

Ensign



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Under the banner "Pioneers of 1847," men and women who entered the Salt Lake Valley in 1847 gather for a 24th of July celebration in 1905.

Photograph courtesy of Church History Library

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Family Home Evening Ideas

This issue contains articles and activities that could be used for family home evening. The following are some examples.



“Playing the Most Important Part,”

page 18. You might start off the family home evening singing “Choose the Right” (*Hymns*, no. 239). Turning to the article, retell the author’s story about choosing to not participate in a questionable play. You could then role-play choose-the-right situations with your family. For example, what would you do if you were tempted to cheat on a test or exclude someone from an activity? Personalize the circumstances to match your family situation. If you have teens, consider watching and discussing the video “Leave the Party” (lds.org/go/leaveE717).

“Christlike Attributes: Kindness,”

page 54: Consider asking family members to come to family home evening prepared

to share a time when someone showed kindness to them and how it made them feel. Share one of the stories about kindness related in the article. You could then read together the “Looking Inside” and “Looking Outside” lists included with the article, inviting family members to select one or two ideas to work on. Encourage them to share their experiences at a future family home evening. You might want to conclude by singing “A Special Gift Is Kindness” or “Kindness Begins with Me” (*Children’s Songbook*, 145).

JUST THE TWO OF US

Soon after we were married, my husband and I realized we needed to create the habit of holding family home evening, even with just the two of us. One time we each wrote down several service ideas and put them in a jar. Every morning afterward we each drew out an idea to accomplish that day and report on later. Another time we went on a short hike, spread out a blanket, and read scriptures about trusting in the Lord. Then we shared our own experiences in applying this principle. It helped us feel even closer to each other. Whether it’s a lesson with many family members or just a couple, the blessings of family home evening are always abundant.

Tosha Tingey, Utah, USA

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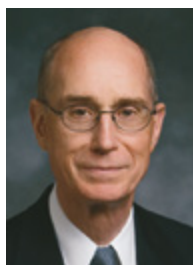
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FROM OUR READERS



See what readers are saying about the *Ensign* at ensign.lds.org. How has the *Ensign* blessed your life? How might the magazine improve? To share your feelings, suggestions, or questions, use the “Submit an Article” link on our web page.



By President
Henry B. Eyring

First Counselor in
the First Presidency

THE REWARD OF Enduring Well

When I was a young man, I served in the Church as a counselor to a wise district president. He was constantly trying to teach me. I remember the advice he once gave to me: “When you meet someone, treat them as if they were in serious trouble, and you will be right more than half the time.” I thought then that he was pessimistic. Now, more than 50 years later, I can see how well he understood the world and life.

We all have trials to face—at times, very difficult trials. We know that the Lord allows us to go through trials in order for us to be polished and perfected so we can be with Him forever.

The Lord taught the Prophet Joseph Smith in Liberty Jail that the reward for enduring his trials well would help qualify him for eternal life:

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

“And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes” (D&C 121:7–8).

So many things beat upon us in a lifetime that it may seem hard to endure well. It can seem that way to a family depending on crops when there is no rain. They may wonder, “How long can we hold on?” It can seem that way to a youth faced with resisting the rising flood of filth and temptation. It can seem that way to a young man struggling to get the education or training he needs for a job to support a wife and family. It can seem that way to a person who

can’t find a job or who has lost job after job as businesses close their doors. It can seem that way to those faced with the erosion of health and physical strength, which may come early or late in life for them or for those they love.

But a loving God has not set such tests before us simply to see if we can endure difficulty but rather to see if we can endure them well and so become polished.

The First Presidency taught Elder Parley P. Pratt (1807–57) when he was a newly called member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “You have enlisted in a cause that requires your whole attention; . . . become a polished shaft. . . . You must endure much toil, much labor, and many privations to become perfectly polished. . . . Your Heavenly Father requires it; the field is His; the work is His; and He will . . . cheer you . . . and buoy you up.”¹

In the book of Hebrews, Paul speaks of the fruit of enduring well: “Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby” (Hebrews 12:11).

Our trials and our difficulties give us the opportunity to learn and grow, and they may even change our very nature. If we can turn to the Savior in our extremity, our souls can be polished as we endure.

Therefore, the first thing to remember is to pray always (see D&C 10:5; Alma 34:19–29).

The second thing is to strive continuously to keep the



were changes in you. The temptation to do evil seemed to lessen. The desire to do good increased. Those who knew you best and loved you may have said: “You have become kinder and more patient. You don’t seem to be the same person.”

You weren’t the same person. You were changed through the Atonement of Jesus Christ because you relied on Him in the time of your trial.

I promise you that the Lord will come to your aid in your trials if you seek and serve Him and that your soul will be polished in the process. I challenge you to put your trust in Him in all your adversities.

I know that God the Father lives and that He hears and answers our every prayer. I know that His Son, Jesus Christ, paid the price of all of our sins and that He wants us to come to Him. I know that the Father and the Son watch over us and have prepared a way for us to endure well and to come home again. ■

NOTE

1. *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, ed. Parley P. Pratt Jr. (1979), 120.

commandments—whatever the opposition, the temptation, or the tumult around us (see Mosiah 4:30).

The third crucial thing to do is to serve the Lord (see D&C 4:2; 20:31).

In the Master’s service, we come to know and love Him. We will, if we

persevere in prayer and faithful service, begin to recognize the hand of the Savior and the influence of the Holy Ghost in our life. Many of us have for a period given such service and felt that companionship. If you think back on that time, you will remember that there

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

We all have challenges that test our faith and ability to endure. Consider the needs and challenges of those you teach. Before visiting, you could pray for guidance to know how to better help them endure well. You might consider discussing both the principles and the scriptures President Eyring mentions, including prayer, service, and keeping the commandments. You might also share personal experiences of how you have been blessed in ways that have helped you endure well.



YOUTH



You can download the music to “Abide with Me; ‘Tis Eventide” at lds.org/go/7176.

When My Friend Died

By Samantha Linton

During my junior year in high school, my friend had a brain aneurism and passed away the next day. Although I was a member of the Church, I still struggled. I had been taught my entire life that I could turn to Heavenly Father and the Savior for anything, but I never had to go through something like this before.

I cried for hours, trying to find something—anything—to give me peace. The night after her passing, I turned to the hymnbook. As I flipped through the pages, I landed on “Abide with Me; ‘Tis Eventide” (*Hymns*, no. 165). The third verse stuck out to me:

*Abide with me; ‘tis eventide,
And lone will be the night*

*If I cannot commune with thee,
Nor find in thee my light.
The darkness of the world, I fear,
Would in my home abide.
O Savior, stay this night with me;
Behold, ‘tis eventide.*

This verse filled me with so much peace. I knew then that not only could the Savior stay that night with me but that He also knew exactly how I was feeling. I know that the love I felt through the hymn not only got me through that night but has also gotten me through many other trials I’ve endured.





The author lives in Utah, USA.

CHILDREN

Focus on Jesus

When we focus on Jesus, He can help us handle the hard things in life. Loving others, keeping the commandments, and praying to Heavenly Father in the name of Jesus Christ are all ways to focus on Jesus.

Draw pictures in the blank squares so that each row and each column has a picture for love, prayer, and commandments.

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That They May Be One

Prayerfully study this material and seek for inspiration to know what to share. How will understanding the purpose of Relief Society prepare daughters of God for the blessings of eternal life?



Faith
Family
Relief

“Jesus achieved perfect unity with the Father by submitting Himself, both flesh and spirit, to the will of the Father,” taught Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

“ . . . Surely we will not be one with God and Christ until we make Their will and interest our greatest desire. Such submissiveness is not reached in a day, but through the Holy Spirit, the Lord will tutor us if we are willing until, in process of time, it may accurately be said that He is in us as the Father is in Him.”¹

Linda K. Burton, former Relief Society General President, taught how to work toward this unity: “Making and keeping our covenants is an expression of our commitment to become like the Savior. The ideal is to strive for the attitude best expressed in a few phrases of a favorite hymn: ‘I’ll go

where *you* want me to go. . . . I’ll say what *you* want me to say. . . . I’ll be what *you* want me to be.’”²

Elder Christofferson also reminded us that “as we endeavor day by day and week by week to follow the path of Christ, our spirit asserts its preeminence, the battle within subsides, and temptations cease to trouble.”³

Neill F. Marriott, Second Counselor in the Young Women General Presidency, bears testimony of the blessings of striving to align our will with God’s will: “I have struggled to banish the mortal desire to have things *my* way, eventually realizing that my way is oh so lacking, limited, and inferior to the way of Jesus Christ. ‘*His* way is the path that leads to

happiness in this life and eternal life in the world to come’ [“The Living Christ”; emphasis added].”⁴ Let us strive humbly to become one with our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

Additional Scriptures and Information

John 17:20–21; Ephesians 4:13; Doctrine and Covenants 38:27; reliefsociety.lds.org

NOTES

1. D. Todd Christofferson, “That They May Be One in Us,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 72, 73.
2. Linda K. Burton, “The Power, Joy, and Love of Covenant Keeping,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 111.
3. D. Todd Christofferson, “That They May Be One in Us,” 71.
4. Neill F. Marriott, “Yielding Our Hearts to God,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2015, 32.



Consider This

How does doing the will of God help us to become more like Him?

APRIL 2017 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 2017 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.



DOCTRINAL HIGHLIGHT

Jesus Christ Is the Source

“It is doctrinally incomplete to speak of the Lord’s atoning sacrifice by short-cut phrases, such as ‘the Atonement’ or ‘the enabling power of the Atonement’ or ‘applying the Atonement’ or ‘being strengthened by the Atonement.’ These expressions present a real risk of misdirecting faith by treating the *event* as if it had living existence and capabilities independent of our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

“Under the Father’s great eternal plan, it is the Savior who suffered. It is the Savior who broke the bands of death. It is the Savior who paid the price for our sins and transgressions and blots them out on condition of our repentance. It is the Savior who delivers us from physical and spiritual death.”

President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Drawing the Power of Jesus Christ into Our Lives,” *Ensign*, May 2017, 40.

PROPHETIC PROMISE

STUDY THE BOOK OF MORMON



“If you are not reading the Book of Mormon each day, please do so. If you will read it prayerfully and with a sincere

desire to know the truth, the Holy Ghost will manifest its truth to you. If it is true—and I solemnly testify that it *is*—then Joseph Smith was a prophet who saw God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

“Because the Book of Mormon is true, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the Lord’s Church on the earth, and the holy priesthood of God has been restored for the benefit and blessing of His children. . . .

“. . . I implore each of us to prayerfully study and ponder the Book of Mormon each day. As we do so, we will be in a position to hear the voice of the Spirit, to resist temptation, to overcome doubt and fear, and to receive heaven’s help in our lives.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “The Power of the Book of Mormon,” *Ensign*, May 2017, 86–87.

Answers for You

Each conference prophets and apostles give inspired answers to questions Church member may have. Use your May 2017 issue or visit conference.lds.org to find answers to these questions.

- How can we hold on in hard times? “Look up to Christ for strength, balance, and healing.” —See Yoon Hwan Choi, “Don’t Look Around, Look Up!” 92.
- How can we keep progressing in the gospel? “Prayerfully think about what adjustments are needed to help you keep your ‘eye single to the glory of God’ [D&C 4:5].” —See M. Russell Ballard, “Return and Receive,” 64.
- What are the blessings of faith? “Our sins can be forgiven. . . . Prayers are answered according to faith.” —See Quentin L. Cook, “Foundations of Faith,” 130, 131.
- How can we keep the gift of the Holy Ghost? “By . . . seeking loving and forgiving relationships with family and loved ones. We should keep our thoughts, actions, and language virtuous.” —See Gary E. Stevenson, “How Does the Holy Ghost Help You?” 120.

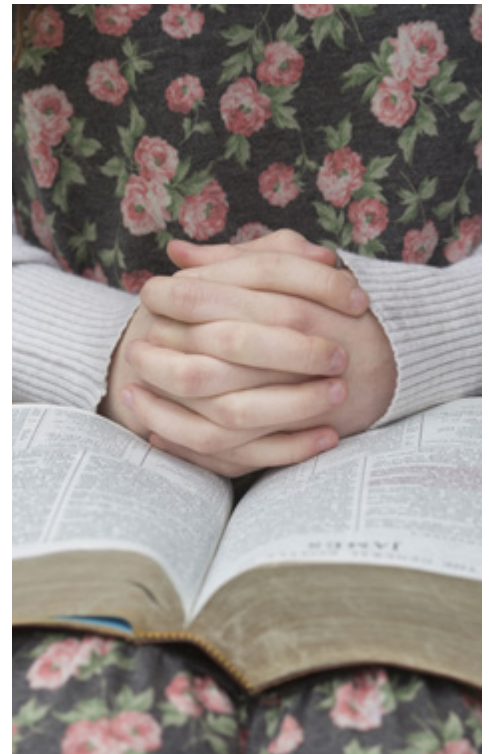
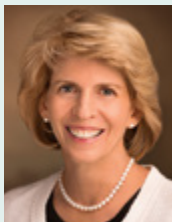


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GIVE TIME TO HOLINESS

“Our hope for holiness is centered in Christ, in His mercy and His grace. With faith in Jesus Christ and His

Atonement, we may become clean, without spot, when we deny ourselves of ungodliness [see Moroni 10:32–33] and sincerely repent. We are baptized by water for the remission of sins. Our souls are sanctified when we receive the Holy Ghost with open hearts. Weekly, we partake of the ordinance of the sacrament. . . . Over time, as we continually strive to become one with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, we become partakers of Their divine nature [see 2 Peter 1:4].”

Carol F. McConkie, First Counselor in the Young Women General Presidency, “The Beauty of Holiness,” *Ensign*, May 2017, 10.

Who Said This?

Match the following quotes to the conference speaker.

1. “‘Come as you are,’ a loving Father says to each of us, but He adds, ‘Don’t plan to stay as you are.’” _____
2. “Each of us can trust in the Lord and lean *not*.” _____
3. “When we ‘inhale’ the praise of others, that praise will be our compensation.” _____
4. “Out of the well of integrity springs an empowered, sin-resistant generation.” _____

Answers: 1. Jeffrey R. Holland; 2. Bonnie H. Gordon; 3. Dieter F. Uchtdorf; 4. Joy D. Jones

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

A TEACHER WHO HELPS SAVE SOULS

By Brian Hansbrow

Church Curriculum Development

*Why the Savior taught gives meaning to how He taught.
Is our purpose any different?*

I admit that when I think about teaching in the Savior's way, I tend to focus on *how* He taught. What did He do? How did He interact with people? After all, He was the master teacher! But if we want to teach like Him, it's essential to understand *why* He taught. Ultimately, that "why" will make all the difference for us and for those we teach.

When the Savior taught, His purpose wasn't to fill time or to entertain or to unload a bunch of information. Everything He does—including teaching—is meant to lead others to His Father. The Savior's whole desire and mission is to save Heavenly Father's children (see 2 Nephi 26:24). In our quest to teach as He did, we can learn to be motivated by the same purpose that motivated Him.

In other words, to teach in the Savior's way is to be a teacher whose purpose is to help save souls.

The Desire to Save Others

One of my all-time favorite accounts in the Book of Mormon tells of the sons of King Mosiah forsaking the kingdom of the Nephites so that they can establish the kingdom of God among the Lamanites. They give up an earthly kingdom for the

kingdom of heaven. They give up the comforts of safety and security among the Nephites to go among their enemies, the Lamanites, that they "might save some few of their souls" (Alma 26:26).

What motivated these servants of the Lord? "They could not bear that



any human soul should perish; yea, even the very thoughts that any soul should endure endless torment did cause them to quake and tremble” (Mosiah 28:3). That motivation caused them to endure “many afflictions” (Alma 17:5, 14).

This story has often inspired me to think, Am I doing what I can to bring others to Christ? Am I focused enough on saving souls?

Becoming a Teacher Who Helps Save Souls

When we desire to teach for the same reason the Savior did, the principles of *how* He teaches take on greater meaning. More than just techniques, they serve as patterns for becoming like Him. As we consistently apply the following ideas, as well as others found in *Teaching in the Savior’s Way*, we can not only *teach* more like Him but also *be* more like Him.

Seek Revelation Early

In order to assist in the work of saving souls, we need revelation. Revelation comes “line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little” (2 Nephi 28:30)—and that takes time. So we begin preparing early and we seek revelation often.

Love the People

Love may be the most powerful way a teacher can help save souls. It may be as simple as knowing each class member’s name, asking them





about their week, telling them what a good talk they gave, or congratulating them on a milestone or achievement. Showing interest and love opens hearts and helps those we teach be receptive to the Holy Ghost.

Prepare to Teach with the Needs of Learners in Mind

A teacher who helps save souls focuses on the learners. As we review the lesson material, we focus on what will best meet their needs, not ours. We forget about filling time and focus on filling hearts and minds. We think about not just what we will say and do but what learners will say and do. We want them to share their ideas because it builds unity, opens their hearts, and helps them exercise faith.

Stay Focused on the Doctrine

It's common for teachers to evaluate their effectiveness by how much participation they elicit, but that is just one element of the experience. If our class has a lot of sharing but very little doctrine, we have provided what Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles called a “theological Twinkie.” We have provided something that tastes good, but we have failed to nourish our class members with the sustaining power of doctrine.

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge.”¹ We must help those we teach gain the most important kind of knowledge—the doctrine of Jesus Christ.

When we and class members share our thoughts and feelings, we should always bring it back to the scriptures and to the words of the latter-day prophets. Recently, Brother Tad R. Callister, Sunday School General President, taught: “The ideal teacher is constantly striving to connect class comments to doctrine. For example, a teacher might say, ‘The experience you shared reminds me of a scripture.’ Or, ‘What gospel truths do we learn from the comments we have heard?’ Or, ‘Would someone like to bear testimony of the power of that truth we have been discussing?’”²

Invite the Holy Ghost to Testify

A teacher who helps save souls understands that what we say and do as teachers is intended to invite the influence of the Holy Ghost into the lives of others. The Holy Ghost is the teacher. One role of the Holy Ghost is to testify of truth, especially about the Father and the Son. So as we teach about Them and Their gospel, we invite the Holy Ghost to testify to class members. To the degree that they allow it, His power strengthens their testimonies and changes their hearts. His witness is more powerful than sight.³

Invite Learners to Learn and Act for Themselves

I was recently in a Sunday School class where a teacher began by asking class members to share something that was especially meaningful to them as they read that week’s



assignment from the scriptures and how they had applied it to their lives. This led to a powerful discussion about insights and discoveries they had found for themselves. It was very natural for the teacher to add to this conversation the doctrinal points she had prepared to teach. What really impressed me was how she focused on encouraging her class members to experience the power of the word of God for themselves.

Our goal as teachers isn’t just to have a great experience in class

or to fill the time or to give a good lesson. The real goal is to walk with others on their journey back to our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. Our goal is to become teachers who help save souls. ■

Visit teaching.lds.org to learn more about how Teaching in the Savior’s Way and teacher council meetings can change how we learn and teach.

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 266.
2. Tad R. Callister, “Sunday School ‘Discussion Is a Means, Not an End,’” *Church News*, June 9, 2016, deseretnews.com.
3. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Harold B. Lee* (2000), 39.

THE ONLY THING THAT SAVED ME

By Shuho Takayama, as told to
Richard Clark and Ana-Lisa Clark
Mullen

Golf is a popular sport in Japan, so I started playing it when I was 14 years old as a way to spend time with my father. It was fun from the start, and eventually I started to practice on my own and played on the golf team at my high school. I became friends with my teammates and coaches, who encouraged me to pursue my dream of becoming a professional golfer.

I worked hard, not just on my game but on my studies, graduating near the top of my high school class.

When I first entered college, I had a great relationship with my golf coach and teammates. They were better than I was, so I did all I could to keep up with them. Some of the team members commented on my unique first name, Shuho. I told them that my Korean maternal grandmother gave it to me and that in Korean it means “beautiful mountain.” From that point on I felt

**An unexpected
friendship
helped me
change my life
from darkness
to light.**

like their attitude toward me changed, tainted by a generations-long tension between some in Japan and Korea.

They began calling me “the Korean kid” and said I would hurt the good name of the university. Rather than allowing me to practice golf with them, they made me clean the toilets.

It became increasingly stressful to be around the team. Being away from home, I felt like I was on my own. I tried to hang on to my dream and return to the good favor of my coach and team, but after two years,

I couldn’t tolerate their harsh treatment anymore, so I returned home.

This was a dark time for me. The stress was having psychological and physical effects. My self-esteem had taken a beating for two years. My dream to be a professional golfer was at an end. I didn’t know where to go with my life. And I was angry. I was angry at everyone: the coach, my teammates, and my parents. I was so angry, my thoughts scared

me. I had no friends, and I felt I was unable to trust or associate with other people. For six months, I only left home to work out at the gym.

During this dark part of my life, I made friends with Justin Christy, whom I met at the gym. When I first saw him, I thought he was a foreign-exchange student. I was hesitant to talk to him until I saw him talking to someone at the gym and was surprised to hear that he spoke Japanese. I still felt unable to trust other people, but he suggested that we train together.



There was something different about him that I didn't understand at the time. I was calm when I was around him. I started to look forward to our training time together. I had found someone I felt I could trust as a friend.

After training together for several months, Justin invited me to a dinner group that he went to on a regular basis. I was hesitant, but after several invitations I decided to go to what ended up being a young single adult dinner at the home of Richard and Corina Clark. They greeted me warmly when I entered their home, Brother Clark in Japanese and Sister Clark in English. I didn't understand what she was saying, but I attempted to respond to her. Even though several people there didn't speak Japanese, they were a fun-loving group who were warm and friendly. There was lots of laughter.

I began attending other young single adult activities and had never had so much fun with other people in my life. I wondered what it was about these people that made them so nice and friendly.

Around this time Justin asked me what I wanted to do with my life. I was surprised to find that my goals had started to change. I told him I wanted to learn to speak English and I wanted to be a friend to all, just like

I decided that I wanted to help save people who were in the same situation I was.

him. He told me of the free English classes at his church. I went to the English class and met the missionaries. Even though I had never thought about God, I felt like I should listen to the missionaries. They taught me the fundamentals of the gospel and called me almost every day. They became my good friends, which made me really happy because I didn't have very many friends yet.

I started meeting many members of the Church who went to the missionary lessons with me and became good friends with them. They taught me the gospel and set the example for me. Justin talked to me about the Book of Mormon and told me stories from it so that I wanted to read it for myself. Another friend, Shingo, who is very detail-oriented, discussed doctrines with me in a way that was easy for me to understand. He always bore

his testimony at the end of our conversations.

I had found something I believed in and a place I felt I belonged. After I was baptized and confirmed, I started to think about serving a mission, but I was worried about dedicating two years to it. I talked to a lot of people about serving a mission, especially my returned missionary friends. I thought a lot about it, and I realized that the gospel was the only thing that could

have saved me.

I know that God has given me everything: my dreams, hope, friends, and especially love. The gospel helped me come out of darkness into the light. ■

The author lives in Tokyo, Japan.



BE AN EXAMPLE

"Each of us came to earth having been given the Light of Christ. As we follow the example of the

Savior and live as He lived and as He taught, that light will burn within us and will light the way for others. . . .

"I am confident there are within our sphere of influence those who are lonely, those who are ill, and those who feel discouraged. Ours is the opportunity to help them and to lift their spirits."

President Thomas S. Monson, "Be an Example and a Light," *Ensign*, Nov. 2015, 86.



How I Shared the Gospel with Shuho

By Justin Christy

When I met Shuho at the gym, he said he wanted to learn English and go to a golf exchange program. I told him about the English classes at the church, but it took several weeks before we were able to attend. In the meantime, as we worked out together, we talked a lot about gospel topics, about the Book of Mormon, and about life in general.

The friendship and examples of the Church members he met caught his attention and helped him learn about the gospel. It is the Spirit that leads to conversion; all we do is deliver the message and support people as they choose for themselves.

It used to be stressful for me to think about sharing the gospel. But I have found that if we just open our mouth at the right time, we will have missionary opportunities. All we need to do is invite people to a Church activity or meeting. If we are open-minded, there will always be opportunities to share the gospel. ■

Playing the Most Important Part

By Annie McCormick Bonner

Live theater was my passion! As a young adult, I threw myself into acting and singing on the stage. I was blessed with talent and hoped to establish a career performing professionally. I won the most challenging roles I could get and always behaved professionally in order to win the respect of my fellow thespians.

I was thrilled when the most influential director in our area told me that he would be holding auditions for an operetta and that he wanted me to try out. The show would be performed in our area's most prestigious venue, and it seemed that my director friend already had me in mind for the leading role.

The script was unavailable for perusal before the audition, but the operetta was based on a novel by

an 18th-century philosopher, which I read. I also became familiar with the show's music, which was exceptionally beautiful and challenging.

The audition went well, and I was soon informed that the leading role—the most important part—was mine! I believed that this role was a huge opportunity.

I walked on clouds of excitement—until the script arrived. As I read it, my elation rapidly floated away. While the novel and the music were worthy, the script was irreverent and contained suggestive and inappropriate stage directions. I knew that I shouldn't be involved in this production. It was a terrible disappointment.

Suddenly I had a dilemma. Theater etiquette dictates that after accepting a role, an actor does not quit, because the production schedule does not allow time for changes in cast. Backing out now would be considered very unprofessional. I feared losing the trust of the theater company, offending the

director, and even losing the opportunity to continue performing elsewhere.

Of course, I was tempted to rationalize! A voice strutted across my mind, proclaiming, "You can't quit now. The script isn't so bad. The good in the show will make up for the naughty parts." But the Holy Spirit was always in the wings of my heart—firmly, patiently, unwaveringly cuing me that I needed to exit the operetta.

I had just landed the biggest role of my life. I was excited—until the script arrived.

I knew what I had to do. Trembling, I picked up the phone and dialed the director.

“Hello, sir,” I said when he answered. “This is Annie.”

“Annie! I’m so excited about the show. Did you get the script?”

“Yes, I did, and I . . . I . . .”

I burst into tears. Talk about unprofessional!

Somehow, between sobs, I managed to explain to the director why I could not be in his show. And then I waited for the world to end.

The dear man laughed. He respected my choice. At first he tried to talk me into staying with the show, but he relented. He said he would still adore me even if I didn’t want to be in his operetta. And he simply asked me to bring the script to him right away so that he could give it to somebody else. I hung up the phone, mortified at my weeping but grateful for the director’s affectionate, understanding response.

I wiped away my tears and then grabbed the script and jumped into my car. As the engine started, the radio also came to life. It was preset to the local classical music station, and to my amazement, the tune playing was the overture to the very same operetta. I had never, ever heard it played on the radio before.

I felt like Heavenly Father was playing this music for me. He

wanted me to understand that He loved me and that He approved of my choice. The music coming over the airwaves was one of God’s tender mercies. Through it I felt the comfort of His love.

I went on to study drama at university. More than once I found myself in similar circumstances. There were times when it became necessary to exit certain collaborative projects because of inappropriate content. These situations were never easy or pleasant, but I was able to handle them more gracefully and without tears. Perhaps my earlier experience was preparation for these occasions. Perhaps it helped me to better understand who I am and what I most want to be.

William Shakespeare wrote:

*All the world’s a stage,
And all the men and women
merely players:
They have their exits and their
entrances;
And one man in his time plays
many parts.¹*

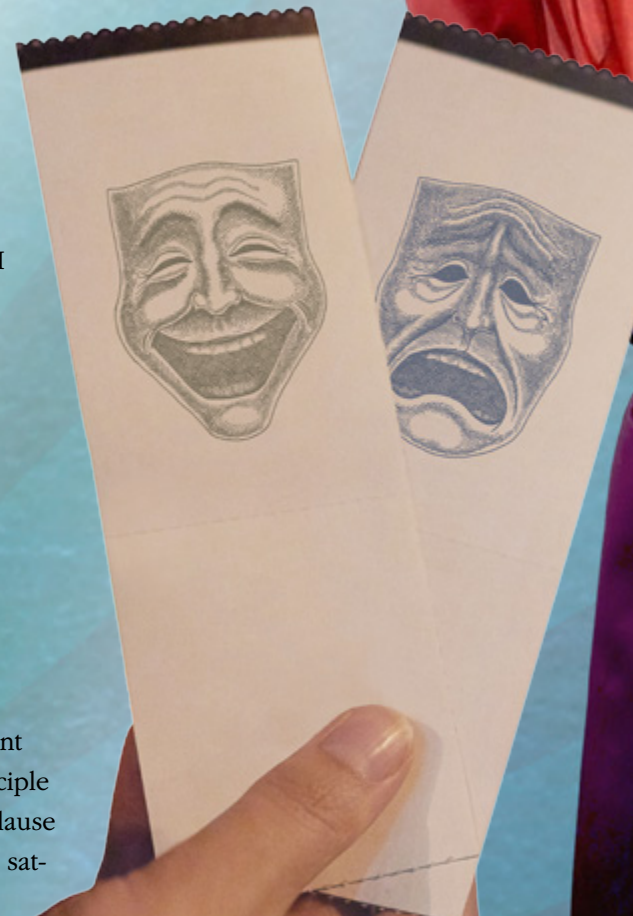
I’m learning that there is one part to play that is more important than any other. It is as a true disciple of Jesus Christ. Winning the applause of our peers can be exciting and satisfying, but it is God’s approval

that matters. Our greatest performances come as we learn to follow the Master. ■

The author lives in Washington, USA.

NOTE

1. William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, act 2, scene 7, lines 141–44.



YOUNG ADULTS



Looking **IN,** Turning **OUT**

Were shyness
and introversion
limiting
my growth?

By Margaret Willden Willes

I've always been shy. As a child, I was much more comfortable coloring pictures of butterflies than inviting the neighbor girl over to play. When report cards rolled around, my teachers routinely mentioned one improvement that I could make: "She could speak up more in class," they kindly offered. Rather than cheer on the football team every Friday night with the rest of the teenage student body, I was perfectly pleased sitting at home watching period dramas with my family. And for most of my college career, I arrived early to class, sat at the edge of the lecture hall, and quietly slipped out at the end of class without saying a word to anyone. I was encapsulated in my own little bubble.

While my shyness was never debilitating, I was always acutely aware of it. Some mistook my reserved personality for boredom, annoyance, or even arrogance—and it was frustrating. From the sidelines I watched

those bubbly girls at stake dances and the gregarious students in class, wishing I could be outgoing like they were. Every extroverted person in my life seemed to be happier, more successful, more likable, and, in my mind, a better disciple of Christ. After all, how could I share my feelings about the gospel with others when I struggled even to strike up a conversation about the weather? In my heart, I knew I could still be happy, likable, and Christlike—regardless of facets of my personality that made it tough to turn outward. Still, I felt that my introverted demeanor was a weakness in and of itself.

Over the next few years, however, I discovered an unexpected sense of happiness and personal peace as I learned more about myself and what the Savior expects of me as a disciple.

Coming to Know Myself

When I arrived at college, I felt timid in a crowd of young adults who seemed to be able to do everything. In an effort to understand myself better, I began searching to know who I was in the Lord's eyes. I knew I needed to internalize the truth that I was among "the noble and great" whom the Lord sent to earth and

that He had big plans for me (see Abraham 3:22–23). He gave each of us specific talents and gifts so we can help others in our quest to become like Him (see D&C 46:11). I started studying my patriarchal blessing intently, dissecting each paragraph and pondering the meaning of each word. As I pored over the blessing, I was amazed at the gifts I could one day develop with the Lord's help—and the gifts that I realized I already possessed.

I began learning more about shyness and introversion. I realized shyness was an emotional response I could work to overcome. I tackled it step by step. I would accompany my roommate to a ward activity, visit the girls I was called to serve as a visiting teacher, or smile at acquaintances on campus.

I also began to understand introversion as a dimension of human personality. I prayed to know how the Lord sees me, and He opened my eyes to my personal strengths and weaknesses. I slowly realized that being introverted didn't make me bad—or good—but it was a part of what made me *me*. It didn't change Heavenly Father's love for me, and I shouldn't let it dictate how

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MINA PRICE



much I loved myself. However, I also decided that I shouldn't use introversion (or my feelings of shyness) as an excuse. Heavenly Father wants me to find happiness and a sense of achievement through personal growth.

As I worked on learning to overcome my insecurities and focus on how I could help others with the talents that I had (rather than the ones I wished I had), a magical thing happened: the Lord was able to use me as I was *and* teach me how I could grow. I began to relate to people better. I found myself more easily talking in groups of people. I felt greater love for myself *and* others. I even began to enjoy leading class discussions as a Sunday School teacher in my YSA ward.

I discovered that with the Lord's help, I could continue to learn and progress if I wanted to. I had previously labeled my introverted personality a hindrance, but I was learning that it could be a conduit for serving and understanding others in a unique way. My eyes were opened to the magnificent promises that could be realized if I was willing to let the Lord

mold what He had to work with into what He knew I could become.

Coming to Know Him

In the process of coming to know myself, I also began to know my Savior better. His example is a powerful influence in helping us know what we can become and how it is done.

During my junior year of college, following months of pondering the words in my patriarchal blessing, I decided it was right to submit papers to serve a full-time mission. Amidst lingering feelings of concern over my shyness, I was called to serve in Tokyo, Japan. On the exterior, I tried to play it cool. *Missionaries are never scared, right?* But on the inside, I was petrified. How would I be able to approach strangers and share something so precious to me? I didn't even like asking the grocery store employee where I could find the string cheese.

One Sunday evening in the missionary training center, feeling extra small amidst hundreds of missionaries, I found myself watching a broadcast of a talk by Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. It was then that I heard the words that pierced my heart with understanding:

“Character is demonstrated by looking and reaching outward when the natural and instinctive response is to be self-absorbed and turn inward. If such a capacity is indeed the ultimate criterion of moral character, then the Savior of the world is the perfect example of such a consistent and charitable character. . . .

“. . . Throughout His mortal ministry, and especially during the events leading up to and including the atoning sacrifice, the Savior of the world turned outward—when the natural man or woman in any of us would have been self-centered and focused inward.”¹

This newfound revelation was like a lightning bolt from heaven. I realized that I loved the Savior enough to love others as He would—even when circumstances would make it reasonable to focus on myself. I could love, even if *how* I showed that love was different from how someone else might do it. It didn't matter if I was extroverted or introverted, had social superpowers or wasn't a “people person.” I could find ways to turn outward even when I wanted to turn inward. I could do that.



There were still times as a missionary that I struggled to open my mouth and invite people on the street to church. I still sometimes doubted my ability to help a companion or investigator feel loved. But when my actions came from my love for the Savior and my desire for others to feel His love, suddenly anything was possible, and I felt peace knowing I was striving to follow His will. I repeatedly reminded myself that the true character of Christ is to turn outward, especially when it would be easy to give up, go home, and indulge in self-doubt. And that thought gave me strength.

Finding Peace

I still have to take a deep breath before I make phone calls, and truthfully, my face sometimes burns when I speak up at work or in Church meetings. But I'm at peace with it. It's okay to be uncomfortable at times. We all have strengths and weaknesses, and we all have room to grow.

I have changed in many ways, and some people are surprised that I was ever shy. I've also found peace with my need for being away from others sometimes. The Savior Himself went to the mountains alone to pray and ponder (see Matthew 14:23). But the

Savior's peace—and ours—doesn't come from being alone or not being alone. It comes from turning outward rather than turning inward—losing ourselves for His sake rather than saving ourselves (see Luke 9:24). It's not about trying to be like others; it's about trying to be like Him—an expectation that, with His help, is within my reach. ■

The principles in this article could benefit others who struggle with similar challenges. Some individuals may find they need the additional help of a professional counselor.

The author lives in New York, USA.

NOTE

1. David A. Bednar, "The Character of Christ" (Brigham Young University–Idaho religion symposium, Jan. 25, 2003), byui.edu.



BELIEVE IN YOURSELF

"Believe in yourself, and believe in [Heavenly Father]. Don't demean your worth or

denigrate your contribution. . . . You are unique; you are irreplaceable. The loss of even one voice diminishes every other singer in this great mortal choir of ours, including the loss of those who feel they are on the margins of society or the margins of the Church."

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Songs Sung and Unsung," *Ensign*, May 2017, 50.



Led to Answers

By Howard M. Collett

Landing flat on my back and staring up at the ceiling, I realized that my two roommates had just dumped me out of bed. Jerry and Burt stood over me, grinning. They had literally picked up my mattress and turned it upside down, depositing me directly onto the floor.

Jerry proudly held up a white shirt he'd ironed and declared, "You're going to church with us today." Too startled to object, I mumbled a simple acceptance.

I hadn't attended church for nearly two years. Few of my college friends knew I was a Latter-day Saint. While most of my member friends from high school had gone on missions, I had not. I had slowly drifted into inactivity, and now here I was, looking up at two grinning friends with reactivation on their minds.

What Jerry and Burt didn't know was that just the night before, the girl I had taken out was a Latter-day

Saint. As we had sat in my car talking about religion, we had concluded that I needed to find my own answers to three questions: Was Joseph Smith a prophet of God? Was The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints really the only true Church upon the earth? Was the Book of Mormon revealed scripture? After the date, I had decided I would put these questions to the test and went home to offer a simple prayer for understanding.

At church that day, the sacrament meeting speaker started out, "I'd like to review today how we can determine that Joseph Smith was a true prophet of God." Then in Sunday School we talked about how even though all religions contain some truth, God is not the author of confusion and disharmony. He provided us with His restored gospel, which gives us the complete picture. Next, I found myself in priesthood meeting learning how this restoration was accomplished

through the plain and precious truths found in the Book of Mormon.

A sense of wonderment started to stir within me. In less than 24 hours from the time I had prayed, I felt that the Lord had orchestrated several events and prompted multiple people to help me find my answers. The conversation with my date planted the seed; my roommates bringing me to



**I learned
that the Lord can
inspire multiple
people to answer
one prayer.**



church showed me that I was important; and the testimonies and insights of ward members helped me feel the Spirit enough to trust in the doctrines I knew.

After that revelatory experience, I returned to Church activity and have done my best to remain active and faithful. I'm thankful that the Lord

cared enough about me to prompt the people around me to influence me to return and to seek the answers I needed. Because of these events, I've been blessed in many ways. I know that He hears our prayers and knows the desires of our hearts. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



BLESSED, PROTECTED, AND DIRECTED

"Simply stated, prayer is communication to Heavenly Father from His sons and daughters on earth. 'As soon as we learn the true relationship in which we stand toward God (namely, God is our Father, and we are his children), then at once prayer becomes natural and instinctive on our part' (Bible Dictionary, "Prayer," 752). We are commanded to pray always to the Father in the name of the Son (see 3 Nephi 18:19–20). We are promised that if we pray sincerely for that which is right and good and in accordance with God's will, we can be blessed, protected, and directed (see 3 Nephi 18:20; D&C 19:38)."

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Pray Always," *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 41.





**By Elder
David A. Bednar**

Of the Quorum
of the Twelve
Apostles

ON THE

The Zion's Camp expedition led by the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1834 is a striking example of choosing to be on the Lord's side. Reviewing the history of Zion's Camp can help us learn valuable and timeless lessons from this significant episode in Church history that apply to our lives and circumstances today.

What Was Zion's Camp?

The Prophet Joseph Smith received a revelation in 1831 designating Independence, Jackson County, Missouri, as the site of Zion, the central gathering place for the Latter-day Saints and the location for the New Jerusalem identified in both the Bible and the Book of Mormon (see D&C 57:1–3; see also Revelation 21:1–2; Ether 13:4–6). By the summer of 1833, Mormon settlers accounted for approximately one-third of the population in Jackson County. The rapidly increasing numbers, the potential political influence, and the distinctive religious and political beliefs of these newcomers were causes of concern to the other settlers in the area, who consequently demanded that Church members vacate their homes and properties. When this ultimatum was not acted upon, the Missourians attacked the settlements in November 1833 and forced the Saints to leave.

The formation of Zion's Camp was commanded by revelation in February 1834 (see D&C 103). The primary

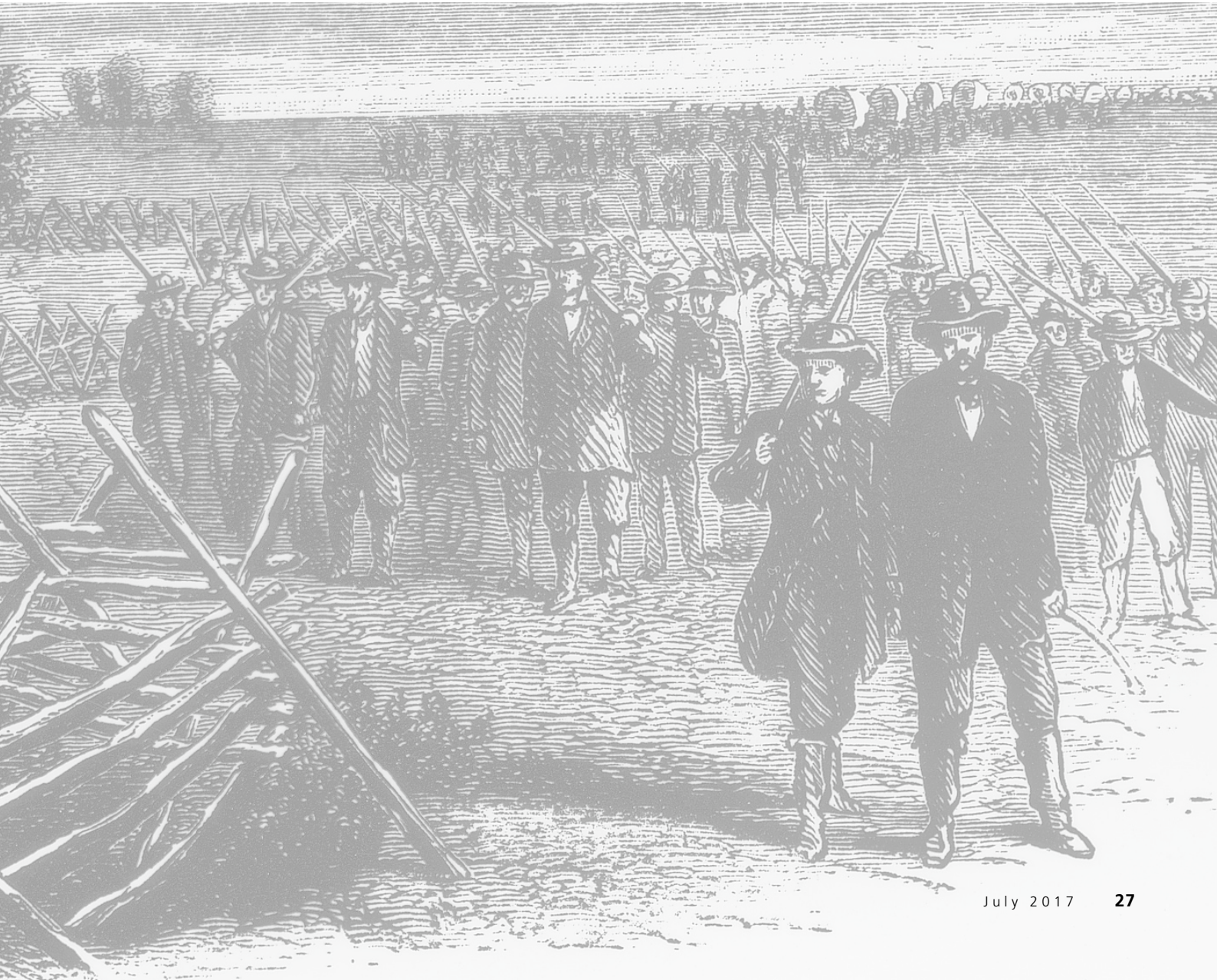


Indiana Ohio Cleveland
New Portage
Chippaway
Tabash
Loooste

LORD'S SIDE

Springfield
Indianapolis
Belleville
Greenfield
Dayton

Lessons from Zion's Camp



In November 1833, Missourians attacked Mormon settlements in Jackson County, Missouri, and forced the Saints to leave.



purpose for this army of the Lord was to protect the Mormons in Jackson County from additional assaults—after the Missouri militia fulfilled its obligation to escort the settlers safely back to their homes and lands. The camp also was to bring money, supplies, and moral support to the destitute Saints. Thus, during May and June 1834, a company of over 200 Latter-day Saint volunteers led by the Prophet Joseph Smith traveled approximately 900 miles (1,450 km) from Kirtland, Ohio, to Clay County, Missouri. Hyrum Smith and Lyman Wight also recruited a smaller group of volunteers from Michigan Territory and met up with the Prophet's group in Missouri. Participants in Zion's Camp included Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Wilford Woodruff, Parley P. Pratt, Orson Hyde, and many other readily recognizable individuals from Church history.

My purpose is not to describe the details of this demanding journey or recount all of the spiritually significant episodes that took place. Let me simply summarize a few major events of the Zion's Camp expedition:

- Governor Daniel Dunklin of Missouri failed to provide the promised militia assistance necessary for the Mormon settlers to be reinstated on their lands.
- Negotiations undertaken among Church leaders, Missouri state officials, and the citizens of Jackson County to avoid armed conflict and to resolve property disputes failed to reach a satisfactory agreement.
- Ultimately, the Lord directed Joseph Smith to disband Zion's Camp and indicated why the army of the Lord had not achieved its perceived objective (see D&C 105:6–13, 19).
- The Lord directed the Saints to build goodwill in the area in preparation for the time when Zion would be recovered by legal rather than by military means (see D&C 105:23–26, 38–41).

Zion's army was broken into smaller groups in late June 1834, and final discharge papers were issued the first few days of July 1834. Most of the volunteers returned to Ohio.

What Lessons Can We Learn from Zion's Camp?

Because of the failure to reestablish the Saints on their lands in Jackson County, Zion's Camp was considered by some an unsuccessful and unprofitable endeavor. A brother in Kirtland—one who lacked the faith to volunteer to go with the camp—met Brigham Young on his return from Missouri and asked, “Well, what did you gain on this useless journey to Missouri with Joseph Smith?” ‘All we went for,’ promptly replied Brigham Young. ‘I would not exchange the experience I gained in that expedition for all the wealth of Geauga County,’ the county in which Kirtland was then located.¹

I invite you to seriously think about Brigham Young's answer: “All we went for.” What are the key learnings we can glean from an undertaking that did not accomplish its stated purpose but nonetheless provided for those early Saints, and can afford us, the blessings of a lifetime?

I believe at least two overarching lessons are to be found in Brother Brigham's answer to that taunting question: (1) the lesson of testing, sifting, and preparing, and (2) the lesson of observing, learning from, and following the Brethren. I emphasize that these lessons are as important, if not more important, for us to learn and apply today as they were just over 180 years ago for the volunteers in Zion's Camp.



The Lesson of Testing, Sifting, and Preparing


The stalwart Saints who marched in the army of the Lord were tested and tried. As the Lord declared, “I have heard their prayers, and will accept their offering; and it is expedient in me that they should be brought thus far for a trial of their faith” (D&C 105:19).

In a most literal way, the physical and spiritual challenges of Zion's Camp constituted a sifting of the wheat from the tares (see Matthew 13:25, 29–30; D&C 101:65), a dividing of the sheep from the goats (see Matthew 25:32–33), a separating of the spiritually strong from the weak. Thus, each man and woman who enlisted in the army of the Lord faced and answered the penetrating question of “Who's on the Lord's side?”²

As Wilford Woodruff was settling his business affairs and preparing to join Zion's Camp, his friends and neighbors warned him not to undertake such a hazardous journey. They counseled, “Do not go, if you do you will lose your life.” He replied, “If I know that I should have a ball put through my heart the first step I took in the state of Missouri I would go.”³ Wilford Woodruff knew he did not need to fear evil consequences as long as he was faithful and obedient. He clearly was on the Lord's side.

Indeed, “the time to show”⁴ for those faithful men and women was the summer of 1834. But the decision to march with the Prophet Joseph to Missouri was not necessarily a one-time, all-inclusive, or immediate response to the question of “Who's on the Lord's side?” The time to show for those Saints arose frequently and repeatedly through mental and physical fatigue, through bloody blisters on their feet, through inadequate food and unclean water, through a multitude of disappointments, through dissensions and rebellions within the camp, and through external threats from vicious enemies.

The time to show came in the experiences and privations of every hour, of every day, and of every week. It was the grand combination of the many seemingly

A photograph showing two women in a professional or office environment. They are seated at a desk with a computer monitor and keyboard. The woman on the right, wearing glasses and a red top, is pointing at a document on the desk. The woman on the left, wearing a pink top, is looking towards the computer screen. The background shows a window with natural light.

“We have too many potential spiritual giants who should be more vigorously lifting their homes [and] the kingdom.”

small choices and actions in the lives of these devoted Saints that provided the conclusive answer to the question “Who’s on the Lord’s side?”

How did the testing and sifting that occurred in the lives of the Zion’s Camp participants serve as a preparation? Interestingly, eight of the brethren called into the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in 1835, as well as all of the Seventies called at that same time, were veterans of Zion’s Camp. At a meeting following the call of the Seventies, the Prophet Joseph Smith declared:

“Brethren, some of you are angry with me, because you did not fight in Missouri; but let me tell you, God did not want you to fight. He could not organize his kingdom with twelve men to open the gospel door to the nations of the earth, and with seventy men under their direction to follow in their tracks, unless he took them from a body of men who had offered their lives, and who had made as great a sacrifice as did Abraham.

“Now, the Lord has got his Twelve and his Seventy, and there will be other quorums of Seventies called.”⁵

Truly, Zion’s Camp was a refiner’s fire for all of the

volunteers in general and for many future leaders of the Lord’s Church in particular.

The experiences gained by the volunteers in the army of the Lord also were a preparation for larger, future migrations of Church members. More than 20 of the Zion’s Camp participants became captains and lieutenants in two great exoduses—the first but four years in the future, involving the removal of 8,000 to 10,000 people from Missouri to Illinois⁶; and the second, 12 years in the future, the great western movement of approximately 15,000 Latter-day Saints from Illinois to the Salt Lake and other Rocky Mountain valleys. As a preparatory training, Zion’s Camp was of immense value to the Church. The year 1834 was the time to show—and to prepare for 1838 and for 1846.

As individuals and families, we too will be tested, sifted, and prepared, as were the members of Zion’s Camp. The scriptures and the teachings of the Brethren are replete with promises that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; the making, honoring, and remembering of sacred covenants; and obedience to God’s commandments will strengthen us to

prepare for, to face, to overcome, and to learn from the trials and tests of mortality.

The leaders of the Lord's Church clearly have identified some of the collective or generational tests we can expect to encounter in our day and generation. As the President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in 1977, President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) raised a prophetic voice of warning in a meeting of regional representatives. I now quote extensively from President Benson's message and invite your focused attention on his timely counsel:

"Every generation has its tests and its chance to stand and prove itself. Would you like to know of one of our toughest tests? Hear the warning words of Brigham Young, 'The worst fear I have about this people is that they will get rich in this country, forget God and His people, wax fat, and kick themselves out of the Church and go to hell. This people will stand mobbing, robbing, poverty, and all manner of persecution and be true. But my greatest fear is that they cannot stand wealth.'"

President Benson continues: "Ours then seems to be the toughest test of all, for the evils are more subtle, more clever. It all seems less menacing and it is harder to detect. While every test of righteousness represents a struggle, this particular test seems like no test at all, no struggle and so could be the most deceiving of all tests.

"Do you know what peace and prosperity can do to a people—It can put them to sleep. The Book of Mormon warned us of how Satan, in the last days, would lead us away carefully down to hell. The Lord has on the earth some potential spiritual giants whom He saved for some six thousand years to help bear off the Kingdom triumphantly, and the devil is trying to put them to sleep. The adversary knows that he probably won't be too successful in getting them to commit many great and malignant sins of commission. So he puts them into a deep sleep, like Gulliver, while he strands them with little sins of omission. And what good is a sleepy, neutralized, lukewarm giant as a leader?

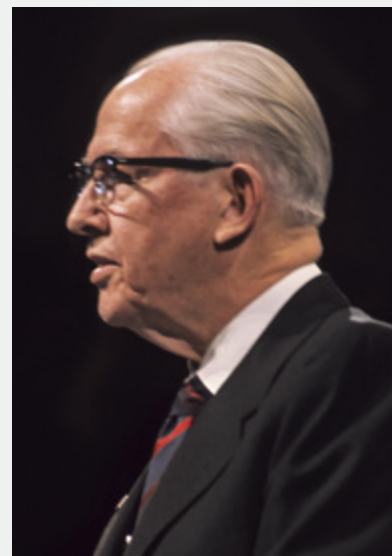
"We have too many potential spiritual giants who should be more vigorously lifting their homes, the kingdom, and the country. We have many who feel they are good men and women, but they need to be good for something—strong patriarchs, courageous missionaries, valiant family history and temple workers, dedicated patriots, devoted quorum members. In short, we must be shaken and awakened from a spiritual snooze."⁷

Consider that affluence, prosperity, and ease can be tests in our day equal to or greater in intensity than the persecution and physical hardships endured by the Saints who volunteered to march in Zion's Camp. As the prophet Mormon described in his magnificent summary of the pride cycle contained in Helaman 12:

"And thus we can behold how false, and also the unsteadiness of the hearts of the children of men; yea, we can see that the Lord in his great infinite goodness doth bless and prosper those who put their trust in him.

"Yea, and we may see at the very time when he doth prosper his people, yea, in the increase of their fields, their flocks and their herds, and in gold, and in silver, and in all manner of precious things of every kind and art; sparing their lives, and delivering them out of the hands of their enemies; softening the hearts of their enemies that they should not declare wars against them; yea, and in fine, doing all things for the welfare and happiness of his people; yea, then is the time that they do harden their hearts, and do forget the Lord their God, and do trample under their feet the Holy One—yea, and this because of their ease, and their exceedingly great prosperity" (Helaman 12:1–2).

I invite you specifically to note the final phrase in the last verse: "and this because of their ease, and their exceedingly great prosperity."



President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973) likewise taught about the collective test of ease that we face in our day: “We are tested, we are tried, we are going through some of the severest tests today and we don’t realize perhaps the severity of the tests we are going through. In those days there were murderings, there were mobbings, there were drivings. They were driven out into the desert, they were starving and they were unclad, and they were cold. They came here to this favored land. We are the inheritors of what they gave to us. But what are we doing with it? Today we are basking in the lap of luxury, the like of which we’ve never seen before in the history of the world. It would seem that probably this is the most severe test of any test that we’ve ever had in the history of this Church.”⁸

These teachings from modern and ancient prophets about latter-day tests and trials are sobering and solemn. But they should not be discouraging, and we should not be afraid. For those with eyes to see and ears to hear, spiritual warnings lead to increasingly vigilant watching. You and I live in “a day of warning” (D&C 63:58). And because we have been and will be warned, we need to be, as the Apostle Paul admonished, “watching . . . with all perseverance” (Ephesians 6:18). As we watch and prepare, truly we have no need to fear (see D&C 38:30).

Who’s on the Lord’s side? Now is the time to show that we have minds and hearts that accept and will be responsive to these inspired warnings. Now is the time to show that we are watching and preparing to withstand the latter-day trials of prosperity and pride, of affluence and ease, and of hard hearts and forgetting the Lord our God. Now is the time to show that we will be true at all times in whatsoever things we are entrusted by our Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son—and that we will keep the commandments of God and walk uprightly before Him (see Alma 53:20–21).

The Lesson of Observing, Learning from, and Following the Brethren

The stalwart Saints in the army of the Lord were blessed to observe, to learn from, and to follow the Brethren. And we today can benefit greatly from the example and faithfulness of the devout members of Zion’s Camp.

In response to counsel from Parley P. Pratt, Wilford Woodruff traveled to Kirtland, Ohio, in April 1834 to join Zion’s Camp. Brother Woodruff’s account of his first meeting with the Prophet Joseph Smith is instructive for all of us:

“Here for the first time in my life I met and had an interview with our beloved Prophet Joseph Smith, the man whom God had chosen to bring forth His revelations in these last days. My first introduction was not of a kind to satisfy the preconceived notions of the sectarian mind as to what a prophet ought to be, and how he should appear. It might have shocked the faith of some men. I found him and his brother Hyrum out shooting at a mark with a brace of pistols. When they stopped shooting, I was introduced to Brother Joseph, and he shook hands with me most heartily. He invited me to make his habitation my home while I tarried in Kirtland. This invitation I most eagerly accepted, and was greatly edified and blest during my stay with him.”⁹

I find it noteworthy that Brother Woodruff, who lived for a time in the Prophet’s home and undoubtedly had a most remarkable opportunity to observe him in the routine of daily living, was blessed with eyes to see beyond “the preconceived notions of the sectarian mind as to what a prophet ought to be, and how he should appear.” Such false notions cloud the vision of many in the world today, both inside and outside the Lord’s restored Church.

As a result of my call in 2004 to serve in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, I have a decidedly distinctive perspective about what it means to observe, to learn from, and to follow the Brethren. I now see on a daily basis the individual personalities, the various preferences, and the noble characters of the leaders of this Church. Some people find the human



It is important for all of us to remember that we can learn both from the teachings of the Brethren and from the examples of their lives.

limitations and shortcomings of the Brethren troubling and faith diminishing. For me, those weaknesses are faith promoting. The Lord's revealed pattern of governance in His Church provides for and attenuates the impact of human frailty. It is truly miraculous to me to witness the Lord accomplishing His will through His servants despite the flaws and failings of His chosen leaders. These men never have claimed to be and are not perfect; they certainly are, however, called of God.

A priest when he walked to Missouri with the army of the Lord, Wilford Woodruff later declared while serving as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "We gained an experience that we never could have gained in any other way. We had the privilege of . . . traveling a thousand miles with [the Prophet], and seeing the workings of the Spirit of God with him, and the revelations of Jesus Christ unto him and the fulfilment of those revelations. . . . Had I not gone up with Zion's Camp I should not have been here today."¹⁰


On the last Sunday in April 1834, Joseph Smith invited a number of the leaders of the Church to address Zion's Camp volunteers gathered in a schoolhouse. After the

brethren had concluded their messages, the Prophet arose and indicated that he had been edified by the instruction. He then prophesied:

"I want to say to you before the Lord, that you know no more concerning the destinies of this Church and kingdom than a babe upon its mother's lap. You don't comprehend it. . . . It is only a little handful of Priesthood you see here tonight, but this Church will fill North and South America—it will fill the world."¹¹

Men such as Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Orson Pratt, and Wilford Woodruff listened to and learned much from the Prophet that night—and years later helped to fulfill his prophetic pronouncement. What glorious opportunities these men had to observe, to learn from, and to follow the Prophet.

It is important for all of us to remember that we can learn both from the teachings of the Brethren and from the examples of their lives. Given the majestic vision of the future growth of the Church articulated by the Prophet Joseph Smith, please now consider the power of his personal example in the performance of routine and mundane



“Who’s on the Lord’s side?” Now is the time to show by hearing and heeding the counsel of the living apostles and prophets called of God.

but necessary tasks. George A. Smith described in his journal the reaction of the Prophet to the daily challenges of the march to Missouri.

“The Prophet Joseph took a full share of the fatigues of the entire journey. In addition to the care of providing for the Camp and presiding over it, he walked most of the time and had a full proportion of blistered, bloody and sore feet. . . . But during the entire trip he never uttered a murmur or complaint, while most of the men in the Camp complained to him of sore toes, blistered feet, long drives, scanty supply of provisions, poor quality of bread, bad corn dodger, frouzy butter, strong honey, maggoty bacon and cheese, etc., even a dog could not bark at some men without their murmuring at Joseph. If they had to camp with bad water it would nearly cause rebellion, yet we were the Camp of Zion, and many of us were prayerless, thoughtless, careless, heedless, foolish or devilish, and yet we did not know it. Joseph had to bear with us and tutor us, like children.”¹²

Joseph was a strong example of the principle taught by Alma: “For the preacher was no better than the hearer,

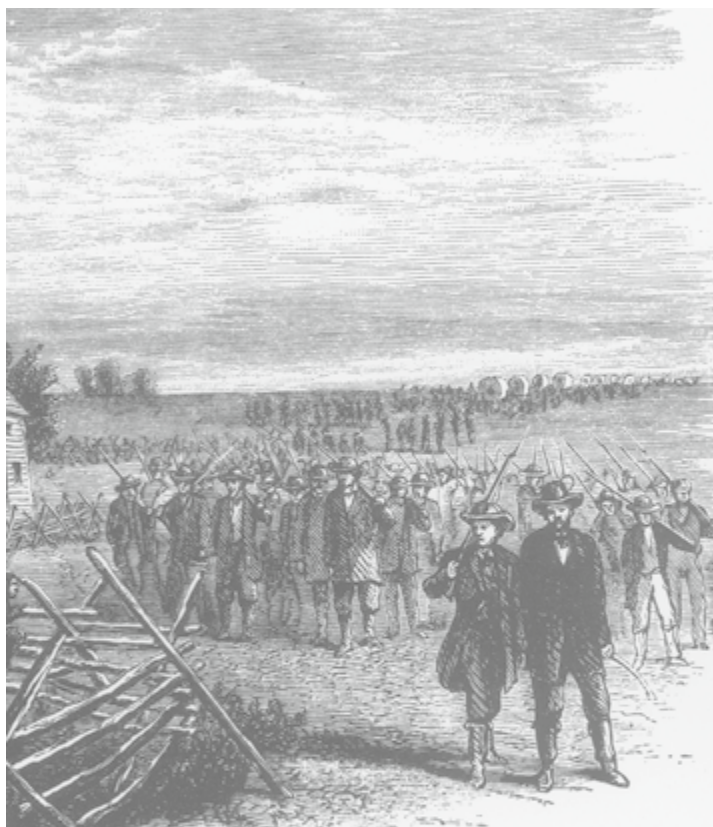
neither was the teacher any better than the learner; . . . and they did all labor, every man according to his strength” (Alma 1:26).

Since my call as a General Authority, I have tried to observe and learn as some of my Brethren have faced the effects of aging or the relentless demands of physical limitations and constant pain. You cannot and will never know the private and silent suffering some of these men live through as they serve publicly with all of their heart, might, mind, and strength. Serving with and watching President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008), President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015), Elder L. Tom Perry (1922–2015), Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015), and my other apostolic associates empower me to declare clearly and authoritatively that the Brethren with whom I serve are warriors—noble and great spiritual warriors—in the truest and most admirable sense of that word! Their patience, persistence, and courage enable them to “press forward with a steadfastness in Christ” (2 Nephi 31:20) that is worthy of our emulation.

President Lee warned of an additional collective test that is growing ever more pervasive in this generation: “We are now going through another test—a period of what we might call sophistication. This is a time when there are many clever people who are not willing to listen to the humble prophets of the Lord. . . . It is rather a severe test.”¹⁵

The test of sophistication is the companion to the test of prosperity and ease. How important it is for each of us to observe, learn from, and follow the Brethren.

“Who’s on the Lord’s side?” Now is the time to show by hearing and heeding the counsel of the living apostles and prophets called of God in these latter days to oversee and direct His work on the earth. Now is the time to show we believe that God’s “word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled, whether by [His] own voice or by the voice of [His] servants, it is the same” (D&C 1:38). Now is the time to show. The time is now!



Our Own Zion’s Camp

At some point in each of our lives, we will be invited to march in our own Zion’s Camp. The timing of the invitations will vary, and the particular obstacles we may encounter on the journey will be different. But our ongoing and consistent response to this inevitable call ultimately will provide the answer to the question “Who’s on the Lord’s side?”

The times to show are now, today, tomorrow, and forever. May we ever remember the related lessons of testing, sifting, and preparing and of observing, learning from, and following the Brethren. ■

From an Education Week devotional address, “Who’s on the Lord’s Side? Now Is the Time to Show,” delivered at Brigham Young University–Idaho on July 30, 2010.

NOTES

1. Brigham Young, in B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church*, 1:370–71.
2. “Who’s on the Lord’s Side?” *Hymns*, no. 260.
3. *The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, ed. G. Homer Durham (1946), 306.
4. “Who’s on the Lord’s Side?” *Hymns*, no. 260.
5. Joseph Smith, in Joseph Young Sr., *History of the Organization of the Seventies* (1878), 14; see also *History of the Church*, 2:182.
6. See Alexander L. Baugh, “From High Hopes to Despair: The Missouri Period, 1831–39,” *Ensign*, July 2001, 44.
7. Ezra Taft Benson, “Our Obligation and Challenge,” regional representatives’ seminar, Sept. 30, 1977, 2–3; unpublished typescript.
8. Harold B. Lee, Christmas address to Church employees, Dec. 13, 1973, 4–5; unpublished transcript.
9. Wilford Woodruff, in Matthias F. Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff: History of His Life and Labors* (1909), 39.
10. *The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, 305.
11. Joseph Smith, in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff* (2004), 25–26; see also Joseph Smith, quoted by Wilford Woodruff, in Conference Report, Apr. 1898, 57.
12. George A. Smith, “My Journal,” *Instructor*, May 1946, 217.
13. Harold B. Lee, “Sweet Are the Uses of Adversity,” *Instructor*, June 1965, 217.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM MATTERS

We must raise our voices in defense of religious freedom or we risk losing it.

Freedom to choose. That's what the War in Heaven was all about. We couldn't afford to lose agency then, and we can't afford to lose it now. And that includes the freedom to "worship how, where, or what [we] may" (Articles of Faith 1:11). That's why the Prophet Joseph Smith said, "I am bold to declare before Heaven that I am just as ready to die in defending the rights of a Presbyterian, a Baptist, or a good man of any other denomination [as for a Mormon]; for the same principle which would trample upon the rights of the Latter-day Saints would trample upon the rights of the Roman Catholics, or of any other denomination who may be unpopular and too weak to defend themselves" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 345).

In addition to maintaining religious freedom as an eternal principle (even God will not remove the agency of any of His children), there are some potentially severe consequences if we lose the freedom to worship, speak, and live according to our beliefs.

LEARN MORE

To learn more about religious freedom and what you can do to protect it, visit ReligiousFreedom.lds.org. See also "Religious Freedom," *Gospel Topics*, topics.lds.org.



WHAT'S AT RISK

- **You could lose your job or leadership positions for expressing religious beliefs—even outside of work.** For instance, CEOs, newscasters, judges, teachers, doctors, professors, firefighters, Olympians, graduate students, and many others have been fired, pressured to resign, or intimidated for donating money or simply saying that they support the traditional view of marriage.
- **You might be required to hide your religion or perform tasks at work that go against your beliefs.** Does it seem fair, for example, that a doctor who opposes abortion on a religious or moral basis be required to perform one even though numerous other doctors nearby are willing? Should you be forced to wear an immodest uniform when it's not necessary for your job function?
- **You may be required to work on the Sabbath or religious holidays** even when others are willing to take your shift and your employer accommodates other nonreligious interests.
- **Your children in public schools may be required to learn about sexual and gender theories that contradict basic Church teachings.** Many public schools already teach sex education in a way that's fundamentally contrary to Church teachings, and some have required reading lists with explicit content.
- **You may not be able to adopt children or become a foster parent** because of your religious beliefs or views on the family.
- **As a business owner or professional, you might lose your license or be fined if you refuse to perform services that are contrary to your religious beliefs.** You might even lose professional credentials if you don't participate in certain activities, even if other co-workers are willing to perform them in your place.
- **You might not be able to create faith-based clubs on college campuses** without being required to let people become club members—or even officers—who oppose the club's religious beliefs.
- **Churches may be forced to employ people who disagree with or refuse to live core values of their faith,** threatening their ability to carry out their religious missions.
- **Churches could lose their tax-exempt status** by maintaining doctrines, policies, and standards that conflict with secular beliefs regarding marriage, family, gender, and sexuality, resulting in a huge increase in costs to build houses of worship or to purchase and provide goods for humanitarian aid.
- **You might lose tax exemptions for charitable donations like tithes and offerings** if the Church loses its status as a tax-exempt, nonprofit organization.
- **Churches may not be able to access government lands for camps on equal terms with other groups,** limiting youth conferences and camps.
- **Housing units, such as dorms, at religious colleges could be forced to abandon moral standards that protect privacy, modesty, and morality,** denying people the right to room with those who uphold the same standards.
- **Religious schools that maintain honor codes may lose their accreditation and be denied research funds and even federal student loans and grants,** diminishing the value of their degrees, undermining the quality of their education, and making it financially impossible for many students to attend.

There's a lot at stake, and this is just a sampling. As society continues to move away from eternal truths and God-given commandments, we can't predict all the consequences that may result if religious freedom and the right to act on our beliefs are taken away.

So we need to raise our voices to defend religious freedom. If we don't raise them for the protection of religion now, vital religious freedoms will be lost.

When we join the cause together, we can make a difference that will protect religious freedom not just for Latter-day Saints but also for followers of all religions. ■

From the Church website ReligiousFreedom.Ilds.org.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID STOKER

Learning to Listen

THE FIRST RACIALLY INTEGRATED BRANCHES IN SOUTH AFRICA

By Matt McBride and James Goldberg

Church History Department

Tears gathered in 56-year-old Frans Lekqwati's eyes as he sat across from Olev Taim, his stake president. President Taim had just asked him what he thought about creating a branch of the Church in Frans's hometown of Soweto, South Africa.

"Why are you crying? Did I offend you?" asked President Taim.

"No," Frans responded. "This is the first time in South Africa that a white man has asked me my opinion before making a decision."



Above: A beach is designated as a whites-only area under strict apartheid practices in South Africa.

Right: A 1952 protest in Johannesburg calling for freedom and equality.

Life under Apartheid

The year was 1981. At the time, black and white people in South Africa were segregated under a system of laws known as apartheid. This legal separation, together with the Church's restriction preventing black African men



from being ordained to the priesthood, had long meant that the Church could not thrive among black South Africans. A new day dawned in 1978 when President Spencer W. Kimball received the revelation that lifted the priesthood restriction, but the challenges of segregation and a culture of suspicion between races remained.

The vast majority of black South Africans lived in townships, usually built on the outskirts of predominantly white cities such as Johannesburg. Soweto, short for South Western Townships, was the largest. White people rarely went to the townships, and black people who went to the cities were rarely treated as equals with the whites.

Frans and his family were part of a small group from Soweto who had embraced the restored gospel during the 1970s. At first they attended the Johannesburg Ward. Frans's son Jonas remembered getting up on Sundays

“We may not have agreed on things that were happening outside church, . . . but we agreed on the doctrine.”

at 4:00 a.m. so the family could catch an early train into Johannesburg and then make the long walk to the chapel before the services started at 9:00 a.m. The family was always early—

though sometimes it was difficult for the children to stay awake through Primary!

Being a pioneer of racial integration could also be an emotional challenge. Josiah Mohapi remembered overhearing a six-year-old white boy say something offensive about



South Africa's first black Relief Society president, Julia Mavimbela, participates in the groundbreaking for the new Soweto Branch building in 1991. (See her story in the following article.)

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF CHURCH-HISTORY LIBRARY

the black people he encountered at church. “To be honest, I became hot under the collar,” Josiah recalled. But then he heard the mother tell her son, “The Church is for everybody.” Comforted by the reminder, Josiah cooled down.

A Branch in Soweto?

President Taim was aware of the physical and emotional challenges black members faced. He considered starting a branch in Soweto to make travel easier for them but did not want to make them feel as if they were unwelcome in Johannesburg. He decided to interview Soweto members like Frans to gauge their feelings before taking any action. They gave him a clear answer: “We would love to establish the Church in Soweto.”

President Taim identified experienced leaders who could help mentor recent converts. He interviewed over 200 members in Johannesburg and ultimately called 40 to join the new branch long enough to help train a pioneering group of local leaders there.

Just as black members had crossed into another part of town and another culture to attend the Johannesburg Ward, white members had to adjust to a new environment

“We can only change perception through experiences. We all needed these lived experiences that caused us to change.”

and culture as they served in Soweto. Things did not always go smoothly. Maureen van Zyl, a white member who had been called to serve as Primary president, thought nothing of it when the South African national anthem of the time was chosen as the

opening song in Relief Society meeting one week. She soon learned, however, that black South Africans viewed the anthem as a symbol of apartheid and that many black sisters were offended by the choice of song.

Black and white members alike could easily have become discouraged by such misunderstandings, but they chose to see them as an opportunity for discussion and improvement instead. “We shared all sorts of things,” Maureen remembered. “As blacks, what would be offensive and as whites, what we’d find offensive. How they did certain things and how we did certain things. And so it was just this wonderful time of learning together.”

As the branch in Soweto grew stronger and larger, branches were started in other townships using the same model. Khumbulani Mdletshe was a young man living in the KwaMashu township near Durban. When he joined the Church in 1980, he brought with him suspicions of white people common to almost all young black men in South Africa at that time. But his experiences worshipping in an integrated branch changed his perspective.

The Glue That Binds People Together

In 1982, Khumbulani and several other young men in his branch were invited to attend a young single adult conference. His branch president, a white brother named John Mountford, wanted the young men to look their best, though few of them had nice clothing. He emptied his closet, distributing suits to the young men, who wore them to the conference. The next Sunday, President Mountford wore the suit he had loaned to Khumbulani. “I could not imagine a white person wearing the same clothes that have been worn by me,” Khumbulani recalled, “but there he was. He began to help me see white people differently than I’ve ever seen them before.”

Now an Area Seventy, Elder Mdletshe observed, “We all needed these lived experiences that caused us to change.”



The flag of South Africa was adopted in 1994 as a post-apartheid symbol of unity. The black, yellow, and green represent the African National Congress, and the red, white, and blue represent the Boer Republics.



Apartheid in South Africa ended in 1994. While many congregations today exist in mostly black or mostly white areas, the greater freedom means that an increasing number of areas are mixed. Like the pioneers of the first branches in the townships, members with different backgrounds worship and work together to build up the kingdom of God.

The current Soweto stake president, Thabo Lebethoa, describes the gospel as glue that binds people together in times of division. “We may not have agreed on things that were happening outside church, with politics and other things,” he observed, “but we agreed on the doctrine.” Working from that shared foundation, people can learn from each other’s differences as they counsel carefully and listen with spiritual sensitivity. “One of the most important things about leadership is to listen to people,” President Lebethoa advises. “Listen so that you can understand. Listen so that you can feel. Listen so that you can receive inspiration.”

Thoba Karl-Halla, the daughter of early Soweto Branch member Julia Mavimbela, agrees that listening helps keep

inevitable friction from turning into painful division. “I should listen with an ear that would make me understand the frustrations of the person who might probably come out as an offender to me,” she says.

Elder Mdletshe urges South African Saints today to find strength in their diversity, especially in council settings. “The Lord would have liked that,” he observes, “to have people from all walks of life sit around the table and talk about the issues.” His call to local leaders throughout the Church is to continue to build up leaders from different backgrounds, just as a past generation supported him. When trying to reach new areas and new groups, he notes, “you’re not going to find experienced people. But you build experiences in the Church. You build experiences by bringing people right into the center and having them work together.” ■

Quotations come from interviews conducted by the Church History Department in 2015. An inspiring video featuring some of these interviews can be found at lds.org/go/soweto.

Healing the Beloved Country: The Faith of Julia Mavimbela

By Matthew K. Heiss
Church History Department

Julia Mavimbela's life suddenly changed in 1955 when her husband, John, was killed in an automobile accident. Evidence at the scene suggested that the other person involved, a white man, had veered into John's lane. Yet that man was not ruled at fault. Rather, white police officers said that blacks are poor drivers, so John was responsible for the crash.¹

Julia was 37 years old with four children and another on the way. She had been wronged by racism, the police, and the justice system. Yet she eventually learned not to give in to bitterness; rather, she spent her life striving to be healed and to heal her beloved country through Christlike service. It was her love of the land, her faith in God, and her dedication to living by her faith's principles that made this possible.

Julia was born in 1917, the last of five children. Her father passed away when Julia was five years old. Her mother was left to raise the children on her own, finding work as a washerwoman and a domestic worker.

Julia's mother was a religious woman who taught her children from the Bible. "My mother had taught me to swallow



Julia met and married John in 1946.

the bitter pills of life and encouraged me never to look back but to look ahead," Julia said. Julia's mother also understood the importance of education and did all she could with her limited means to see that her children received formal schooling.

Julia received more training and education and worked as a teacher and school principal until she met and married John Mavimbela in 1946. John owned a grocery and butcher shop. Julia gave up her career to work there. Together they built a home and had children. Despite the restrictions of apartheid, life was good. However, that all changed with John's death.

On her husband's tombstone, Julia inscribed these words:

*In loving memory of
John Phillip Corlie Mavimbela.
By his wife and relatives.
But the lump remains.
May his soul rest in peace.*

Describing the fourth line, Julia said, "At the time of writing, the lump that remained was one of hatred and bitterness—for the man who caused the accident, for the policemen who lied, [and] for the court who deemed

my husband responsible for the accident that took his life."² One of her greatest trials was to overcome this bitterness and anger.

Shortly after the death of her husband, in a night of "troubled sleep," Julia had a dream in which John appeared to her, handed her some overalls, and said, "Go to work." Describing the result of this dream, she said, "I found a way of getting myself away from the worries of these years, and that was through community involvement."

Twenty years later, in the mid-1970s, the blacks' reaction to apartheid had gone from peaceful protests to violent outbursts. One of the flash points for the violence was Soweto, where Julia was living. She said, "Soweto became unlike any place we had known—it was as if we were in a battlefield."

Julia feared that her wound of bitterness would reopen: "It had been over



Below: During apartheid, Julia started a community garden to teach children that “all is not lost.”

Right: Julia in her native Zulu dress and serving in the Johannesburg South Africa Temple.

20 years since John’s death, but I could still feel the pain of that time.” In an effort to seek healing, both for herself and for her people, Julia thought, “Perhaps if I can teach the children to love working in the soil, all is not lost.” She established a community garden that symbolized hope to people who knew only fear and anger.

As she worked with the children in her community garden, she would teach them: “Let us dig the soil of bitterness, throw in a seed of love, and see what fruits it can give us. . . . Love will not come without forgiving others.”

She said, “I knew deep in my heart I was breaking up the soil of my own bitterness as I forgave those who had hurt me.” The lump of bitterness that remained after John’s death started to dissolve.

In 1981, Julia was introduced to the Church. The missionaries, performing community service in Soweto, found a boys’ center in desperate need of repair. For several weeks they cleaned up the premises.³

One day, Julia was asked to serve at that same boys’ club. When she arrived, she was astonished to see “two white boys hurling their spades into the brown dust.” The missionaries asked if they could come to her home and deliver a message. Three days later, Elders David McCombs and Joel Heaton showed up wearing their



missionary attire and name tags.

Julia said that the first two missionary lessons “went in one ear and out the other.” But on their third visit, the missionaries asked about a photograph of Julia and John on her wall. She mentioned that her husband was dead, and the missionaries felt prompted to tell her about the plan of salvation and baptism for the dead. She said, “Then I started listening, really listening, with my heart. . . . As the missionaries taught me the principle of eternal relationships, I had the feeling that here is the way to be with my parents and my husband.” Julia was baptized five months later.

A month after her baptism, Julia spoke at stake conference. “When I walked to the podium,” she said, “I think most everybody was shocked. It was their first time seeing a black person speaking at conference—maybe for some of them the first time ever to hear a black person address an audience.” She felt prompted to talk about her husband’s death and the years of difficulty she had. She described her bitterness and how she “had finally found the church that could teach me to truly forgive.”

Her struggles with misunderstanding and prejudice, however, were not over,

Watch a video about the life of Julia Mavimbela that includes interviews with two of her children and others who knew her: lds.org/go/julia.

even after apartheid ended in 1994.

Elder Dale G. Renlund of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, in his April 2015 general conference talk, “Latter-day Saints Keep on Trying,” told of an incident Julia and her daughter Thoba experienced when they “were treated less than kindly by some white members.” Thoba complained about their treatment. What could have easily become an excuse to leave the Church became a priceless teaching moment. Julia replied, “Oh, Thoba, the Church is like a big hospital, and we are all sick in our own way. We come to church to be helped.”⁴

Julia discovered that healing was possible through the gospel of Jesus Christ, not only for herself but also for her nation. Her service in the Johannesburg South Africa Temple taught her that in the temple, “there is no touch of Afrikaner. There is no English. There is no Situ nor Zulu. You know that feeling of oneness.”

Julia Mavimbela died on July 16, 2000. ■

NOTES

1. Except as noted, accounts and quotations come from Laura Harper, “Mother of Soweto”: Julia Mavimbela, Apartheid Peace-Maker and Latter-day Saint,” unpublished manuscript, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.
2. In the Harper text, the word *lamp* is used instead of *lump*. However, Julia’s daughter Thoba confirmed that the word inscribed on the grave marker was *lump*.
3. From David Lawrence McCombs, interview with author, Aug. 25, 2015.
4. Dale G. Renlund, “Latter-day Saints Keep on Trying,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 57.



By Elder
Robert C. Gay
Of the Seventy

PUT THE Savior First

At the time of my graduation from Harvard, I was in the office of my thesis adviser. He was a kind, devout Christian.

We had never spoken about religion, but that afternoon he said, “Bob, I want you to stay and teach here at the business school, but I don’t want you to stay for the reasons you may think. I don’t want you here because I believe you’ll make some great contribution to the literature. You’re smart but not that kind of smart.”

I said something like, “OK.”

He then said, “Bob, I want you to stay and teach here because I want you to teach our students about God. That is what I do every day during my office hours. I need someone to help me teach them about life.”

I was stunned. My vision of my degree changed. I knew then that no matter what else I might do with my schooling—whether it was teaching, going into business, or supporting a family—I needed to apply it in a way that added light to others and not to myself.

Interestingly, about nine years ago I had a similar experience. I had just returned home from serving as a mission president and began seeking advice from others as to what to do next. At that time, I received a note from Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. That note read in part: “What is important in the end is what we have become by our labors.

. . . Wise are those who make this commitment: I will put the Lord first in my life, and I will keep His commandments. . . . This is the ultimate significance of taking upon you the name of Jesus Christ, and this is what we should ponder.”¹

May you resolve to live as a witness for Jesus Christ by letting your light “shine before men.”





Embrace the marginalized of this world, or as the Savior said, the lost, the last, and the least.

Yours too is a choice of how best to apply your degree and talents. You can use your training either to bring light to yourself or to bring the Savior's light to others.

How to do this should be deeply pondered. To that end, I would like to commend two fundamental principles for your consideration.

The first principle is that you hear and follow the Spirit, doing things in the Lord's way, not your way. The second is that you embrace the marginalized of this world, or as the Savior said, the lost, the last, and the least.

Act According to the Spirit

Years ago my father said the following: "The real challenge today is not in outer space but in inner man. To reconcile the how of our living with the why of our existence and in the synthesis to emerge the child of God that we know we are. . . . May your life bear an unalterable testimony that there is knowledge—independent of reason—[a

knowledge that is able to alter lives and which can only be found through obedience] to the voice of . . . God within us."²

The ultimate foundation of all you do in life should be to live so that the voice and integrity of the Spirit take precedence as the powerful, necessary force in determining your actions, both professionally and personally.

You live in an age that needs a profound inner spiritual rebirth. Yours is a time that calls for men and women willing to assert their birthright of choice to alter and shape lives and institutions in a way that reflects the moral and spiritual values dictated by the Spirit of God. Unless you can arrive at that point, you will idolize and surround yourself with the trivial.

Acting according to the Spirit, however, is not always easy. It often requires significant sacrifice and at times deep obedience against the purely rational mind.

I am sure each of you has given thought to your future. Most of you have probably thought, "It's now time to become part of the

real world.” Let me assure you it is not and never will be that time. Rather, this is the time to resolve forever to stand above the world—your goal must not be assimilation into the real world but to disrupt it.

The Lord has said, “Seek not the things of this world but seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God, and to establish his righteousness” (Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 6:38 [in Matthew 6:33, footnote *a*]).

To build up His kingdom you must forsake and sacrifice to establish every needful thing of conscience. You have to stand up and bear witness and testimony in uncomfortable and even threatening circumstances.

By the voice of the Spirit, you will be asked to walk unmarked paths, many times needing to do things that make little sense. You will have to build a Kirtland Temple, like Joseph, with no money; or retrieve brass plates, like Nephi, against an army of 50 (see 1 Nephi 3:31; 4:1).

It is not the maximization of wealth or success that underpins the command to “let your light so shine before men” (Matthew 5:16); rather, it is Spirit-directed acts of sacrifice and courage that build and edify. These also are the acts that blaze new pathways that astonish this world.

The intimate and absolute test of your life will be whether you hearken with exactness to the voice of the Spirit of God within you—using all the talents and gifts and education He has given you—to bring to pass His work and His glory (see Moses 1:39) and not your work and your glory. The great charge to Joseph Smith as he opened this dispensation was to “*Hear Him!*” (Joseph Smith—History 1:17).

Unless you hear and follow the voice of the Spirit, you cannot and will not survive this day and time—and you will certainly never achieve the impact your life could otherwise realize.

While I was a young business professional, I heard a voice shout inside me, “You need to leave this place and this job.” So, I walked out on Wall Street—leaving a large bonus on the table—and joined a small investment company in Boston that paid me less than half of what I was then earning.

I did not doubt that voice. It made neither logical nor financial sense. It made no sense to many of my friends, and I could not fully explain it to them.

In time, though, as I followed the voice of the Spirit to walk away, doors opened that allowed me to become an instrument in the hands of the Lord in helping lift countless people out of poverty, disease, and hopelessness. The decision to leave made sense only in hindsight, but being true to the voice changed everything.

Whether you are on the farm pitching hay and harvesting potatoes, in the home raising a family, or at the office working as a manager, you will not be whole and healed and fully empowered unless you receive the voice of the Spirit and go and do whatever it directs.

Embrace the Marginalized

For better or worse, the reality of our world is that we live in a day and hour when both good and powerful evil share the geography of our time.

You are not here by accident. You are here by choice. You wanted the opportunity to prove yourself. You are here at a time of morally twisted opposition that calls “evil good, and good evil” (Isaiah 5:20). You elected to stand here to give service and to love.

Today we have great divisions before us. Within and without the Church there exist real stumbling blocks. Outside we are pressed daily by violence, invasion of individual liberty, discrimination, poverty, immorality, disease, and so much more. Inside the Church many struggle to reconcile and understand same-gender attraction, the role of women, or certain Church doctrines or historical events. Many struggle with doubt, lack of confidence or resources, zealotry, commitment, meeting schedules, leaders who offend, friends or children who stray, prayers that seem unanswered, or broken trusts through emotional, physical, or sexual abuse.

Some would like to ignore or diminish these issues by contending with those that challenge our orthodoxy, or by delivering dismissive sermons, or by saying to those who struggle temporally or spiritually with doubt or depression to “just be patient; things will work out.” The Lord, however,

Your goal must not be assimilation into the real world but to disrupt it.

The Lord expects us to go into the highways and byways of people's lives and bring them to the Sacred Grove and to Gethsemane and Calvary.

expects more of us than words. He expects our personal ministry despite discomfort or personal rejection. He expects an outreach of charity. He expects us to go into the highways and byways of people's lives and bring them to the Sacred Grove and to Gethsemane and Calvary.

The scriptures teach that the Savior showed forth "an increase of love" (D&C 121:43) toward those He rebuked and toward those who denied Him. Against norms, He dined with sinners and ministered to the outcast, the grieved, and the unbeliever.

Nothing has more power to affect our lives than "the pure love of Christ," which is charity. Charity looks beyond self, choosing to bear and endure all things. If we live without charity, if we live indifferently, our Heavenly Father says, "[we] are nothing." (See Moroni 7:45–47.) That is, we live a life of vanity.

The night of the Lord's Atonement began with the Savior commanding the disciples

to make and renew a covenant to always remember and honor His sacrifice. Then, as described in the Gospel of John, He knelt and washed the feet of those who would in a few short hours betray Him, deny Him, or fall asleep in His most needed hour. He exhorted them to be one with Him, to forgive, to wash the feet of others, and to love each other as He loved them. He asked that they raise their vision to His vision. (See John 13.)

Can you see that the great charge of the Atonement of Christ is to love as He loved? To love those who betray, who offend, who fall asleep, who deny, who doubt, who are overzealous and cut off an ear with a sword or wound a heart with a harsh word or deed? To be long-suffering with those who will not hear and who will not love back?

Pilate did things the world's way. He washed his hands of the matter of justice and sold out, while the Savior pleaded for mercy for those who nailed Him to the cross.

In the Gospel of Mark, a religious leader named Jairus asked Jesus to give a blessing to his daughter, who was dying. As Jesus began the journey to Jairus's home, a woman who had been suffering for 12 years with "an issue of blood" touched His garment, hoping to be cured. Jesus turned and asked, "Who touched my clothes?"

Desperate but faithful, the woman fell down before Him. He enveloped her with His grace, saying, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace." In doing this, the Savior not only healed her physically but also healed





her spiritually. Through His ministry she was no longer a nobody but rather a “daughter,” a member of the family of God and once again a member of her own family and society.

While the Lord lingered, Jairus’s daughter died. Undeterred, Jesus still went forward to minister. He found family and friends weeping and asked why. He told them the young girl was not dead but was sleeping. The scriptures record that they “laughed him to scorn.” Ignoring them, He raised the girl from the dead. (See Mark 5:22–42.)

I keep in a frame on a wall in my home office these words of Elbert Hubbard: “God will not look you over for medals, degrees or diplomas, but for scars.”³

This is the pattern that the Lord places before us as we work to do His work to lift others: we will be called upon to suffer innocently if we are to achieve what He needs us to achieve as His light before men.

We have around us many who are spiritually dead, and you must be willing to be laughed to scorn. Like the Savior, you must move forward against a world that does not believe, and you must not “shrink” (D&C 19:18) before the taunting of our secular world.

In the parable of the great supper, Jesus said, “And whosoever doth not bear [my] cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:27).

In opening this last dispensation, He reminded us that He “partook” of “the bitter cup” and “finished” the required ascent to the cross (see D&C 19:18, 19). God expects engagement. You are to be a finisher and not an observer in the Savior’s battle for the souls of men. This is how we show our love to Him, “shine before men,” and receive His enabling power and grace in our own lives.

Give Your Life

Several years ago, when the late LDS author and professor Truman G. Madsen introduced me at a talk I delivered at Brigham Young University, he shared the following story: “Elder Jeffrey R. Holland . . . was in a meeting somewhere in a university, and from the audience, a student cried out in a mocking way, ‘Brother Holland! Would you give your life for Jesus?’ And he thought a minute and then said, ‘That’s what I thought I was doing.’”

Brother Madsen then said: “[There] are two ways of giving our lives, brothers and sisters: one is in the emergency where we give our life in death. But the other way is to give through our lives [in the *how* of our living].”⁴

May you do so with the resolve to live as a witness for Jesus Christ by letting your light “shine before men.” May you know that this will require you to “hear Him” and to bear with love the outcast, the enemy, the marginalized. May you understand that this is not a journey into the known but the unknown—it is a path of faith and integrity to the voice of the Holy Ghost that ultimately demands your sacrifice to be more than just good or less sinful but to become holy and consecrated.

In all of this my prayer is that each of you may find the strength to obey and repent as needed to live a life, dictated by the Spirit within, that bears witness that Jesus Christ is your priority. ■

From a commencement address, “Let Your Light Shine,” given at Brigham Young University–Idaho on April 10, 2015. For the full address, visit web.byui.edu/devotionalsandspeeches.

You are to be a finisher and not an observer in the Savior’s battle for the souls of men.

NOTES

1. Dallin H. Oaks to Robert C. Gay, Nov. 1, 2007.
2. Frank William Gay, speech at University of Utah, May 2000.
3. Elbert Hubbard, *A Thousand and One Epigrams: Selected from the Writings of Elbert Hubbard* (1911), 104.
4. Truman G. Madsen, remarks at Investment Professionals Conference, Brigham Young University, Sept. 12, 2008.



Raising Our Son

in a PARTNERSHIP
WITH GOD

By Kami Crookston

My vision of parenthood was one of perfectly behaved children who were always beautifully dressed and never got dirty. I quickly realized the image I cherished was a fantasy. I have grown to accept my messy house and runny noses because I know that they come with the most amazing blessings I could ever have. But what I never could have imagined was the struggle I would face while raising my children, especially my son Brad.

Brad came into this life as innocent as any child, but it didn't take long for us to realize that he was different. He couldn't go to nursery without my husband or me with him because he was too aggressive. As he grew older and played with other children, he needed constant supervision. When we sought help, we were told that we just had to be more consistent with him. We did everything we could think of: we researched online, read parenting books, and asked doctors and family members. Finally, when Brad started school, he was diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, or ADHD, as well as a host of other problems.

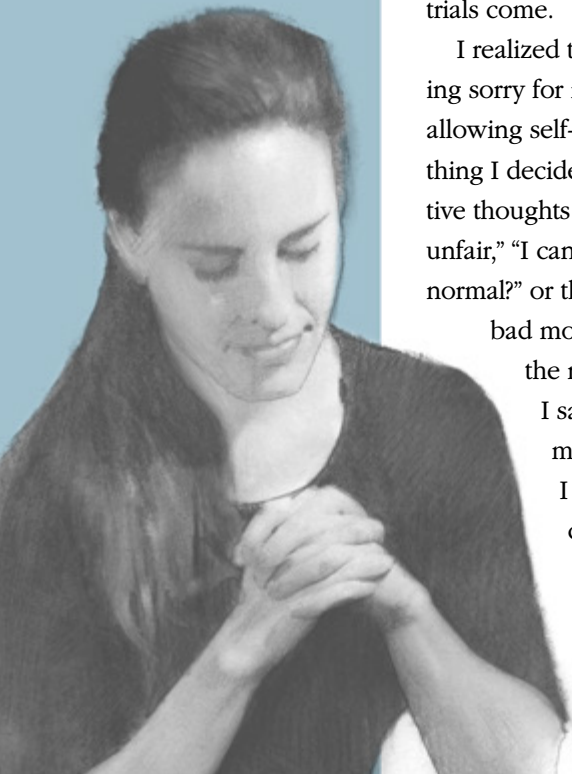
For the first time we felt we had hope. Now that we had a diagnosis, we could start a treatment plan. We were hopeful that Brad would respond well to a medication that had helped others. Unfortunately, Brad's behavior on medication was worse than without it, so he had to stop. I felt the last bit of my hope drain away.

One day when Brad was six, I faced one of his many daily tantrums. I wanted to give up. I went to my room for a moment to myself, and tears rolled down my cheeks. I prayed for the strength to be able to face the approaching bedtime routine. How could I keep doing this, day after day?

When I learned to use the spiritual resources available to me, I was flooded with ideas of ways to help my son and to better face my own trial.



My husband and I had researched and discovered many resources to help us, but we forgot the most significant one: prayer.



I felt like I was past what I could endure. Did Heavenly Father understand how hard it was? If He truly loved me, I reasoned, He would remove this burden from me and give my son a normal life. Those thoughts and feelings surrounded me as the trial I faced seemed to get worse instead of better.

The True Nature of Trials

I thought I understood trials. We were supposed to go through them like a pot being heated in a kiln. We'd go in and out of the fire, and then life would go back to normal until the next round of heating and tempering. But I had been facing this trial for years, and it was not going away. I felt the weight pressing down on me, and the feeling of helplessness brought me to my knees.

I then knew that the place I needed to go for comfort and understanding was the temple. By inspiration, I realized that we do not get to pick what trials we have in this life or how long they last. What we can control is the way we think and act when trials come.

I realized that the reason I was feeling sorry for myself was because I was allowing self-pity to fill my mind. The first thing I decided to do was stop any negative thoughts that crept in, such as "This is unfair," "I can't do this," "Why can't Brad be normal?" or the worst culprit, "I am such a bad mother." I worked hard to stop the negative voice in my head, and I saw that my real voice became more patient and loving when I was dealing with all of my children.

I also encouraged positive thinking. I began to think, "You are doing great," and I would give myself a compliment, such as "You kept your voice low and didn't yell. Way to go!"

Rely on God

After a particularly hard day, I asked my husband to give me a blessing. During the blessing I was reminded that I am a daughter of God, that He is aware of me and my needs, and that my son is a son of God. Brad was God's son first, and my husband and I have a partnership with God in Brad's behalf. I realized that I had not been using all the tools that the partnership provides for me. My husband and I had researched and discovered many resources to help us, but we forgot the most significant one: prayer.

I began to pray daily about how I could help Brad. When he was having an emotional meltdown, I would say a quick prayer for inspiration before approaching him. As I relied on God for my support and for inspiration for my son, I got a glimpse of what I could be and what I could do for him. I strived to follow Alma's words: "And this is my glory, that perhaps I may be an instrument in the hands of God" (Alma 29:9).

The changes were immediate. I was flooded with ideas and ways to help Brad. I used family home evening as a tool and prayed for ideas about what to teach. I also read the scriptures with more intent and recognized the great parenting advice they contain. I began to be filled with hope and comfort.

As I continued to put into practice the idea that my husband and I are partners with God in parenting our children and using the tools that He has given us, I began to rely on God more and more. I realized that my knowledge of parenting could only go so far, but a loving Heavenly Father, who knows all things and loves my son more than I do, could help me become a better and stronger mother. And though I still sometimes falter, I know where to look for help. I understand now that some trials may not have a time limit on them, but if I keep my eye on eternity, God will help me.

Take Joy in the Little Moments

When times were tough, I learned to take time to feel joy in the little moments—the gifts—that are given to us. When my son cannot help but give me a kiss, I am grateful. When I watched my son ride the bus without anyone to sit with, I was blessed to have this scripture come into my mind: “I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up” (D&C 84:88). I knew that Brad was not alone and never will be.

We are an eternal family, and with the help of people who love us and our loving Heavenly Father watching over us, I can appreciate the small gifts given to me daily and feel the joy and happiness that we are meant to have. And with those small blessings and the help of the Lord, I can become who I am meant to be, no matter how long it takes. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



KINDNESS

Heavenly Father blesses us with a continual flow of kindness. In turn, we can also bless others with kindness.

By Barbara A. Lewis

“For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee” (3 Nephi 22:10; see also Isaiah 54:10). This promise from the Lord not only offers us comfort but also reminds us of the importance of the attribute of kindness.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that Jesus Christ is our example of kindness: “He healed the sick [see Matthew 9:35]. He spent much of His time ministering to the one [see Mark 5:25–34] or many [see Matthew 14:14–21]. He spoke compassionately to the Samaritan woman who was looked down upon by many [see John 4:6–26]. He instructed His disciples to allow the little children to come unto Him [see Luke 18:15–17]. He was kind to all who had sinned, condemning only the sin, not the sinner [see John 8:11].”¹

Thinking kind thoughts is a Christlike attribute. Kindness originates in hearts and minds. A lack of kindness can begin with critical thoughts of others, and it can develop into a habit of finding fault. However, if we accept responsibility for our own reactive thinking, we can become more charitable. Rather than judging others, we grow in understanding and kindness.

Kindness in the home, workplace, church, and school can open passages to hearts that have been blocked with misunderstandings. Showing kindness to others allows them to let go of angry feelings so they can focus on real issues. Kindness helps us and others feel acceptance and gain confidence.

Following are stories of kindness.

Kindness through Service

The Prophet Joseph Smith showed kindness one day when two children got their feet stuck in the mud on the way to school. They both began to cry because they couldn't get loose. When Joseph saw the predicament, he bent down and pulled each child out of the mud. He cleaned the mud from their shoes. Then he took a clean handkerchief from his pocket and wiped away their tears. The children smiled as he spoke kind words to them and then sent them on their way.²

Kindness through Patience

When President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973) was in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, he displayed patience and kindness one evening when he was hungry and tired after a hard day's journey. He and his traveling companions stopped at a café to buy some dinner. Since Elder Lee was not feeling well, he asked only for a bowl of "milk toast." The young waitress looked puzzled and then told him that he needed to order something else because milk toast was simply not on the menu.

Elder Lee then patiently asked for two slices of toast and a glass of warm milk. When she brought his simple meal, he asked if he might have an empty bowl. When she brought it, he sincerely thanked the young woman, broke the toast into pieces in the bowl, and poured the warm milk over it, making "milk toast." Instead of getting upset, Elder Lee showed kindness and patience.³



Kindness through Compassion

We often remember Elder James E. Talmage (1862–1933) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles for his wise teaching of doctrine. However, Elder Talmage was also filled with compassion and human kindness. When he was a young father, he learned that three children at a home in his neighborhood were suffering from diphtheria, a dreaded respiratory disease. Elder Talmage went to the neighbor's house to help the parents care for their sick children. He found that one of the children had already died, and a second passed away sometime after. He cuddled and carried the third child as she coughed and struggled to breathe. Later she died in his arms. Elder Talmage didn't stop there. He also assisted with burial arrangements and spoke at the children's graveside services.⁴

Kindness through Love and Friendship

Chandler was born with Williams syndrome, a rare genetic disorder. It caused medical problems, development delays, and learning disabilities. However, his whole ward in Park City, Utah, USA, rallied around his family. As Chandler grew into a very social and loving little boy, Mason, Porter, and Judd became his friends. They took him to the movies and rock climbing and loved hanging out with him. If his mother couldn't pick Chandler up at the bus stop, Mason, Porter, and Judd took him to one of their homes until his mother could come get him.

One day on the school bus, a bully threatened to hurt Chandler unless he gave him his lunch money. When Mason and Porter saw what was happening, they whisked Chandler to another seat, where they protected him. The boys constantly lit the world with kindness.

Kindness through Words

Linda K. Burton, former Relief Society General President, encouraged us to intentionally speak kind words to each other. "We might test ourselves by asking a few questions,"

she said. "With a little adaptation, these questions can apply to most of us, whether we are married or single, whatever our home situation might be.

1. When was the last time I sincerely praised my companion, either alone or in the presence of our children?
2. When was the last time I thanked, expressed love for, or earnestly pleaded in faith for him or her in prayer?
3. When was the last time I stopped myself from saying something I knew could be hurtful?
4. When was the last time I apologized and humbly asked for forgiveness—without adding the words 'but if only you had' or 'but if only you hadn't'?
5. When was the last time I chose to be happy rather than demanding to be 'right'?"⁵



LOOKING INSIDE: DEVELOP KINDNESS WITHIN YOURSELF

- Look for times when God has touched your life with kindness.
- Read the scriptures on kindness in the Topical Guide.
- Pray to recognize opportunities to be kind to others.
- Think of kind things you could do and say each day.
- Practice how to react with kindness.

Kindness through Giving Time

“If we would keep the commandment to love one another, we must treat each other with kindness and respect,” said President Thomas S. Monson in an April 2014 general conference talk.⁶ During this talk, he also shared the following story.

During the Great Depression, employment opportunities were scarce. Arlene Biesecker found a job as a seamstress at a clothing mill, where she was paid only for each correctly completed piece of clothing. Soon she faced a new sewing procedure that she didn’t understand and began to quietly cry. Bernice Rock was a more experienced seamstress and left her own work to kindly help Arlene. She stayed with Arlene until she could successfully



LOOKING OUTSIDE: FIND WAYS TO SHOW KINDNESS TO OTHERS

- Recognize those who might need service or a kind act.
- Apologize whenever you should.
- Remain silent when someone speaks sharply to you.
- Notice the good things that others do and thank them.
- Forgive others and show them an increase of love.

complete the new procedure. Then Bernice went back to her own work. Because she chose to help Arlene, Bernice sacrificed the opportunity to complete the number of pieces she otherwise might have. “With this one act of loving kindness, Bernice and Arlene became lifelong friends,” President Monson said.⁷

As he concluded his talk, he counseled, “Let us determine to respond with love and kindness to whatever might come our way.”⁸

Radiate Kindness

As we seek to develop the Christlike attribute of kindness, opportunities to bless the lives of others will abound. “There is no end to the good we can do, to the influence we can have with others,” said President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008). “Let us not dwell on the critical or the negative. Let us pray for strength; let us pray for capacity and desire to assist others. Let us radiate the light of the gospel at all times and all places, that the Spirit of the Redeemer may radiate from us.”⁹ ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTES

1. Joseph B. Wirthlin, “The Virtue of Kindness,” *Ensign*, May 2005, 26.
2. See Joseph B. Wirthlin, “Virtue of Kindness,” 27.
3. See K. Richard Young, “Kindness: A Celestial Touchstone” (Brigham Young University devotional, Nov. 1, 2005), 3, speeches.byu.edu.
4. See Joseph B. Wirthlin, “Virtue of Kindness,” 28.
5. Linda K. Burton, “We’ll Ascend Together,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 31.
6. Thomas S. Monson, “Love—the Essence of the Gospel,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 93.
7. Thomas S. Monson, “Love—the Essence of the Gospel,” 91.
8. Thomas S. Monson, “Love—the Essence of the Gospel,” 94.
9. Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Need for Greater Kindness,” *Ensign*, May 2006, 61.

To see other articles in this series, find the current article at ensign.lds.org and click on “Christlike Attributes” at the top of the page.



Desideria Yáñez:

A PIONEER AMONG WOMEN

By Clinton D. Christensen
Church History Department

After a dream led her to the restored gospel, this early Latter-day Saint from Mexico became a stalwart pioneer of the Church.

One night in early 1880, Desideria Yáñez was sleeping in a comfortable pueblo in the cactus-lined hills of Nopala, Mexico. As she dreamed, she saw a pamphlet titled *Voz de Amonestación* (*Voice of Warning*) that would change her life and aid her spiritually. Upon waking, she knew the men publishing the pamphlet were in Mexico City.¹ She also realized it was physically impossible for her to travel the 75 miles (120 km) to the city, but she was determined to follow the impressions of the dream and find a solution.

The Faith of a Family

Desideria discussed her dream with her son José. He believed her and journeyed to Mexico City in her place. He began anxiously talking to people and eventually met Church member Plotino Rhodakanaty, who directed him to the Hotel San Carlos.²

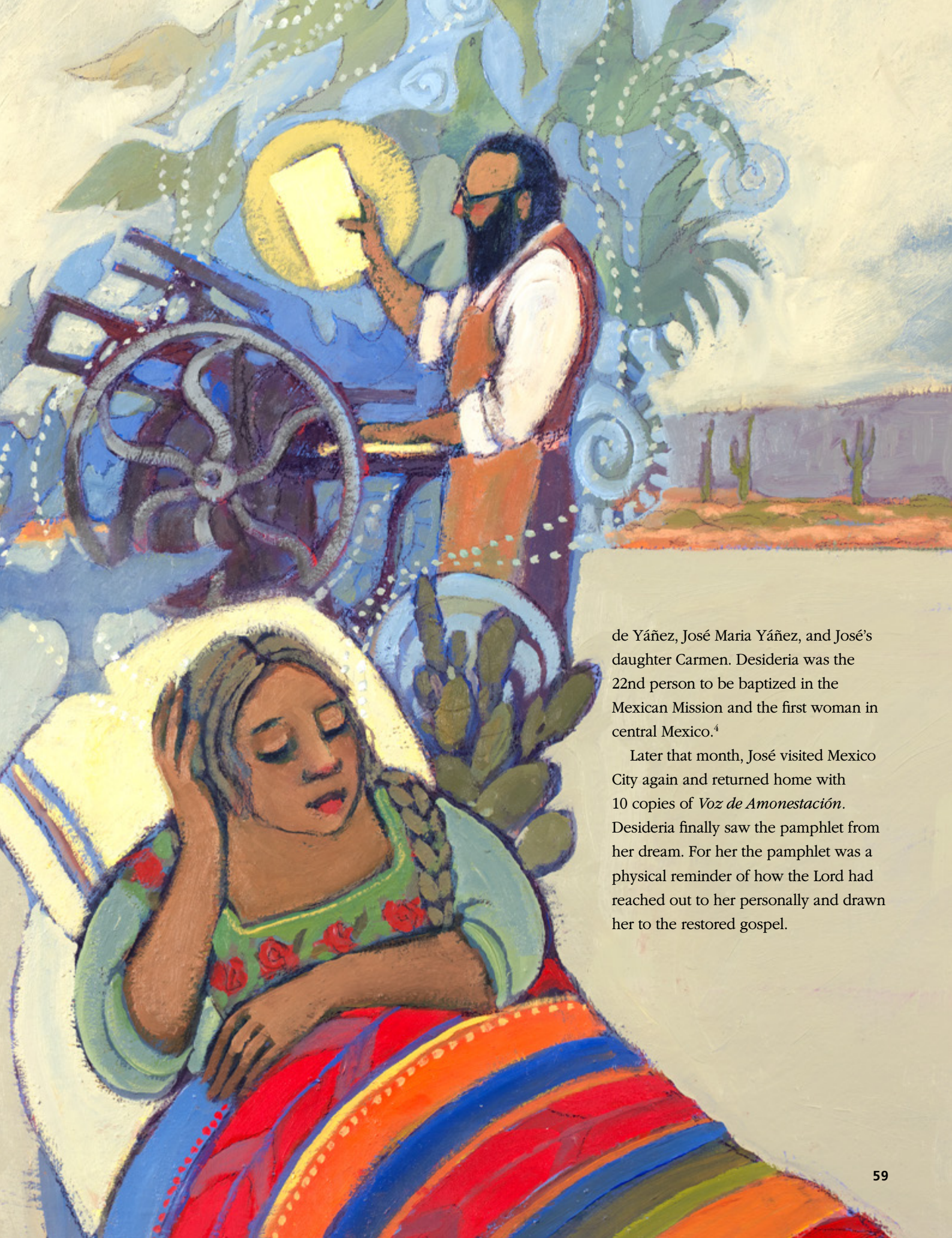
At the hotel, José found Elder James Z. Stewart correcting the printer's proofs of

Parley P. Pratt's *Voz de Amonestación*, the same pamphlet Desideria had seen in her dream. After José talked to Elder Stewart about Desideria's dream, the missionary gave José some other Church pamphlets, since *Voz de Amonestación* was not finished, and Elder Stewart noted the interesting conversation in his journal.³

Many dusty miles later, José reunited with his mother. Upon learning of the pamphlet's reality, Desideria knew that the dream had been true. She pored over the pamphlets José had brought her, and the basic teachings of the gospel they contained touched her soul. She desired to be baptized.

Found by a Missionary

Because Elder Stewart was still completing *Voz de Amonestación*, Elder Melitón Trejo, a missionary from Spain, was sent to Nopala to find Desideria and José. On April 22, 1880, Elder Trejo baptized Desideria Quintanar



de Yáñez, José Maria Yáñez, and José's daughter Carmen. Desideria was the 22nd person to be baptized in the Mexican Mission and the first woman in central Mexico.⁴

Later that month, José visited Mexico City again and returned home with 10 copies of *Voz de Amonestación*. Desideria finally saw the pamphlet from her dream. For her the pamphlet was a physical reminder of how the Lord had reached out to her personally and drawn her to the restored gospel.

The First Spanish Book of Mormon

At age 72, Desideria found her health growing worse. By 1886 she was confined to her little home in San Lorenzo near Nopala. One dreadful evening, thieves broke into her house, beat her, and escaped with \$3,000.⁵ Desideria survived. Instead of despairing, Desideria waited in faith for the Lord's help. She had already learned from her dream that the Lord was aware of her situation.

Then in October 1886, an Apostle and two mission presidents unexpectedly visited the area. José Yáñez told them about his mother's suffering. The brethren came swiftly to Desideria's home. Desideria was delighted to meet Elder Erastus Snow of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and have him place his hands upon her head for a priesthood blessing.

During the brethren's visit, the new mission president, Horace Cummings, surprised Desideria with important news. He told her that the first translation of the entire Book of Mormon in Spanish was near completion in Salt Lake City. Desideria quickly requested a copy of the forthcoming scripture.

A month later, President Cummings returned to Desideria's home with a copy. Of the experience, he wrote: "Visited old Sister Yáñez, an invalid and gave her an unbound Book of Mormon which I had sent to Utah for. It was the first in Spanish that had been received in Mexico. . . . She seemed much pleased with it."⁶ This would be the last visit of a missionary to Desideria during her lifetime.

Isolated but Not Forgotten

By 1889, just 10 years after the restored gospel arrived in central Mexico, Church leaders had felt prompted to shift the Church's limited resources to establishing colonies in northern Mexico. The members near Mexico City, about 1,000 miles (1,600 km) from the colonies, felt like sheep without a shepherd as missionaries left for the north. Though still surrounded by her family, Desideria knew that they would have to practice the gospel in isolation. This meant she would never have the benefit of joining the Relief Society or of receiving temple blessings while alive.



But she recognized that the Lord knew her. Through His servants, the Lord had manifested His desire to minister one by one to His flock. Because of her dream, the priesthood blessing, and the Book of Mormon, Desideria could testify of her absolute assurance that God cared for her spiritual and temporal needs. Though this knowledge did not prevent trials and challenges from occurring in her life, it did give her the confidence that the Lord would always ease her burdens.

An Enduring Legacy

In 1903, missionaries returned to southern Mexico for the first time since 1886. They met with José, who summed up Desideria's endurance to the end and legacy of faith by saying that both his wife and his mother "died in full faith of Mormonism" and that he had "hope of dying in Mormonism."⁷

After having her dream, Desideria embarked on the gospel path, becoming a Latina pioneer of the Church. The seed of faith planted through a dream in 1880 was not wasted; it had sprouted forth as Desideria made the covenant of baptism and endured her trials in faith. It

would have been easy for Desideria to wither away spiritually as she and her family practiced the gospel isolated from the rest of the Church, but she held on. She knew God cared and watched over her small part of the world.

Though she couldn't leave her home, she became an example of faith, diligence, obedience, and fortitude not only to her family but also to each of us as we seek to carry on the pioneer spirit. ■

NOTES

1. See Alonzo L. Taylor Mission Papers, July 10, 1903, and Mexican Mission Manuscript History and Historical Reports, July 7, 1903, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.
2. See Taylor Mission Papers, July 10, 1903, and James Z. Stewart Papers, Feb. 17, 1880, Church History Library.
3. See Stewart Papers, Feb. 17, 1880.
4. See Moses Thatcher, Journal, Nov. 20, 1879, and Stewart Papers, Apr. 26 and June 20, 1880, Church History Library. Desideria was the first woman baptized after the Mexican Mission opened in 1879 in Mexico City. However, a brief mission to the northern city of Hermosillo in 1877 resulted in the baptism of five persons in a nearby village, including Maria La Cruz Paros, the first known Mexican female convert. Official Mexican Mission records created by Moses Thatcher list Desideria Yáñez as the first woman convert, when she was in reality the second. See also Louis Garff Reminiscences, undated, Church History Library.
5. See Horace H. Cummings Papers, Oct. 24, 1886, Church History Library.
6. Cummings Papers, Nov. 29, 1886.
7. Taylor Mission Papers, July 10, 1903.



An Adopted Son's Family History Journey

*How was I supposed to do family history work for
the biological family I had never known?*

By Shane Clifford

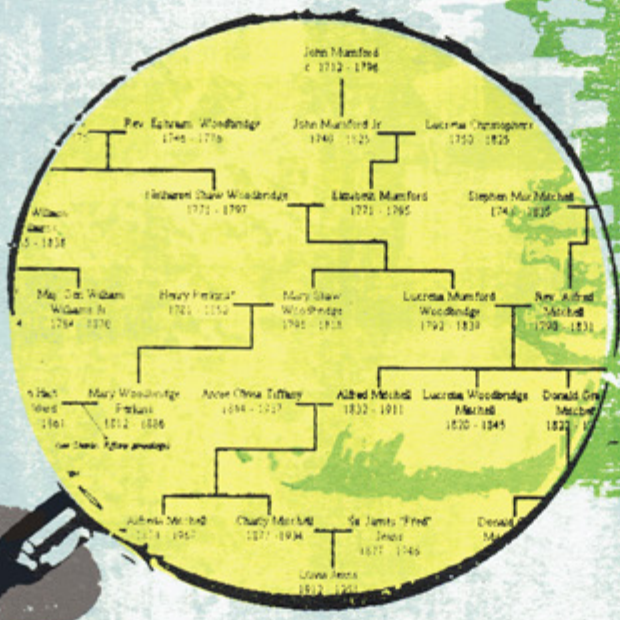
Some years ago, when our family lived in Nevada, USA, the stake presidency announced a stake pioneer temple day in memory of pioneer ancestors and included a request that made me feel a bit uncomfortable. They requested that we research our family history, find a name to take to the temple, and complete the temple ordinances for that ancestor.

My discomfort came because I was adopted in 1969, and I had never made a serious commitment to family history work. I knew I was born in a home for unwed mothers in Maine and that my birth mother had been only 16 years old. I was adopted by a faithful Latter-day Saint couple, who were told virtually nothing of my birth parents. Neither I nor the family my wife and I were raising had any connection to the family line that I belonged to by birth.

Could I Do Temple Ordinances for My Biological Family?

I wasn't sure I could find the information on my family. I wasn't sure I wanted to. I rationalized that I was too busy raising my own family to focus on extended family I had never met. Besides, my adoptive parents had already done a lot of work on my covenant line.

Around that time, I learned that adopted children are allowed to do family history work on their bloodlines.¹ I began to wonder, could I somehow be responsible for my blood relatives who had gone before? Should I be taking steps to seek out my birth parents?



My Search Begins

That year, my family and I had planned a summer vacation in the northeastern United States. I decided that this might be an opportunity to visit the place of my birth. About midway through our vacation, we arrived in the town in Maine where I was born. We searched for the home for unwed mothers, but we found only an adoption agency by the same name. We stopped at that adoption agency, where I asked for information regarding my birth parents. Though I had little hope of receiving any meaningful information, I was given a waiver to sign before a notary.

I finally found an available notary, and at some point I noticed a special feeling. I had the distinct impression that I was being pushed along by a divine force. I raced back to the adoption agency, where a worker shared some

“non-identifying” information from my file, including that my birth mother had called years later to inquire about me and that she had married and had two sons. The worker said she would make an attempt to contact my birth mother.

We left the adoption agency and continued on our vacation. A few days later, the worker from the adoption agency called. She told me my birth mother’s name and that she was at her home awaiting my call.

My Birth Mother

I immediately called her. When she answered the phone, she sounded excited but unsure. As we spoke, I said, “You know, I was about to tell you how old I am, but I guess you probably know that already.” She chuckled. She told me that she married a wonderful man a few years after my



Some of my family and I briefly returned to Maine to meet my birth mother. We spent time together and a great healing took place.

birth. She also told me that she had struggled with depression most of her life, along with guilt for giving me up for adoption. I told her about my wonderful parents, my loving family, and my life. I thanked her for her love and courage, and she seemed to take comfort in my words. She asked to meet my family and me, and I made tentative plans to return to Maine over a holiday weekend.

After the call, my wife did some research on the hotel computer. After only one search, she found a family history website featuring my birth mother's maiden name. The genealogist did not appear to be a Latter-day Saint, but he had done a great deal of genealogy work and had identified dozens of family members. We found out that my birth mother did indeed belong to this family. This family, my bloodline, had long been lost to me but not to the Lord.

The Temple Work

The weeks after we returned from our vacation were filled with excitement. While I was at work, my wife worked to prepare as many of my family names as possible for the temple. We soon discovered that we had enough information to do the temple work for over 60 people.

Some of my family and I briefly returned to Maine to meet my birth mother. We spent time together and a great healing took place.

Upon returning home, we began the temple work. My wife and I went to the temple with our two oldest children and performed baptisms. We then returned to perform initiatory work. We hoped to enlist the help of the stake with the endowments and sealings.

An Acceptable Offering

A few days before the stake pioneer temple day, a counselor in the stake presidency spoke in my ward's sacrament meeting. He suggested that all stake members should make a sacrifice on the pioneer temple day and told us that it could be a day of Pentecost for all those willing to make an acceptable offering.

I wanted to be found among those whose offering was acceptable, and I felt compelled to take the whole day off to work in the temple. Amazingly, everything that was scheduled at my work was quickly resolved.

On the day of the stake pioneer temple day, the temple appeared especially beautiful. My wife and I reserved a few special family names for ourselves and then turned the rest over to members of our stake. We began attending endowment sessions in succession for a few hours, broke for lunch, and resumed with more sessions.

At one point, the Lord blessed me with revelation regarding a personal matter. I could not hold back tears. I knew the Lord had accepted my offering.

My pioneer temple day was a culmination of many miracles in my life. Most important, the Lord instilled in me a desire to do the work of salvation for His children who have left this life. He turned my heart to my fathers from both my covenant family and my birth family. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTE

1. See "Individuals for Whom I Can Request Temple Ordinances," familysearch.org/ask/salesforce/viewArticle?urlname=For-Whom-Should-I-Do-Temple-Ordinances&lang=en.



WORK FOR OUR OWN ANCESTORS

"Any work you do in the temple is time well spent, but receiving ordinances vicariously for one of your own ancestors will make the time in the temple more sacred, and even greater blessings will be received. The First Presidency has declared, 'Our preeminent obligation is to seek out and identify *our own* ancestors' [First Presidency letter, Feb. 29, 2012; emphasis added]."

Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Joy of Redeeming the Dead," *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 93–94.

By Don L. Searle

What happened to Paola Yáñez, her doctors said, was a medical miracle. The Quito, Ecuador, teenager's condition suddenly improved, her father was able to give her one of his kidneys, the transplant operation was a success, and she had a second chance at life.

But Marco Yáñez, her father, says that what happened to him was equally amazing. He found the gospel, and the change it made in his life gave him a second chance too.

A childhood bout of nephritis had damaged Paola's kidneys, but medicine had helped her live. When she was 15, however, her condition worsened. One kidney failed, and the other was deteriorating rapidly. Despite dialysis treatments, Paola was slowly dying. She was allowed to drink only a cup of water a day, and her activities were severely restricted because her lungs, pancreas, and heart had been affected.

It was impossible to take her to the United States or Cuba for a transplant—she would have to find a donor in Ecuador. Tests showed that her father could not be a donor. Her mother could, but then doctors found that dialysis had left Paola's level of antibodies so high that the transplant would be rejected. Paola prayed that somehow her life would be spared.

At this point, in June 1988, the Latter-day Saint missionaries knocked on the Yáñez family's door. Paola's mother, Carmen, recalls that she invited them in so she could taunt them. When they told her they had a message that could help her, she angrily said,

THE Real MIRACLE

The hand of the Lord was evident not only in Paola's recovery but also in her father's conversion to the gospel.



“How can you help me when my daughter is dying? I don’t believe there is a God!”

Despite Carmen’s initial antipathy, the missionaries continued to visit the family. At first Marco felt that he was simply too involved in his daughter’s care to pay attention to the missionaries. But finally he listened, out of curiosity. He found they had answers to his questions about the purpose of life.

Marco did not believe in a personal God. For him, God was a universal energy source or a great, distant being uninvolved with human beings. But when his daughter’s condition was at its most critical, he prayed, asking God to either heal his suffering daughter or take her. He prayed, “If You exist, please show me. Please give me the life of my daughter.”

Following his prayer, Marco felt strongly that Paola’s condition would change. He asked the doctors to test him and his daughter again. They told him the test would be a waste of time, but they agreed to do it.

They found that Marco actually *was* a suitable donor—and that Paola’s condition had improved enough that she could receive a transplant!

The day before the surgery, Marco and Paola accepted priesthood blessings from the missionaries.

Both Marco and Paola expected to recover in the hospital for some time after their operations. But Marco was able to leave five days later, and Paola, who expected to stay for two months, left after only 13 days. Marco attributed their quick recovery to their priesthood blessings, and he knew that he had to take the missionaries’ message seriously.

Marco and Carmen Yáñez were baptized on September 11, 1988. Paola, who had heard the missionary lessons before her surgery, and her younger sister, Patricia, were both baptized on November 3. By that time their father had received the Aaronic Priesthood and was able to baptize them.

Brother Yáñez believes that the Lord answered his prayer and allowed him to be Paola’s donor in order to change his heart. “If they had operated on my wife instead of me, I believe I would have gone on living the same life,” he says. It was not a life he is proud of—drinking, smoking, and gambling. He overcame his addictions, he says, because of the answers he received to his prayers. But it was very difficult; he acknowledges that only God could have helped him change.

Brother Yáñez says he now has a strong testimony of the Word of Wisdom and the law of tithing. When the missionaries were teaching him, he was keeping his business open seven days a week to pay for Paola’s U.S. \$1,000-per-month treatment. The law of tithing “was very hard for me to accept,” he says, but he decided to keep the Sabbath day holy and test the promise in Malachi 3:10 by paying tithing. When he closed his store on Sundays, he says, “those who used to buy on Sunday bought on Saturday—and they bought more.” Today he is much better off financially than he was when he operated his business seven days a week.

When Marco Yáñez looks back, he is surprised at the changes in himself. He recognizes that his pleas for his daughter’s life brought the whole family to a level of spirituality he never dreamed possible. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



The Bread and the Water

The emblems of the sacrament can teach us a lot about the Savior Jesus Christ.

Bread

Bread is one of the most common and most ancient staple foods in the human diet. People have been making bread since before recorded history. It is a good source of carbohydrates, which pro-



vide energy. It will also keep longer than many other foods, making it portable as well.

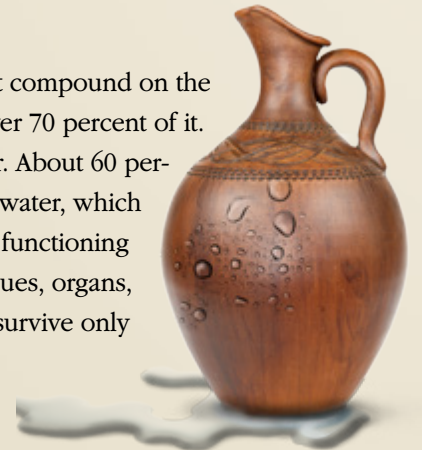
Because bread is so common, many languages have sayings that use the word *bread* as a replacement for *food* (as in the Savior's "Give us this day our daily bread" [Matthew 6:11]). Thus, it often represents the very idea of nourishment.

“ *And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.*
“Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.”

Luke 22:19–20

Water

Water is the most abundant compound on the earth's surface, covering over 70 percent of it. All living things need water. About 60 percent of the human body is water, which is necessary for the proper functioning of pretty much all cells, tissues, organs, and systems. Humans can survive only a few days without water.




What We Can Learn

Bread:

Nourishes us. Through His Atonement and Resurrection, Jesus Christ enlivens our spirits and bodies. Because of His Resurrection, our bodies and spirits will be united inseparably, never to die. Through Him, the Bread of Life, we are fed spiritually, receiving spiritual energy and strength. The sacrament reminds us of this.

Is common. Jesus Christ's Atonement and Resurrection are available to *all* mankind and do not require us to go to exotic lengths to receive their blessings.

Is portable. There is nowhere you can go (spiritually or physically) where



FEEL GOD'S NEARNESS

"I invite you to attend sacrament meeting each week and partake of the holy emblems of the Savior's body and blood. I invite you to feel God's nearness as He is made known to you, as He was to the disciples of old, in the 'breaking of [the] bread' [see Luke 24:30–35].

" . . . As we draw closer to God, the enabling power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ will come into our lives."

Elder Dale G. Renlund of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "That I Might Draw All Men unto Me," *Ensign*, May 2016, 42.

the Atonement of Jesus Christ cannot reach you if you are willing to repent.

Water:

Is essential for life.

Without Jesus Christ, we would be subject to physical and spiritual death eternally (see 2 Nephi 9:7–9). But His Resurrection brings

immortality for the body, and His blood was shed to pay the price of our sins so that we can repent, obtain forgiveness, and live again spiritually in Heavenly Father's presence. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:12).

BIBLE FACTS

- The Savior introduced the sacrament at the Last Supper, which was a Passover meal. At the Passover, unleavened bread was eaten. Leaven (such as yeast) contains microbes or compounds that cause air bubbles to form in the dough, giving the bread a lighter, softer texture but also making it more prone to mold and decay. Thus, unleavened bread represented purity—not being corrupted.
- The Israelites in the wilderness ate manna, which Moses said was "the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat" (Exodus 16:15). Jesus Christ declared: "I am the bread of life. . . . Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. . . . This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever" (John 6:35, 54, 58).
- The first sacrament used wine to represent the blood of Jesus Christ. Today we use water, but it carries the same meaning (see D&C 27:2).
- The Savior declared, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14).





A PIONEERING HEART

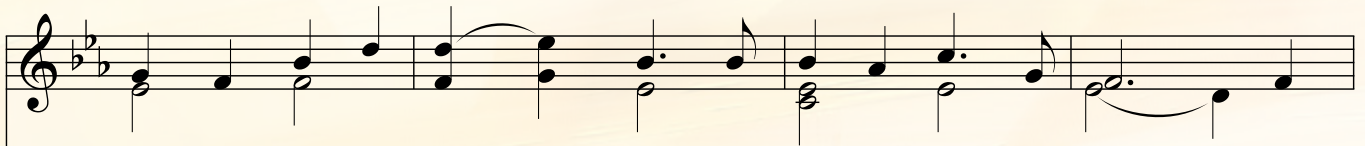
(Solo)

Words and music by
Janice Kapp Perry

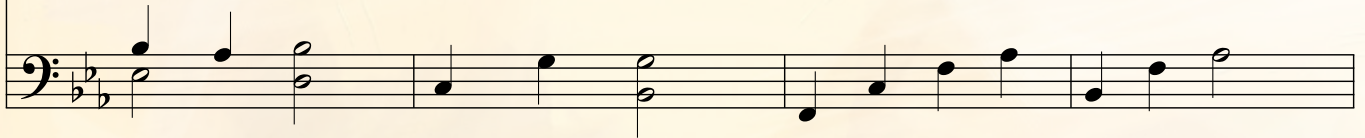
Thoughtfully ♩ = 54



1. I was not there with pi - o - neers who brave - ly walked the plains, — Yet
 (2. I) was not there to suf - fer, with no re - fuge from the storm, — Yet
 (3. When) pi - o - neers came to the West, a ban - ner was un - furled. — Now
 (4. Thru) storms I'll trust that heav - en's love, like man - na from a - bove, — Will



I face oth - er chal - leng - es that dai - ly test my faith. — My
 turn - ing from the world's — ways can leave me bat - tle - worn. — Pro -
 we who fol - low them must take the truth to all the world. — Pre -
 flow in - to my faith - ful heart and it will be e - nough. — When



tri - als may be diff - 'rent, but my will, like theirs, is strong. Through
 tect - ing home and fam - i - ly from sub - tle wars that rage Re -
 par - ing gen - er - a - tions for the com - ing of the Lord Will
 strength seems gone, I'll car - ry on as pi - o - neers be - fore. I'll





heart-aches and ad - ver - si - ty, I too will car - ry on! _____ I
 quires the strength of an - gels in this mod - ern day and age. _____ I
 test our faith in diff - 'rent ways from those who've gone be - fore. _____ When
 be sus - tained thru lat - ter days with bless - ings from His store. _____ Each

rev - 'rence them and fol - low from a - far. _____ Lord,
 pray for strength to no - bly do my part. _____ Lord,
 I must take one step in - to the dark, _____ Lord,
 day I'll find the strength to pull my cart. _____ Lord,

bless me with a pi - o - neer - ing heart. _____

1, 2, 3. □ 4.

2. I
 3. When _____
 4. Thru

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Learn how the *Friend* magazine can help your family understand a different sensitive topic each month.

MODESTY: MORE THAN A DRESS CODE

Many of us explain modesty to our children as a dress code. Pants must be this long, shirts must be this loose, and so on. But we sometimes forget to explain *why* we dress this way and that modesty is about so much more than what we wear. Modesty is a mind-set. It includes a realization that our bodies are precious gifts from our Heavenly Father. When we realize this, we want to respect and protect our bodies, not just in how we dress but in how we think, speak, and act.

“Modesty Means . . .” (page 8) in this month’s *Friend* can help you talk with your children about modesty.

Here are a few points you might include in your discussion:

- Our bodies are sacred and special gifts from Heavenly Father. He gave us our bodies so we could become like our Heavenly Parents.
- Making modest choices helps us show respect for our bodies.
- Modesty includes speaking respectfully, not boasting or showing off, and thanking Heavenly Father for our blessings and talents.
- It isn’t our job to criticize or

condemn another person’s choices. As Carol F. McConkie, First Counselor in the Young Women General Presidency, has said, “We exemplify compassion and Christlike love for the individual while we remain loyal to the standards the Lord has set” (“Courage to Choose Modesty,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2014, 41).

By teaching important doctrines and setting a good example, we can help our children want to be modest in everything they do.

Find stories, activities, and media about other gospel topics at lessonhelps.lds.org. For past *Friend* Connection articles, visit FriendConnection.lds.org.



ACTIVITY

Write different situations on slips of paper and have children take turns deciding if a situation is modest or immodest. If it’s immodest, discuss as a family how to make it modest. For example, if choosing to swear is immodest, then choosing good language is modest. Scenarios might include bragging, dressing for various activities, viewing different kinds of media, and so on.

Remind children that the Holy Ghost can help them recognize the difference between a modest and an immodest choice. What do promptings from the Holy Ghost feel like to them?

OTHER RESOURCES

- “Dress and Appearance” in the *For The Strength of Youth* pamphlet.
- “Modesty,” Gospel Topics, topics.lds.org.
- Carol F. McConkie, “Courage to Choose Modesty,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2014, 40–43.
- Robert D. Hales, “Modesty: Reverence for the Lord,” *Ensign*, Aug. 2008, 34–39.

TEACHING THE PROCLAMATION TO CHILDREN

Each month, we'll give you tips for talking with your children about a portion of "The Family: A Proclamation to the World."¹

This Month's Selection

"The first commandment that God gave to Adam and Eve pertained to their potential for parenthood as husband and wife. We declare that God's commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force."



...covenants available in holy temple for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT that God gave to Adam and Eve pertained to their potential for parenthood as husband and wife. We declare that God's commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force. We further declare that God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between a man and a woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife.

How to Explain This to Children

Adam was the first man on earth, and Eve was the first woman on earth. They were husband and wife. God told Adam and Eve to start a family. Today, Heavenly Father still wants men and women to get married and have families.

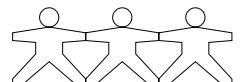
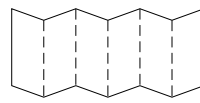
Activity Idea

Make a family paper-doll chain. Take a piece of paper and cut it in half lengthwise. Fold one of the half pieces accordion style into four sections. Draw a figure of a person on the top layer (you can use the template below if you'd like). Cut the figure out, being careful not to cut the ends of the arms, which will connect the figures together.

After you unfold the chain, write something you love about your family on each of the figures (you may need to tape together several paper chains!). You could also write words that describe the kind of family you hope to have one day. ■

NOTE

1. See "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.



When Murilo was baptized at age 16, his whole family was against it. When he received a mission call, his parents threw away his church clothes. He stayed home and eventually helped bring his family into the Church, but he still felt unworthy for not having served a mission.

CODY BELL, PHOTOGRAPHER

Murilo Vicente Leite Ribeiro

Goiânia, Brazil

It was difficult for me to be a young man and to not be on a mission. I felt inferior to my friends who had already left on missions, and I felt alone at church. Some people thought I did not go because I was unworthy. But I did my best to remain firm in the faith.

Years later I met with Elder Jairo Mazzagardi of the Seventy when he came to reorganize our stake. He asked me about my mission.

"I did not serve a mission," I said, starting to cry.

"Brother Murilo," he said, "do not look back; look forward. Whoever looks back walks backwards, and whoever looks forward walks forward. You are clean."

It felt like a six-ton backpack was lifted off my back.

He told me to return with my wife and called me to serve as stake president.

Read more of Murilo's story in the *Ensign* online at [lds.org/go/portraitsE717](https://www.lds.org/go/portraitsE717).







I began driving a jeepney and working as a sales agent to provide for our basic needs.

EMPTY-HANDED BUT FULL OF FAITH

After serving in the Philippines Cagayan de Oro Mission, I was determined to follow the counsel of the prophet and apostles to marry in the temple. Most of my nonmember relatives and friends, and even some members, said I should earn a college degree first or have a great job before thinking about marriage. I had neither when I became engaged.

I was nervous, but I remembered a story about President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) when he received a mission call to England. He was preparing to leave in the midst of economic pressures and concerns that troubled him. Just before he left, his father handed him a card with five written words: “Be not afraid, only believe” (Mark 5:36). I also remembered the words of my bishop: “Have faith. God will provide.” These

words gave me courage and strength to move forward.

Though empty-handed, I married my lovely fiancée in the Manila Philippines Temple. Shortly thereafter I started to work for a company that required me to work on Sundays. I wanted to keep the Sabbath day holy, so this job didn’t last long. Many wondered why I had quit my job, but I pressed forward, repeating to myself the words “Have faith. God will provide.”

I began driving a jeepney and working as a sales agent to provide for our basic needs and prepare for the arrival of our first baby. My wife noticed I was exhausted trying to provide for our family. She told me I needed to go back to school, but I thought it would be hard to work, serve in the Church, and be a student.

I was right; it *was* hard. But we did our best to keep the commandments. Often our finances fell short, but with help from the Church’s Perpetual Education Fund, I was able to finish my education before our second child was born. I found a job as a high school teacher and eventually became a seminary and institute coordinator.

Following the counsel of the prophet and other Church leaders helped me realize that marriage provides great opportunities for spiritual growth and maturity. I have been blessed because of my marriage and the gospel.

We don’t need to be afraid, even in the most difficult circumstances. We just need to do our best and remember these words: “Have faith. God will provide.” ■

Richard O. Espinosa, Tarlac City, Philippines

COMFORTED AFTER A MISCARRIAGE

Eighteen weeks into my fourth pregnancy, I woke up to some minor bleeding. I felt anxious when the bleeding didn't stop, so I decided to go to the emergency room.

During the long drive to the hospital, I hoped and prayed that everything would be OK. At the worst, I thought the doctor would prescribe several days of bed rest.

When I was admitted to the hospital, the staff performed several tests. They found that the baby didn't have a heartbeat. The diagnosis was "fetal demise." The doctor couldn't do anything further at that point, so he released me from the hospital.

I went home feeling sad and frightened. I was unable to sleep that night. When I got out of bed the next morning, I was prompted to go to an early-morning endowment session at the temple.

Near the end of the session, my eyes focused on the wedding and engagement rings on my ring finger. They had belonged to the great-grandmother I was named after. She passed away when I was five, and I had recently been reading her life story. I remembered that she had experienced many miscarriages when she was in her 20s.

All morning I had been fighting tears of sadness and fear, but in that

moment, I felt a wave of peace. I felt comforted. Great-Grandma had passed through similar trials in her life, and the Savior had helped her. I felt the assurance that He would help me too.

"He will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities" (Alma 7:12).

I am deeply grateful for the peace that comes from attending the temple, for a legacy of faithful ancestors, and most of all, for the atoning sacrifice of the Savior Jesus Christ. ■

Emily Miller, Texas, USA

My wedding and engagement rings had belonged to my great-grandmother. I remembered that she had experienced many miscarriages.

GIVING A RIDE AND SHARING THE GOSPEL

The drive through the English countryside was quiet on my way to church one morning. Along the way I saw an elderly lady on the side of the road. I had to decide quickly whether to stop and see if she needed a ride.

I felt that I should stop. She told me her name was Mary and said she had just arrived at that spot. I realized that a few seconds later for her or earlier for me and we would have missed each other. It was perfect timing!

She told me where she needed to go, and it was close to the chapel. I mentioned I was on my way to church and asked if she had heard of the Church. She said she had faith in the Savior but knew little of the Latter-day

Saints. On the way we shared our thoughts and feelings about the Savior.

When I dropped Mary off, I said I could give her a ride after church. She accepted, and we arranged to meet at the chapel. When I walked into church, I asked the missionaries for a copy of the Book of Mormon to give to my new friend. Later, when she arrived at the chapel, the members were friendly and shared their testimonies with her.

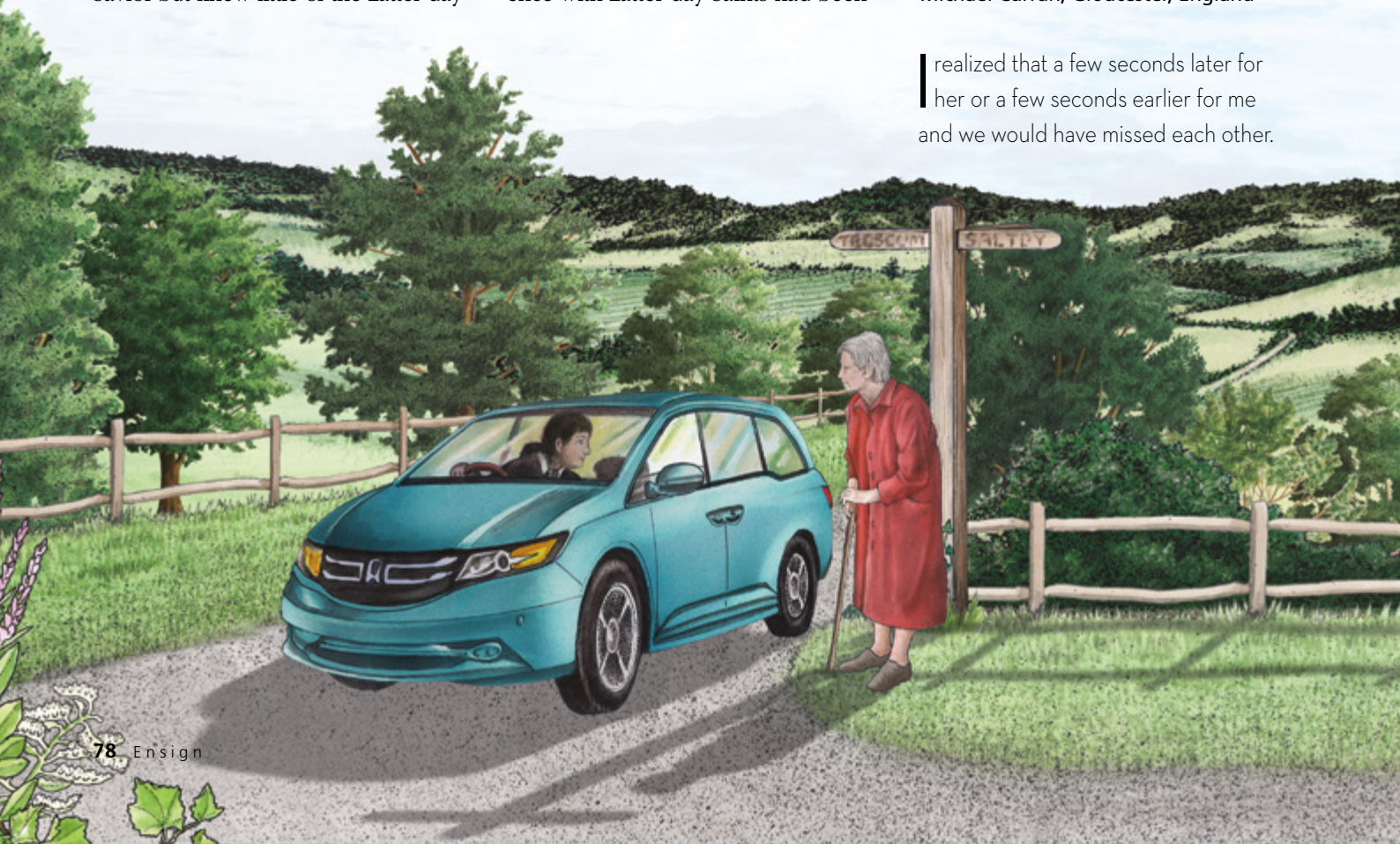
On the drive back I told Mary she could learn more about Jesus Christ by reading the Book of Mormon. I also told her where to find the account of the Savior's appearance to the Nephites. Although her experience with Latter-day Saints had been

brief, I knew she had felt something. I dropped Mary off where we had met. I didn't expect to see her again.

When I was driving home from work the next day, a detour caused me to drive down a road I do not normally travel. To my surprise I saw Mary again! When she saw me, she was surprised too and smiled. I was happy to give her another ride. It was another moment of perfect timing the Lord had arranged for her to hear about our faith.

I haven't seen Mary since, but this experience taught me that the Lord watches over all and prepares the way. I am grateful He provided an opportunity for me to share the gospel. ■
Michael Curran, Gloucester, England

I realized that a few seconds later for her or a few seconds earlier for me and we would have missed each other.



ANGELS BROUGHT LIGHT TO MY HOME

One Sunday morning I was asked if I'd like to have home teachers visit me. I had just recently been divorced and was having a hard time facing my new life as a single mother with two small children. I said I would appreciate a visit. At the time, I was feeling bitter about my situation and felt alone in my struggles.

The following week, two good brothers came to my home. During their visit they asked the usual questions and shared a short gospel message with my family.

Then these good brothers asked, "Sister Nereida, what can we do to help you?"

Without thinking much about it,

I told them the light bulbs were out above the stairs going up to the second floor. I had replacement bulbs, but I couldn't reach high enough to change them, and I worried about using a ladder on the stairs. I also told them that I had no working lights in the backyard.

Right away they got up. One went out to his car and returned with a tool chest. He was almost six and a half feet (1.9 m) tall, so he climbed the stairs and changed the bulb without any problem. Meanwhile, his companion went to the backyard and noticed the wire connection was reversed. In no time he was able to fix it.

How grateful I have been to my home teachers over the years for their simple act of kindness, love, and dedication and for the wonderful lesson they taught me. My home teachers were truly angels who not only brought light to our home but also brought the peace, hope, and safety of the gospel, which brings light to any kind of darkness. ■

Nereida Santafe, Gran Caracas, Venezuela





By President J. Reuben Clark Jr. (1871–1961)

First Counselor in the First Presidency

THEY OF THE LAST WAGON

In that last wagon there was devotion and loyalty and integrity and, above and beyond everything else, faith in the Brethren and in God's power.

I would like to say something about the last wagon in each of the long wagon trains that toiled slowly over the plains. . . .

. . . Back in the last wagon, not always could they see the Brethren way out in front, and the blue heaven was often shut out from their sight by heavy, dense clouds of the dust of the earth. Yet day after day, they of the last wagon pressed forward, worn and tired, footsore, sometimes almost disheartened, borne up by their faith that God loved them, that the restored gospel was true, and that the Lord led and directed the Brethren out in front. Sometimes, they in the last wagon glimpsed, for an instant, when faith surged strongest, the glories of a celestial world, but it seemed so far away, and the vision so quickly vanished because want and weariness and heartache and sometimes



discouragement were always pressing so near.

When the vision faded, their hearts sank. But they prayed again and pushed on, with little praise, with not too much encouragement, and never with adulation. . . . Yet in that last wagon there was devotion and loyalty and integrity and, above and beyond everything else, faith in the Brethren and in God's power and goodness. . . .

So through dust and dirt, . . . they crept along till, passing down through its portals, the valley welcomed them to rest and home. . . .

But hundreds of these stalwart souls of undoubting faith and great prowess were not yet at their journey's end.

Brother Brigham [Young] again called them to the colors of the kingdom of God and sent them to settle

the valleys, near and remote, in [the] vast mountains of refuge. So again they yoked their oxen and hitched up their teams, and . . . wended their slow way to new valleys, again trusting with implicit faith in the wisdom and divine guidance of their Moses. . . .

And thousands upon thousands of these tens of thousands, from the first till now, all the elect of God, measured to their humble calling and to their destiny as fully as Brother Brigham and the others measured to theirs, and God will so reward them. They were pioneers in word and thought and act and faith, even as were they of more exalted station. The building of this intermountain empire was not done in a corner by a select few but by this vast multitude flowing in from many nations, who came and labored and wrought, faithfully following their divinely called leaders. . . .

So to these humble but great souls, . . . I humbly render my love, my respect, my reverent homage. ■

From an October 1947 general conference address, "To Them of the Last Wagon."



TO THEM OF THE LAST WAGON
(CA. 1954), BY LYNN FAUSETT

Sustained by their faith in Jesus Christ, the pioneers courageously forged a path that became known as the Mormon Trail on their 1,000-mile (1,600 km) journey to the Salt Lake Valley. Those at the end of the wagon train couldn't always see their leaders, yet they steadfastly pressed forward.



In Church Magazines

Ensign: Shuho faced racism and rejection but found the gospel and learned to trust people again. See “The Only Thing That Saved Me” (page 14). Plus, learn why religious freedom is so important and what’s at risk if it goes undefended (page 36).

New Era: Learn about the power of hope from President Russell M. Nelson (page 2). Also, find out about the blessings of Sabbath observance (pages 6, 10, and 12). And discover some mythical creatures that can actually be harmful if we believe in them (page 24).

Friend: You can celebrate Pioneer Day wherever you live and whether the pioneers in your family drove wagons or cars! Read how one family celebrated, and come up with your own plan (see pages 4 and 6). You can also read how one girl bravely led her family across the plains to Zion (page 36).

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS



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