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Miracle of the Quail, by Sandra B. Rast

In 1846 the last of the Latter-day Saints were driven out of Nauvoo, Illinois, USA. Most of them were poor, sick, or aged. With few resources, they ferried across the Mississippi River and set up a temporary camp. Amid that suffering, hundreds of quail flew into and fell into the camp. They were so tame that the Saints could catch them with their hands, providing much-needed food for the starving Saints.



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Ensign

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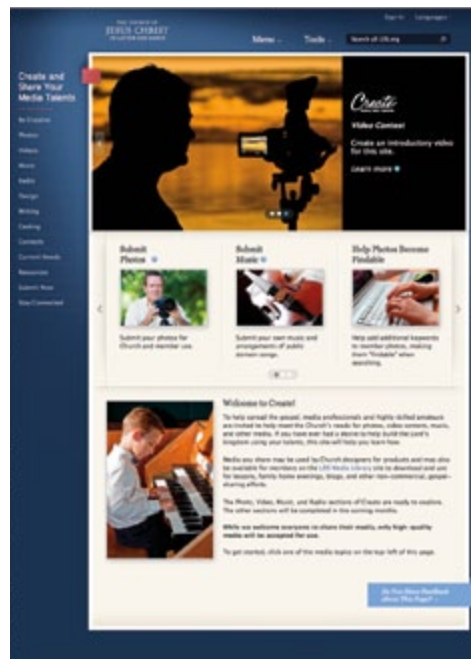
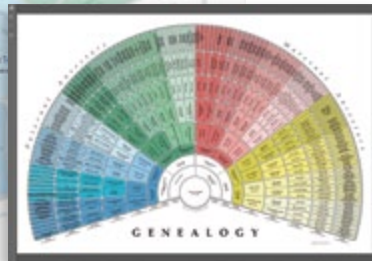
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**By President
Dieter F. Uchtdorf**
Second Counselor in the
First Presidency

ALWAYS IN THE Middle

By many world calendars, July marks the middle of the year. While the beginnings and endings of things are celebrated and remembered, the middle of things often goes unnoticed.

Beginnings are times for making resolutions, for creating plans, for bursts of energy. Endings are times for winding down and may involve feelings of completion or loss. But with the proper outlook, considering ourselves as *in the middle* of things can help us not only to understand life a little better but also to live it a little more meaningfully.

The Middle of Missionary Work

When I speak to our young missionaries, I often tell them they are in the middle of their missions. Whether they just arrived the day before or are to depart for home the day after, I ask them to think of themselves as always being in the middle.

New missionaries may feel they are too inexperienced to be effective, and so they delay speaking or acting with confidence and boldness. Seasoned missionaries who are close to completing their missions may feel sad their missions are coming to a close, or they may slow down as they contemplate what they will do after their missions.

Whatever the circumstances and wherever they serve, the truth is that the Lord's missionaries are daily sowing countless seeds of good tidings. Thinking of themselves as

always being in the middle of their missions will embolden and energize these faithful representatives of the Lord. As it is with full-time missionaries, so it is with all of us.

We Are Always in the Middle

This change in perspective is more than a simple trick of the mind. There is a sublime truth behind the idea that we are always in the middle. If we look at our location on a map, we are tempted to say we are at a beginning. But if we look more closely, wherever we are is simply in the middle of a larger place.

As it is with space, so it is with time. We may feel we are at the beginning or end of our lives, but when we look at where we are against the backdrop of eternity—when we realize that our spirit has existed for time beyond our capacity to measure and, because of the perfect sacrifice and Atonement of Jesus Christ, that our soul will exist for an eternity to come—we can recognize that we are truly in the middle.

Recently I felt impressed to redo the headstone on my parents' grave. Time had not been kind to the grave site, and I felt that a new headstone would be more fitting for their exemplary lives. When I looked at the birth dates and death dates on the headstone connected by the usual insignificant little dash, this small symbol of a lifespan suddenly filled my mind and heart with an



abundance of rich memories. Each of these treasured memories reflects a moment in the middle of my parents' lives and in the middle of my life.

Whatever our age, whatever our location, when things occur in our lives, we are always in the middle. What's more, we will forever be in the middle.

The Hope of Being in the Middle

Yes, there will be moments of beginnings and moments of endings throughout our lives, but these are only markers along the way of the great middle of our eternal lives. Whether we are at the beginning or the end, whether we are young or old, the Lord can use us for His purposes if we simply set aside whatever thoughts limit our ability to serve and allow His will to shape our lives.

The Psalmist says, "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we [should] rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalm 118:24). Amulek reminds us that "this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God; yea, behold *the day of this life* is the day for men to perform their labors" (Alma 34:32; emphasis added). And a poet muses, "Forever—is composed of Nows."¹

Being always in the middle means that the game is never over, hope is never lost, defeat is never final. For no matter where we are or what our circumstances, an eternity of beginnings and an eternity of endings stretch out before us.

We are always in the middle. ■

NOTE

1. Emily Dickinson, "Forever—is composed of Nows," in *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Thomas H. Johnson (1960), 624.

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

Consider discussing with the family how they are "always in the middle," even if they are beginning or ending something. Encourage them to do their best on their current activities, not dwelling on the past or waiting for the next activity or project. You may want to suggest they choose one thing they can do to implement this counsel and set a date to achieve their goal.

YOUTH

In the Middle of Your Preparation for a Mission

President Uchtdorf tells missionaries to think of themselves as being in the middle of their missions. You can also apply this idea to your mission preparation: whether you are 12 or 18, you can prepare to serve a mission.

What are some things you can do “in the middle” of your mission preparation?

- Always be worthy to attend the temple.
- Learn to recognize promptings from the Holy Ghost by writing down your promptings and acting on them.
- Pray for the missionaries.
- Ask the missionaries in your area what they recommend you do to prepare to serve a mission.
- Learn to manage your time effectively, including important activities such as service, scripture study, and journal writing.
- When talking with a family member, share a scripture that inspired you recently. Explain what you think about the scripture.
- Ask your friends about their religions and what they believe. Be willing to share your beliefs. Invite them to church or activities.

As you recognize that you are in the middle of your mission preparation, you can live your life to be more worthy of the Lord’s trust and the Spirit’s companionship.



CHILDREN

Everyone Can Do Something Now

1. President Uchtdorf teaches that no matter your age, you can do something to help others. In your journal or on a piece of paper, list your gifts or abilities. Ask your parents what they think your gifts are.
2. Decide how you could use your gifts to help others in the situations below.



3. At the end of your list of gifts, write one way you can use those gifts to help others this week.



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



Faith, Family, Relief

Demonstrating Our Discipleship through Love and Service

Throughout His mortal life, Jesus Christ showed His love for others by ministering to them. He said, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35). He set the example and wants us to “succor those that stand in need of [our] succor” (Mosiah 4:16). He calls His disciples to work with Him in His ministry, giving them the opportunity to serve others and become more like Him.¹

Our service as visiting teachers will closely resemble the ministry of our Savior when we show our love for those we visit teach by doing the following:²

- Remember their names and the names of their family members and become acquainted with them.
- Love them without judging them.
- Watch over them and strengthen their faith “one by one,” as the Savior did (3 Nephi 11:15).
- Establish sincere friendships with them and visit them in their homes and elsewhere.
- Care about each sister. Remember birthdays, graduations, weddings, baptisms, or other times that are meaningful to her.



- Reach out to new and less-active members.
- Reach out to the lonely or those in need of comfort.

From the Scriptures

3 Nephi 11; Moroni 6:4; Doctrine and Covenants 20:47

NOTES

1. See *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 105.
2. See *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 3.2.3.
3. *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 3.
4. *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 6.

What Can I Do?

1. How am I increasing my ability to nurture others?
2. What am I doing to ensure that the sisters I watch over know that I love them?

From Our History

“The New Testament includes accounts of women, named and unnamed, who exercised faith in Jesus Christ. . . . These women became exemplary disciples. . . . [They] journeyed with Jesus and His Twelve Apostles. They gave of their substance to assist in His ministry. After His death and Resurrection, [they] continued to be faithful disciples.”³

Paul wrote of a woman named Phebe, who was “a servant of the church” (Romans 16:1). He asked the people to “assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many” (Romans 16:2). “The kind of service rendered by Phebe and other great women of the New Testament continues today with members of the Relief Society—leaders, visiting teachers, mothers, and others—who act as succorers, or helpers, of many.”⁴

April Conference Notebook

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

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

STORIES FROM CONFERENCE

The Power of the Priesthood

During World War II, in the early part of 1944, an experience involving the priesthood took place [and] was related by a correspondent—not a member of the Church—who worked for a newspaper in Hawaii. . . . He and other correspondents were in the second wave behind the marines at Kwajalein Atoll. As they advanced, they noticed a young marine floating facedown in the water, obviously badly wounded. The shallow water around him was red with his blood. And then they noticed another marine moving toward his wounded comrade. The second marine was also wounded, with his left arm hanging helplessly by his side. He lifted up the head of the one who was floating in the water in order to keep him from drowning. In a panicky voice he called for help. The correspondents looked again at the boy he was supporting and called back, “Son, there is nothing anyone can do for this boy.”

“Then,” wrote the correspondent, “I saw something that I had never seen before.” This boy, badly wounded himself, made his way to the shore with the seemingly lifeless body of his fellow marine. He “put the head of his companion on his knee. . . . What a picture that was—these two mortally wounded boys—both . . . clean, wonderful-looking young men, even in their distressing situation. And the one boy bowed his head over the other and said, ‘I command you, in the name of Jesus Christ and by the power of the priesthood, to remain alive until I can get medical help.’” The correspondent concluded his article: “The three of us [the two marines and I] are here in the hospital. The doctors don’t know [how they made it alive], but I know.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Willing and Worthy to Serve,” *Ensign*, May 2012, 67, 68.



Questions to Ponder

- What blessings come to Latter-day Saints through the power of the priesthood?
- How are faith and the priesthood connected—for the priesthood holders and for the recipients of blessings?

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

Additional resources on this topic: “Priesthood” in Study by Topic on LDS.org; Julie B. Beck, “An Outpouring of Blessings,” *Ensign*, May 2006, 11–13; *Gospel Principles* (2009), “The Priesthood,” 67–71.

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



SNAPSHOT OF THE CHURCH

Membership (as of 2011)	14,441,346
Stakes and Districts	3,554
Wards and Branches	28,784
Missions	340
Full-Time Missionaries	55,410
Church-Service Missionaries	22,299
Converts Baptized	281,312
Temples in Operation	136

STUDY CORNER

Drawing Parallels: Family

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

- “Husbands and wives should understand that their first calling—from which they will never be released—is to one another and then to their children.”¹
—President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles
- “We need to do things in the *right order!* Marriage first and then family. Too many in the world have forgotten this natural order of things and think they can change it or even reverse it.”²—Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles
- “We know that family scripture study and family home evenings are not always perfect. Regardless of the challenges you face, do not become discouraged.”³
—Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles
- “Teaching our children to understand is more than just imparting information. It’s helping our children get the doctrine into their hearts.”⁴—Cheryl A. Esplin, second counselor in the Primary general presidency

NOTES

1. Boyd K. Packer, “And a Little Child Shall Lead Them,” *Ensign*, May 2012, 8.
2. M. Russell Ballard, “That the Lost May Be Found,” *Ensign*, May 2012, 100.
3. Quentin L. Cook, “In Tune with the Music of Faith,” *Ensign*, May 2012, 44.
4. Cheryl A. Esplin, “Teaching Our Children to Understand,” *Ensign*, May 2012, 10.

Prophetic Promise

As we leave this conference, I invoke the blessings of heaven upon each of you. . . . May you ponder the truths you have heard, and may they help you become even better than you were when conference began.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “As We Close This Conference,” *Ensign*, May 2012, 116.

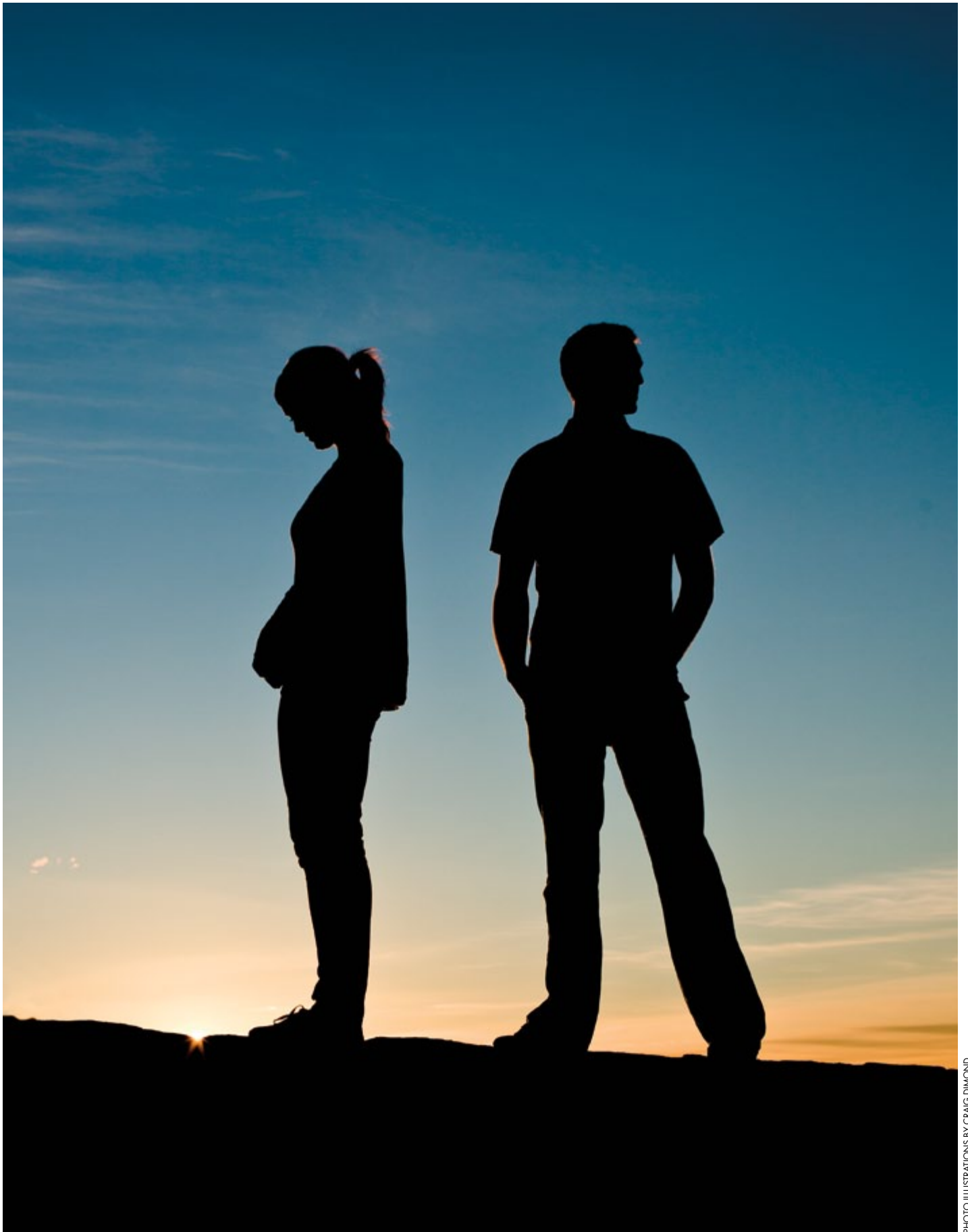


PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY CRAIG DIMOND

Never Give Up

A husband and wife tell of their conversions to the gospel of Jesus Christ—35 years apart.

By Al and Eva Fry

Her Story

For 35 years I hoped and waited for my husband to become a member of the Church. Those long years were full of heartfelt prayers, but three prayers in particular were memorable turning points in my experience.

Al and I were married in 1959. A decade later we had three children and were living in a small town in Canada. Al ran a construction business, and I was a stay-at-home mom who sometimes helped with the business. On the weekends, Al and I partied with our friends, always with alcohol. My dad had been an alcoholic, so I hated that drinking was such a big part of our lives, but it had become our way of socializing.

That year, 1969, I realized my life was going nowhere and that our children deserved better than what we were offering them. One night after another drinking party, I got down on my knees and prayed, “Dear God, if You are there, please help me change my life.” I promised Him I would never drink alcohol again, a commitment I’ve honored ever since.

That was the first memorable prayer, and it was answered quickly. My sister-in-law’s daughter, my niece, had been invited to attend Primary with a Latter-day Saint friend. As my sister-in-law learned more about the Church, she felt inspired to send me a subscription to the Church

magazines, which arrived within a month after I had said that first prayer. I didn’t know what a Mormon was, but I loved the messages the magazines contained and read them cover to cover. I decided to investigate the Church and therein found my answer. I *did* change my life, and I was baptized on June 19, 1970.

Al did not share my desires. He liked our former lifestyle and continued to live it. He continued to be a good husband, father, and provider, but for the next 35 years, as far as the gospel was concerned, I was on my own.

I was raising our children in the Church, but within a few years, our children decided they would rather spend Sundays boating with their dad than attending church with me. I was devastated. One day in 1975 I talked to my stake president and told him that I had decided I needed to leave the Church because it was breaking up our family. He patiently listened and said, “Do what you must, but be sure that your Father in Heaven approves.” So I went home and fasted and prayed. That was the second memorable prayer. The answer that came was the impression that I was the link in the gospel chain for my family; if I broke that link, everyone would be lost. I knew the answer came from God, so I committed to never leave the Church. And I never did.



LIVE FOR IT, PRAY FOR IT

“Throughout your life on earth, seek diligently to fulfill the fundamental purposes of this life *through the ideal family*. While you may not have yet reached that ideal, do all you can through obedience and faith in the Lord to consistently draw as close to it as you are able. Let nothing dissuade you from that objective. . . . If for the present, that does not include sealing in the temple to a righteous companion, live for it. Pray for it. Exercise faith that you will obtain it. Never do anything that would make you unworthy of it. If you have lost the vision of eternal marriage, rekindle it. If your dream requires patience, give it. As brothers, we prayed and worked for 30 years before our mother and our nonmember father were sealed in the temple. Don’t become overanxious. Do the best you can. We cannot say whether that blessing will be obtained on this side of the veil or beyond it, but the Lord will keep His promises.”

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “First Things First,” *Ensign*, May 2001, 7.

Staying faithful didn’t come easily, but several things helped me maintain my faith and patiently hope for the day when Al would reconsider the gospel:

- I always loved Al and did my best to look after him and be a supportive, faithful wife.
- I prayed constantly. Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ became my gospel companions. When being with Al was difficult because he wasn’t living gospel standards, I talked with Heavenly Father and came to know my Savior.
- I regularly read my scriptures and every other Church publication I could get my hands on, including the *Ensign*. Two verses of scripture in particular, 3 Nephi 13:33 and Doctrine and Covenants 75:11, became especially meaningful and poignant to me. They gave me strength and patience to hold on while waiting for a change of heart in my husband and children.

- I faithfully went to church by myself until each of our children came back. All are active today. When they grew up and left home, I continued to attend church by myself.
- We held family home evening without Al knowing that was what we were doing. I would bring up a subject at the dinner table, and we would talk about it as a family.
- I always tried to be obedient and do the right thing.
- I accessed additional power by requesting priesthood blessings.
- I sought counsel from priesthood leaders.
- I treated my Church friends as family.
- I went to the temple and received my endowment. It took me many years to make that decision; I was afraid it would make my relationship with Al more difficult. In the end, I found it was the best decision for me. Al supported it, it made me happy, and after receiving it, I no longer resented Al as the reason I wasn’t going to the temple. When I participated in temple worship, I often put Al’s name on the prayer roll.

In essence, I continued to live as a faithful member of the Church. I looked for small ways to share the gospel with him, even though he usually didn’t want to hear it. But I found that the Holy Ghost would inspire me with the right things to say and the right way and time to share them. I later learned that because of my faithfulness and commitment to him, Al was touched by the Spirit from time to time.

He even agreed to listen to the missionary lessons on several occasions. But each time, my heart broke because he always returned to his old way of life. Even in these discouraging moments, however, Heavenly Father watched over me and made up for what I didn’t have with other blessings. All along I knew that there was something inside Al worth waiting for.

Slowly Al began to make changes. He stopped swearing. He stopped drinking. He treated me better than he ever had before. He began coming to church.

And I kept praying.

The incredible answer to my third memorable prayer came in April 2005. I was wondering if Al would ever accept the gospel of Jesus Christ—I was feeling a little bit desperate. I pleaded with Heavenly Father for His help. It must have finally been the right time because on July 9, Al was baptized.

Although getting to this point was not easy, I am grateful to have witnessed the amazing power of God in changing an unbelieving heart to a believing one. I know that He heard and answered the many prayers I prayed over the course of 35 years. Because of His answers, I now live with a changed man, one who loves our Heavenly Father as much as I do. And we love each other more deeply than we ever did before.

I know that there are others in the Church who are waiting, hoping, and praying for a loved one to come into the Church. I wish to encourage these brothers and sisters to accept the Savior's invitation to "come unto me" (Alma 5:34) for themselves and not just for their loved ones. I know from experience that doing so will give strength as nothing else can. Staying close to Heavenly Father, obeying His commandments, and enjoying current blessings yield happiness and allow Him to work through us.

I testify that God does hear our prayers. Waiting on the Lord and accepting His timetable with faith is rarely easy, but I know that His timing is always right.

His Story

For 35 years many people discussed the gospel with me. My wife never missed an opportunity to talk about it, and she would cleverly leave the Book of Mormon and *Ensign* magazine in plain sight. Of course, I never picked them up. She invited the missionaries over on many occasions; two or three sets of them even taught me the missionary lessons.

So what was keeping me from entering the waters of baptism?

I always had an excuse. I worked long hours. I didn't see that I'd ever have time for the gospel. I was much too busy making money. So I told Eva, "Sometime when things slow

down and I have more time, I'll read the Book of Mormon."

But I never did. Besides, I had never been much of a reader, and when I tried to read the Bible, it didn't make any sense to me. So that was the end of that.

There was another thing that was keeping me from joining the Church, something more serious: the sinful life I was leading. King Benjamin teaches us that "the natural man is an enemy to God . . . unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit" (Mosiah 3:19). I did not yield—I was sitting on the fence. The Savior said, "He that is not with me is against me" (Matthew 12:30). I realize now that because of the way I was living my life, I was against Him. I needed to change.

I was living around the gospel but never actually living it, but as time went on, I started to feel the Spirit. I

As I read my daughter's letter, I realized I had no more excuses.



stopped partying and drinking. When I made that change, the Spirit started to manifest itself more frequently. I still wasn't where I needed to be—my language wasn't very good and I had some other bad habits to work on—but I was changing.

Then one day I received a package. It was from one of my daughters, Linda. It contained a Book of Mormon and a Bible with lots of marked scriptures. She also wrote me a letter in which she told me how much she loved me and wanted me to know what she knew.

She wrote, "The only way to know if the gospel of Jesus Christ is true is to ask with a sincere heart and with real intent."

Linda then shared a series of scriptures that led me on a journey of prayer and scripture study.

"The only way I get to know my Savior and Heavenly Father," she wrote, "is by praying and reading about Them in scriptures."

She then described how important humility is and how, without God in her life, she couldn't have peace. Finally, she wrote, "Don't procrastinate anymore. You have been given so much. Now it's time to give back to Heavenly Father. This is the only way to true happiness."

I no longer had any excuses. Work slowed down, and I had some extra time. So I started reading and studying the scriptures she had outlined for me, which gave me the desire to read the entire Book of Mormon. But there were still so many things I did not understand.

By this time I was attending sacrament meeting because my wife said it would be nice if I came and sat beside her. She also suggested I read the Doctrine and Covenants. I did, and I understood it better. Then, with my wife's help, I read the Book of Mormon and experienced the scriptures coming to life. Through lots of prayer, the Spirit was ignited in me.

What made the difference in me? The Holy Spirit and a knowledge of the scriptures. Both gave me the courage to change my life and to ask God for forgiveness of my sins, which were what had really kept me from joining the Church all those years.



Great happiness has come into our lives because we are united in the gospel.

Confessing my sins was very difficult. It brought me such pain that I lay in bed for three days in sorrow. But through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, I was forgiven. Then Heavenly Father gave me the strength to get up and get on with my new life.

My son Kevin baptized me on July 9, 2005. One of the missionaries who had taught my wife decades earlier attended. Two years later I took my family to the San Diego California Temple to be sealed for time and eternity.

The last seven years have been the happiest years of my life. I can finally take my place as the patriarch and spiritual leader of our family and share in the gospel with my wife, our children, and our nine grandchildren. This family unity has spiritually strengthened everyone. A son-in-law has joined the Church, and four of our grandchildren have served or are serving missions. My new life in the Church is a miracle. I had no idea what great happiness and growth it would bring me.

I am so thankful for this second chance. I am grateful to be making up for those lost years by doing God's work. ■

FACING THE FUTURE WITH HOPE

By Elder
José A. Teixeira
Of the Seventy



Putting the Lord, His kingdom, and our families first will give us the hope we need to face present and future challenges.

Brother Arnaldo Teles Grilo became one of my best friends when I was in my mid-20s. At the age of 62, Brother Grilo, then a retired engineer, was called as one of my counselors in the presidency of what was then the Oeiras Portugal District, where we served together for several years.

His wisdom and experience provided me, a young priesthood leader, much valuable counsel and insight. He was an optimist by nature; he always saw the bright side of every situation and had a good sense of humor. His attitude was a source of great inspiration to many around him and in particular to me because I knew about the arduous challenges he had faced.

After his graduation as an engineer, Brother Grilo joined the National Agronomic Agency as a researcher in Portugal and later traveled to one of the Portuguese colonies in Africa to lead a cotton research project. The project led him to a successful career as a senior executive in a large international bank in that



Brother Arnaldo Teles Grilo—pictured at right in 1956 and above in 1960 with the car he gave to a friend to help him escape war—had to leave behind everything he had worked for, but he remained anchored in solid principles, love for his family, and faith in Jesus Christ.



country. During almost 30 years in Africa, he raised a beautiful family and enjoyed a good life until his family was abruptly forced to return to Portugal because of the tragedy of conflict and war.

Brother Grilo and his family left behind everything they had worked for—all their property and personal belongings—after witnessing firsthand the devastating effects of war on a country they loved.

Despite the confusion and turmoil generated by a war that gradually consumed all peace and stability during his last months in Africa, Brother Grilo rescued one of his friends by giving him an expensive car he had purchased in Germany. The car allowed his friend and his friend's mother to escape the war.

The abundant material possessions that a life of hard work had provided Brother Grilo did not blur his priorities. He remained anchored in solid principles and love for his family.

Back in Portugal at age 52, he faced the reality of beginning everything from zero. With all of this adversity and tragedy, what

made the difference in his life? Why was he so positive about the present and the future? Why was he so confident?

Brother Grilo was converted in the early days of the Church in Portugal and became a solid pillar and pioneer in that country. Several times he led his family to the temple in Switzerland, traveling 2,800 miles (4,500 km) round-trip in an expression of faith and devotion. Over his years of service, Brother Grilo and his wife brought joy to their children and many others.

Brother Grilo's faith was centered in Jesus Christ and in the knowledge that in the end, Jesus Christ would reign. This gave him hope in the present and in the future.

The New Testament ends with a message of great hope.¹ Prophets such as John the Revelator saw things that are to come and told us of the blessings we would receive if we remain righteous and endure to the end.

John saw a book with seven seals, or time periods, and he described how Satan has always fought against the righteous (see Revelation 5:1–5; 6). But John also saw that Satan would be bound and that Christ would reign in triumph (see Revelation 19:1–9; 20:1–11). Finally he saw that the righteous would dwell with God after the Last Judgment (see Revelation 20:12–15).

One of today's great challenges is learning to conquer fear and despair in order to overcome trials and temptations. It takes only a few moments for us to open a newspaper, scroll the web, or hear a news broadcast on radio or television to be confronted with distressing accounts of crime and natural calamities that happen every day.

Understanding the promises in scripture concerning how the Lord will conquer evil

and how truth will conquer error can help us face the future with hope and optimism. In today's world we see war, natural calamities, and economic crises. At times these events are not just things we observe from a distance but are things that affect us personally.

There is no need for us to mourn lost worldly possessions or to fixate on the temporal, for those things can rob us of the joy of the simple, sublime things of life.

I am grateful for the example of Brother Arnaldo Teles Grilo. He kept spiritual matters first, matters "of great worth unto [us] in the last days" (2 Nephi 25:8), including family relationships and service to others.

We should all face the future with hope because we know that the forces of evil will be overcome. We

should all maintain a positive outlook as we face challenges because today we have the scriptures, the teachings of living prophets, priesthood authority, temples, and the support of each other as members of the Church. We should all "come off conqueror" because of prayer (D&C 10:5). And most important, we should have hope in eternal life because of the Lord's perfect atoning sacrifice (see Moroni 7:41).

When our priorities are right, we will live a richer and more abundant life. Putting the Lord, His kingdom, and our families first will give us the hope we need to face present and future challenges. ■

NOTE

1. See Revelation 19–22; see also lesson 46, *New Testament Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual* (1997).



We should all maintain a positive outlook as we face challenges because today we have the scriptures, the teachings of living prophets, priesthood authority, temples, and the support of each other as members of the Church.

KEY POINTS

We flee the wickedness of the world by

- Heeding the prophets, which brings safety.
- Keeping the commandments, which strengthens us.
- Gathering together in our wards and stakes, which builds unity.
- Trusting in the Lord, which builds faith and hope.

Around 148 B.C., the Lord sent the Book of Mormon prophet Abinadi to call the wicked King Noah and his people to repentance. The king and his priests rejected Abinadi's message, imprisoned him, and then put him to death. However, one of King Noah's priests, a young man named Alma, hearkened to the words of the prophet. Alma carefully recorded Abinadi's teachings about the coming of Christ and then quietly began sharing them with all who would listen. As a result, hundreds were baptized at the Waters of Mormon.

Soon their faith and acceptance of the gospel brought a strong negative response from King Noah,



who feared “that Alma was stirring up the people to rebellion against him” (Mosiah 18:33). King Noah sent an army to destroy Alma and his followers. In order to escape, these faithful Nephites had to take “their tents and their families and [depart] into the wilderness” (Mosiah 18:34).

Alma and his people soon learned what many other followers of Christ have learned: the wicked will threaten and sometimes even attack the faithful. Many ancient prophets, including Lehi, Nephi, Abraham, and Moses, suffered in this way. Each of these was forced to leave his home and seek safety elsewhere.

Similarly, during the early days of the restored Church,

Latter-day Saints were uprooted from their homes in Kirtland, Independence, Far West, and finally, Nauvoo, in order to avoid those who would do them harm. Like the prophets of old, they professed beliefs that stirred up opposition from those around them.

In 1831, the Lord warned Joseph Smith that this pattern would occur in his day:

“Prepare yourselves for the great day of the Lord. Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour. Let them, therefore, who are among the Gentiles flee unto Zion. . . . Go ye out from among the nations, even from Babylon, from the midst of wickedness, which is spiritual Babylon” (D&C 133:10–12, 14).

By Kevin Hinckley

Take Your Tents and Flee

The Lord has called us to flee the wicked things of the world and find safety in the gospel.



In other words, the Saints of our day have to flee the wicked, as did the Saints of past ages. The Lord’s warning has as much to do with spiritually fleeing as it does with physically fleeing. We need to spiritually flee the wickedness of the world around us. The Lord refers to this evil as spiritual Babylon. Spiritual escape occurs whenever the honest in heart accept the invitation to be baptized and “come into the fold of God, and to be called his people” (Mosiah 18:8), and live according to the teachings of the Savior Jesus Christ.

As society’s morals continue to decay, we find ourselves in the midst of spiritual Babylon, which grows more clever and sophisticated in its messages.

Lehi also faced increasing wickedness. The Lord directed him to take refuge by fleeing Jerusalem with his tents into the wilderness. For us, safety from the incessant attacks of the adversary today can be found only under the protection of our spiritual tents: living the gospel and finding strength among fellow Saints—those who have taken upon them the name of Jesus Christ and left the world behind.

After escaping Egypt, Moses was directed by the Lord to construct a tabernacle—a temporary temple—thus providing the children of Israel with a place to worship as



well as a refuge in the wilderness. The stakes of this tent-like structure were driven deep in the ground, giving the tabernacle a steadfast anchor in the middle of the hostile desert. We reference this idea in our use of the word *stake* to describe our large ecclesiastical units. (See Isaiah 54:2; D&C 82:14.)

As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we find safety and ultimate security in our spiritual journey as we gather and participate in our stakes. By doing so, we gain strength within the gospel tent.

Finding protection under the gospel tent does not guarantee an absence of trials and hardships. When Alma and his people fled King Noah’s army, they found a remote location where they established a new settlement. Soon came another trial: Lamanites discovered them, placed them into bondage, and allowed apostate Nephites to rule harshly over them.

Nevertheless, through this trial they came to know that the Lord “do[es] visit [his] people in their afflictions,” for “the Lord did strengthen them that they could bear up their burdens with ease, and they did submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord” (Mosiah 24:14–15).

Ultimately, Alma and his people were delivered when the Lord caused a deep sleep to come upon their tormentors. Quietly they escaped, making their way to Zarahemla and safety (see Mosiah 24). Deliverance happened on the Lord’s timetable and in His own way, but it did come, as did many blessings both during and after their tribulations.

Like Alma, we too have been called out of Babylon to find shelter by gathering with the Saints of God. In order to do so, we may need to leave what is comfortable and familiar to dwell under the gospel’s tent. No matter how enticing the world might appear, it was never intended to be our home.

Nor does it provide the true happiness available to those faithful to the Lord (see Mosiah 2:41). We, like Alma’s people, can trust that the Lord will enable us to bear our burdens with ease.

Thankfully, the Lord has provided us with wards and branches, stakes and districts to gather to and a broad gospel tent for spiritual shelter from the storm. Beneath this tent we can find the refuge we seek from the storms of life. ■



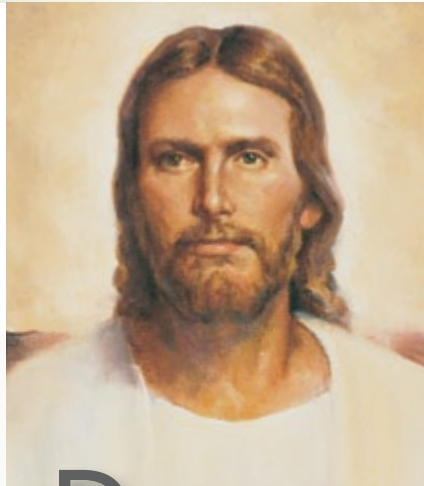
Waiting on the Lord,

Most everyone has experienced anxiety or anticipation while waiting for something. As a single adult, I certainly have learned what it means to wait. For this reason Isaiah 40:31 has come to have special meaning for me: “But they that *wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength*; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint” (emphasis added). Many of us dread waiting, but through the prophet Isaiah, the Lord tells us that waiting can actually be a good thing.

In the past I’ve thought of waiting as wasted time, such as when I wait for a plane to take off or wait in line at the grocery store. This kind of waiting requires little action on our part; it’s mostly a matter of biding our time. This type of waiting is also usually paired with frustration and impatience. Consider how you feel when someone you are waiting for is late. By the time the person arrives, you may be so upset that you had to wait that you don’t appreciate the fulfillment of your anticipation.

Of course, this is not the kind of waiting that Isaiah said could “renew

[our] strength.” On the contrary, impatient waiting tends to leave us physically and emotionally exhausted. I have been guilty of this kind of waiting too often.



Renewing Our Strength

So what kind of waiting *was* Isaiah describing? The Hebrew word translated as *wait* also means “hope for” and “anticipate” (Isaiah 40:31, footnote a). To add my own interpretation, I like to think of *waiting* in terms of a waiter at a restaurant. In this sense, *to wait* on someone is to serve that person. A good waiter—or server—gives his or her customers excellent care and attention by checking in often, learning their desires, and attending to them. When I adopt this attitude

toward the Lord, it adds purpose to the time I spend awaiting a particular blessing. In fact, time seems to pass more quickly when I am diligently working to serve God. Ironically enough, it’s through this work that I “renew [my] strength.”

The same amount of time will pass whether I am squandering it in anger and impatience or using it to serve the Lord and His children. Choosing to “wait upon the Lord”—or viewed another way, to serve Him—yields far more satisfying results. This choice also helps me remember that because Heavenly Father’s greatest desire is to bless His

children with what will ultimately help us be happy, He will not only give me what I need, He’ll also give it at the time that is best for me.

Shifting my attitude from one of “just waiting” to “waiting upon the Lord” has shown me that waiting can be a good thing after all. This perspective has opened my eyes to the many gifts Heavenly Father has given me. Most of all, it has given my life renewed strength, purpose, and meaning. ■

UNDERSTANDING OUR Covenants WITH God

AN OVERVIEW
OF OUR MOST
IMPORTANT
PROMISES



As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” explains President Thomas S. Monson, “sacred covenants are to be revered by us, and faithfulness to them is a requirement for happiness. Yes, I speak of the covenant of baptism, the covenant of the priesthood, and the covenant of marriage as examples.”¹

In the Church, an ordinance is a sacred, formal act performed by the authority of the priesthood. Some ordinances are essential to our salvation. As part of these “saving ordinances,” we enter into solemn covenants with God.²

A covenant is a two-way promise, the conditions of which are set by God.³ When we enter into a covenant with God, we promise to keep those conditions. He promises us certain blessings in return.

When we receive these saving ordinances and keep the associated covenants, the Atonement of Jesus Christ

becomes effective in our lives, and we can receive the greatest blessing God can give us—eternal life (see D&C 14:7).

Because keeping our covenants is essential to our happiness now and to eventually receiving eternal life, it is important to understand what we have promised our Heavenly Father. The following is an overview of the covenants we make in association with saving ordinances and suggestions for where you can learn more.

Baptism and Confirmation

Baptism by immersion in water, performed by one having authority, is the first saving ordinance of the gospel and is necessary for an individual to become a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Inseparable from baptism is its companion ordinance of confirmation—the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.



A covenant is a two-way promise. God promises us certain blessings in return for our keeping the terms we accepted when making the covenant.

When we are baptized, we covenant to take upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ, to always remember Him, and to keep His commandments. We also promise “to serve him to the end” (D&C 20:37; see also Mosiah 18:8–10).

In return, Heavenly Father promises that if we repent of our sins, we can be forgiven (see Alma 7:14) and “always have His Spirit to be with [us]” (D&C 20:77), a promise made possible, in part, through receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost.

The ordinances of baptism and confirmation are the gate through which all who seek eternal life must enter (see John 3:3–5). Honoring our baptismal covenants leads to and is an important part of making the covenants associated with all of the other saving ordinances on the path to eternal life (see 2 Nephi 31:17–21).

LEARN MORE ABOUT BAPTISM

See Robert D. Hales, “The Covenant of Baptism: To Be in the Kingdom and of the Kingdom,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 6.

The Sacrament

Those who have received the saving ordinances of baptism and confirmation partake of the sacrament each week to renew those covenants. While partaking of the bread and water, we remember the sacrifice the Savior made for us. In addition, we ponder the covenants we have made to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ, always remember Him, and keep His commandments. In turn, God

extends the promise that His Spirit may be with us always (see D&C 20:77, 79).

The ordinance of the sacrament is an opportunity each week to renew sacred covenants that allow us to be partakers of the Savior’s atoning grace with the same spiritually cleansing effect of baptism and confirmation.

Church leaders have also taught that when we take the sacrament, we renew not only our baptismal covenants but “all covenants entered into with the Lord.”⁴

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE SACRAMENT

See Dallin H. Oaks, “Sacrament Meeting and the Sacrament,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 17.

The Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood

Heavenly Father gives His oath (guarantee) to bestow certain blessings upon those who keep the covenants associated with receiving the priesthood.

When men live worthy to obtain the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods and “[magnify] their calling,” God promises they will be “sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies.” They become heirs of the promises made to Moses, Aaron, and Abraham. (See D&C 84:33–34.)

Holding the Melchizedek Priesthood is necessary for men to qualify to enter the temple. There, men and women may receive a fulness of priesthood blessings together in marriage.

ANSWERING QUESTIONS

You or someone you have contact with may wonder, “Why aren’t temples open to the public?” Latter-day Saint temples are not used for our weekly Sunday worship, where all are welcome to attend. Sacred ordinances are performed in temples, so temples are open only to baptized members who qualify themselves to receive those ordinances.

After a new temple is built, the public may tour it during an open house. After the temple is dedicated to the Lord, the public may visit the grounds, but the temple is open only to those with a valid temple recommend.

For more information, see “Temples” under Frequently Asked Questions at Mormon.org.

By receiving all of the saving ordinances of the priesthood, all people can receive the promise of “all that [the] Father hath” (see D&C 84:35–38).

“Incredible blessings flow from this oath and covenant to worthy men, women, and children in all the world,” taught Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.⁵

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE OATH AND COVENANT OF THE PRIESTHOOD

See Henry B. Eyring, “Faith and the Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood,” *Ensign*, May 2008, 61.

The Endowment

The temple endowment is a gift that provides perspective and power.

During the temple endowment we receive instructions and make covenants related to our eternal exaltation. Associated with the endowment are the ordinances of washing and anointing and being clothed in temple garments as a reminder of sacred covenants.⁶ Temple ordinances and covenants are so sacred that they are not discussed in detail outside of the temple. Because of that, President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, advised, “It is important that you listen carefully as these ordinances are administered and that you try to remember the blessings promised and the conditions upon which they will be realized.”⁷

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught that the key to receiving divine power to overcome opposition and move the Church forward “is the covenant we make in the temple—our promise to obey and sacrifice, to consecrate unto the Father, and His promise to empower us with ‘a great endowment.’”⁸

You can learn more about the principles behind the covenants we make in the endowment by studying the following:

- “Obedience,” *Gospel Principles* (2009), 200–206.
- M. Russell Ballard, “The Law of Sacrifice,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1998, 6.
- On “the law of [the] gospel” (D&C 104:18), see Doctrine and Covenants 42.
- “The Law of Chastity,” *Gospel Principles* (2009), 224–32.
- D. Todd Christofferson, “Reflections on a Consecrated Life,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 16.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE ENDOWMENT

See *Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple* (2002), 28–35; David A. Bednar, “Honorably Hold a Name and Standing,” *Ensign*, May 2009, 97.

The Sealing

The temple ordinance referred to as “temple marriage” or “being sealed” creates an eternal relationship between husband and wife that can last beyond death if the spouses are faithful. Parent and child relationships can also be perpetuated beyond mortality, linking generations together in eternal family relationships.

When an individual enters into the covenant of marriage in the temple, he or she makes covenants with both God *and* with his or her spouse. Spouses promise faithfulness to each other and to God. They are promised exaltation and that their family relationships can continue throughout eternity (see D&C 132:19–20). Children born to a couple who were sealed in the temple or children who are later sealed to their parents have the right to be part of an eternal family.

As in other ordinances, individual faithfulness to our covenants is required for the earthly ordinance to be sealed, or made valid,



in heaven by the Holy Spirit of Promise.⁹ Individuals who keep their covenants—even when their spouse does not—do not forfeit the blessings promised in the sealing.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE SEALING

See Russell M. Nelson, “Generations Linked in Love,” *Ensign*, May 2010, 91.

Making and Keeping Sacred Covenants

As we enter into these important covenants, we become partakers of the new and everlasting covenant, “even the fulness of [the gospel of Jesus Christ]” (D&C 66:2). The new and everlasting covenant is “the sum total of all gospel covenants and obligations” we’ve made,¹⁰ and the resulting blessings include all that the Father has, including eternal life.

As we strive to understand and keep our covenants, we should remember that keeping our covenants is not merely a list of things to do but a commitment to *become* like the Savior.

“The Final Judgment is not just an evaluation of a sum total of good and evil acts—what we have *done*,” taught Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “It is an



Keeping our covenants is a commitment to become like the Savior.

acknowledgment of the final effect of our acts and thoughts—what we have *become*. It is not enough for anyone just to go through the motions. The commandments, ordinances, and covenants of the gospel are not a list of deposits required to be made in some heavenly account. The gospel of Jesus Christ is a plan that shows us how to become what our Heavenly Father desires us to become.”¹¹ ■

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Happiness—the Universal Quest,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1993, 4.
2. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 20.1.
3. See Russell M. Nelson, “Covenants,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 86.
4. Delbert L. Stapley, in Conference Report, Oct. 1965, 14; see also *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1997), 561; *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball (1982), 220.
5. Russell M. Nelson, “Covenants,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 88.
6. See Russell M. Nelson, “Prepare for the Blessings of the Temple,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2010, 46.
7. Boyd K. Packer, “Come to the Temple,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2007, 20.
8. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Keeping Covenants: A Message for Those Who Will Serve a Mission,” *New Era*, Jan. 2012, 4.
9. See “Holy Ghost,” *True to the Faith* (2004), 82; see also D&C 132:7, 18–19, 26.
10. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, ed. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. (1954–56), 1:156.
11. Dallin H. Oaks, “The Challenge to Become,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 32.

WHEN GOOD PLANS Don't WORK OUT

By Stephanie J. Burns

Planning for the future is important, especially for young adults. But what happens when the best-laid plans don't work out?

Jung Sung Eun of Korea didn't pass the qualification exam to become a teacher. Tina Roper of Utah, USA, lost a job that she had expected to turn into a career. Todd Schlensker of Ohio, USA, received a spiritual confirmation to marry but saw his engagement come to an end. Alessia Mazzolari (name has been changed) of Italy ended what appeared to be the perfect relationship.

No one likes having to resort to "plan B." But even when our plans fall through, Heavenly Father does not abandon His children. There are multiple good ways for life to work out. In time, we may even find that the roadblocks that changed our plans gave us needed insight and experience (see D&C 122:7) and led to something better.

Building Character, Not Résumés

Sung Eun had worked hard to achieve her lifelong dream of becoming

a teacher. She explains, "Because I have always tried to do my best in all I do, I have almost always been able to obtain what I hoped and prayed for." But that didn't happen when she took the teacher qualification exam. "When I failed it," she says, "I felt I had lost all my dreams in one day."

Tina wasn't initially worried when another company acquired the one she worked for. The new organization promised her a long-term position, so she moved closer to her work with high hopes of an exciting new job. When the company laid her off a few months later, she felt "lost, confused, sad, and quite scared."

Rather than focus completely on building their résumés, Sung Eun and Tina realized they could also focus on building their character. Both women found comfort through gospel study and prayer.

"The Apostle Paul was a wonderful friend who helped me be patient and

continually confront challenges," says Sung Eun. "He always had a positive attitude and willingly waited for what God had for him, rather than hoping for his own timing.

"I learned something from his example: the period of waiting is not merely the process that we must go through to get what we want. Rather, it is a process by which we become who our Heavenly Father wants us to be through changes we make."

Tina found that the change she needed most was a shift in perspective. "I was surprised to discover that I had measured my self-worth in worldly ideas of value," she remembers. "I felt valuable because of my employment and position, which were taken away. I now find my self-worth in the eternal truths that I am a daughter of my Heavenly Father and I have divine potential. These truths can never be taken away."

Both Tina and Sung Eun admit that



while building character isn't always pleasant, the fruits of personal growth are sweet. Sung Eun says, "The year after I failed the teacher qualification exam was not only the most painful and depressing time period, but it was also the most precious. I became more able to truly understand other people's difficulties and had a desire to help them with real intent and care."

The examples of Ammon and his brothers in the Book of Mormon showed Tina how the Lord was stretching her faith to help her reach her full potential. "The Lord's plan was for the Nephites to save their Lamanite brothers instead of using a sword to solve the problem," she explains. "The sons of Mosiah were given a task that required greater faith, but they were also given a promise that if they bore their afflictions with patience, they would receive success (see Alma 26:27). Being patient is one of my hardest trials because I want to understand my entire plan—but I realized that Heavenly Father's plan and timing for us will always be the best."

Keeping the Commandments No Matter What

Todd faced a bright future upon returning from his mission. While attending school, he met a wonderful young woman. After several months of courtship and a spiritual confirmation, Todd proposed and she accepted. They planned their wedding for the end of the summer, and both returned

home from school to prepare.

“Three weeks after we said our good-byes at school, she ended our engagement,” Todd recalls. “*Heartbroken* could not express my feelings strongly enough. There were so many unanswered questions in my mind; it didn’t make sense. I had received a confirmation in the house of the Lord, and now our relationship was over. My testimony had never been tested this hard.

“Unfortunately, for years following my breakup, I couldn’t get past it. I didn’t know how I could ever trust a feeling of confirmation again. I had always trusted in the Lord and tried my best to keep the commandments,” he continues. “It all seemed for naught.”

Alessia thought that her relationship with a certain young man was meant to be. “Our story was so beautiful that, even though we had the normal difficulties that every couple encounters, we thought the relationship would never end,” she remembers.

When Alessia’s boyfriend left on his mission, the separation was difficult but for a different reason than Alessia had expected. “While he was gone, I began to know myself better. I realized that many things in my life were not yet right and that many times I had hidden behind some silly ideas rather than humble myself and face reality,” she recounts. “I had been living in a kind of fairy tale, as if being in love were enough to make



everything turn out right, and often this caused me to overlook the most important things.”

Still, Alessia expected a happy reunion and continued relationship after her boyfriend’s mission. However, upon his return, the couple dated only a short time before breaking up. “It was one of the most painful moments I can remember,” says Alessia.

In their respective experiences, Todd and Alessia both eventually recognized that even though a key relationship in their lives was altered, they couldn’t abandon their obedience and allegiance to the Lord. He became their anchor when everything else was changing and uncertain.

“I didn’t have all the answers to why I got a confirmation to marry someone, and it didn’t happen,” Todd recalls. “But I realized that didn’t matter. What *did* matter is that I still had faith in Christ, and I was going to use that faith to trust in whatever the Lord had in store for me.”

Alessia knew that completely pledging herself to the Lord would bring her the strength that she needed. “I understood that the moment had arrived for me to decide what kind of person I wanted to be,” she says. “Would I continue to live life half-way, or would I start on the path to becoming a true disciple of Christ? I wanted to know Him deeply, love Him truly, and try to be a better person

by obeying all His commandments—not just externally but in my heart with true honesty.”

Developing Hope in the Future and Faith in Christ

After being confronted with unanticipated setbacks, all four of these young adults struggled to find the courage to live in the present and again plan for the future. But they found that their faith in the Lord grew.

Sung Eun remembers that after failing her examination, trying new things became difficult. But then came a crucial discovery: “I realized that the real failure is to dwell on the past and make little effort to try to work things out. I decided that rather than continuing to be sad, I should turn this difficult time into an opportunity to learn. My ability to understand life in general broadened and deepened, and I learned that the end of one thing always brings about the beginning of something else.” She has since retaken and passed the exam and is now “a happy teacher who enjoys spending time with students each day.”

Tina chose to trust that something was waiting for her, even though it was difficult to face an uncertain future. “I decided to reenter school, and there I studied the art and technology field, an area I had desired to become involved in but I did not possess the needed skills,” she explains. “I am ready to start another adventure, a much better one, thanks to the wisdom of my Heavenly Father.”

Todd continued trying to date for six years and worked to develop trust in the Lord. Even when he met women he admired very much, he had to fight to keep his doubts from the past from destroying his hopes for the future. “Finding the determination not to succumb to my doubts of six years was not easy,” he says. “But I was firm in attempting to prove to myself that I really did trust in the Lord and His promptings, even though I had been angry with Him before.” A new relationship eventually led to a temple marriage.

“I often wonder why the Lord blessed me with someone as great as my wife when I struggled so long to fully trust the feelings of the Spirit,” reflects Todd. “It is a testimony to me that the Lord is waiting to bless us, but it’s always on His timetable.”

Alessia, by rededicating herself to the Lord, developed a deep and personal testimony. “The plan of salvation became real for me, and my covenants became more binding and deep. Christ’s Atonement was not theory anymore or something that I had read about, perhaps too superficially. A change of heart was happening inside, and I had a sure witness.” Today, she says, she feels like a new person.

Regardless of the turns life’s journey may take, the final destination of eternal life is what Heavenly Father plans for His children (see Moses 1:39). Some may even find that “plan B” was simply a way of making His “plan A” a reality. ■



THE BEST IS YET TO COME

“We look back to claim the embers from glowing experiences but not the ashes. And when we have learned what we need to learn and have brought with us the best that we have experienced, then we look ahead and remember that *faith is always pointed toward the future.*”

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Best Is Yet to Be,” *Ensign*, Jan. 2010, 24.

For more on this topic, see Boyd K. Packer, “The Least of These,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 86–88; Robert D. Hales, “Waiting upon the Lord: Thy Will Be Done,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 71–74; Ann M. Dibb, “Be of a Good Courage,” *Ensign*, May 2010, 114–16.

THE LESSON IS INSIDE THE LEARNER

When we acknowledge the magnificent potential of each learner, we begin to see as God sees.

By Russell T. Osguthorpe

Sunday School
General President



While on a Church assignment in Cusco, Peru, my wife and I attended a combined Relief Society and Melchizedek Priesthood class. The teacher that day was the adult Gospel Doctrine teacher. Because of scheduling issues during the first two meetings, only about 20 minutes remained for him to teach what he had prepared.

He began by asking all members to stand who had joined the Church during the past two years. Five members stood. He wrote the number 5 on the board and then said, “Brothers and sisters, it is wonderful that we have these 5 members with us who have recently joined the Church. The only problem is that during the past two years, we baptized 16 new converts in this ward.”

He then wrote the number 16 next to the number 5 and with great earnestness asked, “So, brothers and sisters, what are we going to do?”

A sister raised her hand and said, “We need to go find them and bring them back.”

The teacher agreed and then wrote the word *rescue* on the board. “We’ve got 11 new members to bring back,” he responded.

He then read a quote from President Thomas S. Monson about the importance of rescuing. He also read from the New Testament about how the Savior went after lost sheep (see Luke 15:6). Then he asked, “So how will we bring them back?”

Hands went up, and he called on one member after another. Class members had suggestions about how they as a ward family or as individuals could work together to help recent converts return to church. Then the teacher asked, “So if you were walking down the street and saw a man you recognized as one of these recent converts on the other side of the street, what would you

do?” One member said, “I would cross over and greet him. I would tell him how much we need him to come back and how eager we are to have him join with us again.”

Others in the class agreed and offered additional specific suggestions about how to help these members. There was an enthusiasm in the room, a determination to do what needed to be done to help these recently baptized members find their way back to full activity.

My wife and I left this lesson with a renewed desire to do something ourselves to help someone return to activity in the Church. I believe that everyone in the class left with such a feeling. Following this experience, I asked myself: What made this short lesson so effective? Why did everyone leave the class feeling so motivated to live the gospel more fully?

While reflecting on these two questions, I identified four principles that



made this class an effective learning and teaching experience:

1. Conversion is the aim.
2. Love is the motive.
3. Doctrine is the key.
4. The Spirit is the teacher.

Conversion Is the Aim

Rather than trying to “‘pour information’ into the minds of class members,” as President Monson has cautioned us *not* to do, this teacher was trying “*to inspire the individual to think about, feel about, and then do something about living gospel principles.*”¹

In short, this teacher’s aim was to help class members *do* something they might not have done had they not attended the class. And that *doing*

was intended to help each individual *become* a true disciple of the Savior.

The aim of this type of teaching is *conversion*. The word *conversion* means simply to turn in a new direction, to embrace new conduct. Conversion—becoming a true disciple—is not a single event but a lifelong process.² In this class the *doing* by class members was intended to help not only the class members but also the recent converts they would be trying to activate. Anytime we live a principle of the gospel more fully, someone else is blessed either directly or indirectly. For this reason, gospel learning and teaching are unique. Rather than leading only to the acquisition of knowledge, gospel learning leads to personal conversion.



Love helps us
 as teachers
 to teach as the
 Savior would teach
 if He were in our
 classroom.

Love Is the Motive

While participating in the class in Peru, I could feel the love the teacher had for those present as well as for the recent converts he was inviting class members to activate. Love seemed to permeate the room—from teacher to learner, from learner to teacher, from one learner to another, and from learners to the recent converts.

Love helps us as teachers to teach as the Savior would teach if He were in our classroom. Indeed, “love prompts us to prepare and teach differently.”³

When a teacher’s motive is to cover the lesson material, the teacher focuses on content rather than on the needs of each individual learner. The Peruvian teacher seemed to feel no need to *cover* anything. He simply wanted to inspire class members to reach out to their brothers and sisters in love. Love for the Lord and love for each other constituted the driving force. Love was the motive. When love is our motive, the Lord will strengthen us to accomplish His purposes to help His children. He will inspire us with *what* we as teachers need to say and *how* we should say it.

Doctrine Is the Key

The teacher in Peru did not read from the lesson manual as he taught. I am convinced he used the manual or conference talks to prepare for the class, but when he taught, he taught from the scriptures. He recounted the story of the lost sheep and recited

Gospel learning and teaching are not about mastering facts; they’re about mastering discipleship.

the following verse: “And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22:32). He shared President Monson’s invitation to all Church members to rescue those who have lost their way. The doctrines at the center of his lesson were faith and charity. Class members needed enough faith to act, and they needed to act out of love.

When the doctrines of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ are taught with clarity and conviction, the Lord strengthens both learner and teacher. The more class members offered their suggestions for reaching out to their brothers and sisters who were less active, the closer everyone felt to the Savior, who constantly reached out to others during His earthly ministry.

Doctrine is the key to effective gospel learning and teaching. It unlocks hearts. It unlocks minds. It opens the way for the Spirit of God to inspire and edify everyone present.

The Spirit Is the Teacher

Great gospel teachers recognize that they are not actually the teachers at all. The gospel is taught and learned through the Spirit. Without the Spirit, the teaching of gospel truths cannot lead to learning (see D&C 42:14). The more the teacher gives inspired invitations to act, the more the Spirit will be present during the lesson. The Peruvian teacher gave an inspired invitation. Then, as class members responded with suggestions, the feeling of the Spirit grew and strengthened everyone.

The teacher was not trying to *cover* the lesson. Rather, he was trying to *uncover* the lesson that was already inside the learner. By inviting class members through the power of the Spirit, the teacher helped members discover their own desire to act—to reach out to their brothers and sisters in love. As class members shared their ideas, they inspired each other because they were jointly drawing upon the Spirit.

When we are trying to live the gospel by helping those around us, the Lord will inspire us in what we should do. So if as teachers we want the Spirit to be more evident in our classroom, we simply need to invite class members to live a principle



of the gospel more fully. When we commit to live a gospel principle more fully, we draw nearer to God and God draws nearer to us (see D&C 88:63).

The Potential of Each Learner

We do not learn and teach the gospel for the sole purpose of gaining knowledge. We learn and teach the gospel to gain exaltation. Gospel learning and teaching are not about mastering facts; they're about mastering discipleship. Whether we are teaching our own children in the home or teaching ward or branch members in the classroom, we need to remember that the lesson we are teaching is already inside the learner. Our role as parents or

teachers is to help learners discover the lesson inside their own hearts and minds.

When we acknowledge the magnificent potential of each learner, we begin to see as God sees. Then we can say what He would have us say and do what He would have us do. As we pursue this path of learning and teaching, conversion is our aim, love is our motive, doctrine is the key, and the Spirit is the teacher. As we learn and teach in this way, the Lord will bless both learner and teacher “that all may be edified of all” (D&C 88:122). ■

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, in Conference Report, Oct. 1970, 107.
2. See Dallin H. Oaks, “The Challenge to Become,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 32–34.
3. *Teaching, No Greater Call* (1999), 32.

If we want the Spirit to be more evident in our classroom, we simply need to invite class members to live a principle of the gospel more fully.

**BUT IF NOT**

"The faithful will not be totally immune from the events on this planet. Thus the courageous attitudes of imperiled Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego are worthy of emulation. They knew that God could rescue them. 'But if not,' they vowed, they would still serve God anyway (see Daniel 3:16–18)."

Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Encircled in the Arms of His Love," *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 17.

A RIVER OF Peace

Despite my grief, I move forward with my head held up in faith and hope in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

By Lanise Heaton

The day our oldest son died in an accident, the loss opened a piercing wound in my soul. Yet I knew I could count on the Savior's atoning power to help carry my heavy burden of sorrow and pain. My husband and I asked our home teachers to give each of us a blessing. We knew strength would come to us beyond our own. Our Savior has promised He will not leave us comfortless (see John 14:18). I have clung with an iron grip to that promise and testify that so has He.

Isaiah teaches that the Savior was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3). If anyone could succor us, I knew He could, on a very personal level. Yet I also knew that if He instantly snatched our grief from us, there would be no growth, no dawn of understanding.

Despite the heartache, I have experienced a constant underlying river of peace that flows from the Savior (see 1 Nephi 20:18). At particularly hard moments, days, or even weeks, His peace has carried away my sadness. I have but to ask for it. Heavenly Father doesn't want us to go through mortality alone.

As I reflect on the accident that took my son's life, an Old Testament account comes to mind:

"Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

"But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods" (Daniel 3:17–18; emphasis added).

The important part is "But if not." We must keep the faith no matter what



happens. Heavenly Father could have sent angels to carry my son out of harm's way, but He didn't. He knows what it will take to sanctify us so we can be prepared to come home to Him. Everything will turn out OK. But that doesn't mean we will never mourn or cry again. Our mourning is a result of our love, but our hearts don't have to be troubled.

The greatest gift we can give those on both sides of the veil is to move forward with our heads held up in faith and hope in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, even if each step is taken with tears streaming down our faces. For we are promised that "the grave hath no victory, and the sting of death is swallowed up in Christ" (Mosiah 16:8). One day "the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces" (Isaiah 25:8). ■

HOW DO WE COPE WITH GRIEF?

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles addressed this question in his October 2006 general conference address:

"I think that of all the days since the beginning of this world's history, that Friday [when the Savior was crucified] was the darkest.

"But the doom of that day did not endure.

"The despair did not linger because on Sunday, the resurrected Lord burst the bonds of death. He ascended from the grave and appeared gloriously triumphant as the Savior of all mankind.

"And in an instant the eyes that had been filled with ever-flowing tears dried. The lips that had whispered prayers of distress and grief now filled the air with wondrous praise, for Jesus the Christ, the Son of the living God, stood before them as the firstfruits of the Resurrection, the proof that death is merely the beginning of a new and wondrous existence. . . .

"Because of the life and eternal sacrifice of the Savior of the world, we will be reunited with those we have cherished."

"Sunday Will Come," Ensign, Nov. 2006, 30.

In an upcoming family home evening, consider discussing death, the Resurrection, and the plan of salvation. See, for example, 2 Nephi 9 and Alma 11–12.





HANDCART PIONEERS, BY MINERVA TEICHERT © IRI, COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM



By Elder
L. Tom Perry
Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

THE STRENGTH OF **Our** HERITAGE

Pioneer faith is needed as much in the world today as in any period of time.

I've always been excited about pioneer stories. My grandmother lived next door to us when I was a child. At the age of eight she had walked most of the way across the plains. She could remember enough pioneer experiences to keep me fascinated by the hour as I would sit and listen to her.

President Brigham Young (1801–77) has always been one of my special heroes. His answers to problems were basic and fundamental and benefited the people. I marvel at his spirit and enthusiasm as he led the Saints west.

When it became apparent that the cost of moving new converts from Europe to Utah would be prohibitive, the idea was presented to President Young that they use handcarts

to cross the prairies. President Young could immediately see the advantage, not only in the cost savings but also in the physical benefit it would be to the people to walk that far and arrive in the Salt Lake Valley full of vigor and vitality after such an experience. He said:

“We are sanguine [confident] that such a train will out-travel any ox train that can be started. They should have a few good cows to furnish milk, and a few beef cattle to drive and butcher as they may need. In this way the expense, risk, loss and perplexity of teams will be obviated [avoided], and the saints will more effectually escape the scenes of distress, anguish and death which have often laid so many of our brethren and sisters in the dust.

“We propose sending men of faith and experience, with suitable instructions, to some proper outfitting point to carry into effect the above suggestions; let the saints, therefore, who intend to immigrate the ensuing year, understand that they are expected to walk and draw their luggage across the plains, and that they will be assisted by the [Perpetual Emigrating] fund in no other way.”¹



Pioneer faith is needed as much in the world today as in any period of time. We need to know that heritage. We need to teach it, we need to be proud of it, and we need to preserve it.

Between 1856 and 1860 a few thousand Saints successfully made the 1,300-mile (2,090 km) journey by handcart. The success of their travel was marred only by two fateful trips, the Willie and Martin handcart companies, which left too late in the year to avoid the early winter snows. Again, notice the genius of President Young. At the October 1856 general conference, he devoted the entire conference to organizing the relief effort to assist those distressed Saints. And he instructed the brethren not to wait a week or a month before they went. He wanted several four-horse teams

ready the following Monday to go and relieve the suffering of the Saints caught in the snows. And that's exactly what happened.

The first relief parties were on their way the following Monday. The description of the Willie company's joy upon receiving that first relief party brings emotions close to the surface. Captain Willie had left his small band and gone out with a single companion in search of the relief train.

History records: “On the evening of the third day after Captain Willie's departure, just as the sun was sinking beautifully behind the distant hills, on an eminence, immediately west of our camp, several covered wagons, each drawn by four horses, were seen coming towards us. The news ran through the camp like wildfire, and all who were able to leave their beds turned out *en masse* to see them. A few minutes brought them sufficiently near to reveal our faithful captain slightly in advance of the train. Shouts of joy rent the air; strong men wept until tears ran freely down their furrowed and sunburnt cheeks, and little children partook of

the joy which some of them hardly understood, and fairly danced around with gladness. Restraint was set aside in the general rejoicing, and as the brethren entered [the] camp the sisters fell upon them and deluged them with kisses. The brethren were so overcome that they could not for some time utter a word, but in choking silence repressed all demonstration of . . . emotions. . . . Soon, however, feeling was somewhat abated, and such a shaking of hands, such words of welcome, and such invocation of God's blessing have seldom been witnessed!”²

Building Strong Families

Out of that hardy pioneer stock have developed traditions and a heritage that have built strong families that have contributed much to the western United States and to the rest of the world.

I was invited to a luncheon years ago sponsored by a retail firm that was announcing the opening of four stores in the Salt Lake City area. Having had retail experience, I asked the president as I sat at the table with him how he was brave enough to open four stores at the same time in a brand-new market area. His reply was just about what I expected. He said his firm had made a demographic study of all the major metropolitan areas in the United States. The firm was interested in finding out which of these areas offered the greatest potential for a department store appealing to young families. The Salt Lake area, destination of those early pioneers, ranked first in the nation.

The firm also found as a result of its study that the workforce in the Salt Lake area is noted to be honest and industrious. You see, a pioneer heritage is still evident down to the third and fourth generations in the area.

However, I was shocked by a statistic that crossed my desk recently. It stated that only 7 percent of the children being reared in the United States today come from traditional homes consisting of a working father, a stay-at-home mother, and one or more children.³ Each day we see the effects of the breakup of the traditional home. There is an alarming increase in the number of battered wives, physically and sexually abused children, vandalism in schools, teenage crime rates, pregnancies among unmarried teenagers, and elderly people growing old without the solace of an extended family.

The prophets have warned us that the

home is the place to save society.⁴ A proper home, of course, is not created automatically when a boy and girl fall in love and marry. It takes those same virtues that were taught in pioneer homes—faith, courage, discipline, and dedication—to make a marriage successful. Just as the pioneers made the desert blossom as a rose, so too our lives and families will blossom if we follow their example and embrace their traditions. Yes, pioneer faith is needed as much in the world today as in any period of time. Once again, we need to know that heritage. We need to teach it, we need to be proud of it, and we need to preserve it.

How blessed we are. What responsibilities our knowledge and our understanding carry. Arnold Palmer, a great American golfer, is reported to have said, “Winning isn’t everything, but wanting to is.” What a great statement: “Wanting to is.”

God grant us the desire to want to win the greatest of all the gifts He has given His children—the gift of life eternal. May God bless us that we will understand our potential, that we will learn and grow and develop an understanding of our heritage and determine to preserve those great gifts that have been given to us as His children. I bear my solemn witness that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, and that His way will lead us to life eternal. ■

From a fireside address delivered on August 3, 1980, at Brigham Young University. For the full text in English, visit speeches.byu.edu.

NOTES

1. Brigham Young, in B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church*, 4:85.
2. John Chislett, in *A Comprehensive History of the Church*, 4:93–94.
3. See Population Reference Bureau, www.prb.org/Articles/2003/TraditionalFamiliesAccountforOnly7PercentofUSHouseholds.aspx. In 1980, when this address was delivered, the figure was 13 percent.
4. See, for example, Thomas S. Monson, “Heavenly Homes, Forever Families,” *Ensign*, June 2006, 98–103; Spencer W. Kimball, “Home: The Place to Save Society,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1975, 3–10.

It takes the same virtues that were taught in pioneer homes—faith, courage, discipline, and dedication—to make a marriage successful.



Just as the pioneers made the desert blossom as a rose, so too our lives and families will blossom if we follow their example.

Joseph & Emma

MOMENTS IN THEIR LIVES

Joseph Smith Jr. and Emma Hale met in October 1825 in Harmony, Pennsylvania, USA. Joseph and his father had traveled from their home in Palmyra, New York, USA, to work temporarily in Harmony for a farmer named Josiah Stowell. They and the other workers boarded on the Hale farm. After a month, Josiah abandoned his project, and Joseph's father returned to Palmyra, but Joseph stayed to work on other local farms.

Emma was 21, an athletic young woman with a spirited attitude, a quick wit, and a lyrical soprano voice. At five feet nine inches, with a “dark complexion” and “piercing eyes,” she was “noble in appearance and bearing.”¹

Joseph, 18 months her junior, was six feet tall, with light brown hair and blue eyes. Five years earlier, he had gone into a grove of trees on his family's farm and prayed to know which church was true. God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, appeared to him—and the Restoration of the gospel began. From that time, controversy surrounded Joseph's name. After Joseph and Emma fell in love, they eloped on January 18, 1827.

For the next 17 years until Joseph was martyred in Carthage, Illinois, USA, Joseph and Emma's lives were never separated from the ongoing Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. They led the Saints from Ohio to Missouri to Illinois. In 1832 when a mob tarred and feathered the Prophet, Emma spent the night removing the tar from his skin. Throughout their lives, they often gave up their bed and slept on the floor “with nothing but a cloak for bed and bedding.”² Following are a few of the tender moments they shared. ■

NOTES

1. Emmeline B. Wells, in Janet Peterson and LaRene Gaunt, *Faith, Hope, and Charity* (2008), 8–9.
2. Lucy Mack Smith, in Peterson and Gaunt, *Faith, Hope, and Charity*, 14.
3. Gracia N. Jones, “Emma's Lost Infants,” www.josephsmithjr.org/history/children.
4. For a detailed history of early Latter-day Saint hymnals, see Sidney B. Sperry, *Doctrine and Covenants Compendium* (1960), 118–23.
5. See *Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 2nd ed. (Church Educational System manual), 2003, 217–19.



Above: Joseph Smith Jr. and his wife, Emma Hale Smith.



Above: *But for a Small Moment*, by Liz Lemon Swindle. Inset: Grave of Joseph and Emma's firstborn child, Alvin, who died on June 15, 1828. The grave is located in the McCune Cemetery near Harmony, Pennsylvania. “Emma nearly lost her life following the difficult birth; her baby, born with un-described birth defects, survived only a short time.”³ Only five of Joseph and Emma's 11 children (including two adopted) lived beyond childhood.

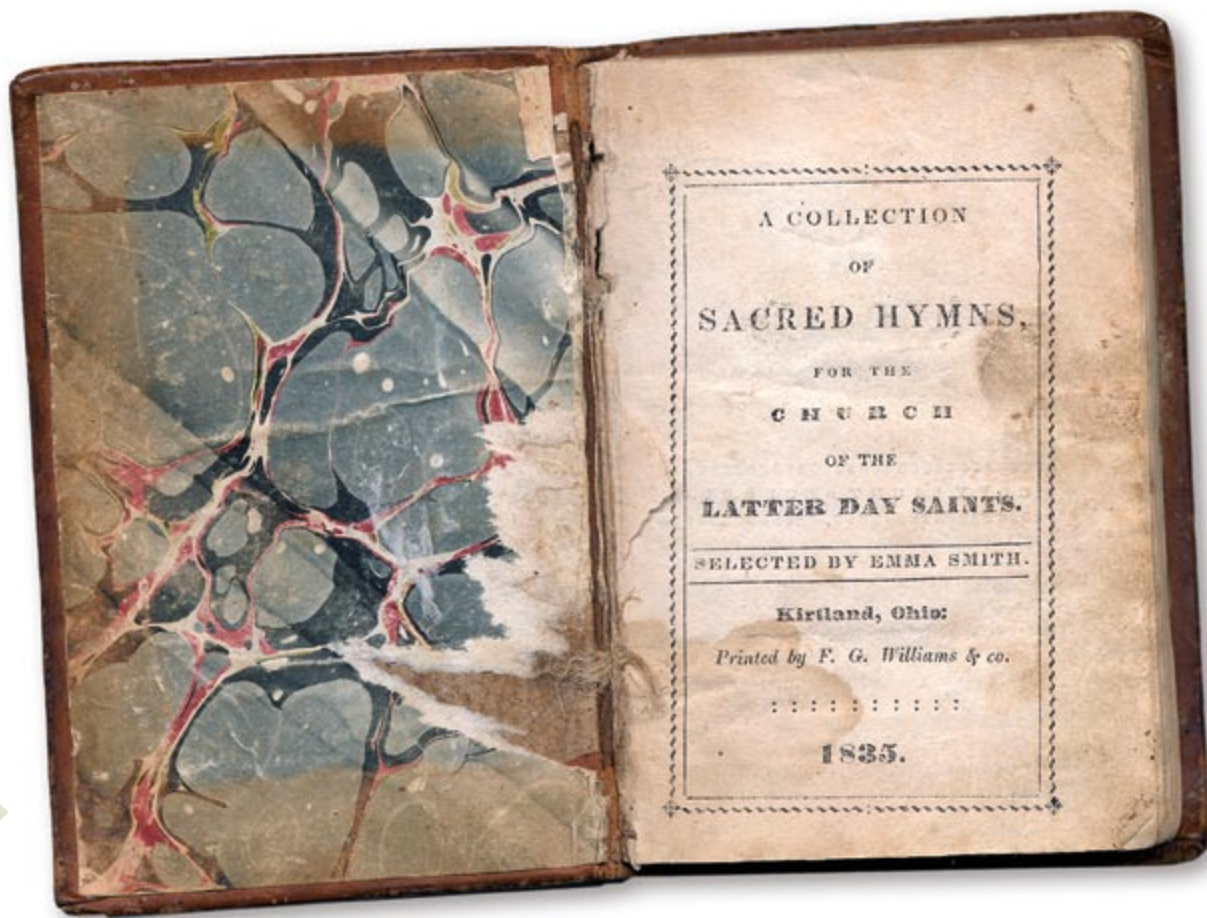


Also and it came to pass that I was a river that Emma
 and Lemuel should come and partake of the fruit also
 therefore I cast mine eyes toward the head of the river
 that perhaps I might see them and it came to pass
 that I saw them but they would not come unto
 me and partake of the fruit and I beheld a rod of
 iron and it extended along the bank of the river
 and led to the tree in which I stood and I also beheld
 a straight and narrow path which came along

Left: By the Gift and the Power of God, by Simon Dewey. **Above:** A page of the original Book of Mormon manuscript translated by the Prophet Joseph Smith. Emma was among the few who served as the Prophet's scribe before Oliver Cowdery, who served as scribe for the majority of the translation.

LEFT: JOSEPH SMITH, JR. BY DAN WEGGELAND, COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM; EMMA HALE SMITH BY LEE GREENE RICHARDS, © 1941 IRI; RIGHT: BUT FOR A SMALL MOMENT © LIZ LEMON SWINDLE, BY THE GIFT AND THE POWER OF GOD © SIMON DEWEY; PHOTOGRAPH OF GRAVE COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES; PHOTOGRAPH OF BOOK OF MORMON MANUSCRIPT © 1988 IRI

Right: A copy of the hymnbook compiled by Emma, printed in 1835 in Kirtland, Ohio, USA, and used during the Kirtland Temple dedication.



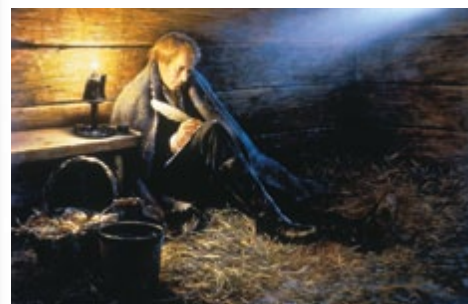
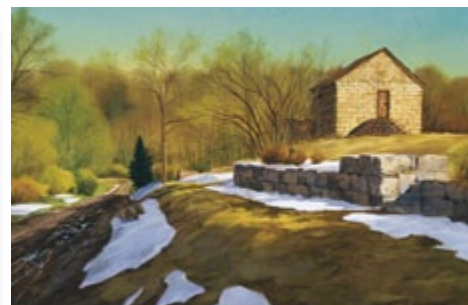
Right: In a July 1830 revelation given through the Prophet Joseph to Emma is a request “to make a selection of sacred hymns” (D&C 25:11). As with many hymnals of the time, this hymnal contained only the words of the hymns, not the music. Emma grouped the hymns by subject matter—Sacred Hymns, Morning Hymns, Evening Hymns, Farewell Hymns, Hymns of Baptism, the Sacrament, Marriage, and finally Miscellaneous Hymns.⁴



LEFT: 1835 HYMNAL COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY ARCHIVES; EMMA'S HYMNS, © IZ LEMON SWINDLE; RIGHT: LETTER FROM JOSEPH SMITH TO EMMA SMITH COURTESY OF COMMUNITY OF CHRIST ARCHIVES; WORLD HEADQUARTERS, INDEPENDENCE, MISSOURI; LIBERTY JAIL, 1839, © AL ROUNDIS; JOSEPH SMITH IN LIBERTY JAIL, © GREG K. OLSEN—DO NOT COPY; FAMILY VISIT TO LIBERTY JAIL, © JOSEPH BRICKEY

Julia is a lovely little girl; I love her also,
 she is a promising child; tell her Father
 wants her to remember him and be a
 good girl, tell all the rest that I think
 of them and pray for them all. Mr
 Rabbit is waiting to carry our letters
 for us. ~~the~~ colonial ^{is} ~~is~~ inspecting them;
 therefore my time is short. Little baby
 Eleander is on my mind continually.
 Oh my affectionate Emma, I want you
 to remember that I am true and faithful
 friends to you; and the children, forever,
 my heart is entwined around yours forever
 and ever; Oh, may God bless you all!
 amen. you I am your husband, and
 am in bonds and tribulation &c
 to Emma Smith } Joseph Smith Jr

P.S. Write as often as you can, and
 if possible come and see me; and bring
 the children if possible, act according
 to your own feelings ^{and} best judgment,
 and endeavour to be comforted, if possible,
 and I trust that all will turn out
 for the best. Yours, J. S.



Above: Liberty Jail, 1839, by Al Rounds; Joseph Smith in Liberty Jail, by Greg K. Olsen.

Just as Joseph wrote letters while he was in the Liberty Jail (above), he wrote this letter (left) to Emma while imprisoned in Richmond, Missouri. An excerpt follows.

“Oh, my affectionate Emma, I want you to remember that I am a true and faithful friend, to you and the children, forever, [and] my heart is entwined around yours forever and ever. Oh, may God bless you all! amen. I am your husband and am in bonds and tribulation etc.

Joseph Smith Jr.

“P.S. Write as often as you can, and if possible come and see me; and bring the children if possible. Act according to your own feelings and best judgment, and endeavor to be comforted, if possible, and I trust that all will turn out for the best. Yours, J. S.” *

In response to this letter, Emma and the children visited Joseph (depicted left).

*Spelling, capitalization, and punctuation modernized.



Right: Family Visit to Liberty Jail, by Joseph F. Brickey.

Right: Emma Smith, the Elect Lady, by Theodore Gorka. This painting depicts Emma and others working to relieve the suffering of the Saints during an outbreak of malaria.



Malaria-carrying mosquitoes thrived in the marshy land that was to be the site of Nauvoo, so the Saints drained the water by digging drainage ditches like the one above, which is still in use today.



Above: July 22, 1839, became known as “a day of God’s power.” The Prophet Joseph arose from his sickbed and led the mighty priesthood effort to bless the many Saints stricken with malaria in Commerce (later renamed Nauvoo), Illinois, USA, and also across the Mississippi River in Montrose, Iowa. Brigham Young, Wilford Woodruff, Orson Pratt, and John Taylor were among those healed in Montrose. As they left to return to Commerce, a man who lived some distance away asked the Prophet to come with him to heal his twin children. Joseph took a red silk handkerchief (below) from his pocket and gave it to Elder Woodruff. He told Wilford that if he wiped the faces of the children with the handkerchief, they would be healed—and they were.⁵



EMMA SMITH, THE ELECT LADY, BY THEODORE GORKA, © 1996 IRI; PHOTOGRAPH OF DRAINAGE DITCH BY KENNETH R. MAVS; PHOTOGRAPH OF THE PICK BY CODY BELL; COURTESY CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM; PHOTOGRAPH OF JOSEPH SMITH'S HANDKERCHIEF BY CODY BELL, © IRI

Pioneer Farewell

By Don L. Searle

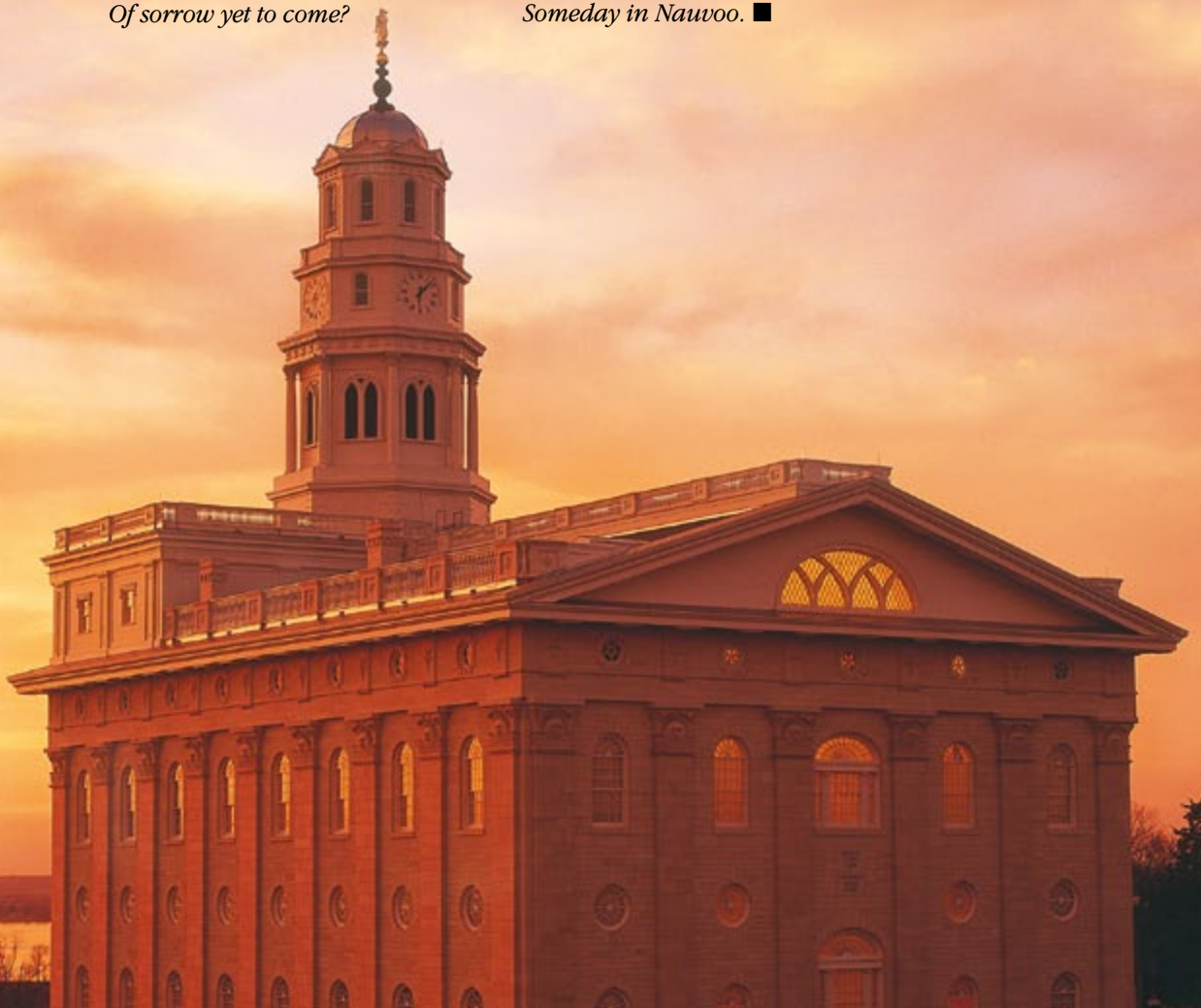
*I look to thee, City Beautiful,
Beyond the river, lost.
Lost, now, my home there,
Wrought in aching toil,
Where tiny bone of my bone
Rests beneath the prairie sod.*

*That life is past.
My face is west,
And my heart will follow,
Because I know His voice.
It is the Captain of my captain
Who calls me to go on,
And my hand is with the hand
Of the chosen of the Lord.*

*Oh, Joseph! What did you see
On our horizon?
Oh, Brigham! What do you know
Of sorrow yet to come?*

*I leave thee, City,
Without an answer,
For my soul is settled.
In camp I echo, "All is well,"
And I move on,
To journey, labor, plant,
For years, or for a life.
My steel is forged,
The fire can only temper more.*

*But the journey and the years
Ne'er will dim my view
Of thy temple on the hill,
And, hand to plow,
I sow the hope
That toil and time will bring
Nauwoo to live again,
That our "All is well"
Will sound once more,
Someday in thee—
Someday in Nauwoo. ■*



PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Linking Church and

As priesthood leaders work with stake and district public affairs councils, they can all help strengthen their communities—and build up the kingdom of God on earth.



Community



By Philip M. Volmar

Church Magazines

When Carol Witt Christensen was called to serve as public affairs director for the Topeka Kansas Stake (USA), she felt “fearful and inadequate” about having to interact with news reporters and editors on behalf of stake leaders.

“The thought of making cold contacts with news people was a little terrifying,” she recalls. And though she majored in English in college, she says that she “didn’t know anything about writing news releases.”

Despite her self-doubt, Sister Christensen decided to rely on her testimony, her familiarity with her community, and the belief that her calling came from inspired priesthood leaders. She says she started with training from the Public Affairs Department and began to “learn [her] duty, and to act in the office in which [she was] appointed, in all diligence” (D&C 107:99).

She began poring over the weekly religion section of her local newspaper to determine what was considered newsworthy. She called the religion writer to find out about deadlines before submitting her first news release.

“I noticed the types of small news items that were printed and began paying special attention at church to activities, interesting people, and accomplishments that seemed appropriate to announce in our newspaper,” she remembers.

Over time, Sister Christensen learned that media relations is much more than merely pitching story ideas. It’s also about knowing the media and helping reporters do their job while at the same time helping them come to understand the Church.

After a series of successes, including an article about her stake’s seminary program appearing in the local paper, she says she gained confidence and “felt on fire with a desire to bring forth the Church ‘out of obscurity’” (see D&C 1:30). Now, years later, Sister Christensen still serves

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID STOKER

as her stake public affairs director and says “that fire has continued to blaze.”

“Much of what we seek to do in public affairs,” she explains, “shows that we love, believe in, and worship Jesus Christ; befriend, work with, and serve our brothers and sisters in the community; and warm people to the restored gospel and the Church.”

Priesthood leaders throughout the world are guiding and encouraging public affairs specialists and councils as they work alongside those in their areas to benefit their communities, correct misconceptions, and demonstrate that Church members follow Jesus Christ.

Though Sister Christensen’s initial efforts focused on media relations, there are many ways Church public affairs councils are following inspired priesthood direction while also helping build their communities and the kingdom of God.

Community and Government Relations

Just 65 miles (105 km) from Topeka, in the Lenexa Kansas Stake, President Bruce F. Friday, stake president, and Sister Carol Deshler, stake public affairs director, are working together to build positive relationships with influential members of their community. They want to help them recognize Latter-day Saints as “good neighbors, a positive influence in the community, and followers of Jesus Christ,” says President Friday.

Sister Deshler, who works with the stake presidency and other members of the stake’s public affairs council, seeks opportunities to partner with other faith-based groups and community organizations to better serve the citizens of their area.

“Nearly all of our successes working with

community groups have been a result of one-on-one relationships,” Sister Deshler says. For instance, a member of another church and a member of her stake ate lunch together and discussed ways the two groups could come together to do something positive for the community. The conversation led to six people—three from each church—forming a “Better Together” committee to brainstorm ideas for the partnership.

That partnership led to a benefit concert in 2010 in which choirs from several churches participated. Admission was a bag of groceries, which benefited a local food pantry. Some 700 people from the community attended the event, which was held in the newly completed stake center. A reception was organized so community and religious leaders could mingle prior to the concert.

Following the concert, four additional churches, two members of the city council, and the chief of police asked to be represented on the Better Together committee, which now meets monthly. The concert was repeated again in 2011, that time with another church hosting, a total of seven churches participating, and approximately 1,000 community members attending.

“The feeling of goodwill and unity as followers of Jesus Christ came through in a significant way among the churches,” Sister Deshler says. Those feelings were evident later when President Friday was in an airport more than 1,000 miles (1,600 km) from home. A woman he had never met approached him and said she recognized him from the Better Together benefit concerts, which she had participated in and found remarkable.

She told him, “I have never felt such a feeling of love for others in our community as



For two years the Lenexa Kansas Stake in the United States has partnered with other area churches to hold a benefit concert. The admission cost—a bag of groceries—was donated to a local food pantry. In 2011, approximately 1,000 community members attended, including several church and government officials.



I have through these events. Thank you for cosponsoring these concerts. I belong to another congregation, but we have the deepest respect and admiration for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”

“That,” says President Priday, “is what public affairs is all about. As we’ve broadened our circle and expanded our vision, we’ve developed many special friends throughout the community. We have mutual respect for each others’ beliefs and a genuine love for one another.”

Garnering such cooperation and respect from community leaders has proven effective in Eastern Europe as well. Katia Serdyuk, director of media relations for the Ukraine public affairs council, works with public affairs missionaries and local priesthood leaders to improve relationships between the Church and the community. “Many people have misconceptions and misinformation about the Church,” says Sister Serdyuk. “As public affairs specialists working with priesthood leaders, we strive to change those perceptions by working with opinion leaders, the media, and the general public. Successful public affairs efforts generate an atmosphere in which people of influence can help the Church achieve its purposes while we help them reach their goals too.”

In Zhytomyr, Ukraine, members of the Church participated in a reception hosted by the city mayor, Olexander Mikolayovich Bochkovskiy, to recognize the Church’s humanitarian project that provided much-needed equipment to seven schools throughout the city. Also noted was the community service efforts of Church members in the city’s Gagarin Park, conducted in April and October 2011. Zhytomyr Branch president Alexander Davydov represented the Church and acknowledged the city’s appreciation.

Event Planning

In addition to media and community relations, another public affairs opportunity comes from planning and hosting events, say Daniel and Rebecca Mehr, who recently completed a public affairs mission in the Caribbean Area.

“Enlisting members to educate their friends through



A MESSAGE TO PRIESTHOOD LEADERS

“We encourage stake and district presidents and Area Seventies everywhere to ensure that stake and multistake public affairs councils are called and trained.

In some districts and developing areas of the Church, public affairs efforts may be small at first and implemented without a fully organized council. Your area director of public affairs can arrange training and point you to important resources.

“You will discover how public affairs work can be a wonderful tool for achieving priesthood objectives as you build relationships and partner with community leaders, the news media, and other opinion leaders. Your attention to this work will also enhance the reputation of the Church by helping people understand that we follow Jesus Christ.”

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Chairman of the Public Affairs Committee

common-ground activities, like a cultural event, a dinner, a service project, or other activities, could be especially effective for building relationships,” says Sister Mehr.

However, Brother Mehr cautions that one of the biggest mistakes public affairs specialists can make is to “start planning activities without considering community needs and without counseling with priesthood leaders.”

Elder and Sister Mehr believe that an annual plan that reflects stake and ward priesthood leaders’ direction is one way to help guide event planning from the outset. To build such an annual plan, Sister Mehr recommends coordinating events using a four-step planning process that focuses on a strategic outcome and is tied to community needs and local priesthood objectives:

- What are the greatest needs in our community?
- What issues in our area affect the progress of the Church, positively or negatively?
- Who are leaders in the community with whom we can partner to address needs and resolve issues?
- How can we initiate or continue a relationship with these leaders?

With these questions answered, priesthood leaders and public affairs councils can avoid creating “activities for activities’ sake,” Sister Mehr says. Instead the councils can plan and carry out events that can build trust between community and priesthood leaders. These events also give Church members and community members a chance to interact and build friendships.

In the Dominican Republic in 2010, for example, priesthood leaders, public affairs councils, and community members worked together at an event highlighting Mormon Helping Hands efforts. Brother and Sister Mehr invited several of the nation’s dignitaries with whom they had been working.

“Many prominent individuals representing many institutions and organizations attended,” Brother Mehr recalls, adding that the Church’s Area Presidency also came.

“The event was very successful,” he reports. “More and more, we experienced mayors and city organizations requesting our help in some kind of cleanup. In addition, there was good exposure for the Church to many organizations.”

While involving priesthood direction is crucial to successful event planning, it’s not the only consideration to make. Kathy Marler serves on a multistake public affairs council in San Diego, California, USA. One of her friends of another faith said that Latter-day Saints are good at inviting others to Church-sponsored activities but often fail to collaborate with others in other churches’ events.

Sister Marler recalls her friend saying, “You just ask others to come along. It would be wonderful if you would ask us if we need help. The answer would be a resounding yes.”

By identifying others’ needs, says Sister

Marler, public affairs councils can sometimes help a community more than they might in hosting the events themselves.

Crisis Communication and Management

Even though most public affairs work takes place in the everyday situations of community life, it can also poise a stake, country, or Church area to deal with emergencies, as happened last year in Japan.

Elder Gary E. Stevenson of the Seventy, President of the Asia North Area, remembers how the 2011 earthquake changed the media climate overnight. “The earthquake and tsunami focused the eyes of the world and all of Japan on the devastated northeastern coastline,” he recalls.

Elder Stevenson says that the catastrophe created an “intense level of interest” in the humanitarian aid and volunteer activities offered to Japan, including those given by the Church.

Within days of the tsunami, the Church began providing necessities to disaster-stricken members and nonmembers alike. “Domestic and international media began following every storyline,” says Elder Stevenson.

With the Church providing more than 250 tons of humanitarian aid supplies and enlisting the help of over 24,000 volunteers who gave over 180,000 hours of service, the relief efforts often caught the attention of local municipal leaders, Elder Stevenson recounts. In a country where less than two percent of the population identifies itself as Christian, some of those leaders wanted to know more about the Church’s role in the efforts. That curiosity, he says, provided an opportunity for public affairs specialists not only to help those in desperate need but also to bridge



Following the 2011 earthquake in Japan, priesthood leaders worked with public affairs specialists to mobilize relief efforts via the Mormon Helping Hands program. Of these humanitarian efforts, one reporter wrote: “The only thing that rivals the Mormon church’s ability to spread the word is its ability to cope with emergencies.”



understanding at the same time. For example, the week after the tsunami hit Japan, one reporter wrote: “The only thing that rivals the Mormon church’s ability to spread the word is its ability to cope with emergencies. . . . The church is not just focused on its own flock.”¹

This positive coverage was possible because of years of building relationships. Conan and Cindy Grames, who began serving as public affairs representatives for the Asia North Area in August 2010, say that “the public affairs council in Japan had worked for years with key government leaders around the country. These friendships opened the doors to the local agencies, which were then willing to accept our help.” Elder Yasuo Niiyama, serving with his wife as director of the Japan public affairs council of the Church, points out that “even Japan’s national government leaders came to understand how effective the Church is and how quickly we could move forward to provide relief.”

An instance when Japanese leaders appreciated the Church’s timely assistance was when local priesthood leaders identified an overwhelmed refugee shelter set up at a school in an isolated area. Together with the public affairs council and the local Church welfare manager, the priesthood leaders arranged for food and other relief supplies to be delivered to the shelter, which was housing approximately 270 displaced tsunami victims.

Although those at the shelter were initially surprised to receive assistance from a Christian church, the second time Mormon Helping Hands volunteers came, wearing their yellow vests, one child yelled, “Here they come! I wonder what they brought this time!”

After receiving the donations, the shelter coordinator told Elder and Sister Grames,

“Your church brought us the first meat and fresh vegetables we had after the earthquake.”

“It felt good,” says Sister Grames, “to really be a helping hand not only to the shelter but also to the priesthood leaders who were trying so hard to reach those in need.”

Elder Niiyama explains another positive result of the council’s efforts: “We found that sharing information about the Church’s relief work with members as well as outside opinion leaders was very vital to our public affairs objectives. I feel people outside of the Church now have a better image of the Church and members are more confident in the strength of the Church in Japan.”

Public Affairs as a Tool for Local Priesthood Leadership

As a crucial part of a worldwide organization, priesthood leaders can benefit from public affairs councils that know the local environment and are able to help serve community needs. Sister Serdyuk, in Ukraine, states, “It is rewarding to see how well priesthood leaders have embraced public affairs as a tool in achieving their priesthood objectives. One such example is performing community service through our Mormon Helping Hands efforts, which has developed unity among members of branches and wards and has also helped build a closer relationship between the Church and local communities.” ■

The Church’s public affairs website—available in English at publicaffairs.lds.org—offers additional helpful information.

NOTE

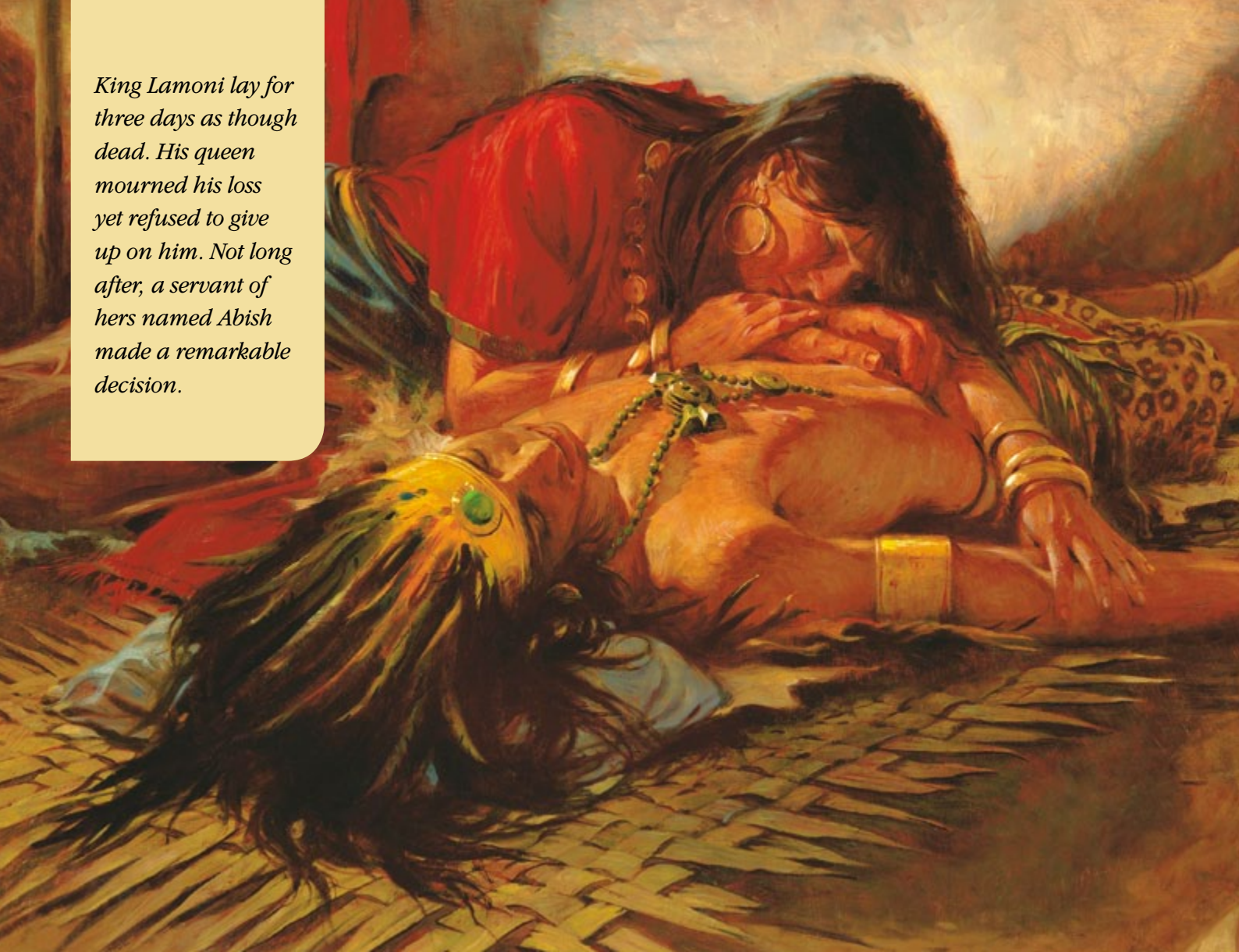
1. Kari Huus, “In Japan, the Mormon Network Gathers the Flock,” World Blog from NBC News, Mar. 18, 2011, http://worldblog.msnbc.msn.com/_news/2011/03/18/6292170-in-japan-the-mormon-network-gathers-the-flock.

PROPHETIC DIRECTION RELATING TO PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The following talks can help priesthood leaders, public affairs councils, and other members better understand how public affairs helps strengthen communities and fulfill priesthood objectives.

- L. Tom Perry, “Perfect Love Casteth Out Fear,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 41–44.
- M. Russell Ballard, “The Importance of a Name,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 79–82.
- M. Russell Ballard, “Faith, Family, Facts, and Fruits,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 25–27.
- Gordon B. Hinckley, “What Are People Asking about Us?” *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 70–72.
- Ezra Taft Benson, “May the Kingdom of God Go Forth,” *Ensign*, May 1978, 32–35.

King Lamoni lay for three days as though dead. His queen mourned his loss yet refused to give up on him. Not long after, a servant of hers named Abish made a remarkable decision.



Abish

A COMMON SERVANT,
A TRUE TESTIMONY

Having hidden her testimony for many years, Abish finally had her moment, and she did not hesitate. The result changed hundreds of lives.

By Heather B. Moore

We may never know the impact our testimony might have on other people. In fact, we may wonder sometimes if our testimony can make a difference. We might even say to ourselves, “Will it really matter if I say something? I am just one person—one voice.”

Yet each conversion, each testimony, each person’s path to God began with the testimony of someone else. That is exactly what happened in the life of the Lamanite servant woman Abish (see Alma 19). You and I may not have an experience that involves an entire kingdom as Abish did. Still, there will be times in each of our lives when we will be called upon to act based on what we believe. Such was the case for Abish.

A Secret Conversion

Our story of Abish begins with the visit of the missionary Ammon, the Nephite son of King Mosiah, to the Lamanite people in the land of Ishmael (see Alma 17). But Abish’s full story began long before this. In fact, at the time Ammon arrived, she had already “been converted unto the Lord for many years, on account of a remarkable vision of her father” (Alma 19:16). Despite her testimony, Abish had kept her conversion to the gospel a secret because her people opposed teachings that were deemed to belong to their most bitter enemy, the Nephites. She was a mere servant to a queen in a society where the king held power over life and death. It is possible that had she made her conversion known, she would have been branded a traitor for supporting Nephite beliefs and punished with death.

Ammon’s arrival changed everything. After proving himself a faithful servant by defending the king’s flocks, he was permitted to teach the gospel directly to King Lamoni. The king was so moved by Ammon’s teachings and the promptings of the Holy Spirit that he offered a plea asking the Lord to show mercy on him and his people. Overcome with the Spirit, the king fell to the ground, unconscious (see Alma 18:41–42).

For three days the king lay as if dead, and for three days Abish listened to the rumors circulating in the court where

she was a servant to the queen. Remarkably, though many thought the king had died, the queen maintained hope that her husband was yet alive and did not send him to the family sepulchre.

And it appears that still, Abish did not reveal her conversion.

An Open Witness

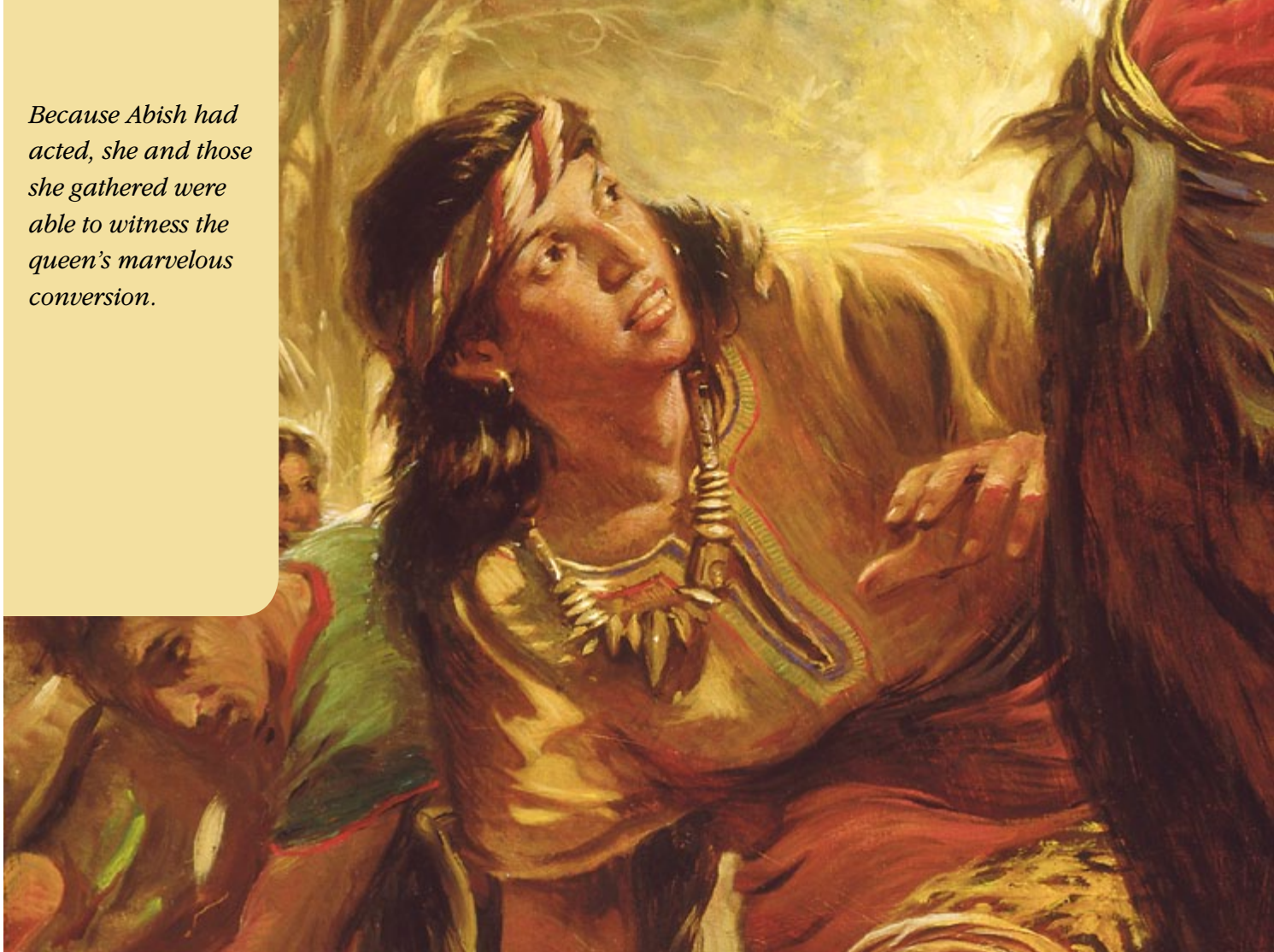
After three days, Lamoni recovered briefly and declared a witness of God so powerful that he was overcome “with joy; and the queen also sunk down, being overpowered by the Spirit.” Ammon, too, was soon overcome by the Spirit, as were the servants of the king, who had begun “to cry unto God” for mercy (Alma 19:13, 15). Although Abish was among the king’s household, she was not incapacitated by the Spirit. “When she saw that all the servants of Lamoni had fallen to the earth, and also her mistress, the queen, and the king, and Ammon lay prostrate upon the earth, she knew that it was the power of God” (Alma 19:17). This is a testimony in itself that Abish was familiar enough with the Spirit and receptive enough that she knew the truth of the situation—something that not everyone would see as she did, as we will soon discover.

Because of her previous conversion, Abish now held the position of being able to act without fear. Of all the members of the king’s house, only Abish had the ability to go among the people to inform them of what had happened to the king, queen, and their servants. The moment had come when she had to choose. Would she stand up for what she believed? Or would she remain quiet?

Taking courage that likely came through the power of the Spirit, “she ran forth from house to house, making it known unto the people.” She hoped that “by beholding this scene it would cause them to believe in the power of God” (Alma 19:17). A multitude came, “and to their astonishment, they beheld the king, and the queen, and their servants prostrate upon the earth, and they all lay there as though they were dead” (Alma 19:18).

However, not all of Lamoni’s people reacted well to what

Because Abish had acted, she and those she gathered were able to witness the queen's marvelous conversion.



they found, especially when they saw Ammon, who as a Nephite would naturally be considered an enemy, lying near the king. Some of them assumed a curse had struck the king and his household because Lamoni had allowed a Nephite into their land. Others believed the curse had come because Lamoni had slain his servants for not preventing his flocks from being scattered by the robbers at the Waters of Sebus. The disagreements escalated into arguments, and then into anger, until one of those present drew his sword to kill Ammon. Before the man could attack Ammon, the man was struck dead by the Lord (see Alma 19:19–22).

Fear descended upon the crowd. Some said Ammon “was a monster, who had been sent from the Nephites to torment them” (Alma 19:26). Others believed he “was sent by the Great Spirit to afflict them because of their iniquities.” As a result, “the contention began to be exceedingly sharp among them” (Alma 19:24–28).

At this point Abish returned to the house of the king.

One can imagine the confusion and sadness she must have felt when she witnessed the arguments and fear among the assembly. Perhaps she thought she was partly to blame for spreading the message far and wide. It is apparent from her reaction that she didn’t expect such outrage to occur. Viewing the discontented mass of people and the death of Ammon’s would-be attacker, Abish “was exceedingly sorrowful, even unto tears” (Alma 19:28).

Still, Abish knew the true cause of what had happened to the king and his household. She could have hidden herself away to avoid the fighting. Indeed, it would have been easy enough to simply sneak away, hope that her part was forgotten, and do nothing until the commotion died down, regardless of the consequences to the king, her mistress, or the others.

And yet, Abish chose to act. In the face of contention that already had led one man to lose his life, Abish boldly went to the queen’s side and took the unconscious

OTHER LESSONS FROM ABISH'S STORY

What other lessons can we learn from Abish's experience? First, we can learn that the Lord doesn't favor a person based on his or her rank, demonstrating that He is "no respecter of persons" (D&C 1:35). No matter what walk of life we come from, each of us has the same privilege offered to us to receive a witness of the truth of the gospel.

Second, we can learn that even our one voice, like Abish's, can play an important role in the lives of others—whether they be common folk like Abish, or the very elite, like the king. Each of us has the capacity to share the gospel no matter our background.

Third, we can learn that the Lord works with those who are receptive. He sent visions to Abish's father, who was openhearted to the Lord's messages and shared them with his daughter. Thus she was spiritually prepared when Ammon came to preach to the Lamanites. Likewise, when Abish gathered the people, many of them were prepared. There are people waiting for us to be brave like Abish, people who will be receptive to the gospel if we will but open our mouths and act.

woman's hand—an act that certainly drew attention from the crowd. At Abish's touch, the queen rose to her feet and "clasped her hands, being filled with joy, speaking many words which were not understood" (Alma 19:30).

The queen then took the king by his hand. King Lamoni stood and, "seeing the contention among his people, went forth and began to rebuke them and to teach them the words which he had heard from the mouth of Ammon" (Alma 19:31). Not everyone wanted to hear Lamoni's adamant testimony, despite the tangible presence of the Spirit and the many fervent testimonies borne that day. "There were many among them who would not hear [Lamoni's] words; therefore they went their way" (Alma 19:32).

Still, many others did open their hearts and listen to Lamoni and the queen, nurturing a seed that Abish had so recently planted. "As many as heard his words believed, and were converted unto the Lord" (Alma 19:31). When Ammon and the king's servants arose, they too began to preach. "And it came to pass that there were many that did believe in their words; and as many as did believe were baptized; and they became a righteous people, and they did establish a church among them" (Alma 19:35).

A Lasting Influence

Although we read nothing more about Abish from this point onward, the events that included Abish's courageous actions form a turning point in the Book of Mormon—a vital transformation in the history of her people. Her

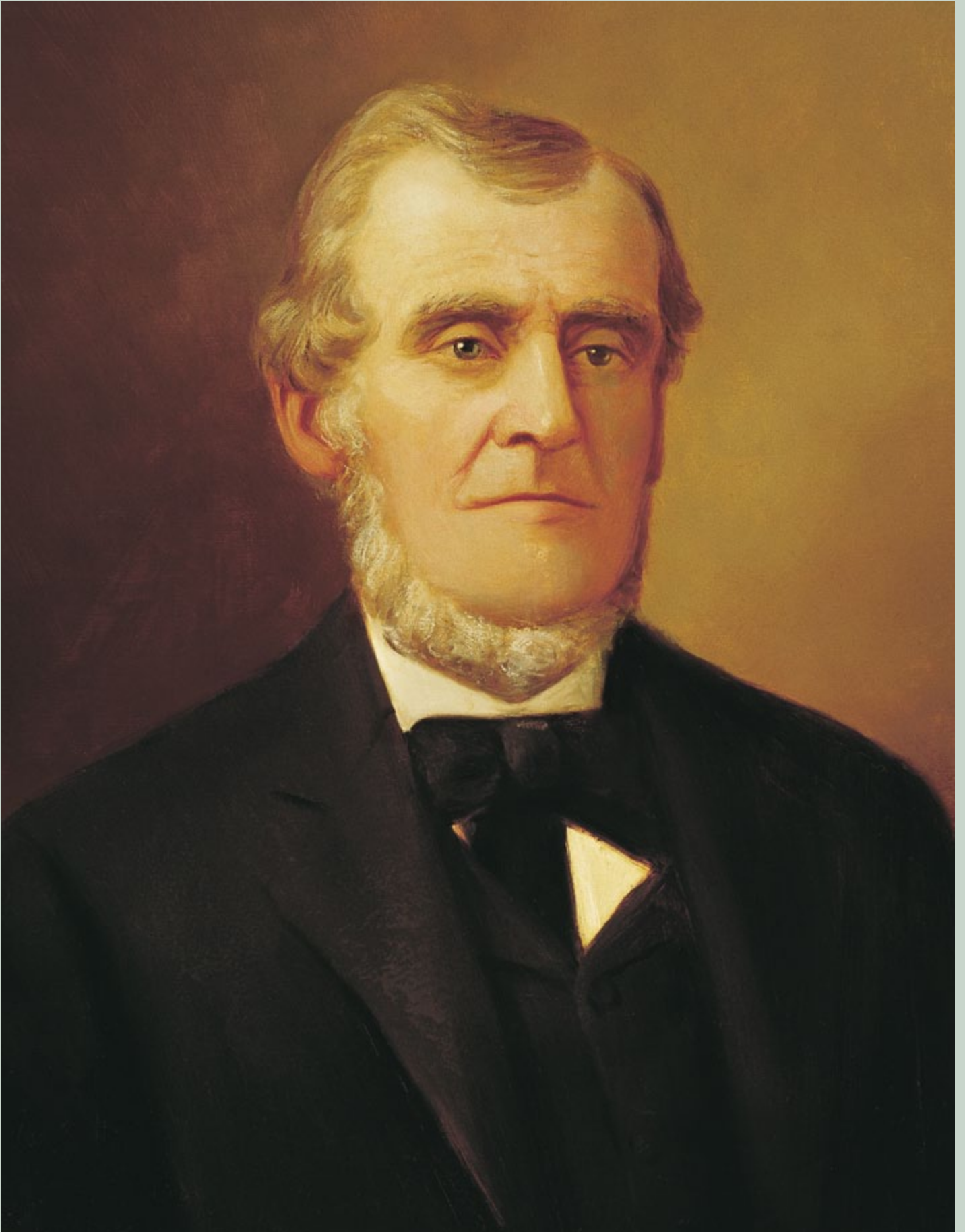
one-voice role, in conjunction with the missionary work of Ammon, played a critical part in thousands of Lamanites' lives as they were "brought to the knowledge of the Lord" (Alma 23:5).

As a Lamanite servant, she was the one who gathered her people to the king's house so they could witness the conversion of their king and queen. Through her actions, a large crowd of Lamanites was taught by the king, the queen, Ammon, and the servants, and was eventually converted. The courageous actions of a common servant—someone like many of those who had come

to see what the commotion was all about—combined with the testimonies of others, changed many lives in ways that can be measured only in eternity.

More than a century later, the Savior Himself explained how a servant could have such a great influence: "For he that is least among you all, the same shall be great" (Luke 9:48). Like Abish, we are servants in our Father's kingdom, and our testimonies do make a difference. When we have the courage to stand as a witness, we may not realize what an impact our single testimony may have on another.

Although Abish lived in a repressive society, she enjoyed the blessing of the Spirit in her private life. Remarkably, she was able to retain her faith in a hostile environment. Only when Ammon, a Nephite, came into her land was she finally able to act on what she knew and what she had been taught; and as a consequence, she became an unforgettable witness. If we prepare ourselves, like Abish, we will become true servants of the Lord, ready to accept the divine charge when He calls upon us to be His witnesses. ■



The Life of Martin Harris

PATTERNS OF HUMILITY AND REPENTANCE

*From the life of
Martin Harris
we learn that
when we are
humble, we
are blessed,
and that we
can make
important
contributions
to the Lord's
work despite
past mistakes.*

By Larry E. Morris

Production editor, Joseph Smith Papers

Church history offers many stories of Saints who were shining examples of faith and devotion in the face of great pressure, persecution, and personal weakness. One of the most memorable examples comes from the life of Martin Harris. Although he is often remembered for his loss of the first 116 manuscript pages of the Book of Mormon, he overcame that fault to become a key figure in the coming forth of the Book of Mormon—one of the monumental events of the Restoration. As Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, “Martin’s subsequent faithfulness [after losing the manuscript] continues under a shadow from which this important man should be rescued.”¹

A Friend and Gentleman

In 1827, Martin was a well-respected and prosperous landowner in Palmyra, New

York, USA. That year he heard about the plight of Joseph Smith, a man more than 20 years his junior who lived on a farm just outside of Palmyra, who was translating golden plates and was having difficulty protecting the plates from thieves.

Although Martin knew that helping Joseph could damage his reputation as a farmer and businessman, Martin’s interest was piqued. He talked with Joseph and other members of the Smith family. Then, Martin reported, “I retired to my bedroom and prayed God to show me concerning these things.” An answer came through “the still small voice spoken in the soul. Then I was satisfied that it was the Lord’s work, and I was under a covenant to bring it forth.”² Martin gave Joseph 50 dollars, enabling Joseph and his wife, Emma, to move to Harmony, Pennsylvania, USA, where Emma’s parents lived.

Shortly thereafter, from April to June 1828, Martin acted as scribe for Joseph while the Prophet translated the plates. After the first



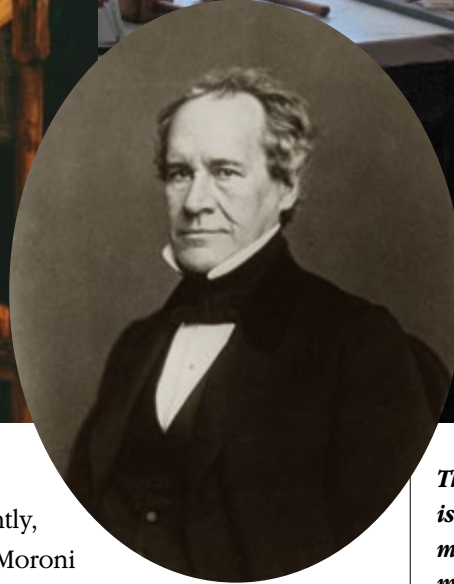
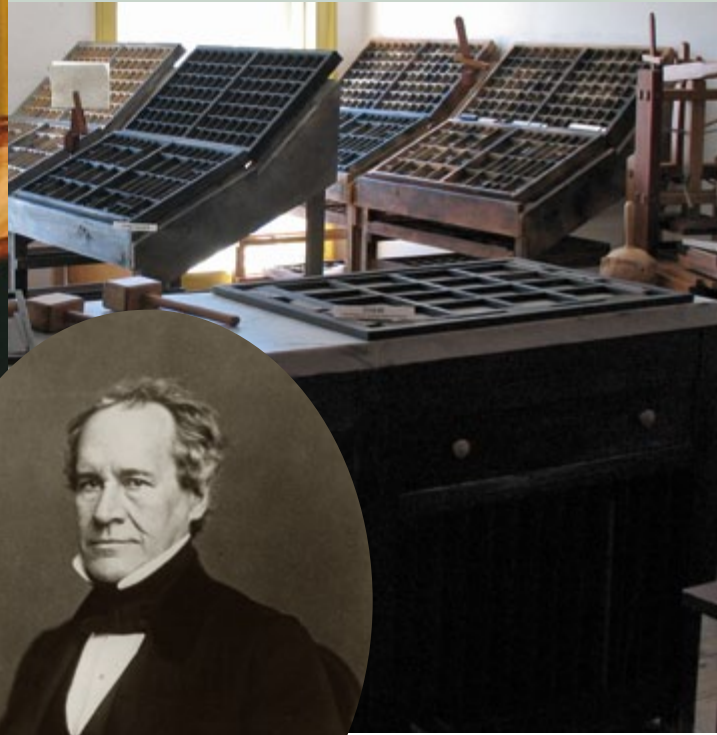
Martin Harris was a prosperous man with a large farm (above, left) and rich belongings (such as the engraved watch above). The house pictured here (above, right) currently sits on the farm Martin once mortgaged to pay for the printing of the Book of Mormon. His original house burned down and was replaced in 1852 by this one.

116 pages were translated, Martin began to plead with Joseph to let him show the Book of Mormon manuscript to friends and relatives. When Joseph finally agreed, the result was disastrous—Martin lost the precious document. A revelation called Martin “a wicked man” and reprimanded Joseph because he had “feared man more than God” (D&C 3:12, 7). In addition, the plates were taken from the Prophet, and he temporarily lost the gift to translate. However, both Joseph and Martin were sincerely repentant, and the Lord forgave them both. Translation of the plates resumed, though Martin no longer acted as scribe.

In spite of this humbling experience, the penitent Martin did not lose his faith. In the spring of 1829, he returned to Harmony, sincerely desiring an additional witness concerning the plates. A revelation sought at Martin’s request promised that “three of my servants . . . shall know of a surety that [Joseph’s claims about the plates] are true, for from heaven will I declare it unto them. I will give them power that they may behold and view these things as they are” (D&C 5:11–13).

Promised that he could be one of the three if he humbled himself before the Lord, (see D&C 5:23–28). Martin left Harmony rejoicing. While traveling, Martin enthusiastically told his fellow stagecoach passengers of his experiences with Joseph. One of these passengers later wrote of this event and recounted, “Smith read to him a good deal of the [gold] bible [and Martin] repeated to those in the Stage verse after verse of what Smith had read to him.”³ Firmly recommitted, Martin thus became one of the first to testify of the Book of Mormon.

About this same time, Martin’s wife, Lucy, who had grown quite hostile to Joseph Smith and his work, “entered a complaint against Joseph, before a certain magistrate of Lyons [New York],”⁴ accusing the Prophet of defrauding her husband. After three men claimed that Joseph had made up the story about the plates, Martin himself was called to testify. Once again demonstrating his humility and his loyalty to Joseph, Martin swore that Joseph had not defrauded him, adding that “as to the plates which he



professes to have, gentlemen, if you do not believe it, but continue to resist the truth, it will one day be the means of damning your souls." The magistrate promptly ended the proceeding and tore up the record of the testimony of the three hostile witnesses.⁵

Witness of the Book of Mormon

In April of 1829, a schoolteacher by the name of Oliver Cowdery volunteered to be Joseph Smith's scribe. The two of them worked at a blinding pace, completing the translation of the Book of Mormon in approximately 10 weeks. Shortly after that, Joseph announced to Martin, "You have got to humble yourself before your God this day, that you may obtain a forgiveness of your sins. If you do, it is the will of God that you should look upon the plates, in company with Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer."⁶

Joseph and Martin then walked to a nearby grove with Oliver and David, where they called upon the Lord. When the promised divine manifestation did not develop, Martin suggested that he was the cause and

withdrew. Subsequently, the angel Moroni appeared and showed the plates to Joseph, Oliver, and David. Joseph then sought out Martin and discovered him engaged in humble prayer. Then the two of them were blessed with a vision similar to the one that had just taken place with the other witnesses.⁷ When the four men returned to the Whitmer cabin, Martin "seemed almost overcome with joy, and testified boldly to what he had both seen and heard."⁸

In a declaration included in each of the more than 150 million copies of the Book of Mormon published since 1830, the Three Witnesses boldly testify that "an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates." Further, "We also know that they have been translated by the gift and power of God, for his voice hath declared it unto us" ("The Testimony of Three Witnesses," Book of Mormon).

Though Martin Harris is remembered for his mistake of losing 116 manuscript pages of the Book of Mormon, he also was dedicated to seeing the Book of Mormon published and accepted by the public. He took a transcription of some of the book's ancient characters to professor Charles Anthon (above, inset) in hopes of obtaining a certificate of authenticity, and he worked with printer E. B. Grandin and Joseph Smith (depicted above with Martin) to finance the book's publication and sell copies.



Martin was chosen to be one of the Three Witnesses of the Book of Mormon. However, the angel did not appear to show the men the plates (depicted above, right) until Martin had withdrawn and prayed for forgiveness. When the Saints went west, he did not go with them. He listed himself in the 1860 census as a “Mormon preacher,” and he acted as the caretaker of the Kirtland Temple (above, left).



Financing the Publication of the Book of Mormon

Before the summer of 1829 had passed, Martin gave generously again. Joseph and Martin went in search of a printer who could publish the Book of Mormon and finally reached an agreement with Egbert B. Grandin, owner of a three-story building in Palmyra that included a bookstore, a printing shop, and a bindery. However, the cost of printing 5,000 copies of the Book of Mormon was \$3,000—a huge sum (approximately \$73,000 in today’s economy).⁹ It was simply impossible for the Smith family to raise even a small fraction of that amount. But Martin, who had plunged the small group of believers into the depths of despair a year earlier by losing the Book of Mormon manuscript, now proved his devotion once again by pledging his valuable farm to cover the tremendous expense.

Martin’s willingness to do so placed him “side by side with Joseph Smith in a negotiating role that proved vital to the Restoration.”¹⁰

Elder Oaks described the significance of Martin’s offering in this way: “One of Martin Harris’s greatest contributions to the Church, for which he should be honored for all time, was his financing the publication of the Book of Mormon.”¹¹

Final Testimony

Martin served faithfully through the coming years, but he separated himself from the Church during the turbulent time of the late 1830s. He was excommunicated in December of 1837, but he again humbled himself and was rebaptized in 1842. When the Saints migrated west, he stayed behind, even though his second wife and family eventually journeyed to Utah without him in 1856. Martin nevertheless “acted as a self-appointed



Martin's Faithfulness

"What do we learn from this example? (1) Witnesses are important, and the testimony of the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon is impressive and reliable. (2) Happiness and spiritual progress lie in following the leaders of the Church. (3) There is hope for each of us, even if we have sinned and strayed from a favored position.

"The Lord's invitation is warm and loving: 'Come back and feast at the table of the Lord, and taste again the sweet and satisfying fruits of fellowship with the saints.' "

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Witness: Martin Harris," *Ensign*, May 1999, 37.



guide/caretaker of the deserted Kirtland Temple," bearing witness of the Book of Mormon, and even "listing himself in the 1860 census as 'Mormon preacher.'" ¹²

In 1870, at the urging and with the assistance of Brigham Young, Martin, now 87 years old, made the long trek by train and joined the Saints in Utah. Over the next five years, he bore powerful testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon publicly, twice in the Tabernacle. Even on his deathbed, he proclaimed, "I did go in the woods with Joseph Smith . . . and beheld an

angel descend from heaven in a dazzling light of glory. . . . I saw the gold plates. I saw him turn the leaves over one by one . . . and I was commanded by God's voice to testify to all the world what I had seen and heard." ¹³

The patterns of humility and repentance in the life of Martin Harris powerfully illustrate that humility allows the Spirit to be with us. Such an attitude fosters a desire to follow the Savior, do His work, and serve others. As Martin's remarkable experience shows, repentance is the key to remaining humble. The Savior's Atonement in our behalf makes this possible. ■

NOTES

1. Dallin H. Oaks, "The Witness: Martin Harris," *Ensign*, May 1999, 36.
2. "Mormonism—No. II," *Tiffany's Monthly*, May 1859, 170.
3. William S. Sayre to James T. Cobb, August 31, 1878, Theodore A. Schroeder Papers, Wisconsin State Historical Society Archives, Madison, Wisconsin, USA, cited in Larry E. Morris, "The Conversion of Oliver Cowdery," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, vol. 16, no. 1 (2007): 15.
4. Lucy Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, and His Progenitors for Many Generations* (1853), 132.
5. Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 133–135.
6. Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 138.
7. See *History of the Church* 1:54–55.
8. Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 139.
9. Value calculated by finding relative worth of \$3,000 from 1829 to 2010 and analyzing the Consumer Price Index and GDP deflator from www.measuringworth.com/uscompare.
10. Susan Easton Black and Larry C. Porter, "For the Sum of Three Thousand Dollars," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, vol. 14, no. 2 (2005): 6. On April 7, 1831, Martin sold a sizeable portion of his farm to pay the printing bill.
11. Dallin H. Oaks, "The Witness," 36.
12. Rhett Stephens James, "Harris, Martin," in Arnold K. Garr, Donald Q. Cannon, and Richard O. Cowan, eds., *Encyclopedia of Latter-day Saint History* (2000), 469.
13. William Pilkington, "A Dying Testimony Given by Martin Harris," Church History Library (spelling and capitalization standardized).



Throughout his life and even on his deathbed, Martin Harris stood by the testimony he received as one of the Three Witnesses of the Book of Mormon.

PHOTOGRAPH OF KIRTLAND TEMPLE BY WEIDEN C. ANDERSEN. © 2003 IRI. THE ANGEL MORONI SHOWING THE GOLD PLATES TO JOSEPH SMITH, OLIVER COWDERY, AND DAVID WHITNER. © GARY E. SMITH; PHOTOGRAPH OF MARTIN HARRIS IN THE 1870S BY CHARLES WILLIAM CARTER. COURTESY OF THE CHURCH HISTORY LIBRARY; MARTIN HARRIS GIVES HIS FINAL TESTIMONY. © MARION HAWS — DO NOT COPY



WHEN HE STOPPED BELIEVING

I never thought it would be me. Yet there I was, sitting across the bed from my husband while he told me that he no longer had a testimony that the gospel was true.

Although his love for me and his dedication to our family were as strong as ever, my husband just didn't believe in the gospel anymore. He didn't even know if God really existed.

How Could This Happen?

This wasn't supposed to happen to me—not my husband, not my marriage. In my naiveté, when I had read or heard of accounts where a spouse turned away from the Church, I thought, “Thank goodness that would *never* happen to our temple marriage.” I am embarrassed to even mention how judgmental I had been, thinking that surely those individuals should have known before they were married that their future spouse really didn't have a testimony deeply rooted in the gospel. It would be impossible, I had thought, for a man and a woman who married in the temple with full faith and honesty to find that after years of dedicated Church service and obedience, one of them no longer believed.

Yet there I was, facing one of the most dreaded scenarios of my life. The heartbreak was beyond description. Despite the abundance of spiritual experiences that we had shared since our courtship, the daily personal and couple prayers, the faithful fulfillment of every calling, full tithes, generous fast offerings, scripture study, and family home evenings, it was gone. My husband admitted that he no longer believed. He had no desire to attend church beyond helping me with the kids. And he no longer wanted to pay tithing, a difficult situation I thought I would never be asked to face.

On a day when the heartache was nearly unbearable, I started to wonder: what had I done wrong? The one desire I had maintained stronger than any other in my life was to have an eternal marriage with a man dedicated to living the gospel. I had done everything I could in my life to live worthily, to marry with unmistakable surety, to keep my covenants, to attend the temple, and to dedicate my life and my home to the Lord. Would Heavenly Father really deny me the righteous desire I longed for the most, when I had done everything He asked to attain it?

What I Have Learned

In response to my many tearful prayers, one encompassing answer continued to impress itself strongly on my mind: “Just love him!” That impression has led me to a wealth of understanding and has enabled me to find healing and hope, as expressions of the Savior's love have become more evident in my life than ever before. While my husband is unchanged in his lack of belief, this experience—and following the prompting I received—has facilitated tremendous growth within me, and I know I will never be the same wife or mother again. It has been through this process that I have learned the following truths.

In the Lord's Plan, We Each Have Agency

First, I have learned that the glory of a celestial marriage is the union of a man and a woman, as separate agents, choosing one another and the Lord above all else. It is impossible for my husband to dedicate his life to the Lord if that is not his personal choice. Regardless of how desperately I long for my husband to have a strong testimony of Jesus Christ, I cannot wish or force or pray him into receiving that testimony. In accordance with our Heavenly Father's plan, he must attain that by his own choice. If he submits solely to my will, as he did in many instances through the years, then he is deprived of submitting his will to the Lord, and the growth of his spiritual knowledge is inhibited.

I Am Responsible for My Choices

In addition, this truth has taught me that while I cannot control my husband's testimony or choices, I can certainly take responsibility for my own. I can seek through prayer to know how to be a better wife, how to love and serve my husband and children more each day, and how to personally grow closer to the Lord.


Initially, I was upset that I had been deprived of the spiritual blessings I had sought so diligently to obtain. I have come to realize, however, that my temple marriage hasn't been taken from me and that I still have my own covenants to keep, many of which are directly related to my attitude toward my husband. Furthermore, the opportunity to seek

a *celestial* marriage is still right in front of me; the chance to unselfishly serve my spouse's best interests is more immediately present than it has ever been. During moments of self-pity, with the help of the Spirit I have realized that either I can focus on what my husband's choices have taken from our temple marriage, or I can strive even more to develop a celestial relationship with him. I can have significant influence on the spiritual progress of our marriage despite his choices.

The Decision to Love Blesses Each of Us

Already the answer I have received to love, trust, and serve my husband has strengthened our marriage in profound ways. While my husband still lacks sure knowledge that God lives, from my perspective our marriage has become closer to heaven. As I seek to love my husband more each day, the Savior's love seems to permeate my heart, causing it to expand with a deeper love than I have ever known. From my point of view, through our daily expressions of love for each other, the overall feeling of love and the occurrence of spiritual experiences have been strengthened both in our relationship and in our home.

Through this experience, I have come to apply a more personal meaning to John 15:13, in which the Savior says, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." For me, to "lay



*I cannot control
my husband's
testimony or
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certainly can
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for my own.*

down [my] life" means to put aside my own will and desires—my own agendas and stipulations—for someone I care about. It is a love without conditions, a pure love rooted in Christ (see Moroni 7:47–48).

In order to achieve this love in our marriage, we must give the energy of our heart to loving our spouse, regardless of how well they meet our expectations. This does not mean that we should desire or expect any less from our spouse, but that we should give our love freely no matter what point they are at on their personal road of progress.

In addition to strengthening my marriage, these realizations have altered my approach as a mother as I have come to better understand the meaning of charity. I am learning more how the love of our Heavenly Father truly knows no bounds.

It is my deepest desire that someday my husband will regain a personal testimony of the Savior and that we can share that united faith in this life. I don't know if that will happen, but I do know that I can trust my testimony of the truthfulness of the gospel. I also know that our Heavenly Father wants what is best for us and allows us to experience hardship in order to realize greater blessings. I have come to know that Jesus Christ is the only sure foundation on which we can build a solid testimony (see Helaman 5:12) and that He can help us find happiness in this life and the next. ■



Spotlighting Our Ancestors

For family home evening, we used to have family spotlights. A name of a family member would be drawn, and the family would get to hear details about the individual, their likes and dislikes. It was a great way to get to know each other better. After going through our various family members several times, we decided to enhance the spotlight activity.

Now, instead of drawing the name of an immediate



family member, we select one of our ancestors. The presenter shares details such as how they are related to us, when and where they were born, and specifics about their immediate family. We highlight their baptismal and temple ordinances. Did they receive them during their lifetime? If not, how long did they have to wait for their temple work to be

done? When possible we also share stories from their lives, including their conversions.

Spotlighting our ancestors has had a tremendous impact on our family. Our children are young and are already realizing the importance and sacredness of the temple and its grand purpose. They are seeing their ancestors as real individuals that they are connected to and with whom they will one day be reunited.

Natalie Flynn Carlson, Utah, USA

HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

“The Strength of Our Heritage,” page 36: Read the article to your family, then reread this statement by Elder L. Tom Perry: “Just as the pioneers made the desert blossom as a rose, so too our lives and families will blossom if we follow their example and embrace their traditions.” Consider asking, “How can our family better follow the example set by the early pioneers?” You may want to close by singing “Come, Come, Ye Saints” (*Hymns*, no. 30).

“Facing the Future with Hope,” page 15: You may wish to summarize the story of Brother Grilo or tell a personal story of you or someone you know facing the future with hope. Help family members apply the message to their lives by asking questions like, “What are some challenges that make it hard for you to have faith in the future? What can you do to keep a positive attitude as you face these challenges?” Conclude by reading the last two paragraphs of the article.

“When Good Plans Don’t Work Out” page 26: Before discussing the article together, you may want to ask if anyone can share an experience of a time when they had a plan that didn’t work out the way they expected. Read or summarize the article, and then discuss what can be learned from the examples of these young adults who found happiness in living their “plan B.”

WHEN GOOD PLANS Don't WORK OUT

By Stephen J. Kern

I had long been a fan of the saying, “When good plans don't work out, you should just go with the flow.” But when I read the article “When Good Plans Don't Work Out” by Stephen J. Kern, I was struck by the author's perspective on how to handle unexpected challenges. The author shares his own experiences and offers practical advice for staying positive and resilient when things don't go as planned. He emphasizes the importance of having a backup plan and the value of flexibility. The article is a great resource for anyone looking for ways to overcome adversity and find happiness in their lives.

While building houses in new areas, pioneers often faced unexpected challenges. The author shares his own experiences and offers practical advice for staying positive and resilient when things don't go as planned. He emphasizes the importance of having a backup plan and the value of flexibility. The article is a great resource for anyone looking for ways to overcome adversity and find happiness in their lives.

PHOTOGRAPH © ROSALIE WESTENSKOW

In the Aftermath of the

TORNADO

In the initial hours after the tornado hit Joplin, Missouri, USA, on Sunday, May 22, 2011, members of the Church in that area knew what to do: the Joplin stake had an emergency plan in place, and members were prepared to account, assess, and report promptly in the wake of disaster.

During the first few days, Elder Jonathan C. Roberts, Area Seventy, met in council with stake and ward priesthood leaders and Welfare Services representatives from Salt Lake City. Meeting by candlelight because there was no power, the council discussed the most pressing needs—one of which was a location from which to operate.

Finding an Operations Location

Normally, relief efforts are coordinated from the stake center, which acts as a command center. It's there that Church headquarters can ship supplies, that volunteers can meet and receive assignments, and that members of the Church and the community in general can find temporary shelter if needed.

But the Joplin Missouri Stake Center, which was at the heart of the area where the tornado touched down, had been destroyed. There was nowhere to hold disaster relief meetings until a solution was presented by some business owners who were not members of the Church. Jim and Virginia Snodgrass, owners of a decorative concrete business in Joplin, offered to share



When a tornado hit Joplin, Missouri, USA, in May 2011, members of the Church relied on both physical and spiritual preparation.



Members of the Church in Joplin, Missouri, were physically prepared for a natural disaster. More important, they were prepared spiritually.

with the stake not only their office and warehouse space but also the acreage surrounding it. It would become the Church's command center and provide an ideal camping place for the hundreds of Mormon Helping Hands volunteers who came in from surrounding stakes each weekend for the next several months to help with cleanup efforts.

Preparing Physically and Spiritually

When Bishop Chris Hoffman of the Joplin First Ward first heard on that Sunday evening that a storm was coming, he never anticipated how serious the situation would be.

After the tornado, he said, "As we realized that things were a lot worse than we thought they might be, we started to try to establish communication." But those efforts were frustrated by phone outages. Even so, he and ward leaders tried to collect what information they could that night via

sporadic phone calls and text messages. In the instances where those methods failed, they turned to prayer.

In a situation of this magnitude, Bishop Hoffman said, "You recognize very quickly how reliant you are on Heavenly Father for answers, because you need them, and you need them quick. But the answers came. They always did. They always will."

The next morning, several men from the ward met at a central spot in town to begin checking on ward members. "It was hard to determine where to start," Bishop Hoffman said, but the group relied on the Spirit in deciding where to go first. They split into smaller groups and went to ward members' homes one by one, assessing needs and helping where they could. In instances when members were OK and available to help, they joined the assessment efforts and fanned out from there throughout the ward boundaries.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CARMEN BORUP; MAP © ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/FRANK RAMSFOOT



Priesthood holders from surrounding stakes pause for a brief sacrament meeting on a Sunday morning before receiving their cleanup assignments.

As members of the ward followed the emergency plan of helping each other and their neighbors, they saw miracles happen. Bishop Hoffman reported that people in the ward told him about times they needed a particular kind of help, only to have a fellow ward member arrive with exactly what they needed when they needed it.

“You can’t plan those things,” Bishop Hoffman said. “There wasn’t a phone call saying, ‘Let’s get a work project together.’ It was everyone in the ward understanding that we needed to take care of each other. It was extremely gratifying to me as a bishop to hear not ‘What do you want me to do?’ but ‘This is what I’ve done.’”

Mobilizing after a Disaster

That kind of response is exactly what needed to happen, said Matthew Montague, first counselor in the Joplin stake presidency. “First and foremost has been the care of our members,” he said. “Once we discovered that they were cared for and accounted for and that members within those wards were meeting immediate needs, then came . . . coordinating our efforts with local agencies and relief efforts.”

Immediately following the tornado, first responders—such as search and rescue teams and medical professionals—asked community members to wait to come in. But when city leaders were ready for additional aid, the Joplin stake was poised to help.

“We don’t want to get ahead of local agencies,” President Montague said. “We want to work with them. We respect and commend them for what they’re doing, and we want to build important relationships because we know that disasters will indeed happen again. Seven of our wards or branches have been affected by tornadoes in the last 11

years, so our association with these agencies is essential.”

Marcy Petersen, who serves as the second counselor in the stake Relief Society presidency, was assigned to help with assessments throughout the entire community, not just among Church members. She assigned each ward to cover a particular part of town; at each home, members were to ask if the residents needed help putting tar paper on the roof and windows, if they needed fallen trees cut up and hauled away, and if they needed debris cleared. The assessments continued until all of Joplin had been covered. When a household needed help, the members generated a work order that went to the Mormon Helping Hands command center at the Snodgrasses’ warehouse. There, the work orders were organized, and needed materials were ordered from Salt Lake City.

Serving with Helping Hands

The first weekend following the tornado, two nearby stakes sent in hundreds of priesthood volunteers to help with community cleanup. These men and boys, donning the recognizable yellow Mormon Helping Hands shirts, pitched tents on the acreage surrounding the command center and worked on cleanup Saturday and Sunday, pausing for a sacrament service held inside the warehouse Sunday morning. Similar groups from other stakes went to Joplin each subsequent weekend for several months.

Mr. Snodgrass said that he was grateful to see the entire community respond in such a way, and that the efficiency with which Mormon Helping Hands operated impressed him. After seeing the deployment of priesthood volunteers on the first weekend following the tornado, he said: “Any organization that can come in here with 600 people and basically have them out of here [and on the job] within two hours is very organized. . . . They moved a lot of people in a short period of time.”

“I think everybody has done a great job of really trying to help the people in this community,” Mrs. Snodgrass said. “[The Church has] been so respectful and so nice to us and our property. We just want to thank them, and we’re glad we [offered our space].”

Recovering and Rebuilding

While physical preparation in all forms has helped the members of the Joplin Missouri Stake respond well in a time of emergency, many agree that the best preparation of all has been spiritual.

The Sunday following the tornado, Elder Roberts attended a joint meeting of the Joplin First and Second Wards, where he saw expressions of affection among the Saints and heard their expressions of testimony. He says:

“People who had lost everything—their homes, their workshops, everything—stood up and said, ‘We’re some of the most blessed people.’ How does that happen? How could anybody in those circumstances have the courage and the backbone to square their shoulders, lift their chins, and say, ‘We’re fine?’ Well, it only happens one way. They have a perspective of the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

The storm had swept away many people’s 72-hour kits and food storage. “And yet,” Elder Roberts observes, “the things that were deep rooted, the foundational things of priesthood keys, of testimony, stood strong. And as the Saints gathered together, it was spectacular to watch the preparation that came from spiritual roots that had been set deep—roots that a windstorm, tornado, or hurricane weren’t going to take away, roots that extend beyond mortality to eternity.”

That perspective manifested itself in the way the

Despite the destruction and disruption of the tornado, members in Joplin say their gospel perspective has carried them through.



Volunteers at the command center help generate and organize work orders for community cleanup needs.

members responded, Bishop Hoffman said, “without panic and without chaos, even amid the chaos of their lives.”

He continued, “That’s not to say there haven’t been lots of emotional ups and downs and tears shed, but you see that members really understand the plan of why we’re here. ‘This is just a moment.’ ‘It’s just stuff.’ ‘We’ll rebuild.’ I’ve heard that many times. It’s a testimony and a testament to their preparation and their understanding of the gospel and how they live their lives.”

Mike and Becky Higginson lost their home but said that their knowledge of the gospel helped them keep their perspective. “We’ve had hard experiences before, and the gospel is what sustains us through everything,” Sister Higginson said. “So although this is a shock and a trauma, . . . it didn’t change anything. You revert to your gospel roots, your spiritual roots, immediately.”

Bishop Dave Richins of the Joplin Second Ward has seen this kind of faith over and over since the disaster. He says, “My testimony has been strengthened by watching members of our ward persevere through all this adversity and think of their family first and then others before themselves. They’ve dropped everything to come to the aid of others. When we’ve had service projects, the members with destroyed homes are the ones showing up wanting to serve. I’ve had to send some of them home with some other brethren to take care of themselves, and they’ve always gone reluctantly.

“That’s just a wonderful example of living Christlike lives,” he adds. “These testimonies and this faith give us the hope that allows us to press on.” ■

To learn more about how the Joplin community, including Latter-day Saints, responded in the aftermath of the tornado, visit news.lds.org and enter the keyword “Joplin.”

THIS TEXT IS HEBREW

After reading the Old Testament several years ago, I gained an interest in its teachings, especially the writings of Isaiah, and continued to study it. In 2010, I found myself seated on a flight next to a Jewish rabbi. I started a conversation by asking him about some passages in Isaiah. As our conversation progressed, we discussed the importance of priesthood authority as understood in the Old Testament.

The rabbi asked me where members of my church get their priesthood authority. I seized the opportunity

to tell him about Joseph Smith's First Vision and the restoration of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods. We discussed the translation of the Book of Mormon and its purpose as "Another Testament of Jesus Christ."

The rabbi was intrigued. He asked how old Joseph was when he had the First Vision. When I told him Joseph was 14, about the same age as Samuel of the Old Testament, he replied that many prophets were called in their youth. He said it was consistent that God would call Joseph Smith in his teen years.

The rabbi asked me where members of my church get their priesthood authority. I told him about Joseph Smith's First Vision and the restoration of the Melchizedek and Aaronic Priesthoods.

I opened my scriptures, and together we read the testimonies of the Three and Eight Witnesses. I told him that several of the witnesses had left the Church but that none ever denied having seen the golden plates.

"How could they leave the Church after seeing an angel and the plates?" he asked.

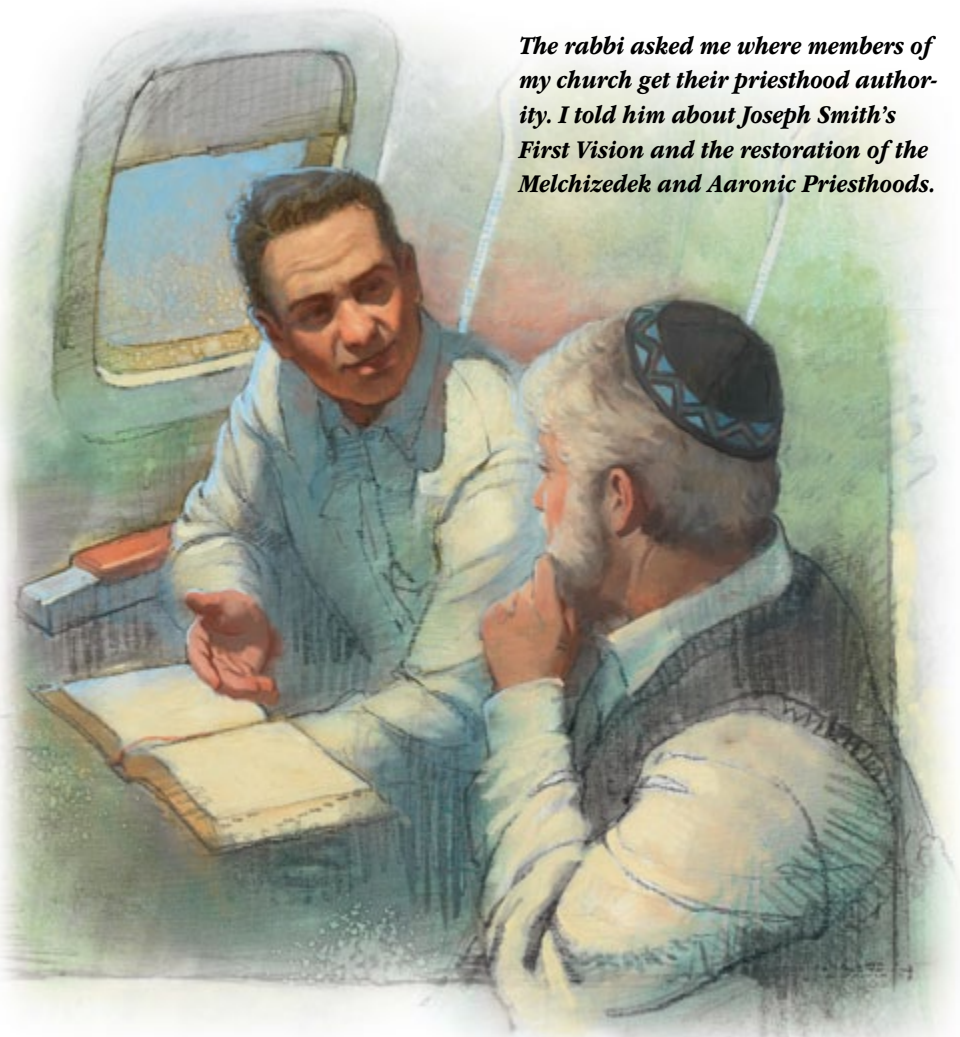
"I remember that the children of Israel built a golden calf shortly after witnessing the parting of the Red Sea," I replied.

He turned to 1 Nephi and began to read. He stopped and said, "This text is Hebrew."

He then explained why the text appeared to be an English translation of Hebrew. I told him the book was written by a tribe of Israel. I cited Ezekiel 37:15–20, which speaks of the stick of Judah and the stick of Joseph. We agreed that the stick of Judah represents the Bible, and I explained that the stick of Joseph is the Book of Mormon.

After our three-hour conversation the rabbi expressed an interest in obtaining a copy of the Book of Mormon. When I returned home, I sent him a copy personalized with my written testimony. I am thankful that my efforts to study the Old Testament had prepared me to discuss the scriptures and share my testimony with my new friend, a rabbi. ■

Derk Palfreyman, Utah, USA



YOU'D BETTER PRAY FIRST

I almost left the Church over a disagreement with my stake president. I felt he had done something that was not right. His actions did not reflect the way I thought things should happen, so I stopped going to church.

My wife told me, "You can't make a decision like that without some serious prayer and fasting."

She was right. After I had prayed for some time, the following words came to me clearly and directly: "The servant of God is called of God."

That night I had a dream. In my dream my grandfather rebuked me for fighting against my leader. I then woke up from my dream and could not sleep for the rest of the night. After a long night of deep pondering, I knew what I needed to do. I went to my stake president and apologized. He happily accepted my apology, and we prayed together.

Immediately I returned to church. Two weeks later my company transferred me to Abuja, the capital of Nigeria. Baffled, I wondered why I was being pulled out of the stake after my efforts to reconcile myself.

I soon learned that the Lord was preparing me. During my second month in Abuja, I was called as a branch president.

I'm sure that Heavenly Father wanted to teach me the importance of sustaining Church leaders before He called me to be a leader. This



After I had prayed for some time, the following words came to me clearly and directly: "The servant of God is called of God."

experience strengthened my testimony. Now I try my hardest to listen to the counsel of my leaders because I know they are called of God. And anyone He calls, He qualifies.¹

Our leaders are human beings. Though they are inspired, they are not perfect. I learned that if we disagree

with them, we need to support, encourage, and pray for them and for ourselves so that we may trust God and the servants He has chosen. ■

Martins Enyiche, Nigeria

NOTE

1. See Thomas S. Monson, "Duty Calls," *Ensign*, May 1996, 44.



I asked if he was planning to bear his testimony when the time came. He said yes and then asked, “Are you?”

ARE YOU GOING TO BEAR YOUR TESTIMONY?

I recently had the opportunity to attend sacrament meeting in another state with Church members I did not know. To make conversation with the brother next to me, I asked if he was planning to bear his testimony when the time came. He said yes and then asked, “Are you?”

“No, probably not,” I answered. Then I added, “But the Church is true, and the gospel is true.”

I soon forgot about our short conversation. When the opportunity for testimony bearing began, we were

encouraged to keep our time short so that many could have the opportunity to share their testimonies. When the brother I had talked to got up and shared his testimony, he acknowledged that there was not enough time to share all he wanted to about the gospel and the happiness it brings. Instead, he shared the words of his conversation with me, someone he had just met, and how my simple statement summed up everything: the Church is true, and the gospel is true. That’s what is important.

Reflecting on that experience, I understand that we can bear our testimonies in many ways, and we can have a positive influence on others in just a short time. No matter how briefly we interact with someone, we can leave a positive impression of the gospel and ourselves.

I did not bear my testimony on the stand that day, but my short testimony was shared and my influence felt both by the brother I talked with and by those who heard his testimony. ■

LaReina Hingson, Indiana, USA

I WANT TO SIT ON JESUS'S LAP

Our grandson was only four when a policeman picked him up on the side of the highway. He said he was headed to Grandma's house, about five miles (8 km) away.

It was the second time he had run away from the unhappiness at home, trying to get to me. Over the next few months, I came to realize that the responsibility of raising my grandson and his two younger sisters was probably going to fall on my shoulders—an idea I did not readily embrace.

My husband and I had done our best to raise our children with gospel principles, but they eventually rejected those principles. I was in my 50s and felt that I had finally earned the right to pursue my own interests. I cherished the goal my husband and I shared of serving a mission together when he retired. The notion of going grocery shopping with preschoolers, organizing mealtimes, doing thousands of loads of laundry, and someday again mothering teenagers reduced me to tears.

One afternoon, however, something changed my heart. A small thing had upset my grandson, so I took him onto my lap and wiped away his tears. As I held him, we talked about how much Jesus loved him. Nearby I had a wall calendar featuring paintings of the Savior, so we looked at those beautiful images one by one.

My grandson was especially interested in a depiction of the Savior

sitting in a stone doorway with a small, brown-haired girl on His lap. In the painting, both the Savior and the child radiate peace. My grandson looked closely, pointed to the girl, and called her by his sister's name.

"How can Katie sit on Jesus's lap, Grandma?" he asked. "I want to sit on His lap too!"

"You can't sit on Jesus's lap now, sweetheart, but you can sit on my lap," I said. "Jesus gives little children grandmas to love them and hold them and

take care of them when they need it."

Suddenly my heart embraced a future of loving—as the Savior would love—three beloved children who needed me. They were no longer a burden but a wonderful blessing and opportunity to serve our Lord.

I will be forever grateful for the tender mercy of the Lord given to me that afternoon. It changed my life and continues to strengthen and bless our home. ■

Name withheld

As I held my upset grandson, we talked about how much Jesus loved him.



News of the Church

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

New Mission Presidents Called to Serve

The Church announced the names of 110 new mission presidents earlier this year. The majority will begin their two- or three-year calling, accompanied by their wives, this month.

MISSION	NEW PRESIDENT
Argentina Bahia Blanca	Manuel Parreno
Argentina Neuquén	Paul R. Lovell
Australia Adelaide	Bradley D. Carter
Australia Perth	R. Bruce Lindsay
Australia Sydney	Philip F. Howes
Belgium/Netherlands	Alden C. Robinson
Brazil Belém	Jose C. Scisci
Brazil Belo Horizonte	Paschoal F. Fortunato
Brazil Campinas	Carlos E. Perrotti
Brazil Cuiabá	Keith R. Reber
Brazil Porto Alegre North	D. Layne Wright
Brazil Porto Alegre South	Palmênio C. Castro
Brazil Salvador South	Marcelo Andrezzo
Brazil São Paulo East	Ronald A. Ferrin
Brazil Teresina	Alvacir L. Siedschlag
Bulgaria Sofia	Michael S. Wilstead
California Oakland/San Francisco	David N Weidman
California San Fernando	Kenneth T. Hall
California Santa Rosa	Rene R. Alba
Cambodia Phnom Penh	David C. Moon
Canada Calgary	Howard Nicholas
Canada Halifax	Brian Leavitt
Canada Winnipeg	Kirk M. Thomas
Chile Santiago East	David L. Wright
Chile Viña del Mar	Frederico M. Kähnlein
China Hong Kong	Val D. Hawks
Colombia Bogotá North	Mark F. Andelin
Colombia Bogotá South	Letvin Lozano
Colombia Medellín	Roberto O. Pitarch
Costa Rica San José	Chad R. Wilkinson
Democratic Republic of the Congo Lubumbashi	Phillip W. McMullin
Denmark Copenhagen	Shawn D. Sederholm

MISSION	NEW PRESIDENT
Dominican Republic Santiago	John Douglas
England Birmingham	R. Craig Rasmussen
England London	David J. Jordan
England London South	Roger C. Millar
France Lyon	Blake M. Roney
Georgia Atlanta	John R. Harding
Germany Berlin	Henry W. Kosak
Ghana Kumasi	Leon A. Holmes
Greece Athens	Eric B. Freestone
Haiti Port-au-Prince	Hubermann Bien-Aimé
Honduras Comayagüela	Candido Fortuna
Hungary Budapest	Lowell V. Smith
Idaho Pocatello	Marvin T. Brinkerhoff
Illinois Chicago	Jerry D. Fenn
India New Delhi	Peter E. Sackley
Japan Fukuoka	C. Samuel Gustafson
Japan Tokyo	L. Todd Budge
Korea Seoul	Brent J. Christensen
Madagascar Antananarivo	David R. Adams
Maryland Baltimore	Mark L. Richards
Massachusetts Boston	Daniel W. Packard
Mexico Cuernavaca	Bruce C. Kusch
Mexico Guadalajara	G. Wesley Wagner
Mexico Guadalajara East	Luis F. Camarillo
Mexico Hermosillo	Alberto E. Hernandez
Mexico Mexico City South	Roberto Valadez
Mexico Monterrey West	Edward M. Swapp
Mexico Puebla North	Ralph N. Christensen
Mexico Tampico	Ralph B. Jordan III
Mexico Xalapa	Paulo Lopez
Mississippi Jackson	Mark J. McDonough
Montana Billings	Kris J Mecham

New Missions Created

To better align resources to changing needs, the Church has created eight new missions and combined one with neighboring missions.

The **Colombia Medellín Mission** is being created by dividing the Colombia Barranquilla and Colombia Cali Missions.

The **Ghana Kumasi Mission** is being created by dividing the Ghana Accra and Ghana Cape Coast Missions.

The **Mexico Xalapa Mission** is being created by dividing the Mexico Veracruz Mission.

The Mexico Puebla Mission is being divided to create the **Mexico Puebla North** and **Mexico Puebla South Missions**.

The **Vanuatu Port Vila Mission** is being created by dividing the Papua New Guinea Port Moresby and Fiji Suva Missions.

The **Utah Salt Lake City West** and **Utah Salt Lake City Central** missions were created from a realignment of the Utah Salt Lake City, Utah Salt Lake City South, and Utah Ogden Missions.

The **Nevada Reno Mission** is being created from a realignment of the Nevada Las Vegas and Nevada Las Vegas West Missions.

The **Russia Moscow West Mission** is being combined with the neighboring Baltic, Russia Novosibirsk, and Russia Moscow Missions.

The changes will be effective this month, when mission leadership changes occur. The number of missions worldwide is now 347. For maps of the newly created missions, visit ldschurchnews.com/articles/62067/New-missions-created.html ■

MISSION	NEW PRESIDENT
Mozambique Maputo	Paulo V. Kretly
Nebraska Omaha	Michael D. Weston
Nevada Reno	David N. Hermansen
New Mexico Farmington	Doyle L. Batt
New York New York North	Thomas B. Morgan
New York New York South	Kevin E. Calderwood
New York Utica	Joseph B. Wirthlin Jr.
Nigeria Calibar	John E. Kosin
North Carolina Charlotte	Ronald L. Craven
North Carolina Raleigh	Marc A. Bernhisel
Norway Oslo	Don A. Evans
Ohio Cleveland	Michael L. Vellinga
Oklahoma Tulsa	Scott K. Shumway
Papua New Guinea Port Moresby	Suliasi Ve'a Kaufusi
Paraguay Asunción	P. David Agazzani
Peru Lima Central	Alan M. Borg
Peru Lima South	Sean Douglas
Peru Piura	Chad A. Rowley
Philippines Bacolod	Marlo O. Lopez
Philippines Baguio	William J. Monahan
Philippines Laoag	Julius Jonah F. Barrientos
Portugal Lisbon	Stephen L. Fluckiger
Russia Rostov-na-Donu	William H. Prows

MISSION	NEW PRESIDENT
Russia Vladivostok	Gregory S. Brinton
Scotland/Ireland	Alan H. Brown
Singapore	Bradley S. Mains
South Dakota Rapid City	Curtis E. Anderson
Spain Barcelona	Mark L. Pace
Spain Madrid	Scott T. Jackson
Spain Málaga	Monte M. Deere Jr.
Taiwan Taipei	David O. Day
Texas Houston South	Brian K. Ashton
Thailand Bangkok	David M. Senior
Ukraine Dnepropetrovsk	J. Robert van Bruggen
Uruguay Montevideo	David K. Armstrong
Utah Ogden	Maurice D. Hiers Jr.
Utah Provo	John A. McCune
Utah Salt Lake City Central	Richard W. Moffat
Utah Salt Lake City West	Earl S. Swain
Vanuatu Port Vila	Larry E. Brewer
Venezuela Barcelona	Juan C. Chacin
Venezuela Maracaibo	Juan F. Zorrilla
Washington DC South	Matthew L. Riggs
Washington Spokane	Donald E. Mullen
West Indies	Daniel S. Mehr II
Zimbabwe Harare	Bryson C. Cook

Addiction Recovery Program Site Added to LDS.org

By **Melissa Merrill**

Church News and Events

Throughout the world, members of the Church and others have found hope and healing through the Addiction Recovery Program (ARP), sponsored by LDS Family Services. Now, with the advent of arp.lds.org, the 12-step program's message of recovery through the Atonement of Jesus Christ is accessible to more people than ever before.

The initial release of the site in May in English (plans are in place for the site to be translated into other languages at a future date) includes information for people facing addictions, their loved ones, their leaders, and ARP volunteers. This structure is somewhat similar to that of the combatingpornography.org website the Church released in April 2010.

The site solves what have been two major barriers to the program in the past—awareness and availability, said Ben Erwin, LDS Family Services counseling program manager for the ARP. The site's presence on LDS.org will help more people be aware of the program's existence—and of its being a program sanctioned by the Church—and it will help people who may not have had access to the program or program materials previously.

One of the main features of

the initial version of the site is the Meeting Locator. This tool allows people to find meetings by location, by schedule, by group makeup or addiction, and by meeting type. For instance:

- People whose jobs require travel can find a meeting in the locations they're visiting. (Prior to this, they might have just skipped their meeting for the week, missing opportunities for valuable support.)
- People whose commitments preclude them from attending meetings during standard times can find a meeting held during a time more conducive to their schedules.
- Someone who wishes to attend a meeting for a particular type of addiction—for instance, pornography or unhealthy eating—can find meetings geared specifically to their struggle.
- Someone who lives in a remote area or a region in which meetings are not yet being held can find meetings held via conference call. This



A new website for the Addiction Recovery Program is helping members become aware of—and access—meetings and other helpful tools that can help lead to recovery through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

could also be a good option for those who are not comfortable attending a face-to-face meeting.

All information about meetings entered into the tool is maintained locally by LDS Family Services Offices, program coordinators, or others associated with overseeing the meetings—not centrally by Church headquarters in Salt Lake City. This is important because, since the program is priesthood-driven and meetings are organized under the direction of a stake or district president, those who have stewardship in particular regions can update the meetings instantly.

Because the program is administered locally, those who are unable to locate the program in their area can speak to their stake or district president and request that he consider hosting the program in their unit. Stake and district leaders who receive such requests then address the need with Area leadership.

The site will continue to grow over time, both in terms of language offerings and of content.

Elements of future releases may include videos of recovery stories, resources for immediate support, and secure tools for confidentially sharing questions and experiences.

For more information about the site, visit arp.lds.org, or search news.lds.org using the keyword “ARP.” ■

Church Leaders Speak at Commencements in Hawaii, Idaho, Utah

Church leaders traveled to Church schools in Hawaii, Idaho, and Utah, USA, during April to give words of advice to graduates leaving the college and university setting to pursue careers.

At Brigham Young University–Idaho on April 7, 2012, Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles counseled students to “replace fear with faith.”

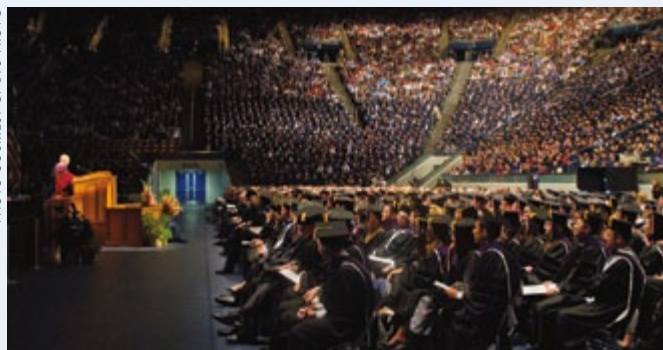
“I believe we are standing on the threshold of a new era of growth, prosperity, and abundance,” he said. “I urge you to make a commitment to yourself and to Heavenly Father to dedicate your life and consecrate your time and talents to the building up of the Church of Jesus Christ in anticipation of the Savior’s Second Coming.”

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles visited LDS Business College in Salt Lake City, Utah, on April 13, 2012, to deliver the commencement address to graduating students from all 50 US states and 67 countries.

He stressed the need for students to give service throughout their lives. “Service will be your antidote against selfishness and the sense of entitlement that more and more afflict societies around the world. . . . Your service will bless others, but it will also protect you,” he said.

The next day, Elaine S. Dalton, Young Women general president, gave these words of advice to students at BYU–Hawaii: “Remember who you are.” “Work hard.” “Train for adversity.” “Dream big.” “Winners do not always finish first.”

PHOTO COURTESY OF BYU-PROVO



“Run into your marathon of faith and life,” she said. “Don’t get discouraged by the hills, but see the opportunity in adversity. Go with a sure foot and a sure knowledge that you are never alone. . . . I truly believe that one virtuous young man or young woman led by the Spirit can change the world.”

On April 19, 2012, graduating students at BYU in Provo, Utah, listened to Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, who spoke of the challenges of the world—wars, natural and financial disasters, and the regression of moral standards—but told graduates to look to the future with faith.

“Though men’s hearts are failing them, you should take heart. There have always been challenging times,” Elder Oaks said. “We, the generations of your predecessors, have survived daunting challenges and so will you. The answer to all of these challenges is the same as it has always been. We have a Savior, and He has taught us what we should do.”

For more on this story and on other messages from Church leaders, visit the Prophets and Apostles Speak Today site at prophets.lds.org. ■

Graduating students at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, USA, listen to Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles on April 19, 2012.

Kansas City Missouri Temple Dedicated

In an area of the United States hallowed by the sacrifices of Latter-day Saints in the late 1830s, President Thomas S. Monson dedicated the Church's 137th operating temple on May 6, 2012.

President Monson, who was accompanied by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, noted that 170 years have passed since those difficult days in Church history, and feelings have softened since then. He commented that a few weeks earlier Missouri's governor, Jay Nixon, attended the open house for the temple and referred to that event and the dedication as "a time of healing."

In addition to presiding over and addressing the dedicatory sessions and a ceremony to seal in place a symbolic cornerstone, President Monson attended a program staged by LDS youth in Kansas City's Municipal Auditorium on Saturday evening.

He was accompanied at that event by Elder Donald L. Hallstrom of the Presidency of the Seventy and Elder William R. Walker, a member of the Seventy and the Executive

Director of the Church's Temple Department.

Buenos Aires Argentina Temple Dates Announced

The open house, cultural celebration, and rededication dates for the Buenos Aires Argentina Temple, which closed in 2009 for expansion and remodeling, will be held in August 2012, the First Presidency announced.

The temple will be open to the public for tours from Saturday, August 4, 2012, through Saturday, August 25, 2012, excluding Sundays.

The temple will be formally rededicated on Sunday, September 9, 2012, in three sessions, which will be broadcast to all stakes and districts in Argentina.

A cultural celebration featuring music and dance will be held on Saturday, September 8, 2012.

Brigham City Utah Temple Dates Announced

The First Presidency has announced open house and dedication dates for the Brigham City Utah Temple, the Church's 14th completed temple in Utah.

An open house (for which tickets will become available on

July 30) will be held from Saturday, August 18, 2012, until Saturday, September 15, 2012, excluding Sundays and Saturday, September 8.

Following a cultural celebration on Saturday, September 22, 2012, the temple will be formally dedicated on Sunday, September 23, 2012, in three sessions, which will be broadcast to congregations within the temple district.

Provo City Center Temple Construction Begins

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles presided over the groundbreaking for the Provo City Center Temple on May 12, 2012.

"What an absolutely stunning sight," he said. "These grounds are filled, as much as possible and practical, with faithful people making history. Sometimes we are so close to history we don't realize we are making it."

He said that for more than 100 years, the Provo Tabernacle hosted stake conferences and worship services of all kinds, firesides, funerals, lectures, concerts, and graduation services. "No other public space in Provo has ever had such valued and varied use, and no other structure in this county has been such an integral part of the religious and civic life here," he said.

Elder Holland then dedicated "already sacred ground for an even more sacred purpose—the construction of the Provo City Center Temple."

The converted Provo Tabernacle will become the second temple in Provo and the 16th in Utah. Construction of the original tabernacle took 15 years—from 1883 to 1898. The building is located on University Avenue between Center Street and 100 South. ■

On May 6, 2012, President Thomas S. Monson dedicated the Kansas City Missouri Temple, the Church's 137th operating temple.



In Other Church Magazines

THE NEW ERA

The Importance of Priesthood Blessings

A priesthood blessing is a confirmed prayer over spiritual things.

A priesthood blessing is a confirmed prayer over spiritual things. It is an ancient gift from the Holy Ghost to call upon the power of heaven for the benefit of the person being blessed. These blessings are confirmed by leaders of the priesthood who have the keys of the spiritual kingdom of the Church (see D&C 107:18).



By Elder Dallin H. Oaks
President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Examples of Priesthood Blessings There are many kinds of priesthood blessings. As a general principle, these blessings are available to all who are worthy. They are given only on request.

For the sick and afflicted The Lord has commanded that we should minister to the sick and afflicted in our families and in the Church. These are perhaps the most frequent occasions for priesthood blessings.

For the young Priesthood blessings are also given to children in the home and in the Church. They can be confirmed by a father or mother or other authorized leader.

For the home Priesthood blessings are confirmed by a father or mother or other authorized leader in the home. They can be confirmed by a father or mother or other authorized leader.

For the Church Priesthood blessings are confirmed by a member of the priesthood over someone who is a member of the Church.

For the Spirit Priesthood blessings are confirmed by a member of the priesthood over someone who is a member of the Church.

For the Holy Spirit Priesthood blessings are confirmed by a member of the priesthood over someone who is a member of the Church.

For the Word Priesthood blessings are confirmed by a member of the priesthood over someone who is a member of the Church.

For the Truth Priesthood blessings are confirmed by a member of the priesthood over someone who is a member of the Church.

For the Right Priesthood blessings are confirmed by a member of the priesthood over someone who is a member of the Church.

For the Good Priesthood blessings are confirmed by a member of the priesthood over someone who is a member of the Church.

For the Best Priesthood blessings are confirmed by a member of the priesthood over someone who is a member of the Church.

Seeking Answers to Prayer

What can I do to receive inspiration? In “How to Pray and Seek Answers” on page 48, Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve gives counsel on how to ask the right questions, how to feel closer to Heavenly Father, and how to recognize answers to prayer.

HOW TO PRAY AND SEEK ANSWERS

By Elder Richard G. Scott
President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Prayer is a gift of our Father in Heaven to every soul. Prayer is most effective when we strive to be clean and obedient, with worthy motives, and are willing to do what He asks. Humble, trusting prayer brings direction and peace.

Don't worry about your compassionate feelings. Just talk to your compassionate, understanding Father. You are His precious child whom He loves perfectly and wants to help. As you pray, recognize that Father in Heaven is near and He is listening.

A key to answered prayer is to learn to ask the right questions. Consider changing from asking for the things you want to honestly seeking what He wants for you. Then as you learn His will, pray that you will be led to have the strength to fulfill it.

Should you ever feel distant from our Father, it could be for many reasons. Whatever the cause, as you continue to plead for help, He will guide you so do that which will restore your confidence that He is near.

Pray even when you have no desire to pray. That is when you most need to pray. Never feel you are not worthy to pray.

Share Your Experiences Share your experiences in applying this principle and lead the experiences of other readers to www.churchofjesuschrist.org

The Importance of Priesthood Blessings

Learn more about the spiritual power that can come from priesthood blessings in an article on page 2 by Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Elder Oaks gives examples of priesthood blessings, explains their significance, and shares experiences.

THE FRIEND

Reverence, Respect, and Love

See pages 28–29 of the July 2012 *Friend* for an activity that helps children recognize the importance of being reverent and respectful. The activity helps children learn that treating others with respect and being reverent at church helps us show Heavenly Father that we love Him.

What Is a Testimony?

In “Thomas’s Testimony” on pages 8–9 of the July *Friend*, Thomas struggles to share his testimony because he isn’t sure what a testimony is. The story explains what a testimony is and teaches children about actions they can take to gain a testimony.



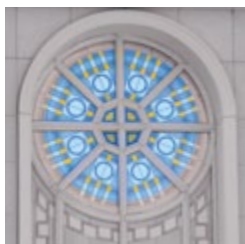
UNSPOTTED FROM THE WORLD

By Julie Thompson

A few years ago, I arrived at the Bountiful Utah Temple to fulfill a late-night cleaning assignment. The turnout for the assignment was impressive, and I wondered for a moment if some would be sent home. I was more than ready to volunteer to leave early. Then I cynically thought to myself, “Of course they won’t let us go early. They will find menial jobs for all of us, thinking it is their duty to keep us here the entire two hours.” I remembered a previous assignment during which I had dusted for more than an hour, only to return a cloth that looked as clean as it had been when it was given to me. I prepared myself to spend two hours cleaning things that didn’t appear to need cleaning. Obviously, I had come to the temple that night out of a sense of duty more than from a desire to serve.

Our group was led to a small chapel for a devotional. The custodian who conducted the devotional said something that will forever change the way I look at temple cleaning assignments. After welcoming us, he proceeded to explain that we were not there to clean things that didn’t need cleaning but to keep the Lord’s house from ever becoming dirty. As stewards of one of the most sacred places on earth, we had a responsibility to keep it spotless.

His message penetrated my heart, and I proceeded to my assigned area with a new



I wondered why I was at the temple to clean when nothing was dirty. But I soon realized that cleaning wasn't really the point.

enthusiasm to protect the Lord’s house. I spent time with a soft-bristled paintbrush, dusting the tiny grooves in door frames, baseboards, and the legs of tables and chairs. Had I been given this assignment on an earlier visit, I might have thought it ridiculous and carelessly brushed over the areas in an effort to appear busy. But this time, I made sure the bristles reached into the tiniest of crevices.

Because this job was neither physically nor mentally taxing, I was blessed with time to ponder while I worked. I first realized that I never paid attention to such minute details in my own home but cleaned those areas that others would see first, neglecting those known only to members of my family and me.

I next realized that there were times when I had lived the gospel in a similar fashion—living those principles and fulfilling those assignments that were most obvious to those around me while ignoring things that seemed known only to my immediate family or me. I attended church, held callings, fulfilled assignments, went visiting teaching—all in full view of members of our ward—but neglected to attend the temple regularly, have personal and family scripture study and prayer, and hold family home evening. I taught lessons and spoke in church but sometimes lacked true charity in my heart when it came to interactions with others.

That night in the temple, I studied the paintbrush in my hand and asked myself, “What are the little crevices in my life that need more attention?” I resolved that rather than plan to repeatedly clean the areas of my life that needed attention, I would try harder never to let them become dirty.

I remember my temple-cleaning lesson each time we are reminded to keep ourselves “unspotted from the world” (James 1:27). ■



House in Peterson, by LeConte Stewart

This peaceful scene of a farm in Peterson, Utah, USA, is representative of the fulfillment of the Lord's promise to the Latter-day Saints in Winter Quarters, Nebraska, USA, on January 14, 1847. Referred to as "the Word and Will of the Lord," this revelation was given to President Brigham Young as he prepared the Saints to leave their temporary homes in Winter Quarters and continue across the plains to the Salt Lake Valley:

*"Let every man use all his influence and property to remove this people to the place
where the Lord shall locate a stake of Zion.*

"And if ye do this with a pure heart, in all faithfulness, ye shall be blessed; you shall be blessed in your flocks, and in your herds, and in your fields, and in your houses, and in your families" (D&C 136:1, 10–11).



“As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” explained President Thomas S. Monson, “sacred covenants are to be revered by us, and faithfulness to them is a requirement for happiness. Yes, I speak of the covenant of baptism, the covenant of the priesthood, and the covenant of marriage as examples.” Because keeping our covenants is essential to our happiness now and to eventually receiving eternal life, it is important to understand what we have promised our Heavenly Father. See “Understanding Our Covenants with God,” page 22.