those who are always there to love and nurture” (“True Greatness,” Ensign, May 1982, 19).



The story of the Mormon Battalion is a story of courage and sacrifice. The 339 survivors who struggled into San Diego that lovely midwinter day in January 1847 each bore a wild but strangely holy countenance after walking more than 2,000 miles. They had made it. Top: Red, white, and blue ribbons previously hung from this cloth banner carried by the Mormon Battalion. “Ram in the Thicket” refers to Genesis 22:13, where a ram caught in a thicket was used by Abraham as a burnt offering after an angel stopped Abraham from sacrificing his son Isaac. These words reminded the battalion that the Lord would provide for them in the midst of their sacrifice as He had provided for Abraham. Above: One of the packs used by the men of the battalion.