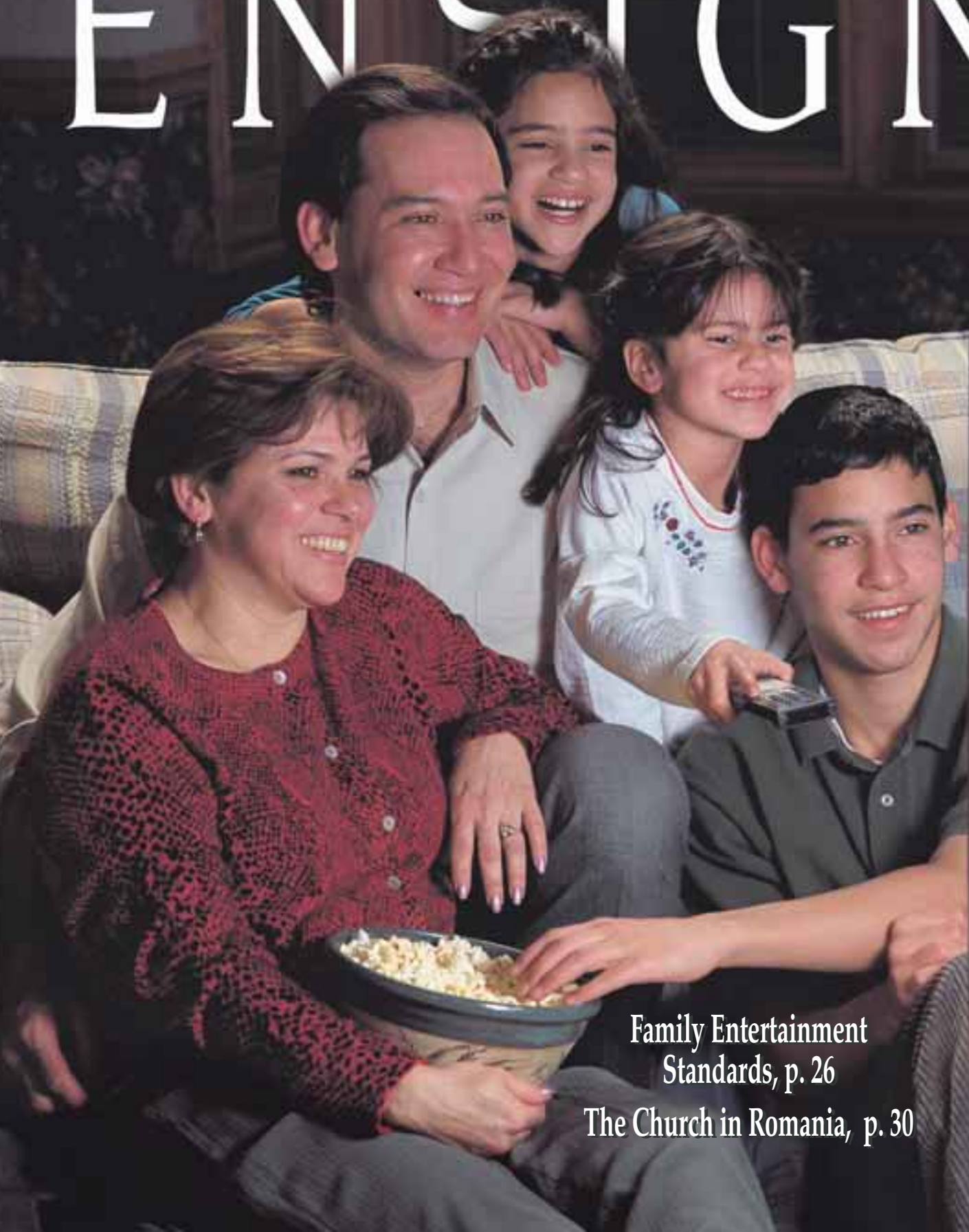


# ENSIGN



Family Entertainment  
Standards, p. 26

The Church in Romania, p. 30

Beautiful Nauvoo, by Larry C. Winborg



*"The name of our city (Nauvoo) is of Hebrew origin, and signifies a beautiful situation, or place, carrying with it, also, the idea of rest; and is truly descriptive of the most delightful location" ("A Proclamation of the First Presidency of the Church to the Saints Scattered Abroad," 15 Jan. 1841, History of the Church, 4:268).*

# ENSIGN

VOLUME 31 NUMBER 6

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- 2 "BEHOLD YOUR LITTLE ONES"  
President Gordon B. Hinckley
- 6 MIRACLES Elder Dallin H. Oaks
- 18 JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION  
Elder D. Todd Christofferson
- 26 SETTING FAMILY STANDARDS  
FOR ENTERTAINMENT Carla Dalton
- 30 THE CHURCH IN ROMANIA  
LaRene Porter Gaunt
- 36 ANSWERS ALL AROUND ME  
Judy Zabriskie Howa
- 40 SINGULAR ACCOMPLISHMENTS  
Jonathan H. Stephenson
- 44 "WE MUST KEEP ONE ANOTHER" Ronald W. Walker
- 50 GOSPEL TAUGHT, GOSPEL SHARED Richard G. Oman
- 56 BEYOND SHYNESS Rebecca M. Taylor
- 61 VISITING TEACHING MESSAGE  
INCREASING OUR SPIRITUALITY THROUGH FASTING AND PRAYER
- 62 LATTER-DAY SAINT VOICES  
A HIGHER VIEW Hugo Ibañez  
THE GIFT OF HANDS Laura Belnap  
ON A COUNTRY ROAD Kelly A. Harward  
THE LORD'S TIMING LeAnne C. Bunn  
ASKING WITH MY HEART Edmundo E. Abellán  
I TRIED THE EXPERIMENT Lydie Zebo Bahie
- 68 RANDOM SAMPLER
- 70 QUESTIONS & ANSWERS  
HELPING COWORKERS ELIMINATE TALK THAT OUGHT NOT  
TO BE SHARED PUBLICLY Craig Redding  
HAVING EQUAL VOICE IN DECISIONS MADE AS A COUPLE  
Hoyt W. Brewster Jr.
- 72 NO BOUNDARIES Susan Ure
- 73 PORTRAITS
- 74 LATTER-DAY COUNSEL
- 76 NEWS OF THE CHURCH



BEYOND SHYNESS, p. 56

GOSPEL TAUGHT,  
GOSPEL SHARED, p. 50



# “Behold YOUR LITTLE ONES”



BY PRESIDENT  
GORDON B. HINCKLEY

**M**y wife and I once took some of our grandchildren to the circus. I was more interested in watching them and many others of their age than in watching the man on the flying trapeze. I looked at them in wonder as they alternately laughed and stared wide-eyed at the exciting things before them. I thought of the miracle of children, for it is children who become the world’s constant renewal of life and purpose. Observing them in the intensity of their interest, even in that atmosphere, my mind reverted to the beautiful and touching scene recorded in the book of 3 Nephi when the resurrected Lord took little children in His arms and wept as He blessed them and said to the people, “Behold your little ones” (3 Ne. 17:23).

It is so obvious that the great good and the terrible evil in the world today are the sweet and the bitter fruits of the rearing of yesterday’s children. As we train a new generation, so will the world be in a few years. If you are worried about the future, then look to the upbringing of your children. Wisely did the writer of Proverbs declare, “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Prov. 22:6).

When I was a boy, we lived in the summer on a fruit farm. We grew great quantities of peaches—carloads of them. Our father took us to tree pruning demonstrations put on by the agricultural college. Each Saturday during January and February we would go out to the farm and prune the trees. We learned that by clipping and sawing in the right places, even when snow was on the ground and the wood appeared dead, we could shape a tree so that the sun would touch the fruit which was to come with spring and summer. We learned that in February we could pretty well determine the kind of fruit we would pick in September.

E. T. Sullivan once wrote these interesting words: “When God wants a great work done in the world or a great wrong righted, he goes about it in a very unusual way. He doesn’t stir up his earthquakes or send forth his thunderbolts. Instead, he has a helpless baby born, perhaps in a simple home of some obscure mother. And then God puts the idea into the mother’s heart, and she puts it into the baby’s mind. And then God waits. The greatest forces in the world are not the earthquakes and the thunderbolts. The greatest forces in the world are babies” (quoted in *The Treasure Chest*, ed. Charles L. Wallis [1965], 53).

And those babies, I should like to add, will become forces for good or ill, depending in large measure on how they are reared. The Lord, without equivocation, has declared, “I have commanded you to bring up your children in light and truth” (D&C 93:40).

If I may be pardoned for suggesting the obvious, I do so only because the obvious is not observed in so many instances. The obvious includes four imperatives with reference to children: love them, teach them, respect them, pray with them and for them.

## LOVE THEM

How fortunate, how blessed is the child who feels the affection of his parents. That warmth, that love will bear sweet fruit in the years that follow. In large measure the harshness that characterizes so much of our society is an outgrowth of harshness imposed on children years ago.

Once, when I met one of my childhood friends, there came a train of memories of the neighborhood in which we grew up. It was a microcosm of the world, with many varieties of people. They were a close-knit group, and I think we knew them all. I think, also, we loved them all—that is, except for one man. I must make a confession: at a point in my

Wisely did the  
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it" (Prov. 22:6).



childhood I detested that man. I have since repented of that emotion, but as I look back, I can sense again the intensity of my feeling. His young boys were our friends, but I thought he was my enemy. Why this strong antipathy? Because he whipped his children with strap or stick or whatever came to hand as his vicious anger flared on the slightest provocation.

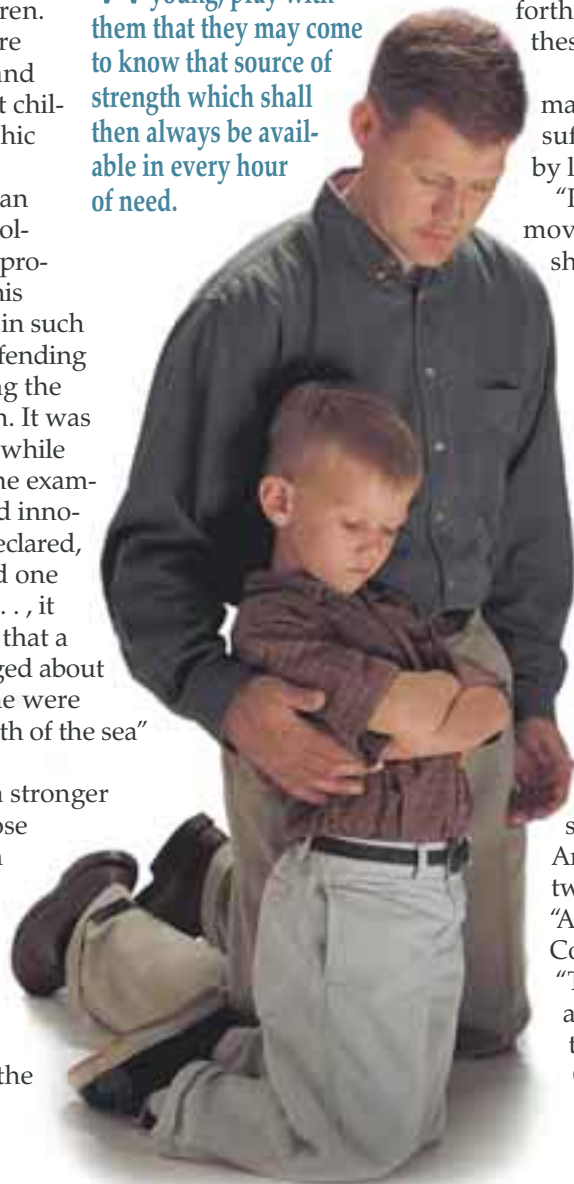
Perhaps I felt as I did because of the home in which I lived, where there was a father who, by some quiet magic, was able to discipline his children without the use of any instrument of punishment, though on occasion they may have deserved it.

I have seen the fruits of that neighbor's temper come alive again in the troubled lives of his children. Every social worker, every duty officer in the emergency room of a large hospital, every policeman and judge can tell you similar stories. The whole tragic picture is one of beatings, kicking, slamming, and even of sexual assault on small children. And akin to these are those vicious men and women who exploit children for pornographic purposes.

No man or woman who is a professed follower of Christ or a professed member of this Church can engage in such practices without offending God and repudiating the teachings of His Son. It was Jesus Himself who, while holding before us the example of the purity and innocence of children, declared, "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones . . . , it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matt. 18:6).

Could there be a stronger denunciation of those who abuse children than these words spoken by the Savior of mankind? Do you want a spirit of love to grow in the world? Then begin within the

**While your children are young, pray with them that they may come to know that source of strength which shall then always be available in every hour of need.**



walls of your own home. Behold your little ones and see within them the wonders of God, from whose presence they have recently come.

President Brigham Young once said: "A child loves the smiles of its mother, but hates her frowns. I tell the mothers not to allow the children to indulge in evils, but at the same time to treat them with mildness" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* [1997], 340).

He further stated, "Bring up your children in the love and fear of the Lord; study their dispositions and their temperaments, and deal with them accordingly, never allowing yourself to correct them in the heat of passion; teach them to love you rather than to fear you" (*Teachings*, 172).

Of course, there is need for discipline with families. But discipline with severity, discipline with cruelty inevitably leads not to correction but rather to resentment and bitterness. It cures nothing and only aggravates the problem. It is self-defeating. The Lord, in setting forth the spirit of governance in His Church, has also set forth the spirit of governance in the home in these great words of revelation:

"No power or influence can or ought to be maintained . . . , only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned; . . .

"Reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reproved, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy;

"That he may know that thy faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death" (D&C 121:41, 43–44).

## TEACH THEM

Behold your little ones and teach them. Your example will do more than anything else in impressing upon their minds a pattern of life. It is always interesting to meet the children of old friends and to find in another generation the ways of their fathers and mothers.

The story is told that in ancient Rome a group of women were, with vanity, showing their jewels one to another. Among them was Cornelia, the mother of two boys. One of the women said to her, "And where are your jewels?" to which Cornelia responded, pointing to her sons, "These are my jewels." Under her tutelage, and walking after the virtues of her life, they grew to become Gaius and Tiberius Gracchus—the Gracchi, as they were

called—two of the most persuasive and effective reformers in Roman history. For as long as they are remembered and spoken of, the mother who reared them after the manner of her own life will be remembered and spoken of with praise also.

I return again to the words of Brigham Young: “Let it be your constant care that the children that God has so kindly given you are taught in their early youth the importance of the oracles of God, and the beauty of the principles of our holy religion, that when they grow to the years of man and womanhood they may always cherish a tender regard for them and never forsake the truth” (*Teachings*, 172).

I know that there are parents who, notwithstanding an outpouring of love and a diligent and faithful effort to teach them, see their children grow in a contrary manner and weep while their wayward sons and daughters willfully pursue courses of tragic consequence. For such I have great sympathy, and to them I am wont to quote the words of Ezekiel: “The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son” (Ezek. 18:20).

But such is the exception rather than the rule. Nor does the exception justify others of us from making every effort in showing forth love, example, and correct precept in the rearing of those for whom God has given us sacred responsibility.

## RESPECT THEM

Nor let us ever forget the need to respect these, our little ones. Under the revealed word of the Lord, we know they are children of God as we are children of God, deserving of that respect which comes of knowledge of that eternal principle. In fact, the Lord made it clear that unless we develop in our own lives that purity, that lack of guile, that innocence of evil, we cannot enter into His presence. Declared He, “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 18:3).

Channing Pollock once wrote these interesting and provocative words: “Contemplating the adolescence through which we scorned the wrong, some of us must wish . . . that we could be born old, and grow younger and cleaner and ever simpler and more innocent, until at last, with the white souls of little children, we lay us down to eternal sleep” (“The World’s Slow Stain,” *Reader’s Digest*, June 1960, 77).

## PRAY WITH THEM AND FOR THEM

Behold your little ones. Pray with them. Pray for them and bless them. The world into which they are moving is a complex and difficult world. They will run into heavy seas of adversity. They will need all the strength and all the faith you can give them while they are yet near you. And they also will need a greater strength which comes

of a higher power. They must do more than go along with what they find. They must lift the world, and the only levers they will have are the example of their own lives and the powers of persuasion that will come of their testimonies and their knowledge of the things of God. They will need the help of the Lord. While they are young, pray with them that they may come to know that source of strength which shall then always be available in every hour of need.

I love to hear children pray. I appreciate hearing parents pray for their children. I stand reverently before a father who in the authority of the holy priesthood lays his hands upon the head of a son or daughter at a time of serious decision and in the name of the Lord and under the direction of the Holy Spirit gives a father’s blessing.

How much more beautiful would be the world and the societies in which we live if every father and mother looked upon their children as the most precious of their assets, if they led them by the power of their example in kindness and love, and if in times of stress blessed by the authority of the holy priesthood, and if they regarded their children as the jewels of their lives, as gifts from the God of heaven who is their Eternal Father, and brought them up with true affection in the wisdom and admonition of the Lord.

Said Isaiah of old, “All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children” (Isa. 54:13). To which I add, “Great also shall be the peace and the gladness of their fathers and mothers.”

I humbly pray for that peace in behalf of all children and all fathers and mothers. □

*Gospel topics: children, parenting, discipline, prayer, child abuse*

## IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

### Some Points of Emphasis

*You may wish to make these points in your home teaching discussions:*

1. *The Lord has said, “I have commanded you to bring up your children in light and truth” (D&C 93:40).*
2. *To do this, we need to:*
  - *Love little children.*
  - *Teach little children by example.*
  - *Respect little children as children of God, as we ourselves are.*
  - *Pray with and for little children.*

### Discussion Helps

1. *Relate your feelings about the blessings of little children.*
2. *Are there some scriptures or quotations in this article that might be read aloud and discussed?*
3. *Would this discussion be better after a previsit chat with the head of the house? Is there a message from the bishop or quorum leader?*

# MIRACLES

*Miracles happen every day in the work of the Church and in the lives of its members.*



BY ELDER DALLIN H. OAKS  
*Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles*

When I was a college student, almost 50 years ago, Elder Matthew Cowley (1897–1953) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles spoke to a BYU audience about miracles. That devotional message had a great impact on me, and I have felt to revisit its subject. Like Elder Cowley, I will seek to provide an answer to the prophet Mormon’s question “Has the day of miracles ceased?” (Moro. 7:35). In fact, many miracles happen every day in the work of our Church and in the lives of our members. Many of you have witnessed miracles, perhaps more than you realize.

A miracle has been defined as “a beneficial event brought about through divine power that mortals do not understand and of themselves cannot duplicate.”<sup>1</sup> The idea that events are brought about through divine power is rejected by most irreligious people and even by some who are religious. All of us have known people who have what Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles once called “the anti-miracle mind-set.”<sup>2</sup> This rejection of miracles in the last days was prophesied. The prophet Nephi foretold that the Gentiles would “put down the power and miracles of God, and preach up unto themselves their own wisdom and their own learning, that they may get gain” (2 Ne. 26:20). He also prophesied that churches would be built up in which persons would teach with their learning, deny the power of God, and tell the people that if someone should “say there is a miracle wrought by the hand of the Lord, believe it not; for this day he is not a God of miracles” (2 Ne. 28:6).

Some people reject the possibility of miracles because they have not experienced them or cannot understand them. In contrast, President Howard W. Hunter declared, “To deny the reality of miracles on the ground that the results and manifestations must be fictitious simply because we cannot comprehend the means by which they have happened is arrogant on the face of it.”<sup>3</sup>

## TYPES OF MIRACLES

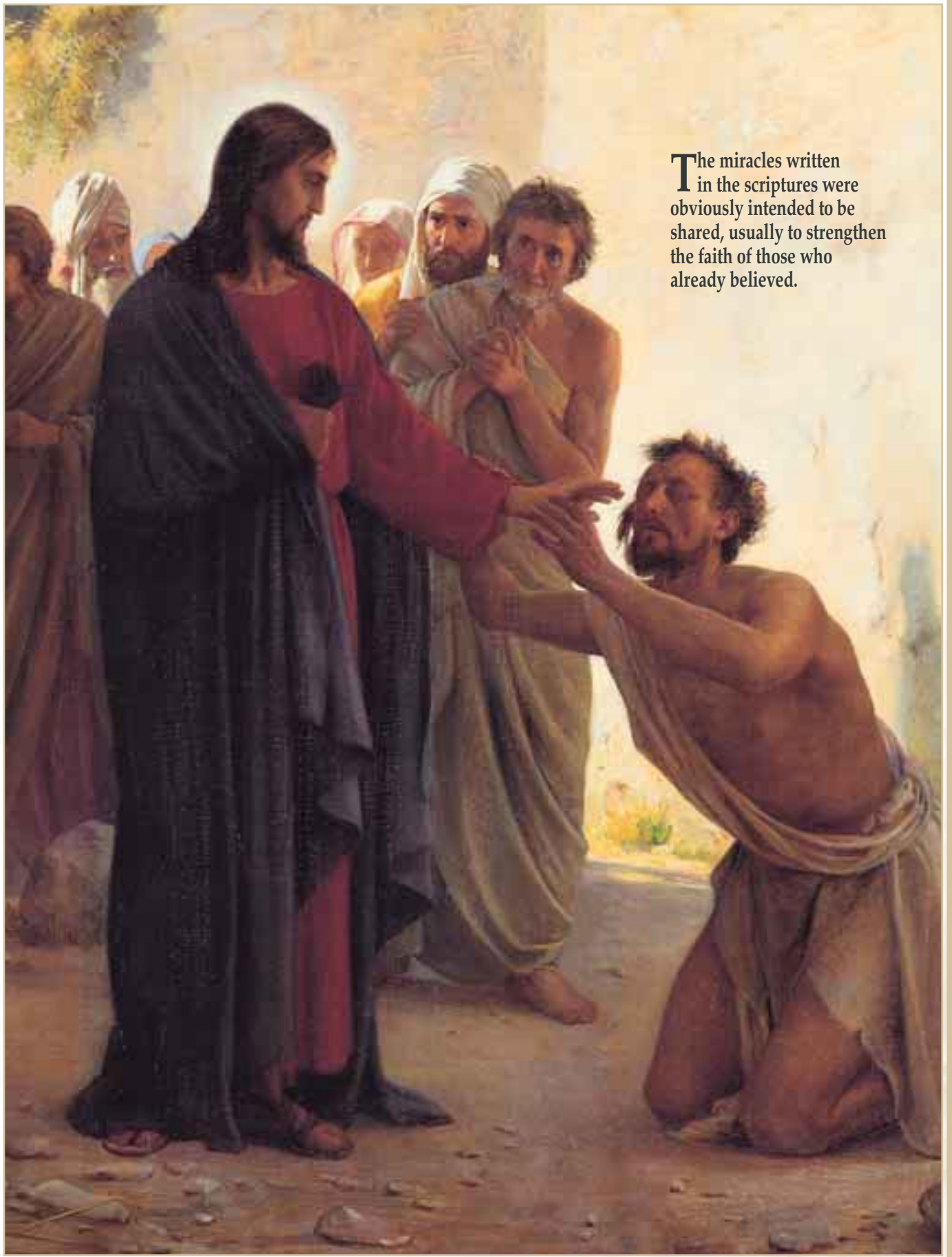
The word *miracle* is used in different ways. We sometimes say that any happening we cannot explain is a “miracle.” To me, a computer is a miracle. So are cell phones and space travel. But these wonders are explainable by physical laws understood by some mortals. I call them miracles because I do not personally understand them and therefore cannot duplicate them at will.

Another category of miracles, so-called, are the tricks that some magicians and religious practitioners stage in order to produce astonishing events in aid of their professions or ministries. You will remember that the magicians in Pharaoh’s court duplicated some of the miracles Moses produced through the power of God (see Ex. 7–8). Perhaps these magicians were servants of the devil, using his power, but I think it more likely that they were simply skilled practitioners of magic tricks that they used to reinforce their position in Pharaoh’s court.

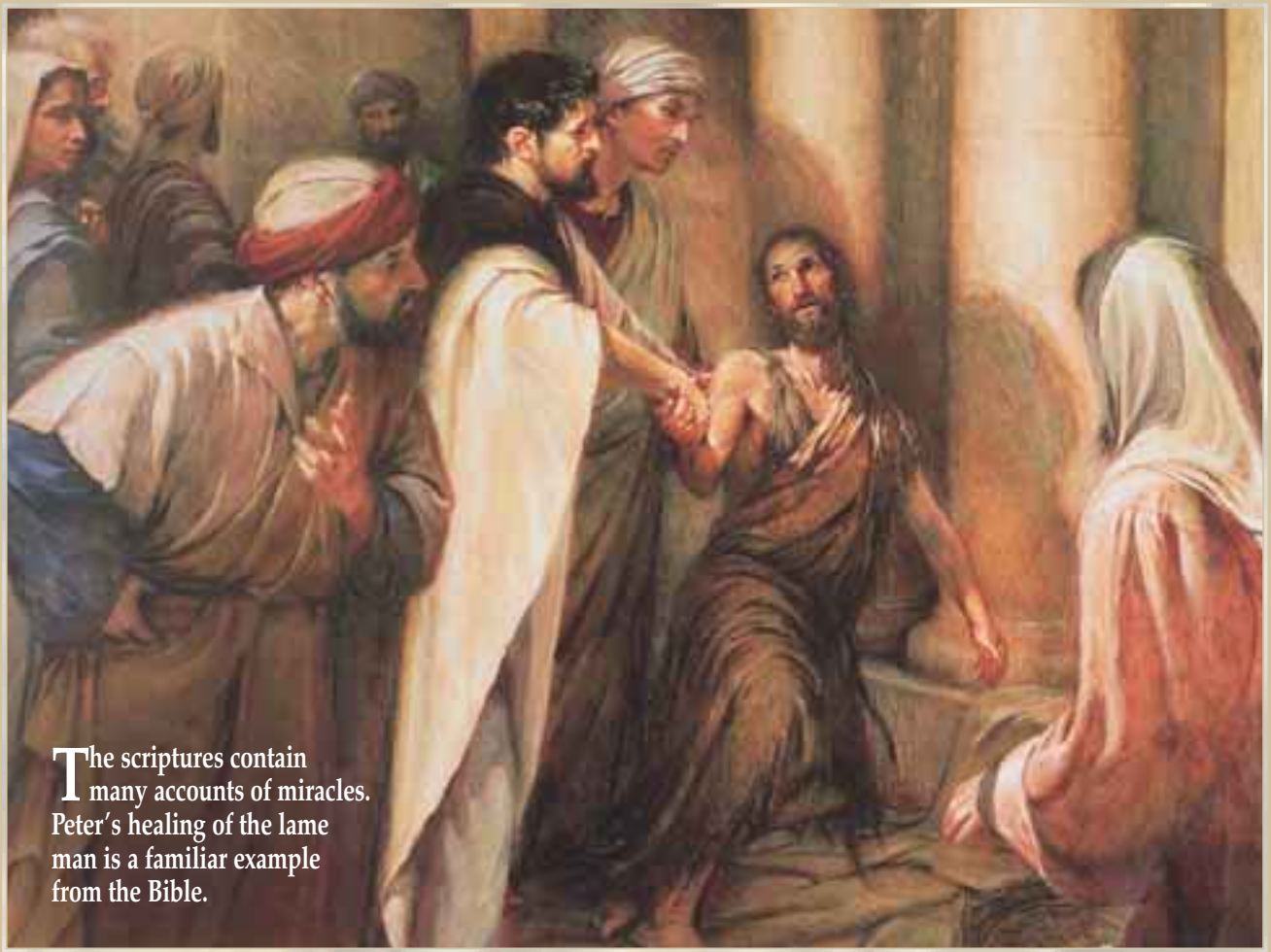
Religious practitioners have employed similar deceptions in our own day. About 40 years ago a professional dramatic production planned for a midwestern city had to be postponed because the producers could not find enough professional actors to perform the required roles. A great religious revival was under way in that city, and I was told the revivalists had hired all of the available professional actors to portray miraculous healings and conversions to enhance their position and goals with their audiences. Before we are too



**T**he miracles written in the scriptures were obviously intended to be shared, usually to strengthen the faith of those who already believed.



PAININGS BY AMY DAVIS, EXCEPT AS NOTED; RIGHT: JESUS HEALING THE BLIND, BY CARL HEINRICH BLOCH, DET NATIONALHISTORISKE MUSEUM PÅ FREDERIKSBORG, HILLERØD



The scriptures contain many accounts of miracles. Peter's healing of the lame man is a familiar example from the Bible.

critical of such techniques, we should remember that we engage in similar deceptions whenever we exaggerate a happening in order to dazzle an audience into thinking we have experienced a miracle or to enhance our stature in other ways. Warning!

We know from the scriptures that persons without authority will use the name of Jesus Christ to work what seem to be miracles. The Savior taught that as part of the Final Judgment many would say, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" (Matt. 7:22). You will remember that these pretenders were rejected by the Lord (see v. 23).

Not every manifestation or miracle comes from God or from mortal deception. The adversary has great powers to deceive, and he will use these to give his corrupted copy of the genuine miracles worked by the power of God. I will say no more of this, since I believe it is not desirable to say much about the powers of the evil one. It is sufficient for us to know that his power exists and that we have been warned against it (see Rev. 13:11–14; D&C 28:11; 50:1–3).<sup>4</sup>

I will now describe two types of genuine miracles. These two fit all of the elements of the definition: they are brought about by divine power, mortals do not understand them, and mortals cannot duplicate them of themselves.

First, miracles worked by the power of the priesthood are always present in the true Church of Jesus Christ.<sup>5</sup> The Book of Mormon teaches that "God has provided a means that man, through faith, might work mighty miracles" (Mosiah 8:18). The "means" provided is priesthood power (see James 5:14–15; D&C 42:43–48), and that power works miracles through faith (see Ether 12:12; Moro. 7:37). The scriptures contain many accounts of such miracles. Elijah's raising the widow's son and Peter's healing of the lame man are two familiar examples from the Bible (see 1 Kgs. 17:8–24; Acts 3), and there are many others. I will describe some modern examples later.

A second type of genuine miracle is the miracle worked through the power of faith, without specifically invoking the power of the priesthood. Many of these miracles occur in our Church, such as by the prayers of faithful women, and many occur outside it.

As Nephi taught, God “manifesteth himself unto all those who believe in him, by the power of the Holy Ghost; yea, unto every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, working mighty miracles, signs, and wonders, among the children of men according to their faith” (2 Ne. 26:13; see also 1 Ne. 7:12; James 5:15).

## MACRO-MIRACLES

Some miracles affect many people. The ultimate such miracle is the Atonement of Jesus Christ—His triumph over physical and spiritual death for all mankind. No miracle is more far-reaching or more magnificent.

Other far-reaching miracles—impossible to explain by rational means—occur as a result of obedience to the commandments of God. Thus, there is something miraculous about the way the members of our Church pay their tithing so faithfully and are blessed for doing so.

To cite another far-reaching miracle, there is no rational way to explain why young men and women give a year and a half to two years of their lives in the middle of their education and marriage eligibility to suffer the hardships incident to an inconvenient and highly disciplined pattern of missionary service to their fellowmen. Other miracles occur in funding missions by missionaries or families too poor to do so but who do so anyway.

Still another miracle is the way missionaries are protected during their labors. Of course we have fatalities among our young missionaries—about three to six per year over the last decade—all of them tragic. But the official death rates for comparable-age young men and women in the United States are eight times higher than the death rates of our missionaries. In other words, our young men and women are eight times safer in the mission field than the general population of their peers at home. In view of the hazards of missionary labor, this mortality record is nothing less than a miracle.

Other large-scale miracles are occurring in the Church’s family history work. The effect of our FamilySearch™ Internet Genealogy Service in the time it has been available is truly miraculous. After one year our Internet site averaged eight million hits per day, representing daily visits by about 130,000 persons. In this same one-year period, the site registered users from 117 countries who downloaded over 410,000 copies of our Personal Ancestral File. This was an eight-fold increase in

usage over the prior technology. Family history work is exploding in a miraculous way.

## MICRO-MIRACLES

In contrast to these far-reaching miracles are the more familiar categories of miracles that impact only a few individuals. The scriptures abound with such miracles, and miracles as great as these still occur. I have seen them, and so have you. Elder Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985), then of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said:

“We do have miracles today—beyond imagination! . . .

“What kinds of miracles do we have? All kinds—revelations, visions, tongues, healings, special guidance and direction, evil spirits cast out. Where are they recorded? In the records of the Church, in journals, in news and magazine articles and in the minds and memories of many people.”<sup>6</sup>

Most of us are acquainted with miracles that have occurred in our personal lives and the lives of those we love, such as miracles involving births and deaths and miraculous healings. All of these are fulfillments of the Lord’s modern promise to “show miracles, signs, and wonders, unto all those who believe on my name” (D&C 35:8).



**T**he more familiar categories of miracles impact only a few individuals.

## WHEN MIRACLES DON'T HAPPEN

I have been speaking of miracles that happen. What about miracles that don't happen? Most of us have offered prayers that were not answered with the miracle we requested at the time we desired. Miracles are not available for the asking. We know this from the Lord's revelation directing that the elders should be called to lay hands on and bless the sick: “It shall come to pass that he that hath faith in me to be healed, and is not appointed unto death, shall be healed” (D&C 42:48). The will of the Lord is always paramount. The priesthood of the Lord cannot be used to work a miracle contrary to the will of the Lord. We must also remember that even when a miracle is to occur, it will not occur on our desired schedule. The revelations teach that miraculous experiences occur “in his own time, and in his own way” (D&C 88:68).

## WHY DON'T WE HEAR MORE ABOUT MIRACLES?

Why don't our talks in general conference and local meetings say more about the miracles we have seen?

Most of the miracles we experience are not to be shared. Consistent with the teachings of the scriptures, we hold them sacred and share them only when the Spirit prompts us to do so.

The revelation on priesthood affirms the biblical teaching in Mark 16:17 that “signs,” including miraculous healings and other wonderful works, “follow them that believe” (see also D&C 84:65). Similarly, modern revelation directs that “they shall not boast themselves of these things, neither speak them before the world; for these things are given unto you for your profit and for salvation” (D&C 84:73). Another revelation declares, “Remember that that which cometh from above is sacred, and must be spoken with care, and by constraint of the Spirit” (D&C 63:64). President Brigham Young explained, “Miracles, or these extraordinary manifestations of the power of God, are not for the unbeliever; they are to console the Saints, and to strengthen and confirm the faith of those who love, fear, and serve God, and not for outsiders.”<sup>7</sup>

Latter-day Saints generally follow these directions. In bearing testimonies and in our public addresses we rarely mention our most miraculous experiences, and we rarely rely on signs that the gospel is true. We usually just affirm our testimony of the truthfulness of the restored gospel and give few details on how we obtained it. Why is this? Signs follow those that believe. Seeking a miracle to convert someone is improper sign seeking. By the same token, it is usually inappropriate to recite miraculous circumstances to a general audience that includes people with very different levels of spiritual maturity. To a general audience, miracles will be faith-reinforcing for some but an inappropriate sign for others.

There are good reasons why we do not seek conversions by exhibiting signs. “The viewing of signs or miracles is not a secure foundation for conversion. Scriptural history attests that people converted by signs and wonders soon forget them and again become susceptible to the lies and distortions of Satan and his servants (Hel. 16:23; 3 Ne. 1:22, 2:1, 8:4). . . .

“In contrast to the witness of the Spirit, which can be renewed from time to time as needed by a worthy recipient, the viewing of a sign or the experiencing of a miracle is a one-time event that will fade in the memory of its witness and can dim in its impact upon him or her.”<sup>8</sup>

President George Q. Cannon (1827–1901), who served for more than a quarter century in the First Presidency, observed: “It has been a matter of remark

among those who have had experience in this Church that where men have been brought into the Church by such manifestations, it has required a constant succession of them to keep them in the Church; their faith has had to be constantly strengthened by witnessing some such manifestations; but where they have been convinced by the outpouring of the spirit of God, . . . they have been more likely to stand, more likely to endure persecution and trial than those who have been convinced through some supernatural manifestation.”<sup>9</sup>

## SHARING MIRACLES



**R**eturning to her homeland, Japan, one woman found much-needed information at a cemetery she did not know existed.

Although we are generally counseled not to speak of sacred things like the miracles we have witnessed, there are times when the Spirit prompts us to share these experiences, sometimes even in a setting where our account will be published. The miracles written in the scriptures were obviously intended to be shared, usually to strengthen the faith of those who already believed. Modern servants of the Lord have also felt impressed to describe miraculous events to strengthen the faith of believers. Many of these have been published. I have chosen to share some of these here.

A few years after the pioneers arrived in the Salt Lake Valley, a young man took an ox team up Millcreek Canyon on a cold winter day to get logs to build a house. It was extremely cold, and the snow was deep. His sled held five large logs. After he loaded the first one, he turned around to load another. In that instant, the log already on the sled—22 feet long and about 10 inches in diameter—slipped off the sled and rolled down on him, striking him in the hollow of his legs. He was thrown face-forward across the four logs still on the ground and pinned there, alone, with no way to extract himself. He knew he would freeze to death and die alone in the mountains.

The next thing this young pioneer remembered was waking up, sitting on a load of five logs nicely bound on his sled with his oxen pulling the load down the canyon. In his personal history he wrote, “Who it was that extricated me from under the log, loaded my sled, hitched my oxen to it, and placed me on it, I cannot say.”<sup>10</sup> Thirty-three years later, that young pioneer, Marriner Wood Merrill, was ordained an Apostle.

Many miracles happen to aid individuals in pursuing their personal family histories. In an issue of the *Church News*, a woman told how she returned to her ancestral home in Japan to seek information about

her ancestors. After finding nothing in official records, local libraries, and cemeteries, she gave up and was driving away empty-handed when she became lost and somehow drove past a cemetery she did not know existed. From the car window she saw a familiar name on a tombstone, stopped, and found many markers with the information she sought."<sup>11</sup>

Miraculous healings through priesthood blessings and the prayer of faith are familiar to most of us. An experience related in the *Friend* magazine is typical. During his early childhood, Elder John M. Madsen was afflicted with double pneumonia. After examining the little boy, a doctor told his parents he could do nothing for him and offered no hope that he would live through the night. Soon the child sank into unconsciousness. When his mother felt for his pulse and could find none, she prayed fervently, and the father gave the dying child a priesthood blessing. Immediately he recovered consciousness and began to feel better.<sup>12</sup>

In his great talk on miracles, Elder Matthew Cowley tells of several miraculous healings, including

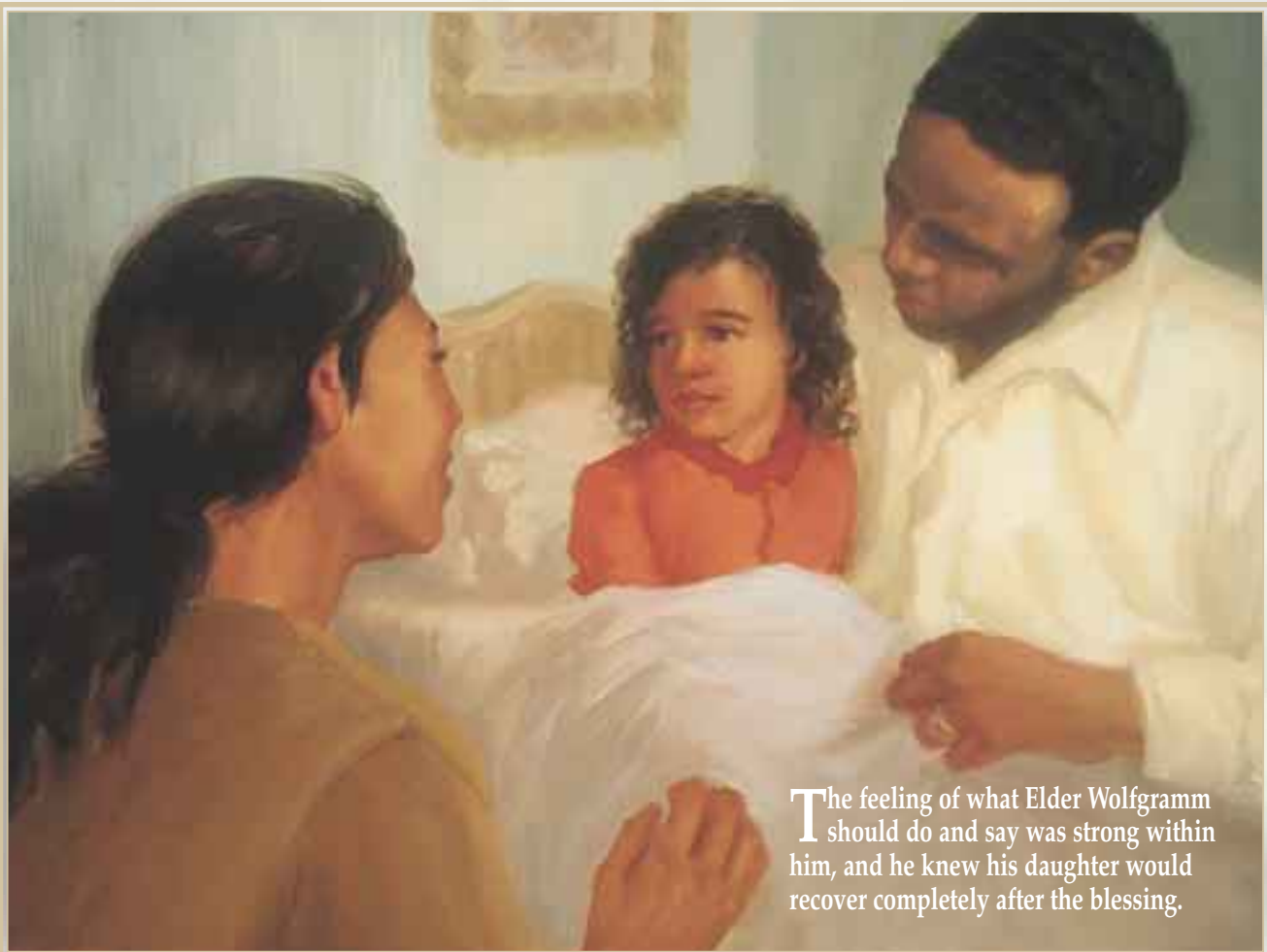
this one that occurred while he was serving as a mission president among the Maori people of New Zealand.

One Sunday a father brought a nine-month-old baby forward to Brother Cowley, requesting that he give him a name and a blessing. Here I quote Brother Cowley:

"I said, 'All right, what's the name?' So he told me the name, and I was just going to start when he said, 'By the way, give him his vision when you give him a name. He was born blind.' It shocked me, but then I said to myself, why not? Christ said to his disciples when he left them, 'Greater things than I have done shall you do.' (See John 14:12.) I had faith in that father's faith. After I gave that child its name, I finally got around to giving it its vision. That boy is about twelve years old now. The last time I was back there I was afraid to inquire about him. I was sure he had gone blind again. That's the way my faith works sometimes. So I asked the branch president about him. And he said, 'Brother Cowley, the worst thing you ever did was to bless that child to receive



**T**he young man was thrown face-forward across the logs and pinned there, alone, with no way to extract himself. He knew he would freeze to death and die alone in the mountains.



The feeling of what Elder Wolfgramm should do and say was strong within him, and he knew his daughter would recover completely after the blessing.

his vision. He's the meanest kid in the neighborhood; always getting into mischief.' Boy, I was thrilled about that kid getting into mischief!"<sup>13</sup>

President Gordon B. Hinckley shared another miracle in the restoration of sight: "I recall once when I arrived in Hong Kong I was asked if I would visit a woman in the hospital whose doctors had told her she was going blind and would lose her sight within a week. She asked if we would administer to her and we did so, and she states that she was miraculously healed. I have a painting in my home that she gave me which says on the back of it, 'To Gordon B. Hinckley in grateful appreciation for the miracle of saving my sight.' I said to her, 'I didn't save your sight. Of course, the Lord saved your sight. Thank Him and be grateful to Him.'"<sup>14</sup>

As I said earlier, the Lord works miracles in response to the faith of His children. No denomination—not even the restored Church—has a monopoly on the blessings of the Lord. He loves and blesses all of His children.

In an airport one day I picked up a copy of the *Dallas Morning News*. My eyes were drawn to a

columnist's report of a letter detailing a remarkable miracle. The writer's five-year-old granddaughter, Heather, suddenly became feverish and lethargic. She breathed with difficulty, and her lips turned blue. By the time she arrived at the hospital, her kidneys and lungs had shut down, her fever was 107 degrees, and her body was bright red and covered with purple lesions. The doctors said she was dying of toxic shock syndrome, cause unknown. As word spread to family and friends, God-fearing people from Florida to California began praying for little Heather. At the grandfather's request, a special prayer service was held in their Church of Christ congregation in Waco, Texas. Miraculously, Heather suddenly came back from the brink of death and was released from the hospital in a little over a week. The columnist concluded that Heather "is living proof that God does answer prayers and work miracles."<sup>15</sup>

We do not usually speak of spiritual gifts as a miracle, but sometimes the effect of a spiritual gift is miraculous. For example, many missionaries who must learn a new language are blessed with the gift of tongues. Most often this gift merely accelerates the normal

process of learning, but sometimes its effect is so immediate that it can only be called a miracle. A young mission president experienced this in the South Pacific in 1913. John Alexander Nelson Jr. spoke Samoan but not Tongan. When he arrived for an assignment in Tonga, he found that he had been scheduled to speak to a congregation of 300 Wesleyan Methodists. He began in faith by speaking a few sentences of greeting he knew in the Tongan language, and then suddenly found himself continuing to speak in Tongan. He spoke without hesitation for nearly an hour “as fluently as any native.”<sup>16</sup>

Eric B. Shumway’s book *Tongan Saints: Legacy of Faith* describes many other miracles experienced in those islands of faith. For example, in the midst of the furious hurricane that devastated Vava’u in 1961, a Tongan father reasoned that he had priesthood power to heal a body and saw no reason why he could not also “heal” the raging storm. Brother Shumway writes, “His dramatic blessing at the peak of the hurricane saved his home and the people who took refuge there.”<sup>17</sup>

In another experience, heavy ocean waves were crashing onto a beach at a time when the missionaries had scheduled some baptisms. An elder “stepped out and blessed the ocean, commanding it to be still so these sacred ordinances could be accomplished.” Almost instantly the ocean calmed down and five people were baptized. Then as the party started up the path from the ocean, “the waves came crashing in again over the very spot the sacred ordinances were held.”<sup>18</sup>

One of the greatest miracles we can imagine is for someone to be brought back to life after being dead for a time. So it was with Lazarus, whom Jesus raised (see John 11:17, 39–44). So it has been with others in our day.

The miracle of raising someone from the dead is so exceptional and so sacred that those who have been privileged to see it should never speak of it publicly unless the Spirit specifically induces them to do so. Our published literature contains two such examples I can share. The first is from the Matthew Cowley talk that impressed me so deeply when I was a student at BYU. I quote:

“I was called to a home in a little village in New Zealand one day. There the Relief Society sisters were preparing the body of one of our saints. They had placed his body in front of the big house, as they call it, the house where the people come to wail and weep and mourn over the dead, when in rushed the dead

man’s brother. He said, ‘Administer to him.’ And the young natives said, ‘Why, you shouldn’t do that; he’s dead.’ ‘You do it!’ . . .

“The younger native got down on his knees and he anointed this man. Then this great old sage got down and blessed him and commanded him to rise. You should have seen the Relief Society sisters scatter. He sat up and said, ‘Send for the elders; I don’t feel very well.’ . . . We told him he had just been administered to, and he said, ‘Oh, that was it.’ He said, ‘I was dead. I could feel life coming back into me just like a blanket unrolling.’ He outlived the brother that came in and told us to administer to him.”<sup>19</sup>



**M**iraculous healings through priesthood blessings and the prayer of faith are familiar to most of us.

Another sacred experience is related in the book *Tongan Saints*. It happened while Elder ‘Iohani Wolfgramm and his wife were serving a mission in their native Tonga, presiding over a branch on an outlying island. Their three-year-old daughter was accidentally run over by a loaded taxi. Four of the occupants of the taxi sorrowfully carried her lifeless body to her parents. “Her head was crushed and her face was terribly disfigured.”<sup>20</sup> The sorrowing helpers offered to take the little girl’s body to the hospital so the doctors could repair her severely damaged head

and face for the funeral. I now quote the words of her father, Elder Wolfgramm: “I told them I did not want them to take her but that I would ask God what I should do and, if it was possible, to give her life back.”<sup>21</sup>

The helpers took the little girl’s body into the chapel. Elder Wolfgramm continued: “I asked them to hold her while I gave her a priesthood blessing. By then the curious people of the village were flocking in to see our stricken little daughter. As I was about to proceed with the administration, I felt tongue-tied. Struggling to speak, I got the distinct impression that I should not continue with the ordinance. It was as if a voice were speaking to me saying: ‘This is not the right time, for the place is full of mockers and unbelievers. Wait for a more private moment.’

“My speech returned at that moment and I addressed the group: ‘The Lord has restrained me from blessing this little girl, because there are unbelievers among you who doubt this sacred ordinance. Please help me by leaving so I can bless my child.’”<sup>22</sup>

The people left without taking offense. The grieving parents carried the little girl to their home, put her body on her own bed, and covered her with a sheet. Three hours passed, and her body began to

show the effects of death. The mother pleaded with the father to bless her, but he insisted that he still felt restrained. Finally, the impression came that he should now proceed. I return to his words:

"All present in the home at that moment were people with faith in priesthood blessings. The feeling of what I should do and say was so strong within me that I knew Tisinā would recover completely after the blessing. Thus, I anointed her head and blessed her in the name of Jesus Christ to be well and normal. I blessed her head and all her wounds to heal perfectly, thanking God for his goodness to me in allowing me to hold his priesthood and bring life back to my daughter. I asked him to open the doors of Paradise, so I could tell her to come back and receive her body again and live. The Lord then spoke to my heart and said, 'She will return to you tomorrow. You will be reunited then.'"<sup>23</sup>

The parents spent an anxious night beside the body of the little girl, who appeared to be lifeless. Then, suddenly, the little girl awoke, alive and well. Her father's account concludes: "I grabbed her and examined her, her head and face. They were perfectly normal. All her wounds were healed; and from that day to this, she has experienced no complications from the accident. Her life was the miraculous gift from Heavenly Father during our missionary labors in Fo'ui."<sup>24</sup>

## MIRACLES I HAVE EXPERIENCED

I have seen quite a few miracles during my Church service. I feel I can share two of them at this time.

I had an experience with the gift of tongues in the newly opened country of Bulgaria. In November 1990 we sent missionaries into Bulgaria. A handful of elders entered from Serbia, without any contacts or training in the Bulgarian language. Through their labors and the blessings of the Lord, we soon had 45 Bulgarian members.

In April 1991 I went to Bulgaria with Area President Hans B. Ringger and mission president Dennis B. Neuenschwander. There, most of our members and about 150 investigators assembled in an attractive civic building in Sofia for a fireside at which I was to speak. My interpreter was Mirella Lazarov, a newly baptized member in her 20s. The audience included many professional people and some government officials. I had prayed fervently for guidance in this talk but had little time for preparation.

I began by telling the audience about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and how we differed from other Christian churches. I then felt impressed to speak about the Apostasy, which I did in some detail. In doing so, I completely forgot that I was speaking through an interpreter who had been a member only five months and had almost no background in the subject of the Apostasy. Forgetful of this, I made no attempt to speak in simple terms but made extensive use of the unfamiliar English words involved in a detailed explanation of the Apostasy and the Restoration.

After the crowd had departed, Sister Lazarov tearfully told me of her unique experience in translating my talk. Despite her fluency in English, she sometimes heard me speak words or express thoughts she did not understand in English. She said that whenever this happened, "another voice" spoke through her so she found herself using words or explaining concepts in Bulgarian that she did not understand in English. I told her to cherish this experience and testify of it to others. She had experienced the gift of tongues in a classic circumstance in which the Lord gives a spiritual gift to one person so that others of His children can be edified and His work can be forwarded (see D&C 46:9).

I experienced another miracle during an attempted military coup to overthrow the government of Philippine president Corazon Aquino in December 1989.<sup>25</sup> Many persons were killed in nearly a week of heavy fighting between rebel and loyal government troops. A principal site of this fighting was Camp Aguinaldo, which adjoins our temple in Manila.

During the first day of the attempted coup, gunfire and bombing could be heard from our temple. That night the road in front of the temple was occupied by rebel armored vehicles, trucks, and many soldiers. With the coming of daylight on Saturday, these rebel forces exchanged gunfire with the loyal government troops in Camp Aguinaldo. Opposing aircraft fired rockets and dropped bombs.

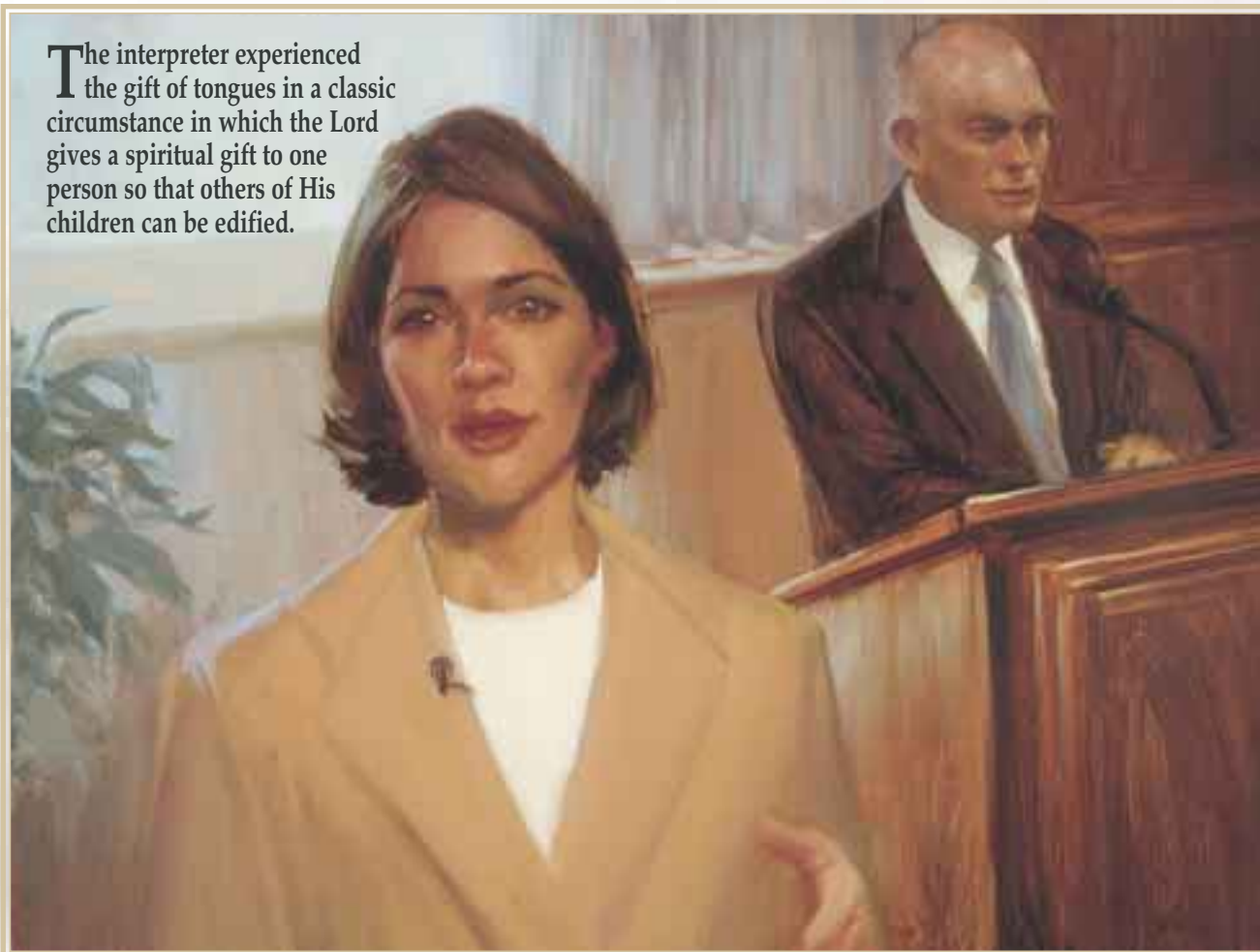
At about 3:00 P.M. Saturday afternoon, the rebel soldiers breached the gate of the temple and occupied our temple grounds. At this time we had five Philippine employees there: three security men and two custodians. Our temple president, Floyd H. Hogan, instructed them by phone not to resist the soldiers entering the temple grounds or the temple annex, which housed auxiliary facilities like name processing, but to secure the temple and take cover there. The man in charge,



**R**ebel soldiers breached the gate of the Manila Philippines Temple and occupied the temple grounds.



The interpreter experienced the gift of tongues in a classic circumstance in which the Lord gives a spiritual gift to one person so that others of His children can be edified.



Brother Espi, later wrote that he worked to develop a good relationship with the rebel soldiers to convince them that even though they wanted to get access to the temple, “because of the sacred nature of the temple, they should not try to enter.”

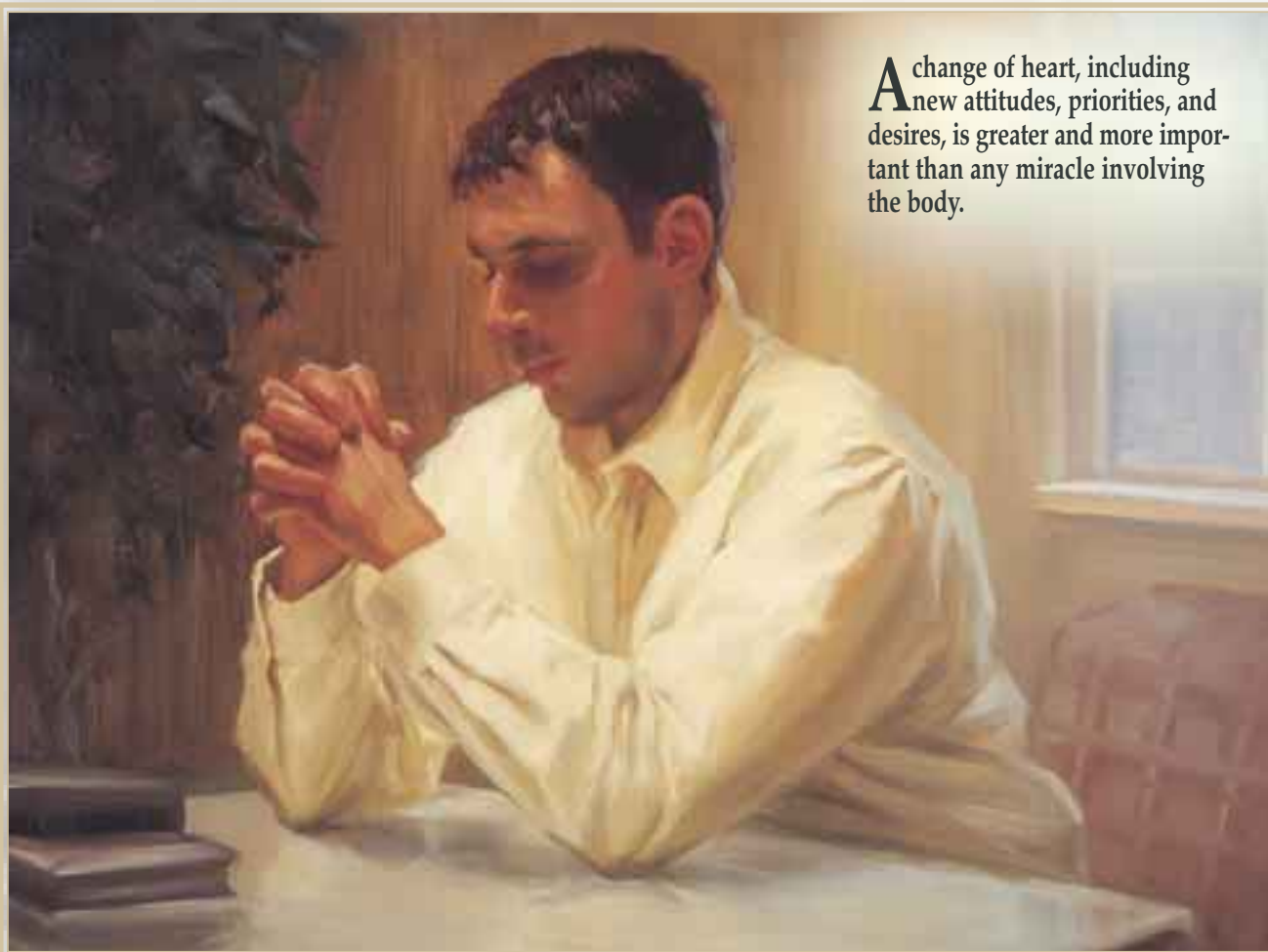
Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning there were almost continuous exchanges of gunfire between the government troops in Camp Aguinaldo and the rebels around the camp, including those occupying our temple grounds. Brother Espi later wrote: “We all thought that we are on our own but still asked our Heavenly Father to strengthen each one of us and to spare the temple from being desecrated.”

Others were praying too. In his later report, Area President George I. Cannon wrote: “The Sunday when the rebellion was going on was fast Sunday. Throughout the Philippines the members were praying and fasting for the temple, for the members, and for the missionaries.”

Sunday morning a government helicopter gunship appeared and strafed the vicinity of the temple, but retreated because of stiff resistance from the rebels’ 50-caliber machine guns. About noon that day

an air force plane dropped several bombs that hit the residence house near the temple. Bomb fragments broke windows in the temple annex.

Sunday evening Manila radio reported that the Mormon temple was in rebel hands but that a government force was moving in to drive them out. At that report, President Hogan, the temple president and a retired colonel in the U.S. military, went into action himself. He made the dangerous walk from the temple president’s home to the assembling government troops. There he found that their commander had given the rebels one hour to surrender and planned to attack them at 11:00 P.M. His force included armored personnel carriers, heavy mortars, and at least 150 soldiers, who believed they outnumbered and could easily defeat the rebel force in the temple annex. But their attack would obviously employ extensive heavy weapons and rifle fire and would cause great damage to the temple facilities. President Hogan argued with the commanding officer that if he would only wait until daylight, the rebels might abandon the temple grounds and no attack would be necessary. The commander insisted



A change of heart, including new attitudes, priorities, and desires, is greater and more important than any miracle involving the body.

that he had to follow his orders, and President Hogan was not able to contact the general who had given the order to see if he would rescind it.

During this time I was the member of the Quorum of the Twelve whom the Philippines Area President contacted for help at headquarters. Thirty minutes before the 11:00 P.M. Manila deadline, Area President George I. Cannon phoned me to report that our temple annex and grounds were the last remaining rebel stronghold in Manila and the army had massed artillery and troops for an assault at any moment. He said he had done all he could through the Philippine government and the American ambassador to discourage the attack, but without success. It was then 7:30 A.M. Sunday in Salt Lake City.

By a remarkable coincidence—one of those happenings that cannot be coincidental—the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles had scheduled an unusual meeting that Sunday morning. At 8:00 A.M., 3 December, just 30 minutes after I received that alarming report from Manila, the assembled First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve bowed in prayer and pleaded with the Lord to intervene to protect His

house. Elder Marvin J. Ashton led our prayer. As we prayed, it was 11:00 P.M. Sunday evening in Manila, the exact hour appointed for the assault.

The attack never came. Twenty minutes after our prayer, President Cannon phoned Church headquarters to report that the military commander had unexpectedly decided against a night assault. Early the next morning, Philippine time, President Hogan phoned to say that the rebels had melted away during the night. I recorded in my journal, “I consider this a miracle of divine intervention no less impressive than many recorded in holy writ.”

On Monday morning President Hogan inspected the temple annex. It had shrapnel marks and many broken windows on the north side, but inside, none of its locked rooms had been entered. The temple itself had not been entered and was not damaged. A total of six mortar or rocket shells had exploded inside the temple grounds. From their trajectory, President Hogan concluded that some of these shells had to have passed between the spires of the temple. The patron housing building under construction nearby had been hit by four or five rockets and had

sustained extensive damage. The Manila temple opened for normal sessions the next day.

A week later I received a letter from the Philippine ambassador to the United States, Emmanuel Pelaez, whom I had recently hosted at Church headquarters. His letter explained how he had worked behind the scenes, as soon as he learned that our temple was threatened, to urge the Philippine military to “do everything possible” to spare this sacred building from damage. After the fighting was over, they had reported to him that “they were careful in their counter-shelling, so as not to cause damage” to the temple.<sup>26</sup> I concluded that the Lord had worked behind the scenes through these government servants to save His house.

When I was in the Philippines a few months later, I personally inspected the temple and grounds and found that despite all of the shelling and exchanges of gunfire within a few feet of this sacred edifice, it was completely unmarked by any shell fire except for one bullet hole, apparently a single stray rifle shot, at the top of the highest steeple. As President and Sister Donald L. Hilton of the Philippines Manila Mission wrote in a letter sent to their missionaries, “an unseen army of angels assisted faithful temple guards that the temple was not desecrated.”

## THE GREATEST MIRACLE OF ALL

I have spoken about miracles. I have given illustrations of miracles in the Church as a whole and in many different circumstances involving a few individuals or a crisis of weather or war. But the greatest miracle is not in such things as restoring sight to the blind, healing an illness, or even raising the dead, since all of these restorations will happen, in any event, in the Resurrection.

Changing bodies or protecting temples are miracles, but an even greater miracle is a mighty change of heart by a son or daughter of God (see Mosiah 5:2). A change of heart, including new attitudes, priorities, and desires, is greater and more important than any miracle involving the body. I repeat, the body will be resurrected in any event, but a change affecting what the scripture calls the “heart” of a spirit son or daughter of God is a change whose effect is eternal. If of the right kind, this change opens the door to the process of repentance that cleanses us to dwell in the presence of God. It introduces the perspective and priorities that lead us to make the choices that qualify us for eternal life, “the greatest of all the gifts of God” (D&C 14:7).

My dear brothers and sisters, I pray that each one of us may experience and persist in that miracle of the mighty change of heart, that we may realize the destiny God has prescribed for all of His children and the purpose of this Church to bring to pass the eternal

lives of men and women. This is the Church of Jesus Christ, and He is our Savior, our Redeemer, and our Resurrector. We are His spiritual children, spiritually begotten by His sacrifice in Gethsemane and on Calvary and possessing the opportunity to qualify for eternal life. May God bless us to do so. □

*From a talk given at a Church Educational System fireside in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, on 7 May 2000.*

*Gospel topics: miracles, faith, priesthood*

### NOTES

1. In Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 5 vols. (1992), 2:908.
2. See “Not My Will, But Thine” (1988), 25.
3. *Ensign*, May 1989, 16.
4. See also Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 202–15.
5. See George Q. Cannon, *Gospel Truth* (1987), sel. Jerreld L. Newquist, 151–52.
6. “The Significance of Miracles in the Church Today,” *Instructor*, Dec. 1959, 396.
7. *Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe (1998), 341.
8. Dallin H. Oaks, *The Lord’s Way* (1991), 87.
9. In *Deseret News Semi-Weekly*, 15 Feb. 1882, 1.
10. Marriner Wood Merrill, in Jeaneen Merrill Anderson, “Pinned to the Ground,” *Church News*, 6 Sept. 1997, 16.
11. See Keiko Teshima Fuller, “Treasure in Tombstones,” *Church News*, 18 Mar. 2000, 16.
12. See Rebecca Todd Archibald, “Friend to Friend,” *Friend*, Mar. 2000, 6.
13. *Miracles*, Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year (5 Apr. 1966, rebroadcast from a speech delivered 18 Feb. 1953), 9.
14. *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1997), 343.
15. “Sometimes, ‘Miracles’ Are Just That,” *Dallas Morning News*, 30 Jan. 2000, p. 31A.
16. Eric B. Shumway, trans. and ed., *Tongan Saints: Legacy of Faith* (1991), 45.
17. *Tongan Saints*, 14.
18. *Tongan Saints*, 84.
19. *Miracles*, 9.
20. *Tongan Saints*, 88.
21. *Tongan Saints*, 88.
22. *Tongan Saints*, 88.
23. *Tongan Saints*, 89.
24. *Tongan Saints*, 89.
25. The facts recited here are based on written reports in the Historical Department Archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and in the personal journal of Dallin H. Oaks.
26. Letter dated 11 Dec. 1989.

## LET’S TALK ABOUT IT

*Most Ensign articles can be used for family home evening discussions. The following questions are for that purpose or for personal reflection:*

1. *What is the purpose of miracles?*
2. *Why is it unwise to base our testimonies upon miracles?*
3. *When is it appropriate or inappropriate to discuss miracles we have witnessed?*
4. *Why is a “mighty change of heart” a great miracle?*

# JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION

*Justification and sanctification are elements of a divine process that qualifies us to live in the presence of God the Father and Jesus Christ.*



BY ELDER D. TODD  
CHRISTOFFERSON  
*Of the Presidency of the Seventy*

Justification and sanctification are at the center of God's gracious plan of salvation and are the essence of our witness of the Lord Jesus Christ. While justification and sanctification may be viewed as distinct topics, in reality I believe they are elements of a single divine process that qualifies us to live in the presence of God the Father and Jesus Christ.

I have organized my discussion of this doctrine into three sections based upon statements from "The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles."

1. "As we commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ two millennia ago, we offer our testimony of the reality of His matchless life and *the infinite virtue of His great atoning sacrifice.*"

2. "He gave His life to atone for the sins of all mankind. *His was a great vicarious gift* in behalf of all who would ever live upon the earth."

3. "He will rule as King of Kings and reign as Lord of Lords, and every knee shall bend and every tongue shall speak in worship before Him. *Each of us will stand to be judged of Him according to our works and the desires of our hearts*" (*Ensign*, Apr. 2000, 2–3; emphasis added).

## "THE INFINITE VIRTUE OF HIS GREAT ATONING SACRIFICE"

Justification and sanctification are the fruit of the Atonement's "infinite virtue," which virtue we also refer to as mercy or grace. A verse in the Book of

Mormon lays a helpful foundation: "And if ye shall say there is no law, ye shall also say there is no sin. If ye shall say there is no sin, ye shall also say there is no righteousness. And if there be no righteousness there be no happiness. And if there be no righteousness nor happiness there be no punishment nor misery. And if these things are not there is no God. And if there is no

God we are not, neither the earth; for there could have been no creation of things, neither to act nor to be acted upon; wherefore, all things must have vanished away" (2 Ne. 2:13).

Lehi here remarks on the foundational nature of law, the divine law that governs in the universe. Elsewhere in the scriptures, as in Alma 42 for example, the word *justice* is used with similar meaning. So justice, or law, is something of a platform that sustains certain other fundamentals.

Lehi states that if there were no law, there would be no sin: "If ye shall say there is no law, ye shall also say there is

no sin." Why cannot sin exist if law does not exist? What is sin? Quite simply it is disobedience to law. Obviously, where there is nothing to obey or disobey, there cannot be disobedience.

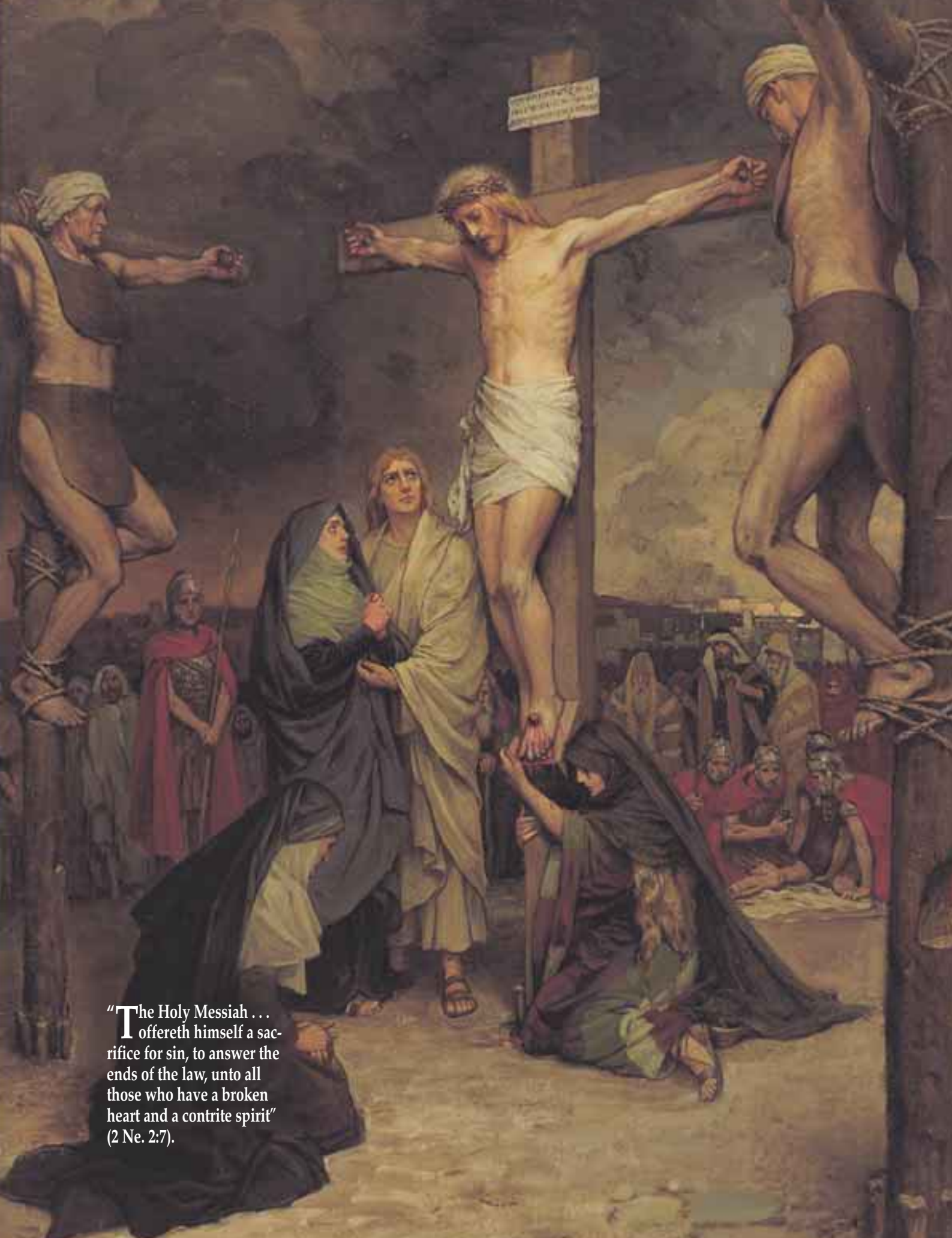
Lehi continues, "If ye shall say there is no sin, ye shall also say there is no righteousness." Again the question, why? What is righteousness but obedience?

Just as law must exist for sin or disobedience to be possible, so law must exist to give rise to the possibility of obedience or righteousness.

Lehi next observes, "If there be no righteousness there be no happiness." One may ask why. To me the answer is clear: happiness is the product of righteousness. It is a question of cause and effect. Happiness, the



*Lehi taught his family about the foundational nature of law.*



**T**he Holy Messiah . . . offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law, unto all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit” (2 Ne. 2:7).

effect or result, can exist only when its necessary cause, righteousness, is first present.

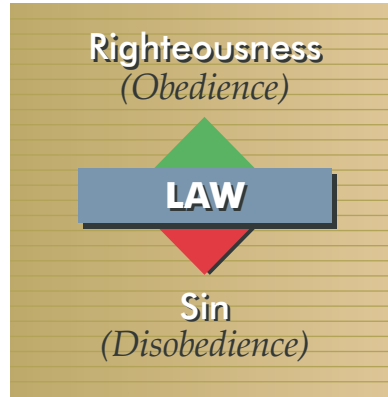
Completing the symmetry, Lehi adds, "If there be no righteousness nor happiness there be no punishment nor misery." Why so? Again, it is a matter of cause and effect: misery is the consequence of sin, its natural result.

Without any of these things and the necessary predicate or foundation of law, Lehi concludes, there could be no God, no earth, no mankind, "for there could have been no creation of things, neither to act nor to be acted upon." Without law, one could not predict or control outcomes of actions. Without awareness of cause and effect, there would really be no such thing as choice. Existence would simply be chaos, the action of random forces. God could not work His will, and if we existed at all, we would lack the means to be actors; we would only be "acted upon."

Fortunately, reality is otherwise. Lehi affirms, "There is a God, and he hath created all things, both the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are, both things to act and things to be acted upon" (2 Ne. 2:14).

Nevertheless, we still face a dilemma. Lehi states it earlier in this same chapter: "And men are instructed sufficiently that they know good from evil. And the law is given unto men. And by the law no flesh is justified; or, by the law men are cut off. Yea, by the temporal law they were cut off; and also, by the spiritual law they perish from that which is good, and become miserable forever" (2 Ne. 2:5).

With nothing more, by virtue of the Fall and our own disobedience, the law condemns us to temporal and spiritual death. Law, or justice, is not a pleasant concept when one is condemned by it and "miserable forever." Worldly philosophies attempt to resolve this misery and guilt by endeavoring to erase divine law or define it out of existence. As we have already observed, if we could get rid of the law, there would be no such thing as sin and thus no misery. With Corianton, there are many today who "try to suppose that it is



*Lehi taught: "If ye shall say there is no law, ye shall also say there is no sin. If ye shall say there is no sin, ye shall also say there is no righteousness" (2 Ne. 2:13).*

injustice that the sinner should be consigned to a state of misery" (Alma 42:1). This approach, however, if it could succeed, would also eliminate our potential for happiness. We need to preserve justice for our own sakes, for our own potential happiness.

There is a better way. That better way is not to deny the law, but to come out from under its condemnation. The righteous are supported by law, a pleasant position to be in. But to achieve that status, we need more than the law alone. We need a Savior. We need a Mediator.

Again, Lehi:

"Wherefore, redemption cometh in and through the Holy Messiah;

for he is full of grace and truth.

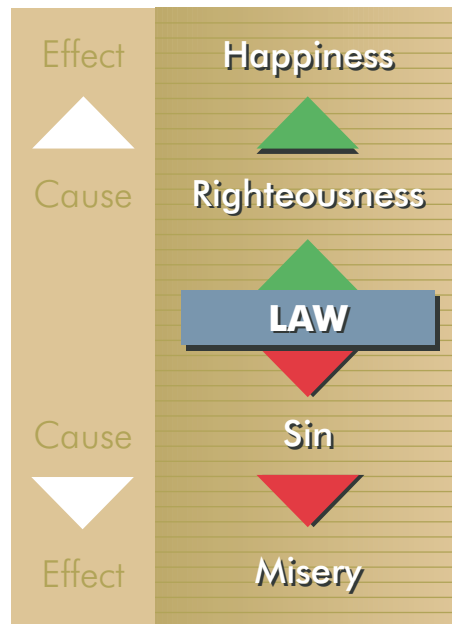
"Behold, he offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law, unto all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit; and unto none else can the ends of the law be answered" (2 Ne. 2:6–7).

Because of "the infinite virtue of His great atoning sacrifice," Jesus Christ can satisfy or "answer the ends of the law" on our behalf. Pardon comes by the grace of Him who has satisfied the demands of justice by His own suffering, "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" (1 Pet. 3:18). He removes our condemnation without removing the law. We are pardoned and placed in a condition of righteousness

with Him. We become, like Him, without sin. We are sustained and protected by the law, by justice. We are, in a word, *justified*.

Thus, we may appropriately speak of one who is justified as pardoned, without sin, or guiltless. For example, "Whoso repenteth and is baptized in my name shall be filled; and if he endureth to the end, behold, him will I hold *guiltless* before my Father at that day when I shall stand to judge the world" (3 Ne. 27:16; emphasis added). Yet glorious as the remission of sins is, the Atonement accomplishes even more. That "more" is expressed by Moroni:

"And again, if ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then are ye *sanctified* in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the



*Righteousness leads to happiness, and sin leads to misery.*

**N**ephi said: "Do the things which . . . your Lord and your Redeemer should do. . . . For the gate by which ye should enter is repentance and baptism by water" (2 Ne. 31:17).



blood of Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father unto the remission of your sins, that ye become holy, without spot" (Moro. 10:33; emphasis added).

To be sanctified through the blood of Christ is to become clean, pure, and holy. If justification removes the punishment for past sin, then sanctification removes the stain or effects of sin. The Prophet Joseph Smith testified:

"And this is the gospel, the glad tidings, which the voice out of the heavens bore record unto us—

"That he came into the world, even Jesus, to be crucified for the world, and to bear

[justify] the sins of the world, and to sanctify the world, and to cleanse it from all unrighteousness" (D&C 76:40–41).

Speaking of certain priesthood brethren in ancient times, Alma said:

"Therefore they were called after this holy order, and were sanctified, and their garments were washed white through the blood of the Lamb.

"Now, they, after being sanctified by the Holy Ghost, having their garments made white, being pure and spotless before God, could not look upon sin save it were with abhorrence; and there were many, exceedingly great many, who were made pure and entered into the rest of the Lord their God" (Alma 13:11–12).

We may appropriately speak of sanctification as the baptism of the Spirit, or being "baptized with fire, and with the Holy Ghost" (Moses 6:66).

"And no unclean thing can enter into his kingdom; therefore nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who have washed their garments in my blood, because of their faith, and the repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end.

"Now this is the commandment: Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, *that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost*, that ye may stand spotless before me

**T**he tokens of the Atonement, the bread and water, become symbolic cleansing agents and the sign of our renewed covenant.

"IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME," BY WALTER RANE



at the last day" (3 Ne. 27:19–20; emphasis added).

It will seem a natural thing for those who have been sanctified to enter into the rest or kingdom of God, for they will have become like Him (see 1 Jn. 3:2; Moro. 7:48). As the Lord said to Adam after he had been baptized by water and by the Spirit, "Behold, thou art one in me, a son of God; and thus may all become my sons" (Moses 6:68).

### "HIS WAS A GREAT VICARIOUS GIFT"

This marvelous pardon that relieves us of the punishment that justice would otherwise exact for disobedience and the purifying sanctification that follows are best described as gifts, or the gift of grace. "His was a great vicarious gift in behalf of all who would ever live upon the earth" ("The Living Christ," 2). Given the magnitude of the gift of grace, we would never suppose, even with all the good we could possibly do in this life, that we had earned it. It is just too great. "We know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do," says Nephi (2 Ne. 25:23). It is, and will always be, in truth, the gift of God through His divine Son.

But, as Nephi implies, there is something we can do, something that all who are accountable must do. To have effect, the gift must be accepted: "For what





doth it profit a man if a gift is bestowed upon him, and he receive not the gift? Behold, he rejoices not in that which is given unto him, neither rejoices in him who is the giver of the gift" (D&C 88:33).

Thus, it is not that we *earn* these gifts, but rather that we *choose* to seek and accept justification and sanctification. Since the Savior paid for our sins and satisfied justice for us, we become debtors to Him rather than to justice. We must therefore meet the stipulations He has established for forgiveness and cleansing. Otherwise, He withdraws His proffered mediation, and we are left to deal alone with the demands of justice, lacking the means to become pure. One must choose Christ to receive what Christ offers.

How does one choose Christ? We noted earlier Lehi's declaration that it requires "a broken heart and a contrite spirit" (2 Ne. 2:7). Nephi elaborates: "Wherefore, do the things which I have told you I have seen that your Lord and your Redeemer should do; for, for this cause have they been shown unto me, that ye might know the gate by which ye should enter. For the gate by which ye should enter is repentance and baptism by water; and then cometh a remission of your sins by fire and by the Holy Ghost" (2 Ne. 31:17).

I repeat the Savior's succinct declaration in 3 Nephi: "Now this is the commandment: Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in

my name, that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day" (3 Ne. 27:20).

Referring to the diagram on page 24, we see that the gift of grace or mercy is received as a believer repents, enters into the specified covenants, and receives the Holy Ghost. This action of acceptance on our part opens the door for the process of justification (remission, or pardoning, of sins) and sanctification (cleansing from sin) to work in us—something we may refer to as being born again:

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

"Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:3–5).

This rebirth was described more fully to Adam as recorded in the book of Moses. God taught Adam that it was necessary for men to repent, be baptized, and receive the Holy Ghost. Adam, seeking deeper understanding, asked why (see Moses 6:50–53). God explained that man must be clean in order to dwell in His presence and that this requires a cleansing birth into the kingdom of God:

"By reason of transgression cometh the fall, which fall bringeth death, and inasmuch as ye were born into the world by water, and blood, and the spirit, which I have made, and so became of dust a living soul, even so ye must be born again into the kingdom of heaven, of water, and of the Spirit, and be cleansed by blood, even the blood of mine Only Begotten; that ye might be sanctified from all sin, and enjoy the words of eternal life in this world, and eternal life in the world to come, even immortal glory;

"For by the water ye keep the commandment; by the Spirit ye are justified, and by the blood ye are sanctified" (Moses 6:59–60).

We see here the elements that bring about our second birth or entry into the kingdom of God analogized to the elements that accompany our birth into mortality (water, blood, and spirit). This birth from mortal life into eternal life requires the interaction of (1) covenants (symbolized by water, the principal feature of our first covenant: baptism), (2) the grace of Christ (symbolized by His blood), and (3) the Holy Spirit, the medium through whom atoning grace is applied to remit sins and sanctify souls.

Justification and sanctification are accomplished by the grace of Christ, which grace is a gift to man based on faith. But our moral agency is also a necessary element in this divine process. We must will to

repent and act to repent. We must elect to be baptized and receive the Holy Ghost, and we must elect to remain loyal to our covenants thereafter. To receive the gift we must act in the manner He has ordained.

### “EACH OF US WILL STAND TO BE JUDGED”

It is clear that our acceptance of the gift of grace is not a single act occurring at a single moment in time, but is instead an ongoing process and obligation. The words of the Savior in 3 Nephi that we have already referred to make this point:

“Whoso repenteth and is baptized in my name shall be filled [with the Holy Ghost]; and if he endureth to the end, behold, him will I hold guiltless before my Father at that day when I shall stand to judge the world.

“And he that endureth not unto the end, the same is he that is also hewn down and cast into the fire, . . .

“And no unclean thing can enter into his kingdom; therefore nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who have washed their garments in my blood, because of their faith, and the repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end” (3 Ne. 27:16–17, 19; emphasis added).

We are warned:

“There is a possibility that man may fall from grace and depart from the living God;

“Therefore let the church take heed and pray always, lest they fall into temptation;

“Yea, and even let those who are sanctified take heed also” (D&C 20:32–34).

In due course, Jesus Christ will judge the world, both those who have rejected His grace and those who have accepted His mercy:

“There is a law given, and a punishment affixed, and a repentance granted; which repentance, mercy claimeth; otherwise, justice claimeth the creature and executeth the law, and the law inflicteth the punishment; if not so, the works of justice would be destroyed, and God would cease to be God.

“But God ceaseth not to be God, and mercy claimeth the penitent, and mercy cometh because of the atonement; and the atonement bringeth to pass the resurrection of the dead; and the resurrection of the dead bringeth back men into the presence of God; and thus they are restored to his presence, to be judged according to their works, according to the law and justice.

“For behold, justice exerciseth all his demands, and also mercy claimeth all which is her own; and thus, none but the truly penitent are saved” (Alma 42:22–24).

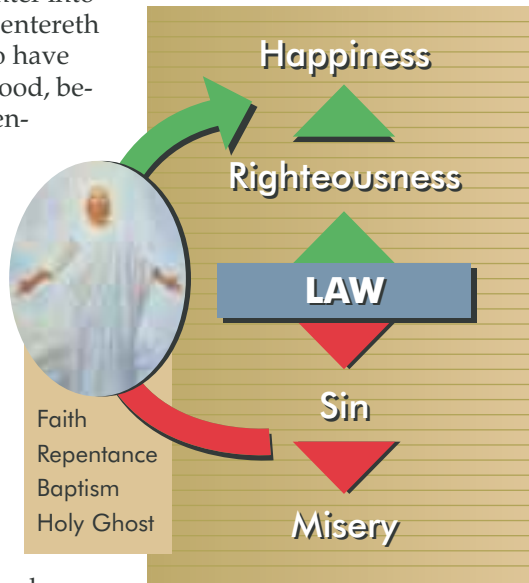
To be classed among the truly penitent, random acts of obedience will not be adequate. We must properly enter into the covenants and persist in keeping them to the point that our expectation of salvation is affirmed by the Holy Spirit of Promise (see D&C 132:7, 19). It is not simply the promise of obedience in our contracts with Deity that brings grace, but the performance of our promises: “For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified” (Rom. 2:13).

None of us, of course, is perfectly obedient, and thus we rely on our baptismal covenant to bring a remission of sins after baptism just as it has done for our lives before baptism. We rely on repentance to reinvigorate that covenant, to bring the Holy Spirit and, with it, atoning grace. The process of cleansing and sanctifying

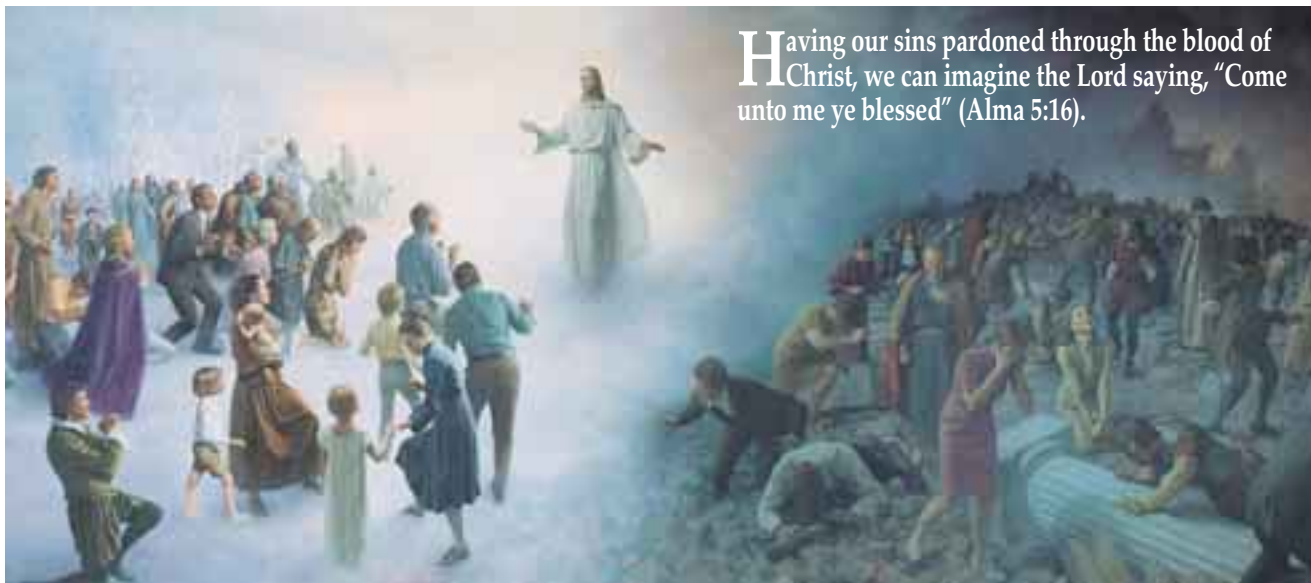
through the baptisms of water and of the Holy Ghost can be continued weekly as we worthily partake of the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. The tokens of the Atonement, the bread and water, become symbolic cleansing agents and the sign of our renewed covenant, similar to the symbolism of the water in which we were immersed at baptism. It is as if we were being baptized afresh and the door once again opened for the Holy Spirit to enter, “that [we] may always have his Spirit to be with [us]” (D&C 20:77). Thus, we need not fear judgment. Having our sins remitted or pardoned and our garments spotless through the blood of Christ, we can imagine we hear the voice of the Lord in the Day of

Judgment saying, “Come unto me ye blessed, for behold, your works have been the works of righteousness upon the face of the earth” (Alma 5:16).

This personal persistence in the path of obedience is something different than achieving perfection in mortality. Perfection is not, as some suppose, a prerequisite for justification and sanctification. It is just the opposite: justification (being pardoned) and sanctification (being purified) are the prerequisites for perfection. We only become perfect “in Christ” (see Moro. 10:32), not independently of Him. Thus, what is required of us in order to obtain mercy in the day of



*The gift of grace or mercy is received as a believer repents, enters into the specified covenants, and receives the Holy Ghost.*



Having our sins pardoned through the blood of Christ, we can imagine the Lord saying, “Come unto me ye blessed” (Alma 5:16).

judgment is simple diligence. As the Prophet Joseph Smith counseled from the dank prison of Liberty, Missouri: “Let us cheerfully do all things that lie in our power; and then may we stand still, with the utmost assurance, to see the salvation of God, and for his arm to be revealed” (D&C 123:17; see also Mosiah 4:27).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles once expressed our obligation this way:

“Everyone in the Church who is on the straight and narrow path, who is striving and struggling and desiring to do what is right, though far from perfect in this life; if he passes out of this life while he’s on the straight and narrow, he’s going to go on to eternal reward in his Father’s kingdom.

“We don’t need to get a complex or get a feeling that you have to be perfect to be saved. . . . The way it operates is this: you get on the path that’s named the ‘straight and narrow.’ You do it by entering the gate of repentance and baptism. The straight and narrow path leads from the gate of repentance and baptism, a very great distance, to a reward that’s called eternal life. . . . Now is the time and the day of your salvation, so if you’re working zealously in this life—though you haven’t fully overcome the world and you haven’t done all you hoped you might do—you’re still going to be saved” (“The Probationary Test of Mortality,” Salt Lake Institute of Religion devotional, 10 Jan. 1982, 12).

When we stand before the Savior to be judged of Him, it will be “according to our works and the desires of our hearts” (“The Living Christ,” 3; see also D&C 137:9). Where we can act, where we have the capacity and the means, we must act if we are to retain a justified and sanctified status. But where we legitimately and truly cannot act, the Lord will accept the desire for the deed. An application of this principle

can be found in King Benjamin’s statements about our obligations to the poor. To those with means and power to help, he counseled: “And now, for the sake of these things which I have spoken unto you—that is, for the sake of retaining a remission of your sins from day to day, that ye may walk guiltless before God—I would that ye should impart of your substance to the poor, every man according to that which he hath, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and administering to their relief, both spiritually and temporally, according to their wants” (Mosiah 4:26).

To those who lack means to assist, he said: “And again, I say unto the poor, ye who have not and yet have sufficient, that ye remain from day to day; I mean all you who deny the beggar, because ye have not; I would that ye say in your hearts that: I give not because I have not, but if I had I would give.

“And now, if ye say this in your hearts ye remain guiltless” (Mosiah 4:24–25).

The Savior offers to all who will have faith and accept it, the gifts of being justified or pardoned before the law and also being sanctified—that is, being made spotless and holy. There is no other name, nor way, nor means whereby such redemption may occur (see Mosiah 3:17; Moses 6:52). And truly His grace is sufficient to achieve it (see Moro. 10:32). So my witness to each member of the Church, and our witness to the world, is as recorded in the scripture of this last and greatest dispensation:

“And we know that justification through the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is just and true;

“And we know also, that sanctification through the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is just and true, to all those who love and serve God with all their mights, minds, and strength” (D&C 20:30–31). □

*Gospel topics: justification, sanctification, faith in Jesus Christ, Atonement*

# Setting *Family Standards* for Entertainment

*While the world continues to offer entertainment that disregards spiritual values, we can teach our families to choose what's best and ignore the rest.*

BY CARLA DALTON

Most people look forward to spring each year, anticipating the new growth of flowers and the regeneration of grass and trees. For me, however, it brings seasonal allergies, accompanied by a runny nose, sneezing attacks, and itchy, red eyes.

After years of suffering, I finally saw an allergy specialist who began injecting small doses of the allergens into my system over a period of time until I became desensitized to them. After numerous exposures, my reactions became less severe and eventually were barely noticeable, even though the dosage of allergens continued to increase.

Subtly and not so subtly, Satan exposes many of us to impure “allergens” that have the potential of contaminating our minds and spirits. These can be found in all forms of entertainment: television, the Internet, movies, music, books, and magazines. Prolonged exposure to these moral allergens that initially shock and offend us will gradually dull our spiritual sensitivities, lulling us away into carnal security and sin (see 2 Ne. 28:21). Because none of us is immune to these subtle influences, which can eventually destroy the spirit of righteousness and peace, we need to rid our homes of these harmful things.

## SET A CONSISTENT EXAMPLE

Some parents may think they are keeping a safe enough distance from inappropriate entertainment, rationalizing our involvement by saying that “just a little won’t hurt” or “it only has one bad part.” Standards will deteriorate if parents subject themselves to these influences.

Late one afternoon my husband and I stood watching the sunset on a beautiful beach, leaving our shelter and chairs far enough up on the sand to protect our belongings—or so we thought. We were taken by surprise when a huge wave suddenly washed up, covering our snacks, traveler’s checks, camera, and film. In the same way, while the tide of evil continues to rise higher and higher, we often pitch our tents upon the sandy shores of the world, assuming we are on safe ground. Our homes may unexpectedly be flooded with a deluge of evil if we do not carefully evaluate where we stand as parents.

I recognized the challenge in this when I began listening to a radio station that plays the music I enjoyed as a teenager. There were songs I hadn’t heard for more than 20 years, yet I had total recall of the lyrics, some of which I now recognize were not always appropriate. I was always taught that if you hear the music, your mind is recording the words, but I realize only

now how desensitized I was as a teenager to some of those popular lyrics. I find myself doing a lot of station-hopping because my spirit can no longer tolerate the words which come so vividly back to my mind, and I realize that if I, as a parent, want to remain credible in the eyes of my children, I cannot justify listening to or viewing the kind of entertainment that I have asked my children not to participate in.

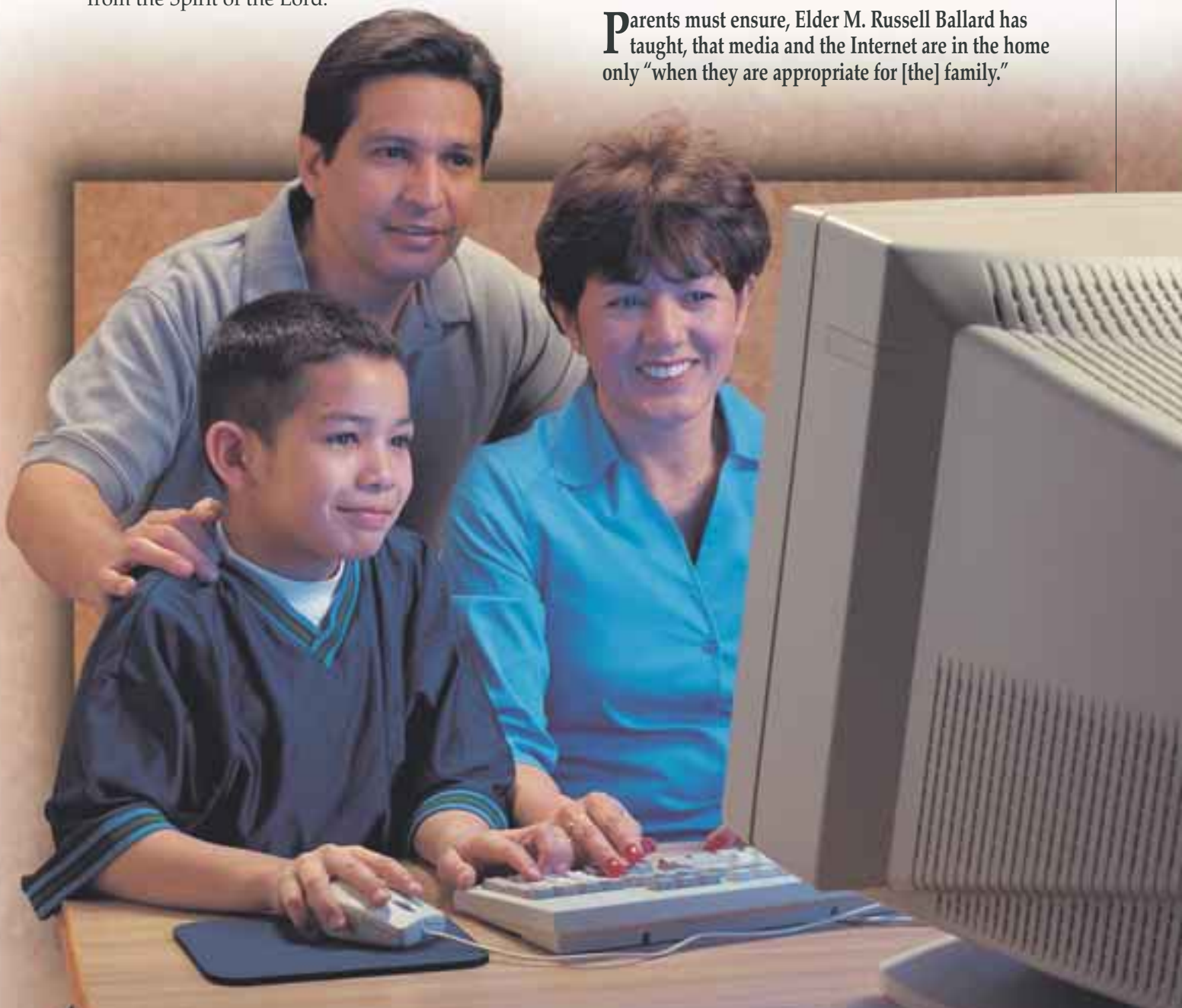
The most powerful way for us to teach our children correct principles is by example. If we stand firm against the waves of worldly entertainment and set a consistent example of private prayer, scripture study, church and temple attendance, and meaningful service, our children will be more likely to follow our example and develop these same strengths in their own lives.

We must make our homes a holy place, not a hiding place for entertainment that will lead us away from the Spirit of the Lord.

## ESTABLISH GUIDELINES, MONITOR CHOICES

Few of us would invite perfect strangers into our homes to teach questionable values to our children while we are busy in another room. Yet in effect that's what we are doing when we don't monitor and participate in our children's entertainment choices. Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said: "Movies, magazines, television, videos, the Internet, and other media are there as guests and should only be welcomed when they are appropriate for family enjoyment. Make your home a haven of peace and righteousness. Don't allow evil influences to contaminate your own special spiritual environment" ("Like a Flame Unquenchable," *Ensign*, May 1999, 87). These media sources are not just casual

**P**arents must ensure, Elder M. Russell Ballard has taught, that media and the Internet are in the home only "when they are appropriate for [the] family."



## LEAVE IT ALONE



"I plead with you to leave it alone. Stay away from any movie, video, publication, or music—*regardless of its rating*—where illicit behavior and expressions are part of the action. . . .

"The Doctrine and Covenants gives a warning and a promise. The promise says 'if your eye be single to my glory, your whole bodies shall be filled with light, and there shall be no darkness in you; and that body which is filled with light comprehendeth all things' (D&C 88:67).

"In an application of this scripture today, it is my understanding that anytime we look at or listen to this kind of material—even in its mildest form—the light inside of us grows dimmer because the darkness inside increases. The effect of this is that we cannot think as clearly on life's challenges—be they business, church, school, family, or personal. We have cluttered the channel to the source of all light with various unclean images. Our entitlement to personal revelation on any subject is severely restricted."—**Elder H. Burke Peterson of the Seventy, "Leave It Alone," *New Era*, Jan. 1995, 45; emphasis in original.**

baby-sitters—they become close companions who repeatedly teach our children to follow value systems that don't always match our own.

The Jenkins family\* had been less active in the Church during most of the children's growing-up years. As the parents once again embraced gospel truths, they knew they needed to make some changes in their lifestyle. Evaluating their entertainment was one of the first things mother and father did, but they knew they could not force their children, now in their teenage years, to immediately change some of their entertainment choices. Instead, they discussed gospel standards and encouraged each child to predetermine what forms of entertainment were acceptable. When family members came home from watching a movie or video with their friends, they were asked about what they saw and how they felt inside as they watched. This level of accountability and parental concern soon helped the children realize how much better they felt when they chose wholesome forms of entertainment. Eventually, the older children who had been struggling began to make more appropriate entertainment choices of music, television shows and videos, and computer games.

In all of our families, we can discuss and identify values and then establish guidelines for using gospel standards to evaluate entertainment choices.

### ONE SOURCE OF STRENGTH

An especially useful tool to help parents evaluate entertainment choices is the *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet. It clearly outlines standards which support the scriptures and teachings of the living prophet and apostles. It urges young people not to watch, listen to, or attend any form of entertainment that is vulgar, immoral, suggestive, or pornographic. It counsels them not to be afraid to walk out of a movie, turn off a television set, or change a radio station if what's being presented does not meet high standards. The pamphlet emphasizes that entertainment which presents immorality in any form is unacceptable, and that when we have a question whether a particular movie, book, or other form of entertainment is appropriate, we should avoid it (see *For the Strength of Youth*, 12).

Following a family home evening in which these principles had been discussed, 10-year-old Colin knew what he had to do when he was invited to go to a questionable movie for a friend's birthday party. Colin gathered the courage to tell his friend he didn't

feel right about the movie and could not attend the party. The next day his friend told Colin that a more appropriate movie had been chosen for the party. Because of Colin's willingness to take a stand, all of his friends were able to participate in a more desirable afternoon of entertainment.

Because our children cannot avoid every potentially harmful situation, we need to help them develop the moral courage to remain true to their values when faced with compromising choices. As they consistently do this, it will become easier to choose the right the next time.

Parents should set limits and help plan television and video viewing in advance. Perhaps you can determine as a family what shows are appropriate for viewing, then turn the television on for those programs only. As parents, you can discuss the programs with family members, teaching children how to evaluate and learn from what they view.

We can establish stronger family relationships if we encourage other forms of creative entertainment—reading, playing games, exercise, hobbies, and worthwhile projects.

We can also help family members evaluate entertainment choices by asking them to consider questions like these: "Does it make me feel worthy to kneel in prayer before my Heavenly Father?" "Are the values being portrayed virtuous, lovely, of good report, or praiseworthy?" (see A of F 1:13). "Are my entertainment choices bringing me closer to the Savior?" "Is this taking me away from more important things that I should be doing?"

### TEACH ABOUT OBEYING THE SPIRIT

We need to help our children learn the importance of making the Holy Ghost our constant companion. As family members learn to follow the guidance of the Spirit, they will be able to make appropriate entertainment choices. Satan knows that they will be able to resist his temptations if they have the Spirit with them. I recently heard a seminary teacher share

\* Names have been changed.

his experiences with youth who were willing to give up their collections of undesirable music. These young people didn't do it because of pressure from their parents or their teacher; it was the Spirit that convinced them to remove those influences from their lives. The Spirit changes hearts.

A young woman named Heather tells of her struggle to choose between heeding the promptings of the Spirit and listening to her friends. She had accepted a date to a concert that she knew would probably not meet Church standards, rationalizing that it probably would be all right to go just this once. Shortly after accepting the date, she was in a testimony meeting with a Church group. Their leader said that sometimes we have to make hard choices and give up things we know aren't right even when we really want them. She reminded them of the covenant they had made with the Lord to obey, and encouraged them to pray for strength to follow the promptings of the Spirit. The upcoming concert immediately came to Heather's mind, and she felt the Spirit bear strong

**W**hen we teach our children correct principles, we give them the doctrinal foundation for making correct choices as they learn to listen to the Holy Ghost.

witness that she should not attend. When she told her date and her best friend that she had decided not to go, they ridiculed her for her sudden change of heart. Had the spiritual witness not been the deciding factor in her decision, she might have buckled under the pressure, but later, after learning of some of the degrading and immoral behaviors exhibited at the concert, Heather was grateful she had heeded the Spirit and withstood the pressure to attend.

When we teach our children correct principles, we give them the doctrinal foundation for making correct choices as they learn to listen to the Holy Ghost. Alma 5:57 urges those who desire to follow Christ to "come ye out from the wicked, and be ye separate, and touch not their unclean things." We need to set ourselves apart from the world in the entertainment choices we make. We can begin to purify our lives and to strengthen our families as we set a consistent example, evaluate and establish guidelines, and encourage family members to remember their covenants and follow the promptings of the Spirit. □

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*Gospel topics: obedience, morality*



The political revolution of December 1989 affected everyone in Romania, including an eighth-grade girl named Izabela Țicală, who lived in Oradea near the Hungarian border in western Romania.

"After the revolution I had the freedom to search out other religions and grow," says Izabela, who grew up in a Romanian-Hungarian bilingual home. "I learned English mostly by reading Shakespeare and the New Testament. After high school, I had developed a desire to learn more about Christ."

In December 1998, at age 21, Izabela met the missionaries, who gave her a copy of the Book of Mormon in English. "I promised I would follow Moroni's words in Moroni 10:3-5," she said. "After

reading a few verses, I realized I had forgotten to pray. I knelt down, prayed, then went back to my reading. The word *yes* in Hungarian seemed to be in the background of the page. I didn't believe it. I said to myself, *It's just in my mind*. Later, when I prayed about Joseph Smith and the Church, the peace and warmth of the Holy Ghost came not only in my heart but also in my mind. Then I realized that the first answer was my answer."

Izabela Țicală was baptized on 18 April 1999. In many ways, she is representative of those who gained a testimony of the gospel when religious freedom increased after the fall of communism. Her testimony is added to those of other faithful Latter-day Saints who are building a strong foundation upon which the Church can grow—line upon line, member by member. For in Romania, as throughout the world, "by small and simple things are great things brought to pass" (Alma 37:6).

"We are those small and simple things," says Sister Țicală, who is serving a mission on Temple Square in Salt Lake City. "We can help bring about great things. Sometimes the Church is struggling in Romania, but I believe the Lord is preparing us for something big. We hope to have a temple and many more chapels here someday, so the adversary is working hard. But we won't let him win. We have to be positive even if it's difficult."



Members of the Obor Bucharest Ward: Ion and Georgeta Alecu with daughter Alice and son David (front row) join with friends (back row).

# THE CHURCH IN ROMANIA

BY LARENE PORTER GAUNT Associate Editor

*Committed, faithful Latter-day Saints are laying a strong foundation upon which the Church can continue to grow.*

with extensive food shortages. People revolted, and at the end of 1989 the communist government fell. The weakened economy collapsed, increasing the poverty. Nevertheless, the door was opened to the world.

On 9 February 1990, Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles dedicated Romania for missionary work and prayed that it would become a great citadel of spiritual strength and a beacon of light to neighboring nations. Now, as the gospel takes root, Romania is poised to spiritually feed itself and surrounding areas as it once physically fed them.

In the capital city of Bucharest, there are six branches—each with Romanian leaders. Recently, a new chapel was built there. Outside of Bucharest, the Church is established in Ploiești, which also has a new chapel, and Brașov and Timișoara. In 13 other outlying branches, membership is small but growing. Each of these branches is part of the Romania Bucharest Mission and enjoys the support of several sets of missionaries. A decade after the first baptisms in 1991, there are nearly 2,000 members.

## HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS

It is easy to see how the "small and simple things" done by Latter-day Saint humanitarian missionaries helped to establish the Church in Romania. In the fall

## A DECADE OF GROWTH

The beginnings of the Church in Romania are linked directly to the revolution there in 1989. A brief political history shows why. Prior to 1948, Romania, which is located in the heart of Eastern Europe, provided enough grain for itself and surrounding areas. For years it was known as the "breadbasket of Eastern Europe." With the advent of communism in 1948, the cities of Romania became industrialized. By 1960 Romanian communist leaders began to distance themselves from the USSR (Soviet Union). At first the economy grew, but by 1988, living standards had dropped dramatically

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRANDON STEPHENS, EXCEPT AS NOTED; ABOVE LEFT: PHOTO COURTESY OF ION AND GEORGETA ALECU; BACKGROUND: PHOTO BY MATT HEISS





of 1990 Beverly Cutler, Virginia Bruce, Harold and Enid Davis, Alvin and Barbara Price, and Reed and Dorothy Fife arrived in Bucharest—the first of several groups of humanitarian missionaries. They found that mass poverty had created desperate situations for many people. Thousands of parents, filled with hopelessness, left their children in orphanages because they could not provide for them. This was especially true for parents of children with disabilities. Eventually politics, poverty, and cultural attitudes caused the orphanages to swell to more than 200,000 children.

The Prices took an interest in children with disabilities and established the Special Olympics in Romania. The first games were held in June 1991 with more than 500 participants. A young Romanian girl in a wheelchair who had been shot during the 1989 revolution lit the Special Olympics flame.

“Everyone in the stadium was crying,” said Brother Price. “These games probably changed Romanians’ ideas about children who are handicapped more than

*Below: These seminary students are joyous after a testimony meeting. Background: Some Bucharest Latter-day Saints meet in this building.*

any single thing that has ever happened.”<sup>1</sup> The Prices trained the Romanians to carry on the Special Olympics, and the games have continued.

The Davises took an interest in the Bucharest Central University Library, which had been burned in the revolution. The people of Romania love learning so much that some say they will stand in line for books more than for food. In August 1991, Brigham Young University donated 20,000 books to the library. Dr. Ion Stoica, university librarian in Bucharest, visited BYU to express thanks.<sup>2</sup>

Other Church humanitarian missionaries taught people how to help themselves. A director in the Ministry of Education noted the success of this method: “The food gets eaten. The clothes get worn out. But what is taught goes on forever.”

In December 1990 the first proselytizing missionaries arrived, and in June 1991 Romania became part of the Budapest Hungary Mission. In January 1993 the Liahona Association was legally recognized by the Romanian government. Through it, the Church could obtain visas and enter legal documents. In July 1993 the Romania Bucharest Mission was created. Church humanitarian supplies arrived often during the early part of that decade for members and nonmembers as well. In September 1996 seminary and institute programs were started in Bucharest and Ploiești. During the Christmas season of 1998, the first Romanian-language copies of the Book of Mormon arrived.

## THE FIRST BAPTISMS

One year to the day after Elder Nelson dedicated Romania, humanitarian missionary Beverly Cutler was on her hands and knees scraping the floor of a remodeled house in Bucharest. “My heart was singing. We now had our own little chapel with a baptismal font.” The first three baptisms since the fall of communism were performed in this font on 24 March 1991: Octavian Vasilescu, Doina Boilaru, and Camelia Ioneascu, all of Bucharest.

Octavian Vasilescu was born in Bucharest to an academically oriented family—his mother taught physics and chemistry and his father was a financial adviser for the city of Bucharest for nearly a decade. Nevertheless, his father was arrested for possessing copies of American movies. He was jailed for six months waiting for his trial, pronounced not guilty, and released. Speaking of the time before the revolution, Brother



Vasilescu, who is an engineer by trade, says, “Our parents learned what fear is. We learned what fear is.”

However, everything changed for him and his family in the fall of 1990 when he made a “small and simple” decision—he volunteered to drive an American Latter-day Saint to church. The meeting was held in a small apartment, so Octavian simply waited inside.

“I felt a good spirit in that meeting,” he says. “I heard the prayers and talks. They were from the heart, and I liked that. I watched them pass the sacrament. I thought, *These people have good principles.*” After the meeting, he asked for a Book of Mormon in English.

All three of the first Latter-day Saints baptized in Romania became leaders and helped with translation of early Church materials.

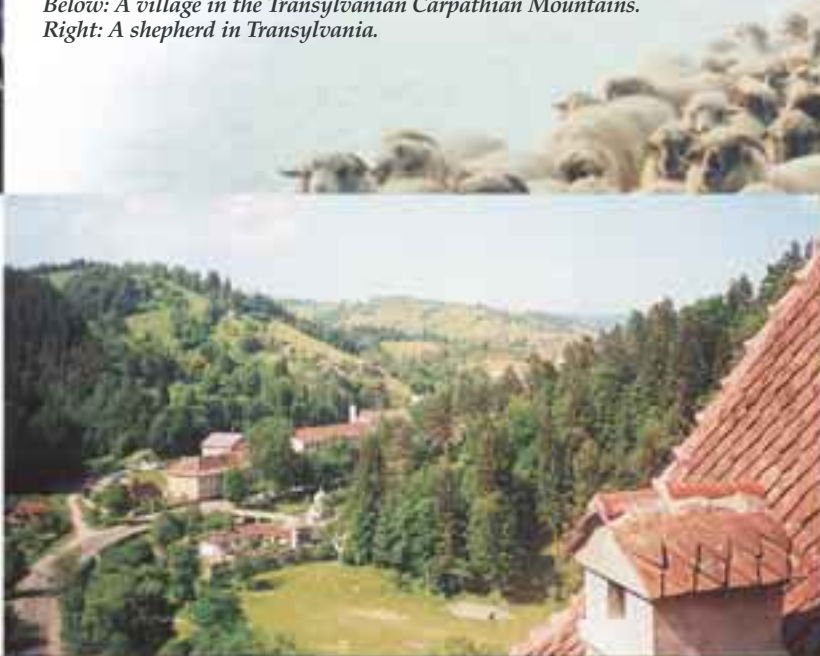
## REMEMBERING THE DIVINITY OF GOD

Though most people in Romania are happy with the change in their government, it is a challenge for new converts to make the transition from a passive religious life to an active religious life in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Gabriela Frunza remembers growing up under communism. “In school we were taught that there is no God. Our parents were at risk if they taught us religion. Even so, most people never lost their sense of the divinity of God.”

Consuela Icleanu is one who struggled with the change. In 1992 she fought her growing feelings that the gospel was true. “I had conscience problems,” she said. “It felt like treason to change. My great-grand-

*Left: A Christmas Primary program in the Cotroceni Branch.  
Below: A village in the Transylvanian Carpathian Mountains.  
Right: A shepherd in Transylvania.*



father had been a priest. How could I betray him and my Orthodox religion?" But she and her husband and two children received answers to their prayers about the truthfulness of the gospel and were baptized.

Sometimes doing "small and simple things" takes courage. In order to establish the Church, it was necessary to have some of the Latter-day Saints add their signatures to a registration application. "It took great courage to sign your name to a document that would go to the government so soon after the fall of communism," remembers Elder Dennis B. Neuenschwander of the Seventy, who was mission president and was involved in gathering the signatures. "After one sister signed, she looked me in the eyes and said firmly, 'This is my church too.'"

### STRONG TESTIMONIES SOLVE PROBLEMS

A great challenge facing Romanian Latter-day Saints is the economic situation and its impact on the family. In the early days of the Church, even asking a family to bring two slices of bread for the sacrament each week could mean a substantial sacrifice for them.

Cristinel Ciobanu was president of the Cotroceni Branch during those early years. "Many people had difficulty paying for food, electricity, and the rent," he says. "A phone was a luxury. People tried hard to pay tithing and fast offerings, but it was a challenge. We continually taught self-reliance. My counselor and elders quorum



PHOTO BY DAVID C. GAUNT

*Faithful young adults Mădălina Icleanu, Dragoș Tieru-Hatu, Laura Vasilescu, and Christina O. Popescu are children of early Latter-day Saints in Romania.*

president had jobs but needed to work nights, sometimes 12 hours a day, Sundays, Saturdays. I understood their situation very well. I had worked long hours also in 1995 and 1996, and that helped me to be promoted."

Maria Ciobanu agrees with her husband. "With the men working such long hours, women usually did all the housework and cared for the children. Most families have about two children. It's unusual for a woman to stay at home. We are hopeful things will get better."

And things are getting better. The scriptures teach that the payment of tithing sanctifies both the individual and the land in which he or she lives. As more Romanian members live the law of tithing,



they and their country are being blessed.

Life has improved for the Ion and Georgeta Alecu family as they have implemented the gospel into their lives. In 1993 they took the missionary discussions. "The Spirit was very strong with us from the beginning," says Georgeta, who now serves as Relief Society president in the Obor Bucharest Branch, "but the Word of Wisdom and tithing were difficult points for us. Both Ion and I smoked and drank coffee. We committed to quit. The next week, I went to my mother's house, and she offered me coffee. I said no, but she gave me some anyway. I didn't want to hurt her feelings, so I took a sip. I felt terrible. From that moment on, I never drank coffee again."

Ion, who serves in the elders quorum presidency and also as Young Men president in the district, remembers their struggle with tithing. "One day we were discussing tithing on the bus, and we had a powerful personal experience that motivated us to pay our tithing. We have done so ever since."

Georgeta remembers the morning in 1993 after they were baptized: "Even though apartments in Romania are so cold in the winter that you can see your breath, we didn't even notice because we were so happy."

Life has improved dramatically for the Alecus since then. Ion went to Italy to work in a tile factory. The owner was impressed that Ion didn't drink or smoke. He noticed Ion's work ethic and honesty. Finally, he proposed that Ion open a tile factory in Romania for his company, which he did with great success.



*Romania's deep-rooted and multi-faceted history is reflected in its picturesque countryside and architecture.*

## JOY IN TEMPLE ATTENDANCE

In August 2000 the Alecus were sealed in the temple and performed the ordinances for their grandparents and great-grandparents. They are among other Romanians who rejoice in receiving the temple ordinances, though the sacrifice to attend is significant.

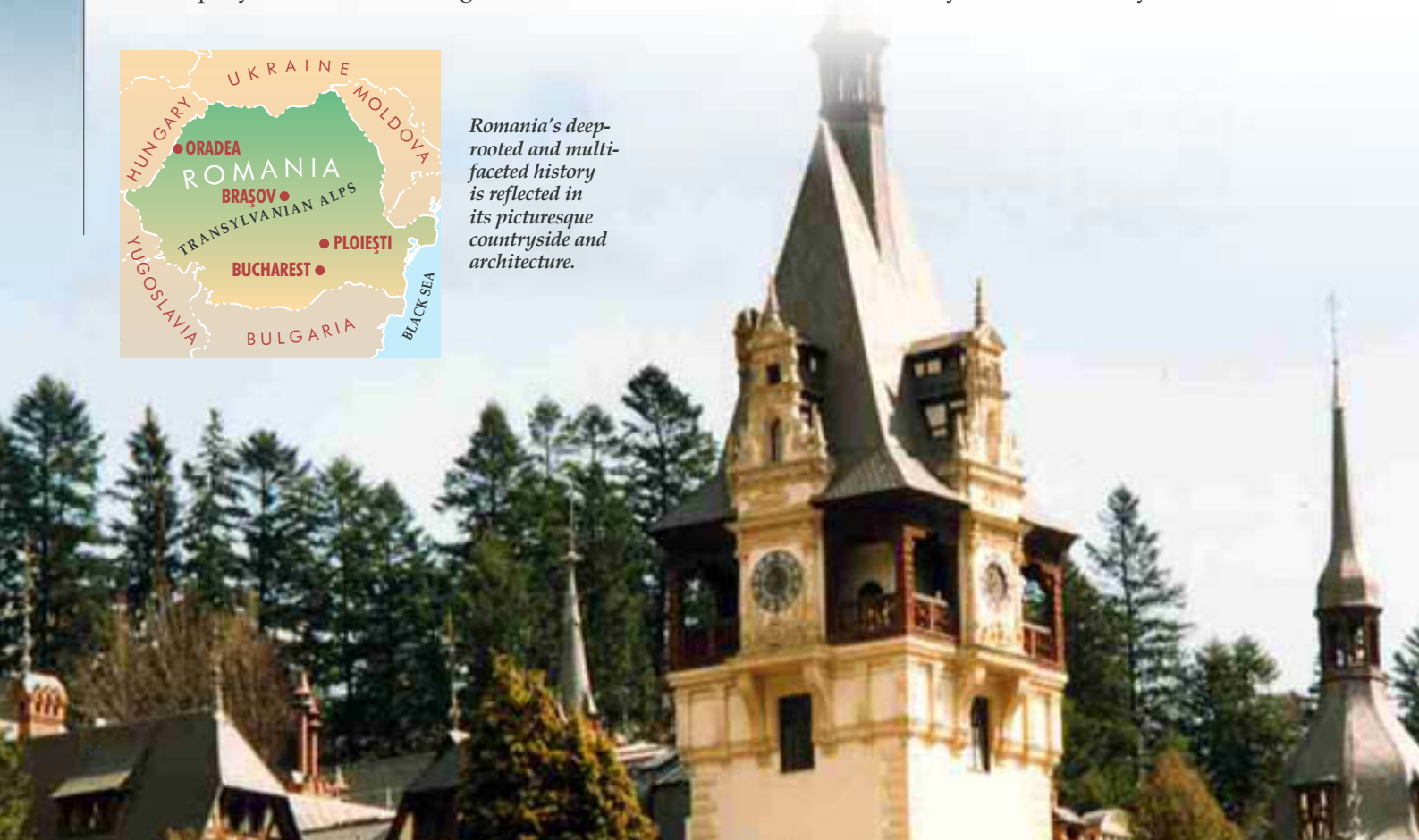
Members usually plan two trips a year to the Freiberg Germany Temple. "We travel 36 hours by bus," says Maria Ciobanu. "We arrive in Germany in the evening, go to the temple the next day at eight o'clock and spend all day, the next day also. The trip is always worth it."

Mădălina Icleanu, a young woman, says, "We went as a family so we could be sealed. Many came with us to share our joy. I also did baptisms. Now my parents are teaching a temple preparation class."

Of the temple, one young woman says, "I don't think there are words to describe what the temple meant to me. It is truly the house of the Lord. The peace that is there is like nothing else I have ever felt."

## "CLOSE FRIENDS"

"Small and simple" decisions abound for Latter-day Saint youth who are a tiny minority scattered among the millions of people in Romania. Alice Alecu is the only Latter-day Saint in her Bucharest high school. "It's not easy, but I'm not ashamed to say that I am a member of the Church," she says. "At first all of my friends lived



near me. They had good hearts, but without the gospel they did things I didn't agree with. Now my best friend is a member even though she lives an hour away."

The Church tries to help the youth to feel a part of the larger Latter-day Saint population in Romania and get to know each other. Activities help—such as a three-day youth conference that was held in July 2000 in the mountains of southeastern Transylvania. About 70 teens enjoyed sports, lectures, a talent show, and a dance.<sup>3</sup>

"The Spirit was so powerful that everyone just forgot about the cold," said one leader. "Many of the youth cried when they had to leave because they had become such close friends."

As always, there is hope in the future as the youth gain spiritual strength. Missions help prepare them to become the next generation of leaders. When Dragoș Tieru-Hatu was a deacons quorum president, he traveled a great distance to visit a quorum member who was ill. When others commented on the long trip, the young man said, "But he is in my quorum, isn't he?" This young leader later served a full-time mission.

### "TOO POWERFUL TO DENY"

Overcoming challenges has made many of the members strong. Following are a few testimonies:

A young convert says, "After I was baptized, the sister missionaries gave me a copy of the Book of Mormon in English as a gift. I wanted to read it so badly that I attended the English classes taught by the missionaries. I studied the Book of Mormon three or four hours a day, and I loved it. That's how I learned English."

One young mother says, "We know this is God's church but that people sometimes make mistakes. The Spirit is too powerful to deny. We are grateful to Jesus Christ for His sacrifice for us, so we remain active."

A priesthood leader says, "My testimony is not based on people. I didn't join the Church to change the Church. I joined the Church to change myself. In our callings, we follow the Church doctrine, principles, and rules. We rely on the *Church Handbook of Instructions*."

Each testimony anchored in Jesus Christ is added line upon line, member by member, building



Temple Square missionaries Alexandra Badea, of Bucharest, and Izabela Țicală, of Oradea.

a strong gospel foundation and leading Romanian Latter-day Saints into a brighter future.

"Romania is beautiful, and I love it so much," says Alexandra Badea, a sister missionary who has returned to Romania after her Temple Square mission. "If I have a choice, I'll live here forever because there are so many good things. People are wonderful. I know it's hard sometimes, but if you want this life to be beautiful you can find it in the gospel of Jesus Christ." □

*Gospel topics: testimony, temple work, missionary work, humanitarian service*

#### NOTES

1. *Church News*, 7 Dec. 1991, 10.
2. *Church News*, 17 Aug. 1991, 5.
3. *Church News*, 12 Aug. 2000, 15.

### FAITHFUL SISTERS OF BRAȘOV: 1903–33

**B**rașov, once known as Kronstadt, is located on the northern side of the Carpathian Mountains. The town was part of the Austria-Hungarian Empire for many years before becoming part of Romania. Beginning in 1903, Brașov was home to a small but faithful group of Latter-day Saints who were still meeting 30 years later.

In 1933 President Oliver H. Budge, mission president in Berlin, wrote to Helene Bammer Bernhardt, who had been a part of the group since she was a child, and asked her to tell him the group's history. She responded in two letters, reporting that missionary Mischa Markow and his companion came to their city in August 1903. Several people were baptized, including her parents.

The group survived over the years with the help of missionaries. Some of the local men who presided moved to America and some died, eventually leaving this group without priesthood leadership, so they functioned as a Relief Society under the president of the mission. Helene kept a list

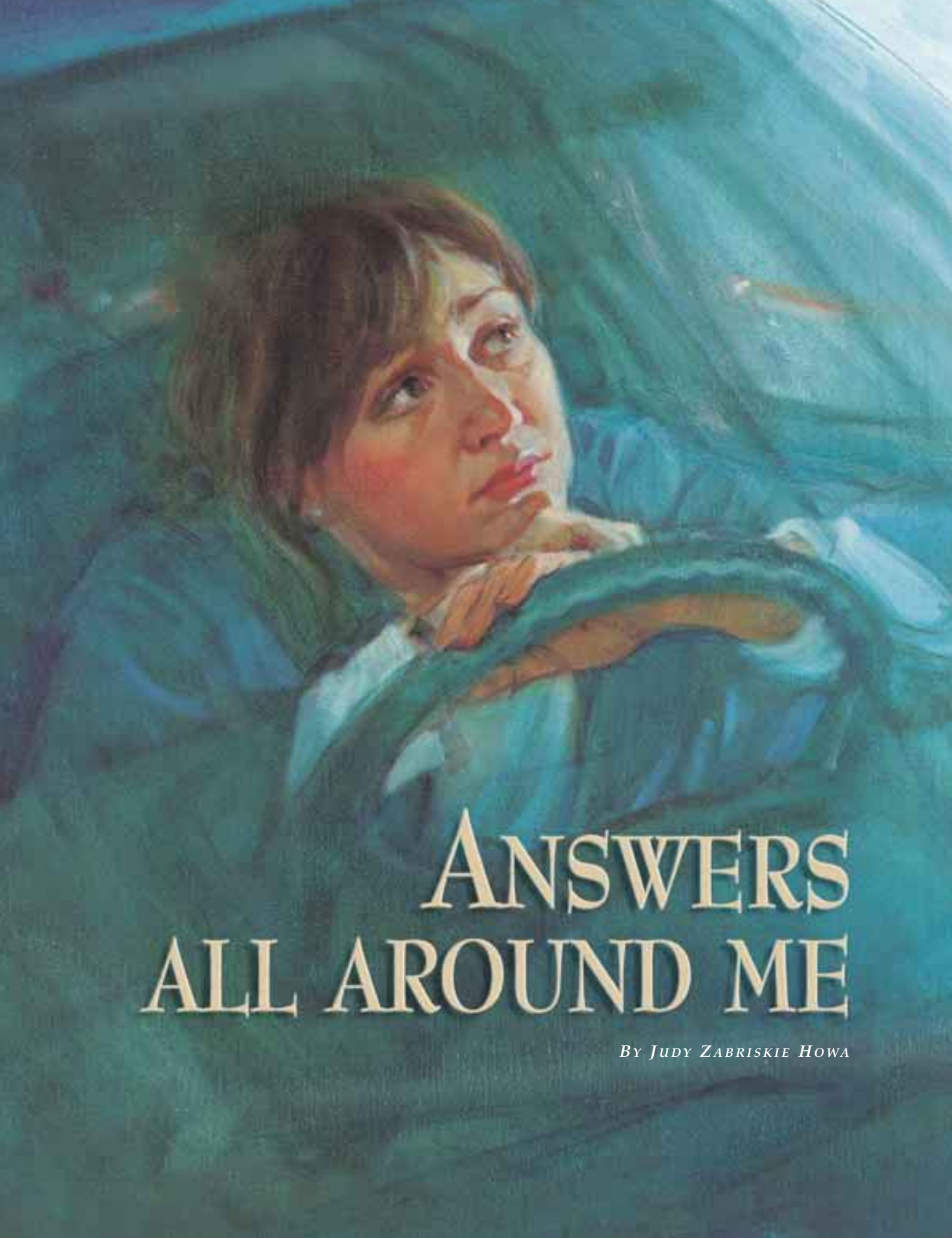
of the names of the 48 missionaries who served in the area and the 30 people baptized between 1903 and 1933.

Of the effects of World War I on the group, Helene wrote: "The terrible war [was] making an end to everything. Long and dreary years now began for us all. We were isolated, no connection with the Church whatsoever, only dependent on ourselves. But this time also went by. The Lord was with us and did not leave us."

In February 1926 the group welcomed two visiting priesthood holders. Helene wrote: "Can you realize what it means to be able to take part in the sacrament and to enjoy the spirit of a meeting after such a long time of 12 years? After a long, dark night the sun finally shone again for us."

In 1933 President Budge visited the group. He wrote: "We administered the sacrament. They all wept for joy."

On 5 June 1995, 60 years after Helene Bernhardt's letters, Brașov opened for missionary work again as part of the Romanian Bucharest Mission, and today a branch is established there. □



ANSWERS  
ALL AROUND ME

*By JUDY ZABRISKIE HOWA*

As my two sons descended into the waters of baptism, I watched them grab hold of the silver handrail in the font, and I was filled with a feeling of warmth and peace. The sight of one son baptizing another is enough to make any mother's heart overflow with joy, but considering how far our family had come—how far *I* had come—the experience was especially fulfilling. The event caused me to reflect on how I, too, in my youth had grabbed hold of a handrail—a spiritual rod—then let go, finally grasping it again in adulthood.

Growing up, I was a dedicated teen. I received all of my Young Women awards, graduated from four years of seminary, and was a seminary vice president. As Lehi described in his dream, I “caught hold of the end of the rod of iron” and “did press forward” toward the tree of life (see 1 Ne. 8:24).

But little by little along my way, I became interested in the “great and spacious building” of Lehi’s dream and the people within (see vv. 26–27). I wanted to know more of them. I gradually changed my friends and started hanging out with a different crowd. While I continued to hold to the rod with one hand, not quite wanting to let go, I leaned more and more toward my new friends and the “spacious building.”

I still went to church, but that was the only day I thought about God. My interests changed; my activities changed; *I* changed. By the time I entered college, I had no grip on the rod at all. I found myself thinking, *I can go back to church any time I want. I just don't need religion in my life right now.*

## WANDERING ALONE

Years passed, and I continued to live a life that drifted from the teachings of my youth, a life in which I thought I was happy. But after my first marriage ended in divorce and the death of my second husband left me a widow at 30, I found myself in the depths of despair.

Throughout these years, I never spoke badly of the Church or its teachings. But I had become so absorbed with my own self-pity (I thought my life was so much harder than anyone else's), I found it uncomfortable to be with Church members, even family members. I thought their biggest challenge was coming up with good family home evening lessons every week.

It was my young son who saved me then. For his sake, I decided to be strong and change my life. As I looked at myself and my friends and saw how our lifestyle was slowly destroying us, I knew I wanted something better for my son. After I changed my

standards, I soon lost all my so-called friends. The changes I made led me to a happier life—I married a good, loving man, and we were able to adopt a newborn son. Yet I had not returned to the gospel and I still felt a deep void inside of me. I had strayed so far from the iron rod that I didn't know where to find it. I had left the “spacious building,” but now wandered alone in spiritual darkness, where I was to remain for several more years.

## SEARCHING FOR SOMETHING

After my second son started school, I began working as an x-ray technician. My job description included receiving phone calls in the dead of night and driving alone to the hospital. Most of the time I just had to perform a simple x ray. But sometimes it would involve a fatal accident. At those times I found myself looking at that still form lying there, sometimes mangled, sometimes without a mark, and I began realizing how fragile my own existence was.

I remember one instance in particular in which three men had been joyriding in a new truck. They were drinking and speeding when they rolled their vehicle. Two of the men were killed, and one was seriously injured.

As I left the emergency room that morning, the sun was just rising and the sky taking on a tint of pink. The birds were starting to sing in the trees, and I thought, *What a beautiful morning, I'm so glad to go home after such a hard night.*

Then I saw the brothers of the men who had died, their heads hanging low as they walked to their car. I'm sure they didn't hear the birds singing or notice the color of the sky. Their lives were changed forever.

I sat there in my car and pondered over those men. What did life have in store for them? I also thought about my life and what it had in store for me. What was my purpose in life? If I died, would I really go somewhere, or would I merely cease to exist?

Many nights after that, I would drive home from the hospital, staring up at the stars but seeing only darkness, even when the moon was bright. I felt myself wanting to search for God. But being in a scientific and analytical world, working with all the modern technology, I started finding it impossible to believe God could exist. It didn't stand to reason. How could it be possible? It frightened me to think that way. It made me feel so alone.

As I drove at night, looking up into the darkness of the heavens, in my heart I began to beg for a sign that God was there. It didn't have to be a huge sign, just *something*. I never even saw a falling star. I became very discouraged.



*I had let go of  
the iron rod  
so long ago  
that I thought  
I could never  
find my  
way back.  
I was wrong.*



## REACHING OUT

I began to share some of my spiritual troubles with my sister and my brother, who are active Church members. I think they could sense my despair, and I'm sure it caused them concern. Now I realize that my family knew what I needed, but for years I hadn't been ready to partake of it.

One day I received a call from a man with a scruffy voice asking me if I wanted to subscribe to the *Friend*. I had no idea how he had gotten my number. I thought,

*This man must be nuts. Does he really think I want Church magazines?* But as I went to say "no," my mouth formed the word "yes," and I told him I wanted the *Ensign* too! Hanging up, I thought, *Wow, that was strange. I can't believe I did that.*

Shortly thereafter, while in a local bookstore, I was drawn toward some novels based on early Church history. *I've heard of these books, I thought. My mom and sister are always talking about them. But I don't want to read them.*

A few days later, I went back in and bought one of the books. I took it home and hid it from my husband and two sons. I didn't want them to think I had flipped or something. The book stayed hidden for several weeks, and I all but forgot about it.

**A**s I was working in my yard, a car pulled up. To my surprise, it was the bishop and his wife.



## TO THOSE WHO HAVE WANDERED



*"I would like to talk to those who have wandered away from the*

*fold. . . You have in many instances formed new associations and no longer keep Church standards. Many of your children tread in your paths and follow your example. Children are not only largely dependent on their parents for physical and emotional support but for spiritual support as well. . . .*

*"What a blessing it would be to your family if you would harmonize your life with the gospel. The decision to change your life and return to activity and come unto Christ is the most important decision you could make in this life."*

Elder Ben B. Banks of the Seventy, "Feed My Sheep," *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 10-11.

As the *Ensign* and *Friend* started to arrive, at first they too were tossed aside and ignored. But for some reason they began to beckon to me. I started looking through them, enjoying the beautiful pictures. I even started reading an article or two. I found the words comforting and warm.

One day while cleaning, I ran across the book I had bought a few months earlier and hidden away. I opened it and started to read, wanting very much not to enjoy the book. Yet I couldn't put it down. Page after page I read, not wanting to stop, the whole time thinking, *What's come over me?*

Several months later, as I was working in my yard, a car pulled up and a man and a woman got out. The man looked like an old high school chum I hadn't seen in 20 years, so I quickly ran over to them. But to my surprise it was a couple I had never met, the bishop and his wife. We visited, and they invited me to church. I was there the next Sunday.

I felt uncomfortable at first, but when we sang the hymns I recognized from my youth, I started to cry. The Spirit comforted me, and I knew it was right to be there.

## RECOGNIZING ANSWERS

A short time later my sister called, and I began telling her of the unusual events in my life. "I don't know what's happening to me," I told her. "I feel compelled to go to church. I count the days until my *Ensign* comes and read it cover to cover. I can't remember when I've ever felt this way. Why am I so strongly pulled in this direction? My husband and children have noticed a difference too. I'm calmer, more patient, and I have a new inner peace."

My sister was very quiet on the other end of the phone and finally said, "May I tell you something that I hope you will understand?" Slightly perplexed, I asked her to go on.

"Several months ago the whole extended family decided to fast and pray as a group for you and your family, that your heart would be changed and that you would return to church."

Dumbfounded, I realized that I had started yearning and searching at the same time my family had fasted and prayed for me. In that instant everything

fell into place; I realized that the whole time I had been asking for signs in the heavens, thinking there were none, there had been signs all around me and within me. I just hadn't recognized them.

It was my family's fasting and praying that brought this miracle into my life. Suddenly I realized how much they loved me.

## GRASPING THE IRON ROD

Four years have passed since that momentous day. Over these years, I've gradually developed relationships with the people in my ward, have been given Church callings, have developed my testimony through gospel study, and have become strong in the gospel. Along the way, I've stumbled and fallen, but I continue to get back up.

As I've become stronger in my faith, I've also seen my husband, a member of another church, become stronger in his faith in Jesus Christ. He supports me in my Church attendance and callings, and we've started holding "nondenominational" family nights. Our marriage is stronger today than it has ever been.

One of the greatest blessings that has come into my life is that my two sons have also become strong in the gospel. My older son,

who was baptized at nine but never active, has become active in the Church. He has received the priesthood, and he and his wife are working toward going to the temple. He recently baptized my younger son, who had requested baptism after hearing the missionary discussions on his own.

Now as I look up into the heavens at night, they no longer look dark and empty, even when there is no moon. There is a light now that comes from within. I know there is a God. I know He loves me. I know He hears my prayers. I know that His Son, Jesus Christ, lives and that through Him all things are possible. I know the peace and contentment that come from holding to the rod and living the gospel. I know the difference it has made in me by returning to it. To any who may be struggling and asking for answers, realize that we do receive them; we just have to recognize them. □

*Judy Zabriskie Howa is a member of the Helper Ward, Helper Utah Stake. Gospel topics: activation, answers to prayer, fasting, testimony, faith*

# Singular

## Accomplishments

BY JONATHAN H. STEPHENSON  
Assistant Managing Editor

**T**hey are bright and talented. They are eager to learn, serve, and contribute to the work of the kingdom. They are our adult single converts, and they're joining the Church by the tens of thousands every year. Their numbers are evenly split between men and women, and they are primarily between the ages of 18 and 30. Each year they bring in a wonderful influx of faith and strength.

One place that has been particularly successful with adult singles is the Lexington Kentucky Stake. Nestled amid the rolling hills and horse farms of the beautiful Kentucky countryside is a stake whose full-time missionaries, stake and ward leaders, and members are dedicated to cooperatively helping each newly baptized person experience both a *social* and a *spiritual* conversion. Their success seems to come from:

1. A friendly boldness in speaking freely about the gospel to everyone;
2. A warm and welcoming atmosphere in the wards and branches;
3. Established, well-organized programs for single members.

### FRIENDLY BOLDNESS

Because overall convert baptisms in the stake have increased significantly in recent years, so has the



*Members and missionaries in the Lexington Kentucky Stake have found a formula for success in baptizing and friendshiping adults who are single.*

baptism of singles. "There is a real receptiveness in this area that cuts across race, gender, and marital status. The missionaries are very active finders, and we're seeing many more member referrals," says President Michael C. Cannon of the Kentucky Louisville Mission. A key factor in this increase has been an emphasis on the Lord's exhortation to "open your mouths" (D&C 28:16; 33:8–10).

Elder Abraham Arnett, a missionary from Chandler, Arizona, explains: "In this mission we talk to absolutely everybody we possibly can. We look at every individual as a potential member of the Church, so we don't want to hold back. We tell people things about the Church that we hope will help

make it more appealing to them. When we talk to singles we tell them, 'We have activities for singles. This is perfect for you.'"

President Cannon says, "That's been a great tradition in this mission—that the missionaries will preach everywhere and are able to be bold but not overbearing" (see Alma 38:12). As a result, many more adult singles are being invited to learn more about the Church.

Members are also using friendly boldness. Joann Maddox, a registered nurse and single mother, was first introduced to the Church as she was saying good-bye to a patient. The patient's wife asked her if she knew of the Church. In relating her experience, Joann says, "She also asked if I would mind if the

missionaries came by my house.” At first Joann rejected a visit by the missionaries, but then her heart was softened after her son was killed in a car accident. “That wonderful Mormon lady came by the hospital to visit and see if I was OK. She invited me over to her house, and we talked. The sister missionaries came, and I just loved them. I feel more at peace now, and I can go out and tell *everybody* what I have found.” In Lexington members and missionaries are inviting everyone to “come and see” (John 1:39).

Greatly facilitating this effort is how aware the members and missionaries are of the stake and ward activities for singles. “The missionaries told me about the activities for singles before I was baptized,” says Jennifer Columbia, an 18-year-old member of the Pioneer Ward who met the missionaries at the drive-through window of the fast-food restaurant where she works. “They said that a lot of people get together and do stuff, like a big family. I thought it sounded fun.” Recently baptized 21-year-old Kristy Adkins of the Richmond Ward was introduced at the activities for singles by a young single adult member she met while investigating the Church.

Sister Amanda Tippets—a missionary from Afton, Wyoming, serving in Kentucky—says, “Our mission leaders are always encouraging us to invite our investigators to whatever Church activities might interest them.”



*Above: The Richmond Ward single members committee meets regularly to discuss and implement plans to meet the needs of investigators, new converts, and other ward members who are single.*

*Top right: Joann Maddox, a registered nurse and single mother, says the members of her ward “treat me like I’m one of their family. They’ve been wonderful.”*



*Bottom right: Bobby Jones first attended Church at the singles branch, where he soon made friends who helped him learn about the Church.*



*Below: Unmarried adults are a significant part of the harvest of souls in the Lexington Kentucky Stake.*



## A WELCOMING SPIRITUAL ATMOSPHERE

"The hardest part about joining the Church is the transition from old friends to new friends," says Bobby Jones, a young single adult (YSA) convert from the Lexington First (YSA) Branch. When the missionaries took him to the singles branch, he felt the Spirit. He saw people his age bearing their testimonies. He was invited to the weekly family home evening meetings in the branch and met people who have become his friends. "This is one of the greatest blessings of being part of this Church," Bobby says. "No matter where you go, you can find a new set of friends."

Ben Auxier, a 46-year-old single adult and power industry employee, says that when he first came to church, "everybody was really friendly. The bishop was one of the first to greet me. I probably met 30 people. One of the hardest things for me to get used to was the children's noise. But now they sit beside me, and I feel like I've got a home."

Unmarried adult investigators can experience many different feelings on their first visits to church. Michelle Lee, a single mother, remembers her first visit: "At first I thought I wasn't going to fit in, but that feeling went away quickly. When several youth spoke in sacrament meeting before leaving on their missions, I thought, *Those kids are the age of my kids*. It was heartbreaking. It was also quite emotional for me to listen to their fathers and mothers speak. I didn't have a spouse, and I looked back on my life with a lot of regrets. I wished I'd had the Church when I was younger. But I was never made to feel out of place. When I'm sitting by myself, somebody with their whole family usually sits next to me. I shy away from situations that I feel are mostly for families, although everyone has helped make me feel very comfortable."

A single mother of two small children, Angela Hardin of the Richmond Ward wondered during her first visit to church what others would think of her. "I've felt very welcome," she happily relates. "When a bunch of young couples who all had one or two small children, like me, got together, I was the only single. At first I felt uncomfortable, but they welcomed me and those feelings died down. I've loved it!"

## NO ONE SHOULD BE IGNORED



*Single adults "often feel cut off from the mainstream of Mormon family life. They especially need to be part of a gospel kindred family, where blessings can be obtained from worthy priesthood bearers and role models can be found in quorum brotherhood and Relief Society sisterhood. Families in the ward can reach out and share loving concern. Within the Lord's design, no one should be ignored. We are all members of the body of Christ."*

**Elder J. Richard Clarke of the Seventy, "Our Kindred Family—Expression of Eternal Love," Ensign, May 1989, 61.**

Elder Jeffrey Lloyd—a missionary from Kaysville, Utah, serving in Kentucky—reports that there are always at least two or three members who greet his investigators. "The attitude of the members is, 'We love you, and we're here for you. Just because you don't have a husband or wife doesn't mean you can't be a part of this Church.'"

## PROGRAMS FOR SINGLE MEMBERS

"We've worked very hard on establishing a young single adult program and a single adult program," says L. Paul Moeck, president of the Lexington Kentucky Stake. "There are three things that have really made it grow: (1) dedication—our leaders are very dedicated. They are at every activity and are spiritual 'moms and dads' to our singles; (2) consistency—we never cancel a scheduled activity, so people have come to depend on them; and (3) an emphasis on the Spirit. We want our singles to simply enjoy getting together to learn the gospel and feel

the Spirit. When some decline to participate, saying, 'I'm not interested in getting married right now,' we say, 'This is *not* a program for finding a spouse.' We have a lot more people participating now."

President Moeck adds, "Each month the mission sends us a disk with a list of all the baptisms. We take that information and give it to our leaders." In this way stake and ward leaders with responsibility for single adults can also invite newly baptized singles to participate in their programs.



*The stake single members committee sponsors a monthly potluck dinner and fireside, making it easier for members to know what they are inviting their friends to attend.*

RIGHT (BACKGROUND), AND LEFT PHOTOS BY RUSSELL SOUTHWORTH

The Lexington Kentucky Stake offers three programs for adult singles: a young single adult branch, a stake single adult program, and an institute of religion. Gary Brown, president of the branch, maintains two lists, one of his branch members and one of every young single adult in the stake. "We send flyers about our activities to everyone on both lists," he says. Brother Russell Southworth, a member of the stake high council, and his wife, Melody, help oversee the program for single adults over age 30. "Many of our singles are widowed or divorced. They want to fellowship with someone their age who has the same values," says Melody. Her husband adds, "We hold a 'Soup Session' on the first Tuesday, a family home evening on the second Sunday, a potluck-fireside on the fourth Sunday, and an additional special activity each month. This way the singles and missionaries always know what to expect. We distribute an activity calendar booklet each year."

The institute of religion program offers weekly scripture study classes primarily for young singles in meetinghouses and on several college campuses. Gus Lafontaine, a newly baptized student at Eastern Kentucky University, looks forward to his opportunity to "talk about the Book of Mormon and the scriptures" with young people his age. Working with local Church Educational System leaders, President Moeck is strengthening the institute program by expanding class offerings, organizing an institute student council, and encouraging participation in institute fireside broadcasts, conferences, and social and service activities.

*Members of the stake single members committee, led by President L. Paul Moeck (second from right), discuss ways to work closely with full-time missionaries.*

## CONVENTIONAL WARDS AND SINGLE CONVERTS

The leaders and members of the conventional wards also place a high priority on fellowshipping new converts, with special attention to the singles. "All converts require 'special handling,'" says Bishop Sam Thomas of the Bluegrass Ward. "When a family joins, they at least have each other for support, but when a single person joins, the ward must step in and provide that essential support. I also regularly meet with the president of the singles branch and the Southworths to review the needs of the singles in my ward." He adds, "We don't have any 'couples-only' activities. Everyone is invited to every activity."

Following Church guidelines, Bishop Mark Stevens of the Richmond Ward has organized a single members committee in his ward (see *Church Handbook of Instructions, Books 1 and 2* [1998], 13, 61, 109–12, 316, 319). "One of our biggest challenges is keeping our committee staffed with singles representatives," he says. "We post flyers on the bulletin board and list information about the singles activities in our Sunday meeting programs. Our ward mission leader is also organized and helpful with our adult single converts."

## A CHALLENGE AND AN OPPORTUNITY

The harvest of souls into the restored gospel of Jesus Christ continues to grow, and unmarried adults are a significant part of that harvest. They can be a great strength to the kingdom of God. When missionaries and members work together with friendly boldness to develop a welcoming spiritual atmosphere and effective programs for single members, this part of the harvest will be abundant. □

*Gospel topics: single adults, missionary work, conversion, fellowshipping*



# “We Must Keep One Another”

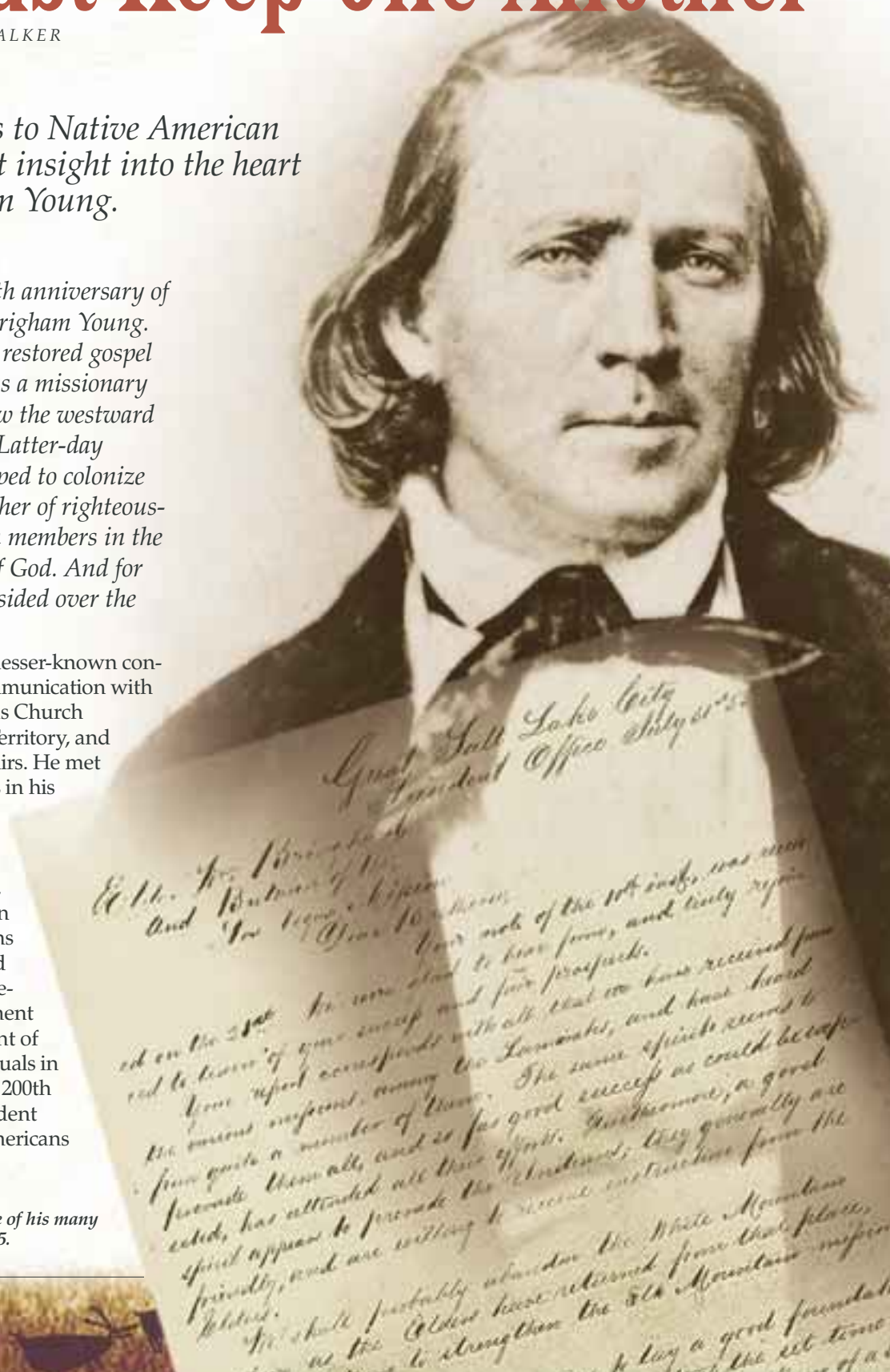
BY RONALD W. WALKER

*More than 80 letters to Native American leaders provide great insight into the heart of President Brigham Young.*

**J**une 1, 2001, is the 200th anniversary of the birth of President Brigham Young. An early convert to the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, he served as a missionary and an Apostle. He oversaw the westward migration of thousands of Latter-day Saints and by doing so helped to colonize the American West. A teacher of righteousness, he instructed Church members in the doctrines of the kingdom of God. And for more than 30 years, he presided over the Church as its prophet.

One of President Young's lesser-known contributions is his extensive communication with the Native American people as Church President, governor of Utah Territory, and superintendent of Indian Affairs. He met with Native American leaders in his office, toured their settlements, negotiated major and minor treaties, and sent missionaries to them. In addition, he spoke dozens of sermons in their behalf. His many sermons and hundreds of letters to and about the Native Americans reveal his interest and commitment to them. The detail and content of these documents have few equals in American history. Now at the 200th anniversary of his birth, President Young's work with Native Americans deserves to be highlighted.

*President Brigham Young with one of his many letters—this one dated 31 July 1855.*



“There [is] no people—no political party, no religious sect—that places the aborigines of this continent so high in the scale of humanity, as we do,” President Young wrote near the end of his life to one Native American leader. President Young believed that he and the Latter-day Saint people were the spokesmen, defenders, and “unflinching friends” of a people who, at the time, had few friends.<sup>1</sup>

It had not always been that way. At first, President Young, like many Americans at the time, misunderstood the Native American people, whose culture was so different from their own. Yet the gospel eventually gave him a different view. It taught him, he believed, that Native Americans were descendants of the Book of Mormon people and therefore a “remnant” of the house of Israel. Indeed, the Book of Mormon had been written partly to show to the remnant of the house of Israel “what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever.”<sup>2</sup>


Thus, President Young taught that the Native Americans were children of the Old Testament prophet Joseph—largely through his son Manasseh, but some through his son Ephraim. President Young believed this ancient heritage was the key to their eventual religious

redemption and that a renewed belief in the gospel and right doing could make them again a “delightsome” people.<sup>3</sup>

### A PERSONAL CHARGE TO HELP

During the 1830s, before Brigham Young started on a mission to Native Americans in the state of New York, the Prophet Joseph Smith laid his hands on Brigham’s head and committed unto him the keys necessary to open the “gospel to every Lamanite nation.”<sup>4</sup> This priesthood blessing, which surprised and unsettled Elder Young, weighed heavily on him for the rest of his life. It gave him a lifelong duty to help the Native American people.

One of President Young’s first opportunities to fulfill this responsibility came in 1846 as he led the first group of Saints (known as the “Camp of Israel”) west from Nauvoo. As they traveled among the Otoes, Potawatomi,<sup>5</sup> and Omaha tribes, President Young needed to obtain permission to occupy Indian lands. One of the first encounters took place in western Iowa, where Church members put together two tents as a meeting place for President Young and leaders of the Potawatomi. There was plaintive and picturesque talk. Would the “Great Spirit” always require us to be driven off our lands? asked the Native Americans, who were



“You will find as fine natural talent among these Indians as among any people, . . . a more consistent, intelligent view of God, angels, and holy beings than [many in] the gentile Christian nations.”

Brigham Young to William Bringhamst,  
29 Aug. 1855, Young Papers.

WASATCH MOUNTAINS, JUNTA RANGE, BY ALBERT BIERSTADT,  
COURTESY OF BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF ART

bedecked with beads and brass ornaments. President Young, the “white man’s Big Chief,” answered no and promised to help them. The Potawatomi reportedly responded, “We have both suffered. We must keep one another, and the Great Spirit will keep us both.”<sup>6</sup>

President Young obtained Potawatomi assurances that the Saints could use their land.

## LAND FOR WINTER QUARTERS

Soon it became clear that the Saints would need to spend the winter of 1846–47 on the banks of the Missouri River. Some Saints stayed on the eastern side of the river in Iowa; however, most stayed on the western side of the river in what is now Nebraska but what was then Indian Territory. President Young negotiated with Big Elk, leader of the Omahas, for use of the land that became known as Winter Quarters and that served for two years as an established camp for Latter-day Saints en route to the Great Basin.

President Young suggested an agreement that traded permission for Latter-day Saints to use Indian lands for Mormon schools, employment, and farming in behalf of the Native Americans. “We can do you good,” the President said. “We are your friends and friends to all mankind.”<sup>7</sup> Big Elk, speaking for the 80 assembled Native Americans, agreed to the compact.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the best intentions of President Young and Big Elk, the agreement did not turn out to be entirely successful. The needy Omahas, who were rapidly breaking up as a community, showed little interest in the “white man’s” learning, or for that matter, in cooperating with the emigrants. Instead, many of the Omaha men raided the Saints’ livestock, which for these hungry men seemed a proper payment for the game, timber, and land the pioneers were using.<sup>9</sup>

However, Native Americans were not the only ones responsible for the growing tension between these two groups. Although some Church members helped the Omahas harvest and mill their grain, repair their arms, and gave them provisions for their hunting parties, other emigrants were not respectful of the Omahas or their

culture.<sup>10</sup> When President Young learned that Church members had taken Indian property, he was quick with a reproof: “Brethren, this thing is not right,” he said. “We must show ourselves of more noble spirit.”<sup>11</sup>

In spite of these challenges, relationships between the two groups were good enough to have some outsiders comment about it. The St. Louis newspaper the *Missouri Republican* reported: “It is represented that the Mormons are on friendly terms with the Indians and [the latter] rarely molest them, although they are accused of occasionally stealing cattle.”<sup>12</sup> So unusual was the relationship that some outsiders began to spread the unfounded rumors

**W**e can do you good. . . . We are your friends and friends to all mankind.”



*Clockwise: A typical LDS migration west; a notice to travelers headed for California from President Young, warning of hostile Indians on Mary’s River; Winter Quarters was built just outside the United States in Indian Territory as a result of negotiations with Native Americans there.*



that Church members and the Native Americans were cooperating in attacks on frontiersmen and that they were “conniving” against the U.S. government.<sup>13</sup>

## BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE UTES

After the pioneer party reached the Great Salt Lake Valley, President Young set out to establish a peaceful relationship with the Indians of the Great Basin. During this process, President Young was sometimes impatient, as his language showed at times. In 1850, after repeated tension between settlers and Indians, he approved a military campaign against some of the Utes living near Utah Lake. In addition, President Young consistently encouraged the Native Americans to give up their



hunting and food-gathering ways and become farmers, which, he believed, offered them the best hope for the future. In spite of these things, President Young's policy and views toward Indians were uncommonly kind, especially for a man living in the 19th century.

From the outset, President Young sought to teach the Native Americans the restored gospel. In 1847, as many as 300 to 500 natives made their seasonal rounds through the Salt Lake Valley. President Young walked among them, raising his hand to greet them and later lowering it into a "white man's" handshake. He then taught them about the Book of Mormon and suggested that they do "right." He encouraged them to be baptized, and some were. A few even took President Young's surname as a token of his teachings.<sup>14</sup>

The use of land was always a concern. "There was enough [land] for both them and us, that [instead of paying for the land] we would teach them to labor and cultivate the earth." This promise of cooperation apparently was pleasing to two local leaders—Goship and Wanship.<sup>15</sup> The remnants of these Salt Lake Valley bands continued to receive food from the settlers for at least a decade,<sup>16</sup> in spite of the fact that "white man's" diseases such as the common cold, smallpox, diphtheria, and the measles took a fearful toll among the Native Americans.

## URGING PEACE

Many of President Young's ideas about the Native Americans were contained in a letter he wrote to Wakara, or Walker, as he was sometimes known. When the Saints were ready to explore and colonize southern Utah, President Young wanted Wakara's support. He wrote: "We wish you to understand decidedly that if your Utahs [Ute Indians] and the different nations in this country do not injure any of our people, in any of our settlements, that you will all be blessed, for we are sent here by the Great Spirit to teach you and do all of you good. Be at peace one with another—don't fight, but love one another, and you will soon be taught to become a great, united, and good people, and you will realize all the blessings that have been told you by your forefathers—and you will prove that we are the people whom you have long waited and looked for."<sup>17</sup>

The peace that President Young hoped to achieve was difficult to secure. Despite the good desires of both parties, different traditions and the desire of each to control the region's resources sometimes brought strife. Wakara said, "There are bad Mormons as well as bad Indians." The Sanpete

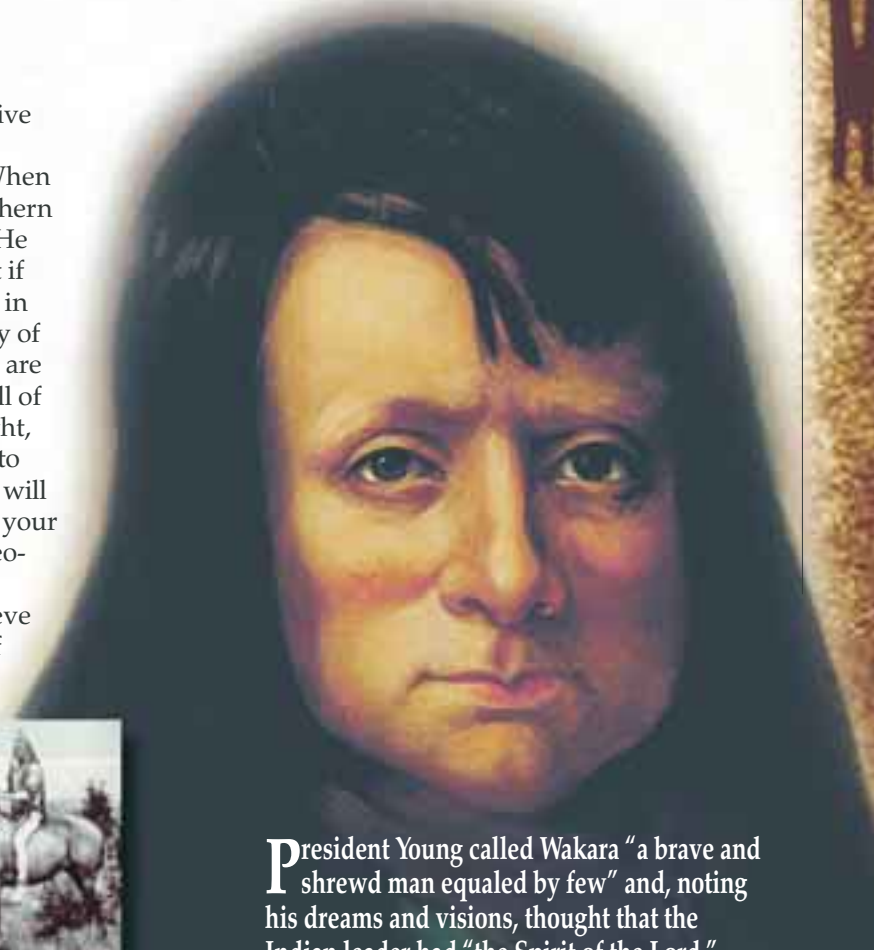


*Ute Indian Chief Wakara; a Ute warrior and his bride.*

County Church leader who recorded Wakara's words added, "Too much truth for a smile."<sup>18</sup>

When conflict did erupt between the old and new citizens, President Young usually urged peace. In 1851 the settlers in Ogden and their Native American neighbors seemed ready for war. Each side had taken horses belonging to the other, and as tensions increased, an Indian had been killed, and local leaders were urging that the Indians be given "a good whipping."<sup>19</sup> While this kind of policy was used elsewhere on the frontier, President Young strongly rejected it. Could the loss of "a few horses" justify the killing of a single Indian? he asked. Why had not the settlers done a better job of guarding the animals? Was not a part of the problem the Saints' own making? And did the stealing by a few Indians warrant an attack upon an entire people?<sup>20</sup>

To resolve the crisis, President Young urged the settlers to send out a peace party and not a war party. Perhaps 50 men might return the horses, explain the death of the Indian, and make amends by giving presents. "Do not the people know that it is cheaper by far, . . . to pay such losses than raise an expedition?" he wrote.<sup>21</sup> President Young's policy became a famous maxim, "It is cheaper to feed than fight the Indians."



President Young called Wakara "a brave and shrewd man equaled by few" and, noting his dreams and visions, thought that the Indian leader had "the Spirit of the Lord."

## WAR AND FORGIVENESS

Two years later, a conflict broke out in Utah County, the so-called Walker War. Members of Wakara's band had attacked several Latter-day Saint settlements before fleeing into the mountains. Once more, President Young refused to fight. "I have not made war on the Indians, nor am I calculating to do it," he told the Saints. "My policy is to give them presents and be kind to them. . . . [Wakara] is now at war with the only friends he has upon the earth."<sup>22</sup> To Wakara, President Young sent a letter that invited him, despite the recent conflict, to come into the settlements for "beef cattle and flour." There was also a reproof and a reminder: "When you get good-natured again, I should like to see you. Don't you think that you would be ashamed? You know that I have always been your best friend."<sup>23</sup>

At times, President Young's letters had a note of weariness about them, a recognition that his own people were sometimes responsible for the conflicts that took place with the Native Americans. "I feel just as well with you as I ever did," he reassured Arapeen, another Ute headman, when war threatened again in the mid-1850s. "I sometimes think that if we could get a valley a way off alone and could get all the Mormons that want to fight Indians and won't hear, and all the Indians that want to fight and won't listen to good talk such as you give them, and let them fight till they were satisfied, that it would be the means of making a good peace."<sup>24</sup>

Even during the Black Hawk War (1865–68)—the most costly of Utah's Indian conflicts—President Young continued his policy of peacemaking. "The plan we now propose to adopt is to stop fighting altogether," he said at the start of the war, "and as soon as possible establish communication with the disaffected Indians and endeavor to make peace with them by means of presents."<sup>25</sup> When this strategy failed to achieve a quick peace, President Young urged the settlers in the outlying areas to uproot their families and return to safer villages. This defensive policy emptied several Utah counties of most of their citizens and left the neutral observer John Wesley Powell "astonished" by the Latter-day Saints' self-inflicted losses.<sup>26</sup>

President Young understood that many settlers were impatient with his policy. "The evil passions that arise in our hearts would prompt us to do this," he acknowledged, "but we must bring them into subjection to the law of Christ." He then asked the Saints to forgive past depredations and allow the Indians to resume a place in the Utah communities. "When they come to live in your vicinity again, let them come in peace. . . . We should now use the Indians kindly, and deal with them so gently that we will win their hearts and affections to us more strongly than before; and the much good that has been done them, and the many kindnesses that have

been shown them, will come up before them, and they will see that we are their friends."<sup>27</sup>

## PRAISING THEIR CHARACTER

As the years progressed, President Young seemed to look upon the Native Americans with increasing favor, saying that they had as "noble spirits among them as there are upon the earth."<sup>28</sup>

On other occasions, President Young praised the character of Native Americans. Their "simple heartedness and honesty" seemed superior to that of many whites, and he believed that their speech had not been profane until it had been corrupted by white men. Moreover, many had an "innate sense of honor," he said.<sup>29</sup> Especially, he admired many of their leaders. He called Wakara "a brave and shrewd man equaled by few" and, noting his dreams and visions, thought that the Indian leader had "the Spirit of the Lord" although without fully understanding it himself.<sup>30</sup> In turn,



*Arapeen and his brother, Chief Wakara; a Shoshone Indian camp in Wyoming.*

**A**rapeen was a good man who talked straight and was industrious and friendly.



President Young thought Arapeen was a good man who talked straight and was industrious and friendly. Arapeen was in "every way worthy to secure the respect and esteem of all men."<sup>31</sup> The magisterial and intelligent Washakie, perhaps the leading man of the Shoshone people, was "one of the best Indians."<sup>32</sup>

In making these judgments, President Young had his own gauge. He believed that men and women should be judged by how closely they lived according to their own thoughts and traditions, and he believed many Native Americans met this standard. "There is perfection among them," he said, citing the example of Petetneet, a chief who lived near Utah Lake. "He is perfect, and I do not believe a better man lives on earth. He will do good all the time and will not do an evil if he knows it."<sup>33</sup>

President Young, then, was a man who stood out among the men and women of his time by his good words and acts toward Native Americans. He wrote, "The 'Great Spirit' has a future for the red man and that is not in their grave, I as sincerely believe as the Indians do themselves."<sup>34</sup> □

Ronald W. Walker is a member of the Ensign Peak Ward, Salt Lake Stake. Gospel topics: peace, brotherhood, tolerance

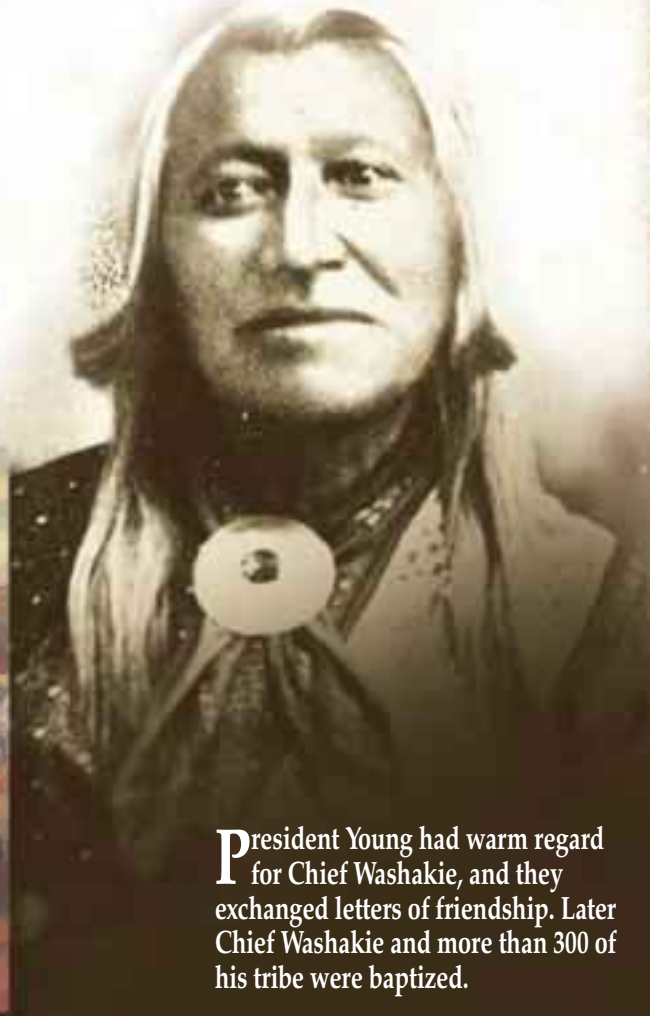
#### NOTES

1. Brigham Young to Charles Thompson, 9 June 1877, Brigham Young Papers, Archives Division, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives. Spelling, punctuation, and grammar modernized in all citations.
2. Title page, Book of Mormon.
3. General Church Minutes, 26 May 1850, LDS Church Archives.
4. Meeting of First Presidency and others, 29 Dec. 1847, General Church Minutes.
5. The spelling in *History of the Church* is *Pottawattamie*.
6. Phil Robinson, *Sinners and Saints: A Tour across the States* (1883), 127; Edward W. Tullidge, *History of Salt Lake City* (1886), 33.
7. Manuscript History of Young, 28 Aug. 1846.
8. Wilford Woodruff diary, 31 Aug. 1846, LDS Church Archives; Tullidge, *History of Salt Lake City*, 34–35.
9. General Church Minutes, 14 May 1848, and Brigham Young to Abner Morton, 29 May 1852, draft letterbook, Young Papers.
10. Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 5 and 28 July 1846, 7 Aug. 1846, 6 Nov. 1846, 20 Apr. 1847, and 3 Jan. 1848.
11. Brigham Young to Mr. Gen Stewart and All the Herd Men of Israel on Both Banks of the Missouri, 8 Jan. 1847, Brigham Young Papers.
12. Brigham Young papers, 6 Sept. 1847.
13. Wilford Woodruff diary, 27 Feb. 1858; Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 25 June 1846.
14. Statements of Grouse Creek Jack in *Deseret News*, 15 Feb. 1941, 7, and as recorded by Hubert Bowen, 5 Feb. 1943, LDS Church Archives; Henry Harris Jr., interviews, 19 July 1967 and 25 July 1967, 25 and 11, Doris Duke Collection of American Indian Oral History, Marriott Library, University of Utah.
15. Wilford Woodruff diary, 31 July 1847; Documentary History, 13 June 1849; and Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1 Aug. 1847, LDS Church Archives.

*Chief Washakie talking with Latter-day Saints at Huntsville; Chief Washakie, known in Washington as the Peace Chief.*



16. Journal History, 6 Apr. 1854, 11.
17. Brigham Young to Wakara, 22 Nov 1849, Indian affairs material, Young Papers.
18. Isaac Morley to Brigham Young, 20 Feb. 1850, Young Papers.
19. Lorin Farr to Brigham Young, 8 July 1851 and 12 July 1851, Young Papers.
20. Brigham Young to Lorin Farr, 11 July 1851, Young Papers.
21. Brigham Young to Lorin Farr, 11 July 1851, Young Papers.
22. Speech in *Heart Throbs of the West*, 12 vols. (1939–51), 1:92.
23. Brigham Young to Wakara, 25 July 1853, manuscript draft in possession of Daniel H. Wells, Territorial Militia Records, 1849–1877, Utah State Archives.
24. Brigham Young to Arapeen, 1 Mar. 1856, Young Papers.
25. Brigham Young to Orson Hyde, 1 Oct. 1865, Young Papers.
26. A. Milton Musser, *Deseret Evening News*, 21 Sept. 1870.
27. *Deseret News*, 16 Aug. 1866, 290.
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30. Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 29 Jan. 1855, LDS Church Archives; Journal History, 3 Dec. 1854, 10–11.
31. General Church Minutes, 10 May 1857; Brigham Young to George W. Manypenny, 31 Mar. 1857, Governor's Letterbook, Young Papers; and Brigham Young, "To Whom These Presents May Come," 3 Jan. 1852, Young Papers.
32. Brigham Young's Office Journal, 29 Oct. 1861, Young Papers.
33. General Church Minutes, 20 Aug. 1854.
34. Brigham Young to George Catlin, 27 June 1870, Young Papers.



President Young had warm regard for Chief Washakie, and they exchanged letters of friendship. Later Chief Washakie and more than 300 of his tribe were baptized.



# Gospel Taught, Gospel Shared

*The story of the Latter-day Saints and Native Americans is kept alive in inspiring artwork.*

BY RICHARD G. OMAN



When Latter-day Saints arrived “in the top of the mountains” (Isa. 2:2) in 1847, a number of Native American tribal groups already lived in some of its valleys. Regarding their new neighbors, President Brigham Young taught that kindness and cooperation were the goals. Among the Shoshone Indians near today’s Utah-Idaho border, missionaries found some success, and Chief Washakie was one of those baptized. In addition, some Utes, Piutes, Gosiutes, and Navajos joined the Church in the years ahead.

In the 1860s, President Young sent Jacob Hamblin and others to southern Utah to begin missionary work among Native Americans. The missionaries, including some new Piute converts, taught the gospel to the more populous Hopi, Navajo, Apache, and Pueblo tribes of Arizona and New Mexico.

Hopi leader Chief Tuba and his wife were among the earliest Hopi converts. They spent several months in pioneer settlements of southern Utah seeking to learn from the Latter-day Saints. Subsequently, Chief

*C. C. A. Christensen, Temple Hill in Manti, November 1849. In fall 1849, Ute Chief Wakara invited Latter-day Saints to settle in this area of the Sanpete Valley, resulting in a settlement of more than 200. We see a Ute Indian village in the foreground and, in the distance, a hill before the Manti Temple was built on it.*

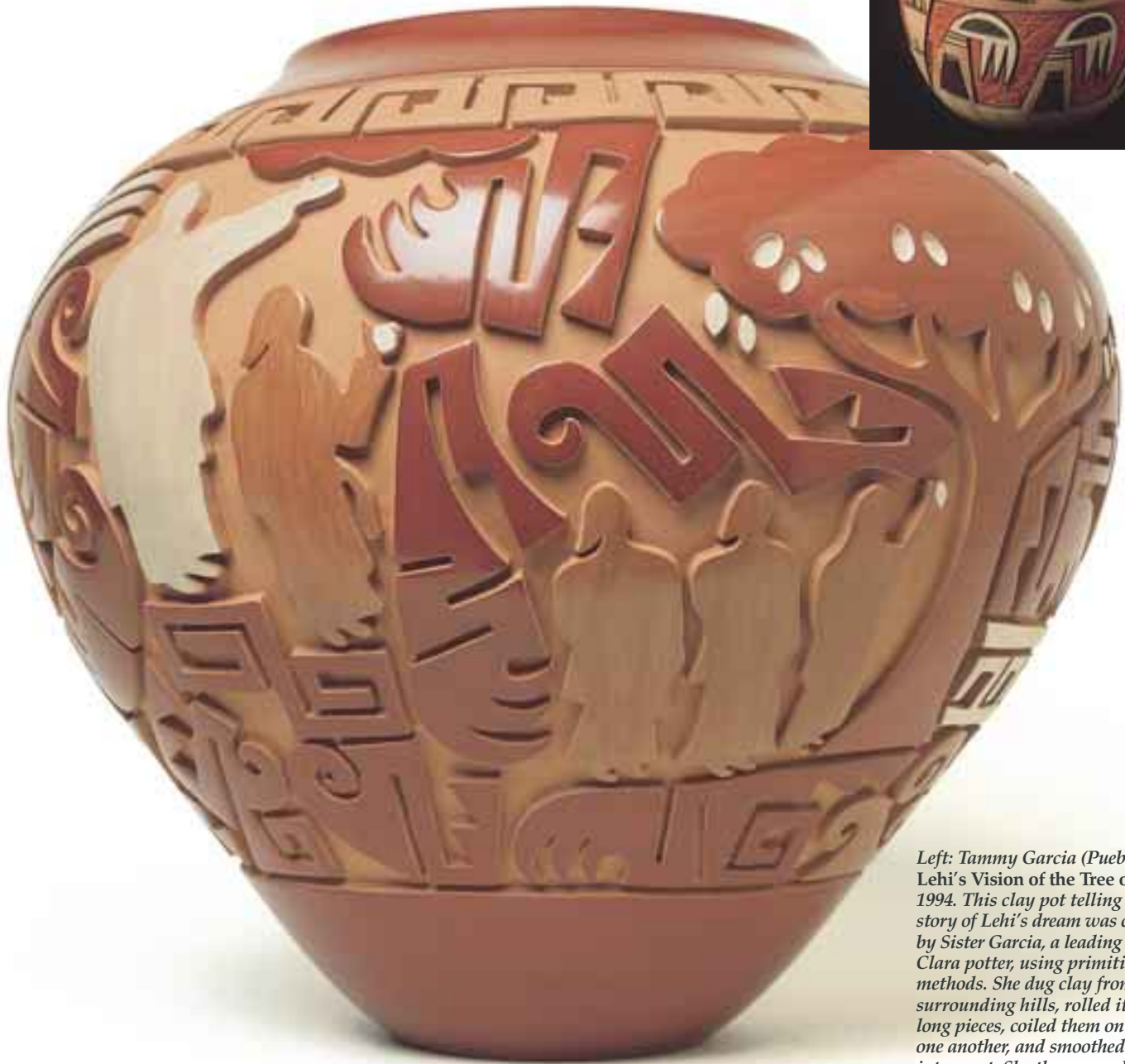
Tuba invited some of them to bring their families and settle next to his village of Moencopi in what is now Arizona. The pioneers named it Tuba City in honor of this faithful Hopi convert.

Today the American Southwest is one of the great art-producing areas of the world. Native American art includes pottery, weaving, and jewelry. Among the most talented artists are Latter-day Saints who express their testimonies through their work.

Following is some artwork focusing on the story of the Latter-day Saints and Native Americans.

*Richard G. Oman is a member of the East Mill Creek Sixth Ward, Salt Lake East Millcreek Stake.*

*Right: Gary Polacca (Hopi), My Testimony Pot, 1994. Motivated by his testimony of the Book of Mormon, Brother Polacca shows the brother of Jared holding up a basket of stones as the finger of the Lord touches and illuminates them for use in the Jaredite barges.*



*Left: Tammy Garcia (Pueblo), Lehi's Vision of the Tree of Life, 1994. This clay pot telling the story of Lehi's dream was created by Sister Garcia, a leading Santa Clara potter, using primitive methods. She dug clay from the surrounding hills, rolled it into long pieces, coiled them on top of one another, and smoothed them into a pot. She then carved the story into the newly formed clay pot and fired it in a wood fire.*



Above: Winfred R. Geisler, *Proselyting the Indians*, 1984. Missionaries, sent north from Salt Lake City by President Brigham Young in 1855, taught the Wind River Shoshone Indians, including Chief Washakie. He and some others were baptized.

Below: Merrill Gogan, *Meditation*, 1971. We sense the power of sincere introspection in the face of this aged Native American.



## EXCELLENCE IN ART



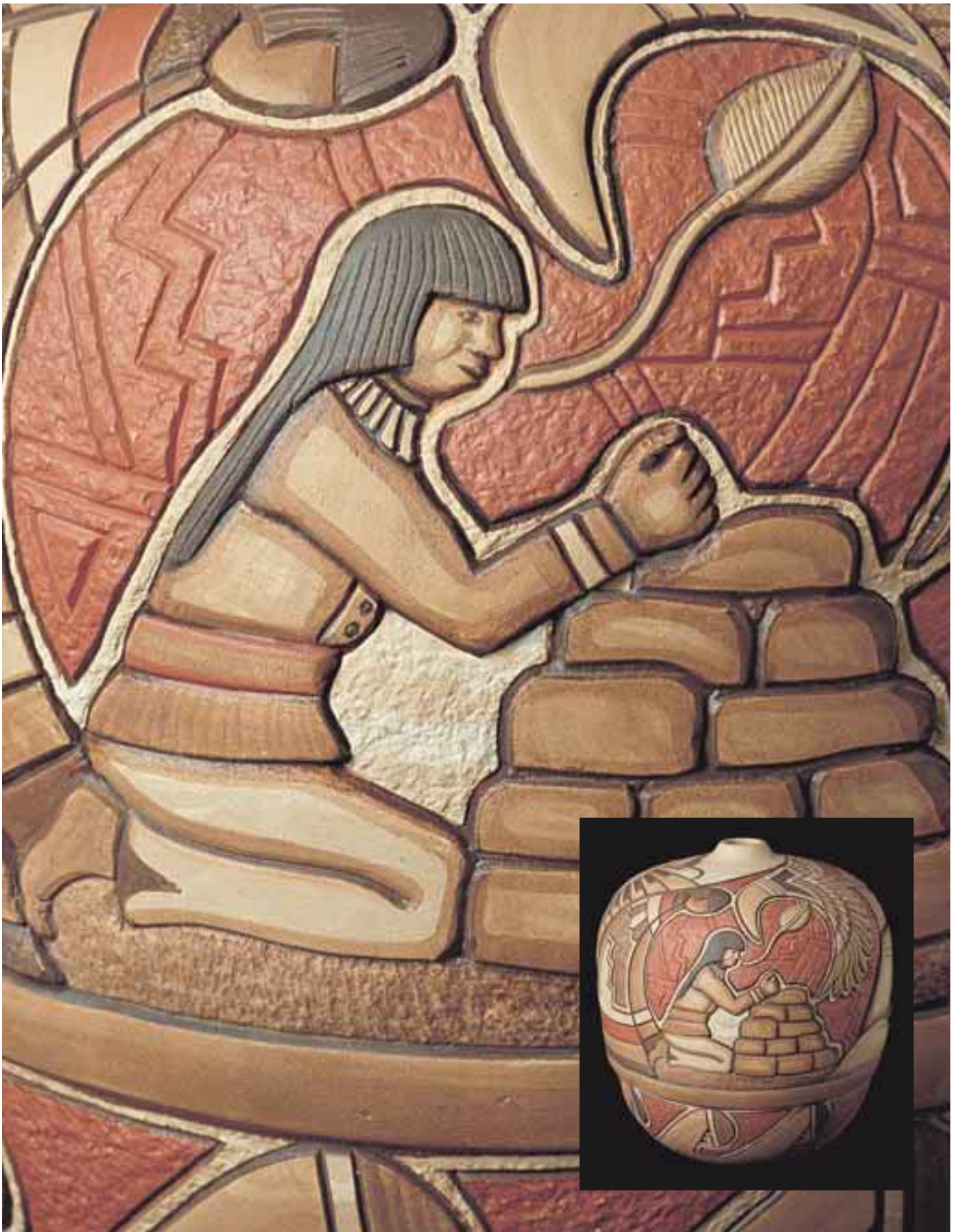
*"We must recognize that excellence and quality are a reflection of how we feel about ourselves and about life and about God. . . . Real craftsmanship . . . reflects real caring, and real caring reflects our attitude about ourselves, about our fellowmen, and about life."*

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985), *"The Gospel Vision of the Arts,"* *Ensign*, July 1977, 5.



Above: Leta Keith (Navajo), *Missionaries on the Reservation*, 1985. Baptized in 1966 in Monument Valley, Sister Keith honors the missionary effort in this rug. She not only created the design but also sheared the sheep, then carded, spun, and dyed the wool before weaving it into a rug.

Right: Thomas Polacca (Hopi), *"My Son, Await the Coming of the Mormon Missionaries,"* 1990. The artist shows himself kneeling in prayer, as shown by a feather coming from his mouth. The feather is a Hopi symbol of prayer because birds, like prayers, connect earth and heaven. The Holy Ghost appears in the form of a bird hovering nearby.





*Above: John Jarvis, Jacob Hamblin and Chief Tuba, 1982. Before crossing the Little Colorado River on their way to Salt Lake City in January 1863, Jacob Hamblin and Chief Tuba prayed together. Brother Hamblin said of the event, "To me the whole ceremony seemed humble and reverential."*

*Right: Joe Oreland (Navajo/Ute), Ute Family, 1994. The continuation of family bonds for eternity is the message of this alabaster sculpture.*



*Above: Les Namingha (Hopi/Zuni), Three Degrees of Glory Bowl, 1994. Christ is in the center of this design with the sun behind His right hand, the moon above the sun, and a star overhead.*







*Above: Leta Keith (Navajo), Arizona Temple Rug, 1990. Temple worship is central to the gospel. Sister Keith regularly travels more than 200 miles to this temple in Mesa, Arizona, where she can worship in Navajo.*



*Left: Phil Sekaquaptewa (Hopi), Three Degrees of Glory, 1991. This silver jewelry shows the sun, moon, and stars, respectively representing the celestial, terrestrial, and telestial kingdoms of heaven. Note its feather-like shape symbolizing prayer.*

# Beyond Shyness

BY REBECCA M. TAYLOR  
Assistant Editor

*Many members learn to manage—or even overcome—their shyness as they perform their Church responsibilities.*

I well remember the moment when I was called to teach Sunday School in my singles ward. The call was extended, and Brother Balli waited for my response, smiling expectantly.

I gulped and thought, *You mean, you actually expect me to get up and talk in front of all those people?* But what I said was yes. Behind my answering smile and genuinely enthusiastic assent, though, lurked a faint sense of panic. I had secretly hoped for this calling; I'd always wanted to teach. But the very thought of standing in front of a classroom, all eyes upon me, made my knees weak.

I know I'm not alone in having those feelings. As members of the Church, we are commonly given opportunities to teach, give talks, conduct meetings, visit or home teach people we don't know well (at least at first), attend large group functions—all of which can be difficult for people who may be naturally reticent. And the ranks of the shy are not small; in fact, nearly 50 percent of adults in the United States identify themselves as shy.<sup>1</sup> Shyness—limited here to discomfort or anxiety in some social situations—has been described as a “nearly universal human trait” because almost everyone experiences it at least occasionally.<sup>2</sup>

Feelings of discomfort or anxiety in some social situations can be reduced as Church members continually venture beyond their comfort zones.

Yet many Latter-day Saints are able to successfully overcome or at least manage their shyness as they perform their Church responsibilities. How do they do it?

What follows are suggestions culled from those who have experienced, to one degree or another, feelings of shyness and yet who are involved, contributing, fully participating members of the Church, enjoying the many blessings that result.

## STEP OUTSIDE YOUR COMFORT ZONE

Venturing beyond one's comfort zone is essential to overcoming shyness. Yet like any worthy goal, this requires effort, self-discipline, and the willingness to adapt.

Claudia Mecham, a member of the Great Falls First Ward, Great Falls Montana East Stake, joined the Church at age 29—but not before making the missionaries promise that she would never have to give a prayer, never have to give a talk, never have to bear her testimony if she didn't want to. "The thought of having to do that was frightening and intimidating," she says. "I was never comfortable speaking to groups."

Her first calling was as a Primary teacher, and her confidence grew from that. "I can't think of any one pivotal experience; it was just a gradual change," she says. "I attribute this to my callings in the Church." Now, 28 years after joining the Church, Sister Mecham's experiences include having served as a seminary teacher, ward Young Women president, and stake Relief Society president.

Steve O'Bannon, a member of the Caldwell Third Ward, Caldwell Idaho Stake, became acutely aware of his shyness about the time he entered his teen years. He found speaking in front of a group to be difficult, and he avoided most social situations and parties. In high school he reached a pivotal point. "I realized that if I wanted to accomplish my goals, I had to overcome this to a degree—I had to really concentrate on it and put in effort," he says now. "I knew that if I didn't, I was going to have problems with most of life's major activities."

Brother O'Bannon says his mission, which continually required him to assert himself, was especially helpful. At first he was extremely uncomfortable with approaching people he didn't know, but this grew easier with time. The mission experience, he says, "really

changed me a lot internally. After I returned home, I don't know that people thought, *Wow, he's different*, but internally it was easier to take steps and go forward."

You don't have to be a missionary to learn these skills. For example, forcing yourself to offer comments in class can, over time, make it easier to participate. Sister Mecham says her natural inclination, like that of many members, is to sit on the back row during Church classes and just listen. "I have to make a conscious effort to participate in the lesson," she says. "The thought will come, *You really should bring this up*. It takes a real push." But the results, she says, are generally worth it.

## PREPARE AND PERSIST

Tisa Curry, a member of the Shaker Heights Ward, Kirtland Ohio Stake, went from being voted "most shy" in eighth grade to "best personality" her senior year in high school. Yet this young mother still identifies herself as naturally quiet and finds speaking in front of groups to be a challenge—albeit a manageable one. When she was called to serve as a Relief Society teacher, she found that the key to doing well was thorough preparation: becoming comfortable with the material and actually going through the motions of giving the lesson beforehand. "Preparation is the only way. You do everything you can ahead of time and then pray that Heavenly Father will help you get through it," she says. She is also helped by the realization that "doing it isn't as hard as worrying about it."

Linked with preparation is persistence. President Heber J. Grant, known for his willingness to practice a difficult task until he mastered it, often said these words: "That which we persist in doing becomes easier for us to do; not that the nature of the thing itself is changed, but that our power to do is increased."<sup>3</sup> Almost every person who has overcome shyness would agree with that principle.

"If speaking is the critical thing, there's really no substitute for actually speaking. You have to *do*," Brother O'Bannon says. "Then you can become good at something you were poor at before." Due in large part to the practice his Church callings afforded him, Brother O'Bannon today is comfortable speaking in front of church groups. In fact, a calling to the high council required him to speak at ward meetings nearly



**E**xperiences such as missionary work have helped many individuals feel more comfortable with approaching new people.

every week, which he was able to do with relative ease.

## FOCUS ON OTHERS

Those who are shy often focus on their own reactions to events—their emotions, their fears, their perceived inadequacies. Church callings can give them the opportunity to redirect that focus to others so that shyness becomes less of an obstacle.

A favorite scripture of Sister Mecham's is Mark 8:35: "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it." She adds: "Through the gospel you learn that focusing on yourself and your weakness is not the answer. If you look outside of yourself and focus on others, your problem diminishes."

Brother O'Bannon says that his Church callings, particularly leadership callings, have given him opportunities to look out for others who may feel ill at ease and help them feel more comfortable. "Taking that kind of approach helps you over the hurdles and puts things in perspective," he says.

Denis Hawkins, a member of the Woodland Hills

## WE ARE ENTITLED TO THE LORD'S HELP



*"Now, some of you may be shy by nature or consider yourselves inadequate to respond affirmatively to a calling. Remember that this work is not yours and mine alone. It is the Lord's work, and when we are on the Lord's errand, we are entitled to the Lord's help. Remember that whom the Lord calls, the Lord qualifies."*

President Thomas S. Monson of the First Presidency, "Duty Calls," *Ensign*, May 1996, 4.

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President Thomas S. Monson of the First Presidency, "Duty Calls," *Ensign*, May 1996, 4.

Ward, Bountiful Utah Central Stake, has found this to be true as he has served in several bishoprics. He says that when he was called to serve as bishop of the Citrus Heights Third Ward, Citrus Heights California Stake, one practice that helped him overcome his reserve was to try to emulate the pure love of Christ. "If I tried to view people as I thought the Lord would, my fears would vanish and I could get up and talk in front of them, greet them and shake their hand, try to fellowship them, things like that. I wasn't focusing on myself and my own inadequacies. I was really just trying to love them and help them, and that was a key to help me overcome any feelings of insecurity."

Several years before that, Brother Hawkins's wife, Jan, learned the same lesson while serving as a Relief Society president.

When she was first called, she says, "I felt the bishop must have been mistaken. I didn't feel like I was the type; I am much more introverted." She felt overwhelmed until she learned to concentrate on one aspect of the calling at a time, particularly by focusing on individuals. That insight again helped her as the wife of a bishop. "The key for Denis and me was focusing on the people and enjoying them and trying to just love them and be their friends," she says.

## HOW TO HELP THOSE WHO ARE SHY

- *Be friendly.* Reserved people often find it difficult to initiate contact with those they don't know. Your friendliness can make a world of difference in helping them feel more comfortable in a situation. It helps to ask open-ended questions to draw them out.

- *Offer genuine praise and encouragement.* When a shy person completes a task such as giving a talk, performing a musical number, or teaching a lesson, offer praise for his or her efforts. Shy people are often particularly harsh judges of their own behavior, and positive reinforcement from others helps them view themselves more realistically. Be sure, however, that your compliments are genuine.

- *Support them in their callings.* Be especially willing to offer comments in class when you know a teacher struggles with shyness. Show support in any

way you can; after all, that's what we pledge to do when we sustain someone to a calling.

- *Don't call attention to someone's shyness.* Saying to someone, "Boy, you're quiet," or (sarcastically), "Don't be so loud!" really isn't helpful. Shy people already know they're reserved; they don't need to have it pointed out. Doing so usually only makes them feel more self-conscious. And do not put shy people in the spotlight unless you know they are comfortable with this.

- *Accept individuals as they are.* Trying to force people to change often results in the opposite of the intended effect: it makes them retreat even further. Unfortunately, many who are shy tend to ascribe more validity to criticism than to praise, and the effects can be damaging and long-lasting. Loving and accepting them are among the most beneficial things you can do in helping them overcome their shyness. □

## RELY ON THE LORD FOR HELP

Probably most crucial in overcoming shyness is to realize that, when fulfilling Church responsibilities, we do not have to rely on our own abilities alone; we can seek help from the Lord. Nephi encapsulated this truth: "I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them" (1 Ne. 3:7).

"The Lord really does take care of the people who are called to positions in the Church," says Brother Hawkins. As a bishop, "it was a tremendous source of strength to feel the Spirit working with me.

A wonderful thing about the Church is that all of us, no matter who we are, can have that same help."

Sister Mecham remembers a blessing that helped her fulfill her first speaking assignment in stake conference as stake Relief Society president. "When I was asked to do that, I knew early on that it would be a painful and difficult situation," she says. "I was afraid of panicking." Her husband gave her a blessing in which she was promised that she would be able to successfully deliver her talk. "Normally in speaking situations I am shaky and can feel my heart beat a foot outside my chest," she says. "But from the time I entered the chapel and sat down, there just wasn't the usual anxiety. I was calm all the way through. It was a real faith-promoting experience."

One of the things that helped Sister Mecham get beyond her shyness was simply understanding the reality of God's love for her as an individual. "Early on in the Church I'd look at other people and think, *They're such spiritual giants; I can never be like that. I've since learned that it's not necessary to compete or try to measure up to others. God loves all of His children, and no matter who we are or how we serve or what we do, we are important to Him. It's not up to you entirely—there is someone greater than you there to help you, and He wants you to succeed.*"

The Lord has told us He gives us weakness so that we may be humble, and if we turn to Him, our weaknesses will become strengths (see Ether 12:27). That doesn't necessarily mean that we can completely transform our personalities. It does mean that with the Lord's aid, difficulties can be overcome and success can be achieved. Not only that, but the "weakness" of being shy can yield its own strengths: perhaps better listening skills, increased compassion, sensitivity, humility, and willingness to turn to the Lord for help.



PHOTO BY WELDEN C. ANDERSEN

Church callings such as teaching provide opportunities to reach out to others.

As for me, that teaching calling which at first seemed so daunting became my favorite up to that point. I have since had a number of opportunities to teach or speak in front of Church groups, and while I may still be nervous at first, I know that the jitters will usually go away after a minute or two. There's always a sense of exhilaration in knowing that, with the Lord's help, I can master my fears instead of allowing them to master me. "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear," Paul said, "but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1:7). And there are few gifts greater than those. □

*Gospel topics: shyness, overcoming weaknesses, faith, Church callings*

#### NOTES

1. See Lynne Henderson and Philip Zimbardo, "Shyness," in Howard S. Friedman, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mental Health* (1998).

2. Joannie M. Schrof and Stacey Schultz, "Social Anxiety," *U.S. News and World Report*, 21 June 1999, 50.

3. In Conference Report, Apr. 1901, 63.

## LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

*Most Ensign articles can be used for family home evening discussions. The following questions are for that purpose or for personal reflection:*

- 1. When we face difficult situations, how can we learn to focus on others rather than ourselves?*
- 2. How can we avoid allowing our fears to dictate our actions?*
- 3. How does the gospel enable us to bring positive changes in our lives?*



**W**hen we seek help from the Lord, He will bless us and turn our weaknesses into strengths.

## Increasing Our Spirituality through Fasting and Prayer

**T**o his astonishment, Alma met his friends the sons of Mosiah as they were returning from their 14-year missionary service among the Lamanites. He rejoiced at their faithfulness and at the devotion with which they had served. Earlier Alma and the sons of Mosiah had persecuted members of the Church. But since their conversion, they had become “men of a sound understanding” because “they had searched the scriptures diligently” and “had given themselves to much prayer, and fasting; therefore they had . . . the spirit of revelation, and when they taught, they taught with power and authority of God” (Alma 17:2–3; see also Mosiah 27:8–37).

### OFFERING OUR WHOLE SOULS UNTO CHRIST

If we want to develop spiritual maturity like that of Alma and the sons of Mosiah, we need to do what they did: obey

the commandments, study the scriptures, serve our families and our neighbors—and combine these efforts with fasting and prayer.

Earlier in the Book of Mormon, Amaleki testified that if we “come unto Christ” and offer our “whole souls as an offering unto him, and continue in fasting and praying, and endure to the end,” we will be saved (Omni 1:26). Since the soul consists of both body and spirit (see D&C 88:15), we offer our *whole* souls when we place the desires of both body and spirit in subjection to the will of our Heavenly Father. Fasting and prayer help us learn to control our appetites; they also help us to “hunger and thirst after righteousness” (Matt. 5:6). Fasting for two consecutive meals, as we are encouraged to do once a month on fast Sunday, can refine the spirit, strengthen its control of the body, and bring into our lives the joyful influence of the Holy Ghost (see D&C 59:12–14).

### “FIRMER IN THE FAITH OF CHRIST”

Sheryl Condie Kempton of Orem, Utah, describes an occasion when fasting and prayer brought her spiritual strength: “I fasted and prayed that I might withstand a particular temptation that had been bothering me. The results were miraculous. Not only did I withstand the temptation, but it ceased to be a temptation!” (“Fasting—A Gift of Joy,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1978, 12).

For fasting to help increase spirituality, it must be accompanied by fervent prayer. Further, contributing to the fast-offering fund softens the heart and opens the windows of heaven.

We should exercise caution to fast in moderation, and we should not fast if our health or other circumstances do not permit it.

All who can, however, should participate in the law of the fast. When we do, we are blessed as the Nephites who “did fast and pray oft, and did wax stronger and stronger in their humility, and firmer and firmer in the faith of Christ, unto the filling their souls with joy and consolation, yea, even to the purifying and the sanctification of their hearts, which sanctification cometh because of their yielding their hearts unto God” (Hel. 3:35). □

*Gospel topics: fasting, prayer, faith, spirituality*

**T**he sons of Mosiah developed spiritual maturity by searching the scriptures diligently and giving themselves to prayer and fasting (see Alma 17:2–3).



## A Higher View

By Hugo Ibañez

**I**n December 1961, at age 21, I earned a pilot's license. I had always dreamed of flying, and now, if I happened to feel depressed or stressed, I would go up in a plane. After flying a short while, I would feel much better. But after a year, having flown 84 hours, I quit aviation and left Uruguay. Although flying had relaxed me, I realized I was searching for something more—an inner peace I could not find in the air.

Ten months of wandering were enough to convince me that I might not find what I was searching for on the ground either. I thought moving to different locations would be the answer, but it wasn't. And so I started to search different religious philosophies. During the next 18 years, I investigated several churches and became active in a few of them.

One day I visited a church three blocks from our house. When I rang the doorbell, the custodian answered. I told him I had two teenage sons who needed to belong to a youth group. "Do you have Boy Scouts?" I asked. He said yes.

Then I asked him if his church was based on the Bible. Again he said yes—it was based on the Bible and the Book of Mormon. He invited me to Church services the following Sunday. My 13-year-old son, Marcelo, was traveling with friends, so I invited my other son, Sergio, who was 15, to accompany me. He came, although reluctantly.

When we entered the chapel, several members greeted us in a friendly manner. An older man quickly introduced us to the missionaries, and they started teaching us the discussions that day.







**M**y search for inner peace brought me to a church three blocks from our house. When I rang the doorbell, the custodian answered.

When Marcelo returned from his trip, he joined us in the discussions. The Spirit touched our hearts, and on 16 February 1980 my sons and I became members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. My wife, Isabel, was baptized on 15 March.

More than 30 years have passed since I began searching for inner peace in places outside myself. Today, thanks to the gospel of Jesus Christ, I see far more than I ever did in a plane. I see a world more real and beautiful than anything I saw from the air. I see a world and a life filled with God's love, and I anticipate even greater glories awaiting in the next. □

*Hugo Ibañez is a member of the Montevideo Fourth Ward, Montevideo Uruguay West Stake.*

*Gospel topics: conversion, peace*

## The Gift of Hands

By Laura Belnap

**T**he dedication of the Bountiful Utah Temple will always hold a special place in my heart. My husband and I attended the sacred event with our older children and extended family members. Not long after we arrived, a temple worker asked those assembled if someone could interpret the dedication for a deaf sister.

Immediately my husband and my brother looked at me. They knew that 15 years ago I had served a mission in Indiana, where I first met Edith Cartwright, a deaf woman in one of the wards. I had always wanted to learn sign language and saw an opportunity to do so, along with being able to help Sister Cartwright. I obtained some books from the library on sign language, and on preparation days or when I had spare time I would read and practice. Soon I felt comfortable and somewhat proficient with my new ability. During the years following my mission, while I finished school, married, and worked at raising my six children, opportunities had not arisen for me to use the sign language I had learned—until now.

I agreed to interpret for the deaf sister, feeling both excitement and anxiety. I had an overwhelming desire to help but also a tremendous fear of failure. As I stood to join the sister at the back

of the chapel, a young man in front of me touched my arm. He reminded me that with prayer and faith I would have the gift of tongues. His words gave me courage and helped me exercise faith in Heavenly Father.

When I was introduced to the sister for whom I would be signing, I told her how nervous I was and that I hoped I would be able to help. She bowed her head and signed a prayer on my behalf. My husband came to give me a reassuring hug and whispered that he and the children would be praying for me.

Shortly after, another deaf sister joined us. As the dedication began I struggled to keep up. But the two sisters quickly let me know that I was doing fine and that they understood what I was signing. A calming peace washed over me. The words of our faithful Church leaders passed through me and flowed easily through my hands, and I began to sign words I had never learned or signed before. Somehow I knew exactly how to sign the words at the same moment I heard them.

At the close of the dedication, the congregation sang "The Spirit of God" as tears flowed down the two sisters' faces. Even though they couldn't hear the song, they could feel the emotion and the Spirit that touched us all.

After the two-hour meeting, I felt like I had run a marathon—and won. I was physically drained but spiritually lifted. I will always be thankful for the faith and prayers that day that strengthened my efforts and helped those sisters feel Heavenly Father's love and receive His words. □

*Laura Belnap is a member of the Mueller Park Seventh Ward, Bountiful Utah Mueller Park Stake.*

*Gospel topics: service, spiritual gifts, faith, gift of tongues*

# On a Country Road

By Kelly A. Harward

**A**s I drove along a country road in Indiana, I felt both thankfulness and great loneliness. I thought about the accomplishments of the week with my new job, fresh out of college—but then there was the loneliness as I was heading toward my empty studio apartment in Chicago. It was my first time away from home and family since my mission. My mind wandered back several months to the morning I had packed my car and left home. With everyone already at work or school, only my mother was there to give me last bits of encouragement and advice for living alone in Chicago. As I pulled out of the driveway, my mother stood in the doorway blowing kisses and trying to hold back tears.

“Get a grip,” I said aloud to myself. “I’m a 24-year-old man.” I

thought about how I had come to Chicago and was awestruck with the size of the city. I had looked down from the 110th floor of the Chicago Sears Tower at one of the busiest intersections of freeway in the world, then out to see the Chicago-O’Hare International Airport, one of the busiest airports in the world. More than seven million people lived in the greater Chicago area, I was told. Looking down at the thousands of cars, I imagined the individuals in each car and how God knew each one. *Is it possible? I had wondered. How is it possible that He knows each of us?*

My mind returned to the emptiness of my car and the country road, and I prayed for comfort. I told Heavenly Father I had spent two years on a mission testifying that I know He lives and knows each of us personally but that my heart was filled with loneliness and doubt. Did He know how terribly alone I felt?

As I prayed I noticed in my rearview mirror a big tractor-

trailer following close behind me. I gradually slowed and pulled slightly to the right to allow him to pass. The driver sped up, and black smoke billowed out the vertical stacks as he pulled alongside my car. I glanced up to see him waving as he passed. Once in front of me, he slowed down and pulled to the right as I had done, inviting me to pass him now. *This isn’t what I had in mind to keep me company,* I thought.

As I accelerated and passed the truck, the driver waved again, and this time he blew his horn, startling me. I quickly put some space between us. But before I could react, there he was, alongside my car and waving again. This time as he passed me, he motioned for me to pull over.

The back of his truck now filled my entire windshield view. That’s when I noticed the bumper sticker: Happiness Is Family Home Evening. “Wait a minute,” I said aloud. “He must be a member of the Church, but how does he

**H**aving a big truck pull up alongside my car wasn’t what I had in mind when I prayed for comfort.



know I am?" I followed him to a shopping area, and he motioned to a fast-food place from his truck window. I glanced over at the familiar bumper sticker and smiled back in agreement. It was, after all, dinnertime and I was hungry.

"Hi, I'm Jake," he said, extending his hand as we entered the restaurant. "I noticed the BYU sticker in your rear window and thought you might be a member of the Church," he continued. "Thought you might like to grab something to eat."

"You're right, I am. And I'm hungry too," I said. "My name's Kelly. I saw your family home evening bumper sticker and thought you must be a member also." He confirmed that he was. After ordering and filling our trays, we sat down at a small table.

"I've only been a member for a year," Jake began. "All my life I felt there was a God who knew and cared about His children here on earth. But it wasn't until I heard the plan of salvation that I gained a real knowledge of God's love for each one of us." Here was a complete stranger bearing his testimony to me. "When I came up behind you in my truck and saw your BYU sticker, I had an overwhelming feeling that I should meet you," he said.

After a while, Jake said, "Can you imagine how different this world would be if everyone knew what we know: that God knows each one of us, loves us, and wants us to be happy?"

*What a wonderful testimony, I thought as Jake explained that he and his wife were planning to be sealed in the temple later that month. My mind filled with thoughts of gratitude: toward Jake for sharing his testimony with me at a time when I needed it most; for the true Church of Jesus Christ, which makes friends and brothers*

out of strangers; for my family, who taught me the gospel; for my mission and the opportunity it gave me to share my testimony with others; for a loving Heavenly Father who knows and cares for each one of His children; and for good Latter-day Saints, like Jake. □

*Kelly A. Harward is a member of the Country Oaks Ward, Layton Utah Kays Creek Stake.*

*Gospel topics: comfort, loneliness, prayer, testimony*

## The Lord's Timing

By LeAnne C. Bunn

**A**s a wife and mother active in the Church and in the community, I had more than enough to keep me busy. In addition to caring for four young children, I was volunteering at school, fulfilling a very time-consuming Church calling, and working on various other projects. My schedule allowed for few if any disruptions.

Then in mid-July I unexpectedly learned that I was going to have another baby. Preoccupied as I was with my pursuits, a feeling of love for this unborn child did not readily come. Instead there was unacceptance. Having another baby did not fit in with my schedule or plans. And though I asked Heavenly Father to help me grow to love this new child, I allowed little to change in my life.

When the baby was 25 weeks along, an ultrasound gave some disturbing news. I had a history of giving birth to small babies, but this baby was not just small; it was behind a full month in growth. I was told to cut down on my activities so that the baby would have a chance to grow. The plan was made to take the baby early by cesarean section, but it

must be mature enough first.

Suddenly my life came to a standstill. I was in anguish over the baby and the thought that I might lose it or that it might have severe disabilities from being born early. My prayers also changed abruptly. I was heartsick over the unaccepting attitude I had had toward this pregnancy. I prayed for forgiveness, and with all the energy of my soul I prayed for the well-being of my unborn child. Suddenly many things on my schedule that had seemed so important did not have the same priority.

When the baby's development continued to be slow, I was required to rest even more. My husband took on many domestic duties, and Relief Society sisters stepped in to assist us. My prayers for the baby became almost constant. I had rarely felt it move, and one night this became too much for me to bear. I fervently prayed to feel a real kick. Ten minutes later I received a series of the only strong kicks I felt during the entire pregnancy. Tears fell down my face as I said a prayer of thanks.

Finally, my condition and the baby's reached a point where birth could be delayed no longer. In mid-December, two and a half months early, our baby girl was delivered by C-section. She weighed one pound, eight ounces. A priesthood blessing and a ward fast strengthened my hope that she might live.

Not only did she live, but she astounded us and the doctors by thriving. No complications occurred. With the aid of only a well-equipped incubator and an ordinary IV, our little girl, whom we named Celeste, slowly started growing. Within two months she weighed four pounds, and we were able to bring her home.

I have tried to never again question my Heavenly Father's wisdom or timing in sending

blessings. I have also learned the importance of prayerfully setting priorities and asking for the Lord's help in balancing my schedule. And I have learned that love is a natural outgrowth of sacrifice and earnest prayer for another person. I cannot look at Celeste without feeling love for her and thankfulness to my Father in Heaven. □

*LeAnne C. Bunn is a member of the Nicholasville Ward, Lexington Kentucky Stake.*

*Gospel topics: children, love, priorities, prayer, faith, sacrifice*

## Asking with My Heart

By Edmundo E. Abellán

All my life I had been a poor follower of my parents' religion. I had benefited from their example of honesty, hard work, high moral values, and healthy living. But they had allowed their children to make their own decisions regarding religion, and I chose not to develop my spirituality. Instead, I elected to train my mind in the rigorous application of the scientific method. I became a biologist. But instead of taking me farther from God, my profession drew me closer. What I learned convinced me that the marvelous and intricate system of life on earth could not have happened by chance. Only a supreme intelligence—God—could have planned and created such wonderful entities as inhabit this planet.

Perhaps it was because of this conviction that I agreed to meet with the missionaries when we encountered one another. At the time, I was 58 years old, retired, and living in Costa Rica. We met for several discussions. Then the missionaries

invited me to be baptized. I had enjoyed our discussions and, more to be courteous than out of any great desire to be baptized, I accepted their invitation.

Afterward, I began to experience doubts. As I had always done in the past, I tried to resolve them by seeking a rational explanation for everything I had been taught. Two weeks went by, and my efforts to understand the gospel from a purely rational point of view led me only deeper and deeper into indecision.

One day, troubled by my doubts and lack of faith, I found myself kneeling in prayer. Something inside prompted me to ask with my heart, not my head. Words started flowing from my mouth with an ease I had never experienced before. I must have remained on my knees for a long time. Finally I became tired and went to bed.

The following day, 14 June 1992, was the date set for my baptism. I woke up early and once again felt the desire to pray. I prayed sincerely, asking for our Father in Heaven's help, but I still couldn't calm down. I was agitated and filled with doubts. I was about to call the missionaries to cancel my baptism when I was impressed to search the Bible. For some reason, I felt sure I would find my answer there.

I opened my Bible and started to read chapter 3 of Matthew, which tells of John the Baptist and the baptism of Jesus Christ. As I read the first few lines, my heart swelled with a great joy. In that instant, everything became clear to me and my doubts disappeared. I joyfully made my way to the meetinghouse and was baptized.

Since then, I have been amazed at the transformation in my life. I now understand concepts I could not understand before. This "spirit of revelation," which touches both mind and heart (see D&C 8:2–3), has taught me why we are on earth

and why Jesus Christ atoned for our sins. I have felt His infinite love, and I desire to so live that I might receive from Him the gift of eternal life. □

*Edmundo E. Abellán is a member of the Coronado Branch, San José Costa Rica Toyopán Stake.*

*Gospel topics: conversion, revelation, Holy Ghost, reason*

## I Tried the Experiment

By Lydie Zebo Bahie

My parents died while I was still living at home. Being the youngest and the only unmarried member of the family, I was devastated.

Alone and vulnerable, I became so distraught that I had to leave school. Concerned about my emotional state, my brothers and sisters took me to nearly every hospital in the area. The doctors said I was in shock and needed complete rest in a peaceful place away from books and anything that required concentrated thinking.

Life became even more difficult, especially as I saw my friends continuing their studies. The fact that they still had their mothers also caused me pain; my mother had been everything to me. I longed to die so I could rejoin my parents.

But my Father in Heaven had other plans for me. In His wisdom and love, He inspired my brothers and sisters to take me from the city where I had been going to school to another city to be near them. I stayed with my sister Alphonsine. She and her husband and children were so kind and courteous that I began to feel better. Even more importantly, my sister's oldest son, Faet Nadege, introduced me to The

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It was my association with the Church and the power of the gospel that finally calmed my mind and healed my wounded heart.

When I went to church for the first time, the sisters of the Relief Society and the Young Women welcomed me so warmly I felt I had almost found my parents again. I continued attending church and in time began taking the missionary discussions.

One of the first commitments Elder Hurst and Elder Bekoin asked of me was to read the Book of Mormon. I replied that I couldn't because I had been told not to read or do anything that required great concentration. The elders encouraged me to pray with sincerity and faith in Jesus Christ about their request, assuring me

the Lord would give me the ability to do what was necessary.

And so I did as they counseled. I tried the experiment. I read the Book of Mormon—and did so without any difficulty. I was baptized on 18 November 1995.

I soon received a calling to teach Relief Society. Then I was called to be a branch missionary. After that I served as a counselor in the Relief Society presidency and then as the president of the Young Women in our branch. All of these callings strengthened me and helped me progress, both spiritually and mentally.

My greatest growth came after I was called to serve in the Democratic Republic of Congo Kinshasa Mission. I was among the first sister missionaries to serve there. The experiences I

had, both positive and negative, helped me develop a greater Christian capacity for love and service. My joy felt complete.

I will always be grateful to those who fellowshipped me when I first found the Church. In meeting them, I found a new family, a large and loving one that I know is eternal: the family of our Father in Heaven. I am grateful to the Prophet Joseph Smith, through whom the Lord restored His Church. Above all, I am grateful for my Father in Heaven and my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. They opened the doors of life and happiness to me when all I could see was sorrow. □

*Lydie Zebo Bahie is a member of the Bouaké Second Branch, Ivory Coast Abidjan Mission.*

*Gospel topics: healing, conversion, Church service, missionary work*

**M**y mother had been everything to me. I longed to die so I could rejoin my parents.



## Teaching Children to Work

**H**elping children develop good work habits while they are young is essential to their progression and happiness. The following are suggestions that may help this learning process.

1. *Teach children the principles of work at a young age.* By age three children can do simple household chores such as making their beds and picking up their toys. Often a notoriously mundane task, such as matching socks, can be a time of enjoyment for parents and young children. We call it a “laundry party,” and our little ones come and help fold and put away the clothes. Even our teens still help and join in the fun.

2. *Teach children to understand the value of money and how it results from work.* We paid our children a

nominal allowance at an early age to help introduce the work-money relationship. By age eight they were shoveling neighbors’ walks or caring for pets of vacationing owners. As our children grew, they were ready for additional responsibilities inside and outside the home. As teens they now baby-sit and do yard work and other jobs. These skills, their forthcoming self-confidence, and a little financial incentive combined to make it easier for our children to learn more advanced jobs as they matured.

3. *Teach children to pay tithing.* The blessings of paying tithing can be recognized at an early age and can help develop faith.

4. *Teach children to budget an income.* Our philosophy has been to pay for our children’s basic needs and necessities. One

thing that has worked well for us is allowing them to pay the difference when they have wanted a more costly name-brand item. They understand we have a limited budget, and they can earn and spend their money as they want, once tithing and savings are paid.

We have learned that making an effort to inspire good work habits in our children’s lives, while incorporating gospel principles, richly blesses the lives of our children and ourselves.—**Alison Affeltranger, Sego Lily Ward, Sandy Utah Granite South Stake**

## Helping Those with Hearing Loss

**F**or those who have no problems hearing, being aware of the challenges of being hearing-impaired can help us to be more sensitive to others’ needs. Following are ways to improve communication.

1. *When speaking, face the person directly.* Avoid covering your mouth with your hands. Besides improving conduction of sound waves, this allows those who can lip-read to understand better.

2. *Pronounce your words distinctly.* Clear enunciation greatly improves understanding.

3. *Speak louder.* Talking louder than normal may help facilitate hearing, but do not shout. Excessive volume can blur sounds.

4. *Remember that most hearing aids magnify ALL sounds.* This means that not only is your voice amplified, but also the background noise. This cacophony of sound makes it difficult for a person losing their



ILLUSTRATED BY JOE FLORES



# Book of Mormon Theater

**T**o introduce our family's study of the Book of Mormon, we planned a Book of Mormon theater for family home evening. The following is a step-by-step approach for putting on your own little play.

First, place props in a laundry basket to be used in the theater. Robes and cloth for headbands can be used for the costumes. Then, in a small bag put slips of paper with either titles of Book of Mormon stories or Primary songs about the Book of Mormon. Next, each family member takes a turn picking a slip of paper from the small bag. If the slip has the title of a song, the person who picked it leads the family in singing that song. If a Book of Mormon story is picked, the person chooses who will play the characters in that specific story. Then someone reads the story (we use a children's version of the Book of Mormon stories) while the "cast" acts it out, using the clothes and props in the laundry basket.

Here are examples of songs you could use from the *Children's Songbook*:

1. "Book of Mormon Stories," p. 118.
2. "Nephi's Courage," p. 120.
3. "Had I Been a Child," p. 80.

4. "Samuel Tells of the Baby Jesus," p. 36.
5. "The Books in the Book of Mormon," p. 119.

6. "The Golden Plates," p. 86.  
Use your imagination to find stories in the Book of Mormon that your family could act out. Some examples we found are:

1. "Nephi Building the Ship"  
*Cast members: Nephi, Laman, and Lemuel.*

Building blocks could be used for making the ship, or a blanket or large towel could be a pretend ship the family could sail on.

2. "King Benjamin's Discourse"  
*Cast members: King Benjamin,*

*people listening to the discourse.*

The person playing King Benjamin could stand on a chair while family members sit on blankets and listen, or blankets could be used as tents.

3. "The Conversion of Alma the Younger"

*Cast members: Alma the Younger, sons of Mosiah, and the angel.*

One person could represent the sons of Mosiah if there are not enough people.

Acting ability is not necessary to help your family benefit from Book of Mormon theater. By acting out the scenes, you help the Book of Mormon come alive for your family and encourage the study of it at an early age.—**Brenda Minor, Suncrest Fifth Ward, Orem Utah Suncrest Stake**



ILLUSTRATED BY BETH M. WHITTAKER

hearing to pick out the voice of the person who is speaking to them. In these situations, asking a person to "turn up his hearing aid" is not a viable solution. Move closer, speak louder, or wait until the background noise has subsided.

5. *Get their attention before speaking.* Many hearing-impaired individuals have learned to ignore noise in order to concentrate on what is around them. They may not realize you want to speak to

them unless you first get their attention. If you are approaching them from behind, get their attention by touching them on the arm. If approaching from the front, you may need to give a gentle hand movement to get their attention.

6. *Realize that hearing aids do not restore all hearing.* "The hard-of-hearing appreciate it when people know that hearing aids are not devices that give normal hearing," says audiologist Evelyn Cherow,

past director of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. You may want to consider learning some sign language to help you communicate.

Those who hear well can be sensitive to others' needs and reach across the natural barriers that exist between the hearing and the hard-of-hearing world.—**Marlene B. Sullivan, Orchard Fifth Ward, Bountiful Utah Orchard Stake**

*Some coworkers use filthy language and talk about things that ought not to be publicly shared. How can I let them know I am uncomfortable without alienating them?*

**Response by Craig Redding,**  
*organization effectiveness consultant,*  
*Kingwood, Texas.*

The way we act determines in large measure how people behave around us. We might ask ourselves, *Do I act like someone worthy of respect, and do people know what I stand for?*

Our standards become apparent to others when the things we do and say radiate a commitment to decency and purity. Then most people will be careful not to offend us with filthy language; some may even intervene in our behalf when others use such language in our presence.

We help coworkers become aware of our standards in various ways, both direct and indirect. Key among these is making sure that, whenever possible, we avoid settings and situations where language tends to become inappropriate. If, for instance, our coworkers are in the habit of gathering around the water cooler to tell off-color jokes, during those times we ought to be found elsewhere.

Another way to make our values known is to share with coworkers something we learned on a mission or from a talk or lesson at church. We could also share an *Ensign* article that addresses a topic of interest to others to convey something meaningful to us. These kinds of actions are most effective when done in ways that build relationships and less effective if done in ways that tell people we think we are better than they are or that we are judging them. If we do such things in the spirit of love, people tend to

naturally keep foul language and influences away from us without our having to say a word.

The items we use to personalize our workplaces can also make a difference. I've seen screen savers on people's computers and other materials in work areas that declare positive, uplifting messages, and these clearly influence what people do and say.

Sometimes, however, the only way to help others understand our concerns about their use of profanity is to tell them directly, especially when our work regularly brings us into contact with new people who are likely to be unaware of our standards. Of course, when we ask someone to refrain from using bad language around us, we should take care not to be disrespectful or judgmental and not to speak with an air of superiority.

My wife's employment with one of the major airlines requires her to associate with a new crew

of people every month and new passengers every couple of hours. On one occasion a hardworking and friendly coworker was bombarding her with foul language. Kindly, she asked him, "Are you aware of how much foul language you use? It is causing me to want to stay away from you." Taken back but not offended, he said, "I didn't realize how much I was doing it." He stopped. Weeks later, he told my wife how much his own wife appreciated the change in language, and he thanked my wife for bringing it to his attention.

A consultant I know once told a person he was training, "You would be far more influential if you eliminated the distractions created by the type of language you use." The person previously thought swearing added spice to his presentation.

Our ability to remedy a situation in which others use filthy language increases as we seek help and guidance through prayer and as we deepen our concern for our brothers and sisters. We are better able to address the problem in a way that typically does not offend, is usually appreciated, and can strengthen our relationship with them. □

*Gospel topics: profanity, respect, example, morality, fellowship*

*My wife and I want to have equal voice in decisions made in our home, but we are taught that it is my responsibility to preside in the home. What does this mean, and what are its limitations?*

**Response by Hoyt W. Brewster Jr.,**  
*president, Salt Lake Brighton Stake.*

From the time Adam and Eve were placed upon the earth to the present day, the principle of

presiding authority has been practiced. Where groups are gathered, societies created, and partnerships formed, individuals are designated by appointment, delegation, or election to preside—that is, to provide presiding



leadership or order to a group.

When the Creator provided Eve as a companion-wife, or helpmeet, for the lone man Adam (see Gen. 2:18; Moses 3:18), He created the first and fundamental unit of society, the family. Though both man and woman are equal in Heavenly Father's eyes, for "male and female . . . are alike unto God" (2 Ne. 26:33), Adam was given the presiding role in the family.

Some have misunderstood or misinterpreted the instruction to Eve when Deity declared, "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall *rule* over thee" (Gen. 3:16; emphasis added; see also Moses 4:22). Commenting on this scripture, President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) said: "I have a question about the word *rule*. It gives the wrong impression. I would prefer to use the word *preside* because that's what he does. A righteous husband presides over his wife and family" ("The Blessings and Responsibilities of Womanhood," *Ensign*, Mar. 1976, 72).

The scriptures and declarations of prophets have consistently taught that a husband has the divinely delegated responsibility to preside, or provide Christlike leadership, in the home. For example, the recent proclamation on the family states, "By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families" ("The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102).

It is significant to note the wording "preside . . . in love and righteousness." The Apostle Paul taught this same concept, although in different words, to the husbands and fathers of his day.

"For the husband is the head of the wife," he wrote, "even as Christ is the head of the church" (Eph. 5:23). Then this servant of the Lord admonished, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:25).

Husbands are to give themselves totally to the welfare of the family. The presiding position does not entail the right to dictate or to "exercise unrighteous dominion" (D&C 121:39).

A bishop was startled during



*A key element of Christlike leadership in the family is counseling together.*

an interview with a husband and wife seeking counsel when the man said: "I want you to tell my wife that she is to do whatever I say because I preside in the home!" To the husband's amazement, it was he who then received instruction from the bishop in principles of true priesthood leadership.

On another occasion a stake president was interviewing a woman and asked about her relationship with her husband. Tears

of gratitude began to well up in her eyes as she told of her love for him. Not only was he a kind and loving husband to her, but he was a wonderful father to her children from a previous marriage. He provided them with love and an example of Christlike conduct.

The qualities essential to presiding in righteousness are enumerated in modern scripture:

"No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned;

"By kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile" (D&C 121:41–42).

The husband who exhibits these godly traits honors his priesthood and his position as the presiding authority in the home. He will speak and act out of love and with a desire to bless his family, not to dominate or dictate. Such a husband follows the example of Christ.

A righteous husband sees his wife as described by President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95): "a companion equal and necessary in full partnership" ("Being a Righteous Husband and Father," *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 51). I believe that a wife who feels loved, is treated with respect, is listened to as she counsels with her husband, and knows her voice is a valued part of family decisions will recognize the marriage as a full partnership in which she is an equal contributor. Such a partnership is based on trust in one another and trust in a loving Father who presides over His eternal family. □

*Gospel topics: priesthood, marriage, family*

Years ago when ward boundaries were changed within our stake in Las Vegas, Nevada, our family was among a handful of members who were realigned into one particular ward. My husband and I found ourselves struggling with the announced change. We would now be in ward boundaries that included an affluent area at a time when the failure of a business venture found us questioning ourselves as well as struggling to make ends meet. We wondered if we'd feel comfortable in a ward in which we thought people weren't grappling with problems as we were.

On the first Sunday in our new ward, I slipped into Relief Society just before it began. Feeling foreign and nervous, I took a seat on the back row so I could care for my eight-month-old baby less conspicuously.

Leaning over to get something for the baby, I noticed a woman on the aisle across from me as she turned to say something to her neighbor. She was well dressed, with perfect make-up and hair. Somewhere in my mind I made an instant judgment. The woman—elegant, well-manicured, no doubt affluent, flawless—symbolized to me the majority of the women in our new ward and represented the dramatic contrast I felt between myself and them as our family struggled financially.

At the conclusion of the lesson, this woman was one of those who stood to bear her testimony. "I can't speak

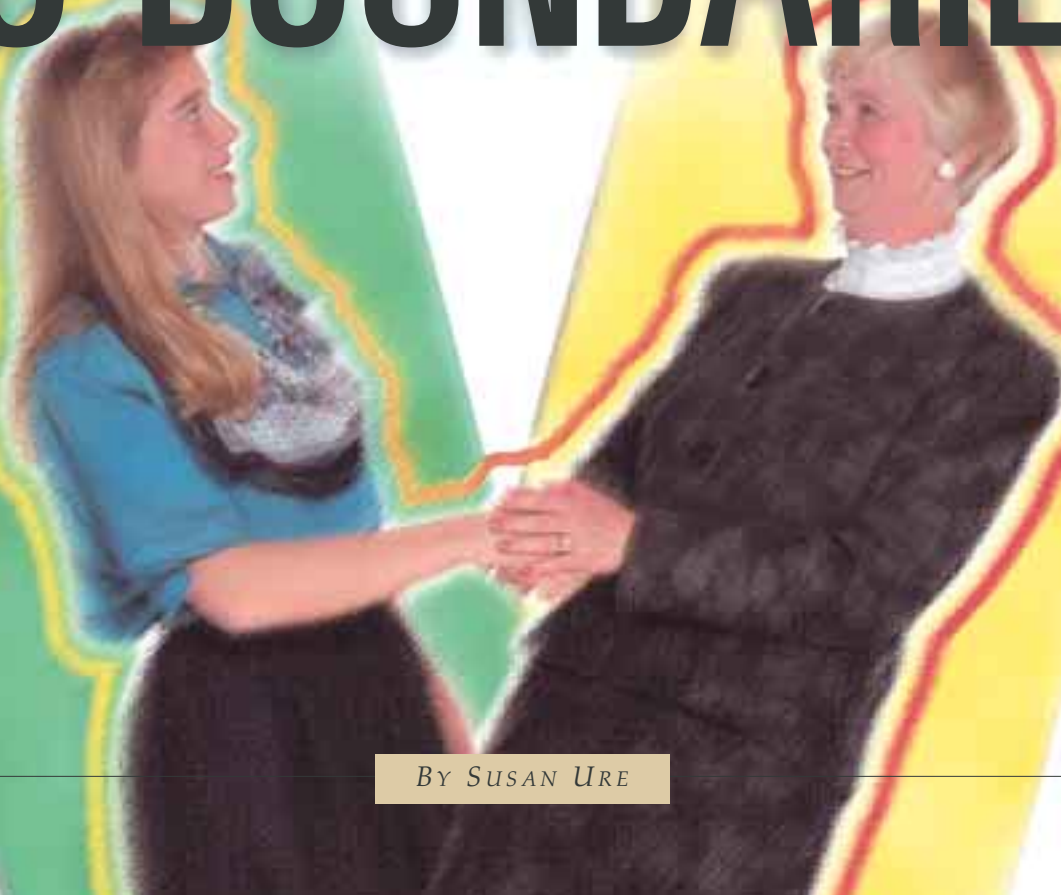
very well," she began, half-covering her mouth with her hand as she spoke in slightly thickened tones. As I looked more closely this time, I realized that one side of her face was paralyzed. "But after my brain tumor and four surgeries," she continued, "I am grateful to still be here." Shocked into a higher consciousness, I was deeply moved as this sister spoke of her love for her Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, and bore witness of Their love. In ensuing months I would come to know her as a guileless and selfless person whose consideration and love encompassed everyone.

This special woman did more than touch me with her sincere testimony and example. She unwittingly taught me one of the greatest lessons of my life. I had feared being judged to be less than adequate in my new ward, but it was I who had done the judging. I realized that we each have a side that the world sees, a side that may seem "flawless," but we each also have a private side, often unseen, in which we experience trial. I was reminded that although our personal trials and circumstances may differ, through the gospel of Jesus Christ, there are no boundaries—we are "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens" who "bear one another's burdens" (see Eph. 2:19 and Mosiah 18:8). □

*Susan Ure is a member of the Washington Third Ward, St. George Utah Washington Fields Stake.*

*Gospel topics: fellowshipping, Christlike love, trials, judging*

# NO BOUNDARIES



BY SUSAN URE

AREA AUTHORITY SEVENTY IN SWITZERLAND

The first clear spiritual experience **Elder Franz R. Gaag** remembers occurred when he was a young boy in Frankfurt, Germany, in 1962. After praying for years that they might find the Lord's true Church, Franz's parents were approached by two missionaries and eagerly heard the discussions. When nine-year-old Franz chose to be baptized, "it was impressed upon me that my decision to enter into sacred covenants with the Lord was guided by the Spirit," remembers Elder Gaag.

After the family's baptism, he says, "I decided that Heavenly Father, who provides me with the richest blessings, would hold first place in my life. I determined to accept any calling I received through His servants."

Elder Gaag served as president of the first non-English seminary class in Europe, full-time missionary to Austria, Young Men president, bishop, stake president, and now Area Authority Seventy. "Through service, I have been blessed to learn," he says.

Elder Gaag has worked in advertising, public relations, and marketing. His hobbies include gardening, landscaping, and caring for a pair of parrots. But "my true hobby and endless source of joy and challenge is my family," says Elder Gaag. "Every moment I have I enjoy spending with my wife and children."



*Elder Gaag, his wife, Fabiola, and their children, Annabelle, Oliver, Sebastian, and Rebekka.*

THE INFLUENCE OF ONE

**Iris Love Bryen** came to Lismore, New South Wales, Australia, as a schoolteacher in 1942. As the sole Latter-day Saint in the town, located 500 miles (800 km) north of Sydney, she paid tithing and corresponded with Church officers, which meant that, as she says, "Lismore began to show up on Church records." In this way she became crucial to the establishment of the Lismore Branch. In 1958 missionaries were sent to the area, and the branch grew until today it has some 250 members.

Born in 1909 in London, England, Iris was a baby when her family moved to Australia in 1910. The family had joined the Church in England in 1908. En route to Australia, their ship docked at Port Said, Egypt, where a frightening thing happened. An Egyptian planter wanted to adopt a white baby girl and offered a large sum of money for one. Eager to obtain the prize money, a kidnapper snatched Iris from her family while they were visiting a crowded bazaar in the city. Iris's mother and others gave chase. A group of men who saw what happened blocked the way of the only exit gate, and Iris's mother grabbed her from the arms of the thief.

Sometime after the family's arrival in Australia, Iris's father became a branch president,

and they held meetings in their home.

Years later, after Iris became an elementary schoolteacher in Lismore, she met Earl Bryen. Though not a member of the Church, he was honest, hardworking, and gentle. They were married in 1944 and over time became the parents of three children.

Even though Iris and her family lived in an area where Church facilities were not available for a time, Iris always had a strong testimony of the gospel and constantly read the scriptures and studied Church books. By her faith, example, and instruction in principles of the gospel, the children have remained active in the Church. After a lifetime of faithfulness, Iris received her temple endowment in 1986, shortly after the dedication of the Sydney Australia Temple.

For 15 years after the missionaries arrived, the Lismore Branch was a dependent group belonging to other Church branches. In 1973 it was made an independent branch, and eight years later the Lismore members had their own meetinghouse. The branch is an admirable tribute to its once lone member, Iris Bryen, who over the years has kept a branch history.

At 91, Iris attends church regularly and pursues historical research.—**R. Wayne Pace, Southgate Ward, Bloomington Utah Stake** □

## SAFETY, PEACE, JOY, AND SECURITY IN CHRIST

“My testimony to you is that the safety, peace, joy, and security we seek are found only in accepting and sincerely believing in the life and mission of Jesus Christ, the Son of Almighty God. As we embrace His teachings, we give up all of our sins, we repent, and we do all that is in our power to come unto Him in a true spirit of discipleship, knowing perfectly well that it is through His grace that we are saved, even after all that we can do. And as we give ourselves to Christ, fully and completely, we find safety, peace, joy, and security in Him.

“Does that mean we will not have turmoil or personal problems, sickness, family challenges, or employment difficulties? . . . Not at all. But it does mean that if our faith is anchored securely in our testimonies of Christ, we will be able to cope with whatever challenge or adversity comes our way, and we will be able to do so in a positive, faith-promoting manner. If we keep our lives focused on Christ, we will gain a broader view, an eternal perspective. With that we can understand adversity and what is the right thing for us to do . . . within the context of Heavenly Father’s eternal plan for all of His children. And we can find comfort in this life in the eternal safety, peace, joy, and security that He promises.”

*Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “That We Might Know,” devotional address, BYU—Hawaii, 25 Jan. 2001.*

## LIVE WITH INTEGRITY

“Difficulty in life begins when small deviations from true standards are made to justify a quick



THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, BY DEL PARSON

move to a greater accomplishment. That pattern does not work in life. Strength comes from making no exceptions to foundation principles. Without such guidelines, an individual lives for the moment, making decisions according to current circumstances. Such an individual is doomed to violate eternal truths and lose by rationalization many of the marvelous opportunities of life with their resultant greater achievement and happiness. . . .

“ . . . Real success is not centered in wealth or position. Should one’s prime interest be focused there, the means then become the end. That pattern is generally accompanied by an insatiable desire for more things and more power. True success comes from fulfilling the conditions of the Lord’s plan of happiness, beginning, when possible, by being a good mother or father and by forming a solid eternal family. It includes serving honorably and in a trustworthy way. It results in producing something of lasting benefit. In short, when your actions are consistent with the teachings of the Lord, that is success. . . .

“ . . . Avoid compartmentalizing your life into segments that apply to profession, to Church, and to

family, using different standards in each segment. Your life is a continuum where the same standards of integrity and hard work apply to every aspect of your life. . . .

“ . . . Always have a Church assignment. Always. Don’t ask for specific callings, but ask to be used so that you can be constantly connected to the reality of eternal truth. That effort will keep your life in balance.”

*Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Brigham Young University commencement, 10 Aug. 2000.*

## HE ASSISTS WITHOUT ABROGATING AGENCY

“When one receives a prompting regarding a question asked in prayer or a feeling of love for other people or a confirming feeling during a person’s testimony, one should recognize that the Holy Ghost is at work. In addition, since the Holy Spirit represents the Savior, one should also recognize the ultimate source: the Redeemer of the world.

“Have you ever thought of the many roles played by the Holy Ghost in our lives? He is a cleanser, a guide, a teacher, a justifier, a healer, a witness, a comforter, a quickener, a revealer, a sealer, and a sanctifier. He is the key. He knows when we are obedient. He knows how to comfort us when in need; he knows how to assist without abrogating agency.”

*Elder Merrill J. Bateman of the Seventy, “Christ Is the Reason,” devotional address, Brigham Young University, 16 Jan. 2001.*

## MAKING RIGHTEOUS CHOICES

“Why are so many resolutions made and so few kept? The answer is simple: it is hard to break bad habits. A bad habit is a false

tradition. Bad habits or false traditions are difficult to change. It takes real determination and resolve to make the change. Remember that our behavior is a result of years of decision making and that those decisions, however small, determine our habits and our traditions.

"Life is all about making choices. We cannot avoid it. We make them consciously or seemingly unconsciously all day long. When we make our choices, we always support one of two possible options. We are either obedient to true principles and choose that course of action, or we choose disobedience and live false traditions. Those are the two options. I define this process of making choices as the 'principle of responsibility.' We are all ultimately responsible for the choices we make."

*Elder Richard J. Maynes of the Seventy, "The Choices We Make," devotional address, LDS Business College, 10 Jan. 2001.*

## HELPING OUR CHILDREN REMEMBER

"As our hearts turn to our fathers in family history and temple ordinances, so our hearts must also be turned to our children in building their memories. Prayers, teachings, companionship, acts of love and concern, family observances, journals—all these, along with the work for the dead, will link our children to ourselves, to their progenitors, and to the family of Adam. They will know who they are, and they will be edified by that understanding, that remembrance."

*Elder Robert S. Wood of the Seventy, "By Way of Remembrance."*

## AN INTERFAITH VIEW OF THE FAMILY

"The family has no beginning, no end. In the family reside the deeds of the past, the breath of the present, and the yearning of the future. The family is the constant of the human universe—it is like the sky, something that has been and will always be. . . .

" . . . Our capacity to overcome obstacles is strengthened by the realization that we labor for something greater than the alpha and omega of our individual existence. I have learned that what I do today is not only for me, but it also shapes the future.

"People say to remember the past. But it is equally important to remember and then protect the future by the quality of what you do today. . . .

" . . . If you can honor those who have gone before and respect the potential of those yet to come, how much more should you love and nurture those who reside with you in the here and now? . . .

"The family is the initial 'center of learning' attended by each of us. The question is not *whether we*



learn within the familial context but *what* we learn. Is it enough of the right stuff, too much of the wrong, or not enough of anything? The formative experience can either be good or bad. If good, the family tree flourishes, and the individual, his community, and his nation benefit. If instruction is toxic, the tree is blighted, and the individual and society suffer. . . .

" . . . We spend precious little time understanding each other. Too many families are strangers residing under one roof. The Internet and other devices offer virtual reality, virtual affection, and virtual fulfillment. All these claims are virtually untrue. Technology is a friend, but this friend has placed some unintended heavy pressure on us.

"In this vastly developed society, we are in danger of being drowned by the amenities intended to benefit us. Our ancestors worked in order to survive, to eat and drink. We would do well to learn a few lessons from them. First and foremost is to cherish each other. . . .

" . . . The family is both marathon and relay race. It is like a marathon in that the distance is vast. From where we are, we see neither the starting line nor the finish line. It is like a relay in that we inherit the baton from a family member, only to bequeath it to another member after our paces have been run.

"We must be prudent stewards of that baton, for it is the connection between our ancestors and our progeny. Your affinity for the past and future should intensify your love for family members of the present."

*George W. Haley, U.S. ambassador to the Republic of Gambia, "Roots—the Challenge," address given at the Oakland California Stake Center, 13 May 2000. □*

## Church Gives Humanitarian Aid throughout the World

By Garry R. Flake

Through their donations and acts of service, Church members strive to follow the Savior's teachings and the Prophet Joseph Smith's counsel "to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to provide for the widow, to dry up the tear of the orphan, to comfort the afflicted, whether in this church, or in any other, or in no church at all" (*Times and Seasons*, 15 Mar. 1842, 732).

In this spirit, members make contributions to the Humanitarian Aid Fund, and the Church uses these contributions to help people in need all over the world. This assistance most often takes the form of life-sustaining resources during emergency situations and support for programs that help people become more self-reliant. The Church has sent food,

clothing, medical equipment, and educational supplies to 147 countries. Much of this aid has been given in cooperation with charitable agencies, including the Red Cross, Mercy Corps International, Food for the Poor, World Opportunities International, and the Children's Hunger Fund.

Most donations to the Humanitarian Aid Fund are made by members through their wards and branches using the Tithing and Other Offerings form. These donations are used to purchase needed materials, to pay shipping costs, or to implement humanitarian programs throughout the world.

To become self-reliant and to care for one's own is an underlying principle of the gospel. More than 300 missionaries serve in humanitarian assignments

throughout the world helping people become self-reliant so they can fulfill their moral obligation to care for themselves and their families. Examples: In China medical specialists teach better ways to treat infants born with serious complications. A couple from Idaho teaches rural farmers in Belarus how to increase their potato

crop production. A couple in Ghana teaches computer skills to youth in a vocational training program.

Often the recipients of humanitarian aid are invited to help meet their own needs. In Russia, for instance, a project was recently approved to provide blankets for a hospital. Fabric was bought and sisters from the local branch worked together with hospital staff to make quilts. In rural Kenya, a village needed new latrines because the old ones had dirt floors and promoted disease. Villagers asked the Church to provide the materials; the villagers then dug the pits, lined them with rocks, and built the outbuildings.

Also, members often labor in behalf of people they will never see. In the United States, for example, many make items such as school kits, hygiene kits, newborn kits, and quilts that are sent to people in need throughout the world.

Members' generous donations and acts of service



Humanitarian service missionary John Hess teaches potato farming in Belarus.

bless millions of people and make possible the Church's humanitarian efforts. Latter-day Saints have responded enthusiastically to President Gordon B. Hinckley's words: "In a world where there is so much of hunger and suffering, where death walks hand in hand with little children, we must continue and enlarge our efforts, not permitting politics or other factors to hold back the hand of mercy" (*"Look to the Future," Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 68). □

Garry R. Flake is director of humanitarian service, Church Welfare Department.



Church members in England bag wheat that was shipped to famine-stricken Ethiopia.



Lorimer T. Christensen, a humanitarian service missionary, teaches neonatal resuscitation to birth attendants in China.

## Elder Carmack to Direct Perpetual Education Fund

The First Presidency has called Elder John K. Carmack of the Seventy to direct the new Perpetual Education Fund announced by President Gordon B. Hinckley on 31 March in the priesthood session of general conference.

The Perpetual Education Fund will assist young Latter-day Saints in developing countries, primarily returned missionaries, to gain an education. Without financial assistance, these young people are often unable to obtain the necessary education or training to help them rise out of poverty. The fund will provide school loans with minimal interest to be repaid after the individual has completed his or her education and is employed.

Elder Carmack will supervise operation of the Perpetual Education Fund, which will be administered through the Church institute program.

Elder Carmack was president of the Europe Central Area when he was called to direct the new program. Sustained to the First Quorum of the Seventy in 1984 while serving as president of the Idaho Boise Mission, he had previously served the Church as a regional representative and stake president. An attorney, he had been president of a Los Angeles law firm. □



Members distribute emergency supplies in Bolivia. The Church sent relief supplies to flood victims in three South American countries.

## Food, Supplies Go to Hungry, Flood Victims

Last fall's Idaho potato crop was so plentiful that farmers took 10 percent off the market in an attempt to stabilize prices. To eliminate the surplus, farmers had two choices: dump the potatoes on the fields as fertilizer or donate them to charity.

The Potato Management Company growers of Idaho decided to donate 12 million pounds of the surplus to the Church to distribute to the hungry. "This is a joint effort by potato growers from Idaho and

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to place this burdensome supply of potatoes in the hands of those whose lives would be blessed by the receipt of the mere essentials of life," said Joe Wirthlin Jr., area director of welfare services.

Volunteers at welfare facilities near Idaho Falls will sort, wash, and pack some four million pounds of the potatoes to be shipped to homeless shelters and food banks throughout the United States.

The remaining 8 million

pounds will be dehydrated at processing plants in eastern Idaho. The Church will ship some of these dehydrated potatoes to El Salvador and other countries that have recently been affected by disasters. The remainder will be stored for future use.

### ASSISTING FLOOD VICTIMS

After severe flooding occurred in South America and Africa, the Church helped victims.

In Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia, dozens of people were killed and thousands lost their homes when dense rains caused flooding in February and March. The Church sent two containers of food and emergency items to Ecuador, six containers to Bolivia, and seven to Peru. Each container holds some 40,000 pounds of supplies.

Heavy March rains also caused flooding in eastern Africa, displacing more than 400,000 people in Malawi and Mozambique. Fifteen containers of relief items were sent to these countries. □

## Relief Society Honored in Brazil

On 20 March the Chamber of Deputies of Brazil (comparable to the U.S. House of Representatives) conducted a special session commemorating the organization of the Relief Society on 17 March 1842. More than 300 local Relief Society sisters attended the session, which was televised nationally.

More than 350,000 Brazilian women are Relief Society members. "These

wonderful women are dedicated to strengthening families," said Aecio Neves, president of the Chamber of Deputies, speaking in the session. "There has never been so great a need for such a work."

The motion to honor the Relief Society was made by Chamber Deputy Moroni Torgan, a fourth-generation Church member from Fortaleza, Brazil. Addressing the session, he said: "In

1937, two women and a girl joined the Church and began to attend Relief Society. One of the women was my great-grandmother Elizabeth Visconti; the other was my grandmother Vilma Visconti Bing. The girl was my mother, Vilma Bing Torgan."

A Latter-day Saint who works in the Brazilian Congress, Luiz César Lima Costa, said he felt this special session did more to promote a positive image of the Church in Brazil than any other event he had witnessed during his 29 years of Church membership. □



Ames stake members remember their pioneer heritage. Thousands of Latter-day Saint pioneers crossed Iowa en route to the Salt Lake Valley.

## Ames, Iowa: Rich Heritage, Bright Future

It was while making the difficult, mud-bogged pioneer trek across Iowa in 1846 that William Clayton penned the words to the hymn “Come, Come, Ye Saints” (*Hymns*, no. 30). The hymn has become an inspirational anthem for Latter-day Saints worldwide, but in Iowa it is also sung in other churches by congregations who revere the faith of the early pioneers. Also out of respect, many Iowa farmers have long-preserved the Mormon Pioneer Trail as it passes through their property, plowing around it as they plant their crops each year.

“We have been blessed by the goodness of the people of Iowa,” says Robert Schafer, president of the Ames Iowa Stake, the fourth stake to be created in the state. “It is because of this goodness that the Church has been able to expand and grow here.”

The first branch in Ames, Iowa, was officially organized in 1927. One of the branch’s first members was



a young graduate student who had come to Ames to study agricultural economics and marketing at Iowa State University. His name was Ezra Taft Benson.

“Sister Benson and I left for Ames the day we were married, September 10, 1926, in a small second-hand Ford pickup, with all of our earthly belongings in the back,” President Benson later reminisced in a 1976 letter to an Ames ward member. “It was a joyous, happy, profitable year. We would alternate in . . . holding Sunday School in our apartments and would usually drive 25 miles to attend sacrament meetings. There was a congenial, rich spirit among the members of the little

branch. We enjoyed the fellowship, the association, and especially the spirit in those early days in Ames.”

The same spirit that existed in the early Ames branch continues in the Ames stake today. President Schafer says the stake’s vision is to emphasize the role of the Savior in people’s lives. One way the stake accomplishes this is through service—each auxiliary of each unit in the stake has a goal to complete two service projects a year.

Since the stake was organized in 1995, three new branches have been created within its boundaries. Jayson and Clover Green of the Ankeny Ward are just two of many converts that have strengthened the stake in recent years. The Greens had just separated when a chance meeting brought Jayson in contact with the missionaries. He began hearing the discussions, reading the Book of Mormon, and making changes in his life. As a result Jayson talked with Clover, and they decided to give their marriage another try. The couple began to hear the discussions together. “After a lot of discussions with the

elders—and dinners with members—we were baptized,” says Brother Green. Last February, the Greens, along with their three young daughters, were sealed in the Chicago Illinois Temple.

### AMES IOWA STAKE

*Organized:* 1995

*Members:* 2,500

*Units:* 6 wards, 6 branches

*Temple district:* Winter Quarters Nebraska

Like early Latter-day Saint pioneers who traveled west across Iowa to reach Winter Quarters, Nebraska, the Greens and other members of the Ames stake now also travel west to Winter Quarters—to attend their new temple, dedicated on 22 April 2001. “This temple is particularly special to us, because it reminds us of the legacy of faith of thousands of Latter-day Saint pioneers who crossed our state,” says President Schafer. Today, instead of continuing west after going to Winter Quarters, Latter-day Saints of the Ames stake return to their homes east from the temple to build up Zion in their part of the world.

—**Maria Pringle, Ames First Ward, Ames Iowa Stake**



Each auxiliary unit in the Ames stake has a goal to complete two service projects yearly.





## TempleReady Upgrade Released

A new version of TempleReady and an update of the International Genealogical Index (IGI) are now in Church Family History Centers.

The new TempleReady 2.0 software for Windows® helps members prepare names for submission to temples. The IGI is an index of all previously performed ordinance work. With this update of 62 million names, the massive library now contains some 347 million names on more than 60 CDs. TempleReady's last upgrade was in 1997.

In order to prevent duplication, TempleReady compares names being submitted with the 347 million names of those for whom ordinance work has already been done. It then saves the names to a separate file for temple work of those for whom the work has not been done. The new version will also update the user's Personal Ancestral File if it finds that

work for someone on the file has already been done.

Another new feature is a built-in tutorial that teaches how to use the program and the Family History Center. TempleReady is now distributed in English, Spanish, French, German, Portuguese, and Japanese. □

## In the Spotlight

### BYU ANNOUNCES INSTITUTE FOR STUDY AND PRESERVATION OF ANCIENT RELIGIOUS TEXTS

Elder Merrill J. Bateman of the Seventy, president of Brigham Young University, has announced the creation of the university's Institute for the Study and Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts. The new institute includes within it BYU's Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS). It will deal with translation and publishing of the Middle Eastern texts as well as the preservation of ancient religious texts.

President Bateman said the institute was created to increase public access to ancient religious records. The production of the Dead Sea Scrolls on CD-ROM, the Islamic Translation Series, and image-acquisition and electronic publication are examples of the work being done at the BYU institute.

### WASHINGTON D.C. STAKE RELIEF SOCIETY AIDS ZIMBABWE

Some 200 Relief Society sisters and other members

of the Washington D.C. Stake worked together in March to produce thousands of humanitarian aid items to be sent to Zimbabwe. The stake made quilts, leper bandages, dresses, newborn kits, sewing kits, and hygiene kits.

Ambassador Simbi Veke Mubako from the Republic of Zimbabwe and his wife, Dr. Hazel Mubako, attended the final day of the service project and spoke about the tremendous need for help in their country. The ambassador noted that 25 percent of his nation's 12 million population are AIDS patients. Most of these are orphan babies whose parents died from the disease.

### IOWA MUSEUM FEATURES DANISH LATTER-DAY SAINT IMMIGRATION

The Danish Immigrant Museum, located in the Danish community of Elk Horn, Iowa, is running a new exhibit, "Wilderness Exodus: The Danish Mormon Experience in America," from 7 May through 28 October 2001.

The exhibit documents missionary work in Denmark, the arduous journey from Denmark to Utah, and the activities of the settlers in their new home. The museum will also sponsor a series of lectures about the experiences of early Latter-day Saints as they traveled across Iowa.

The gospel was first taught in Denmark in 1850. □

## Policies and Announcements

### DISCONTINUATION OF LOCAL CHURCH UNIT WEB SITES

The following letter, dated 15 March 2001, has been sent to local unit priesthood leaders by the Presiding Bishopric:

"As you know, the Church has developed several official Church Internet sites. These sites contain approved, correlated material that the Church has deemed appropriate for the Internet. New and updated material will continue to appear on these sites.

"As the Church grows, it is very important that information presented to the world be accurate and dignified and that it represent a single, unified Church voice. In addition, it is

imperative that the rights of third parties be protected and respected through strict compliance with applicable laws.

"With this in mind, a policy for the creation, operation, and maintenance of local unit web sites is being developed and will be sent to priesthood leaders. Until the policy is established, the First Presidency has requested that local Church units and organizations should not create or sponsor web sites. *They have also determined that existing sites should be discontinued.* If you have questions pertaining to these instructions, please call 1-801-240-3678. We request that local leaders give appropriate attention to this matter." □

# Comment

## Chains of Pornography

The article "Breaking the Chains of Pornography" touched me so much. I felt as though I was reading my own journal. I cannot

thank you enough for bringing to light the possibilities that are open to us when we follow the counsel of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ and the prompting of the Holy Ghost. I was especially thankful that the article pointed out a way to overcome such trials.

I feel blessed that our family is

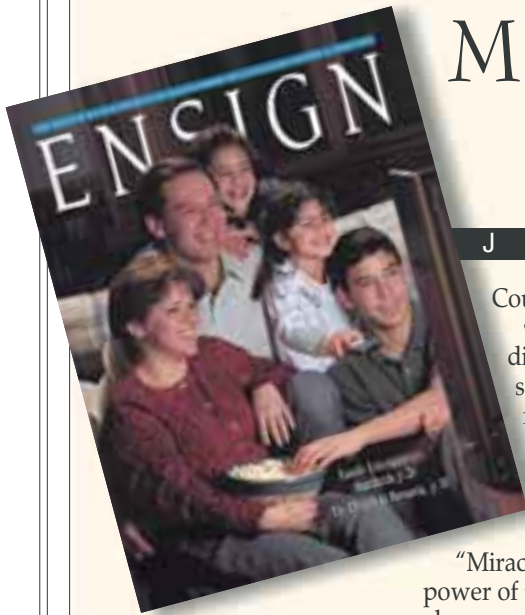
overcoming a very similar situation. This article came as a reassurance to my heart that Heavenly Father hears and answers my prayers.  
Name Withheld

## Song of Hope

Thank you for the article "A Song of Hope" (Dec. 2000). I had

been feeling sorry for myself because I felt I could not help people the way I wanted to, but when I read this story I was so impressed by Pierre Anthian and his desire to serve. It gave me hope that I too could reach my goal of helping others to be their best self.

Solveig Hasleton  
Mesa, Arizona



# Making the Most of This Issue

J U N E 2 0 0 1

Country Road," p. 64.

- Begin a family discussion about spiritual gifts by reading "The Gift of Hands," p. 63.

## Do Miracles Occur Today?

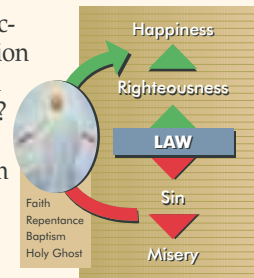
"Miracles worked by the power of the priesthood are always present in the true Church of Jesus Christ," says Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. So, too, are miracles that come through the power of faith. See p. 6.

## Making Single Adults Welcome

Ever wondered how you could help a friend who is single become interested in the Church? See how members and missionaries in one area help single adults come into the Church and feel welcome, p. 40.

## What the Savior's Mercy Means for You

How do the doctrines of justification and sanctification apply in your life? Turn to p. 18 for clear insights from Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Presidency of the Seventy.



## Struggling with Shyness?

Find out how some members have enlisted the Lord's help in learning to manage their shyness, p. 56.

## Talking with the Hearing-Impaired

For six simple tips on improving your communication with people who are hearing-impaired, see p. 68.

## You Can Come Back

Have you ever worried that you or someone you love might have strayed too far from the iron rod to find the way back? Read this moving personal account of one woman who shows how it can be done, p. 36.

## Home Teachers and Visiting Teachers

Find the monthly messages on pp. 2 and 61.

## Did You Know?

Each month's *Ensign* has an article supporting the family. Some articles focus on preparing for or strengthening marriage. Others are

intended to help members become better parents, regardless of their situation. Because the principles in these articles are based on

gospel truths, you can apply them whether you are 22 or 82, whether you are a single parent or part of a long-married couple, whether you have one child or 11.

## Entertainment: You Set the Standards

Helps for you to set family standards on entertainment in a world where spiritual values are so often ignored. See p. 26.

## Ways to Strengthen Your Family

• With a few simple props and a little imagination, you and your children can re-create many scenes from the scriptures and bring them alive for your family. See p. 69.

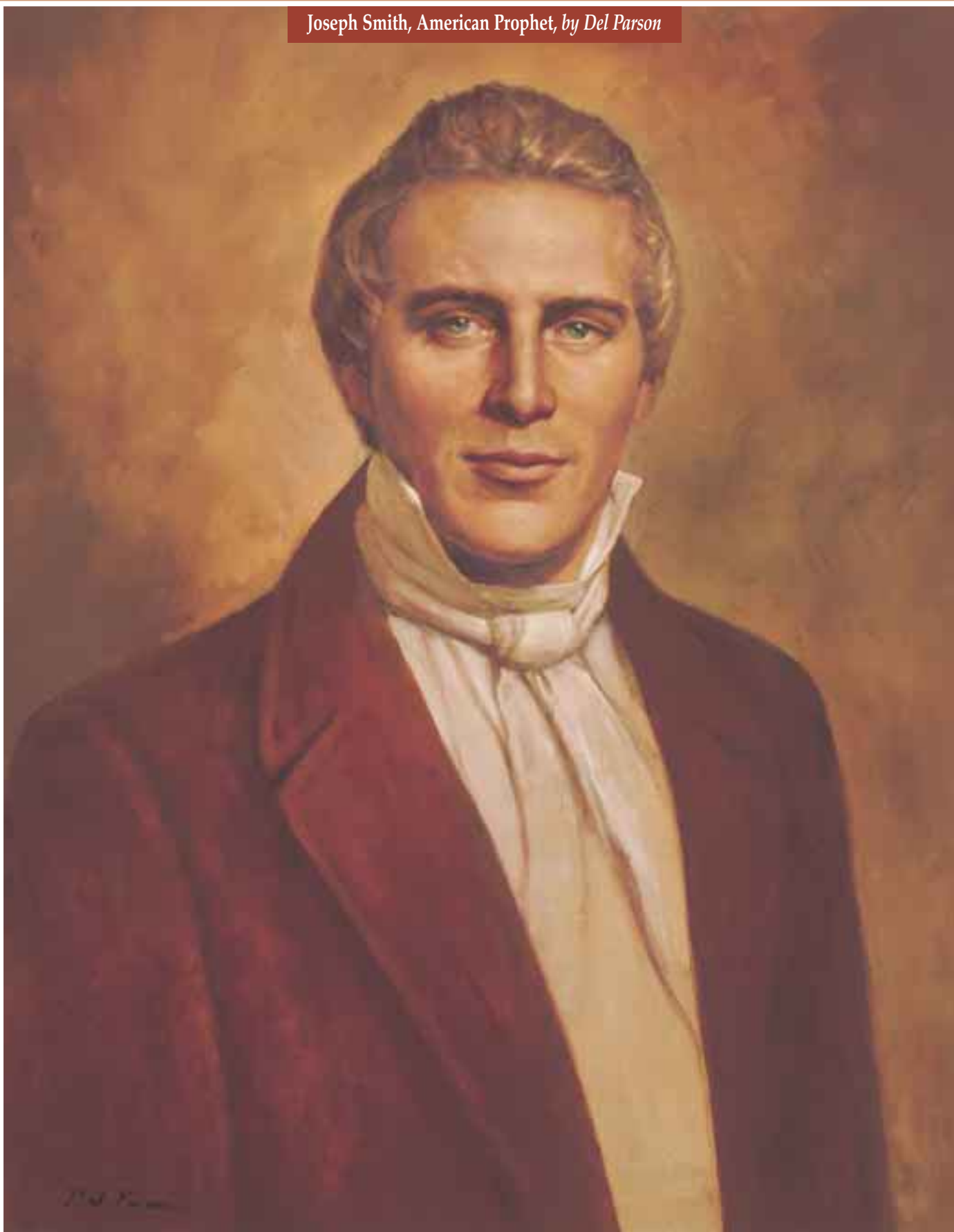
• Ever had a "laundry party" at your house? Learn how this and other ideas help children develop good work habits. See p. 68.

• Most stories from Latter-day Saint Voices can be used for family home evenings. If you want to teach your family about how God knows and loves each of us, read and discuss "On a

## GOSPEL TOPICS

Activation, 36	Love, 65
Answers to prayer, 36	Marriage, 70
Atonement, 18	Miracles, 6
Brotherhood, 44	Missionary work, 30, 40, 66
Child abuse, 2	Morality, 26, 70
Children, 2, 65	Obedience, 26
Christlike love, 72	Overcoming weaknesses, 56
Church callings, 56	Parenting, 2
Church service, 66	Peace, 44, 62
Comfort, 64	Prayer, 2, 61, 64, 65
Conversion, 40, 62, 66	Priesthood, 6, 70
Discipline, 2	Priorities, 65
Example, 70	Profanity, 70
Faith, 6, 36, 56, 61, 63, 65	Reason, 66
Faith in Jesus Christ, 18	Revelation, 66
Family, 70	Sacrifice, 65
Fasting, 36, 61	Sanctification, 18
Fellowshipping, 40, 70, 72	Service, 63
Gift of tongues, 63	Shyness, 56
Healing, 66	Single adults, 40
Holy Ghost, 66	Spiritual gifts, 63
Humanitarian service, 30	Spirituality, 61
Judging, 72	Temple work, 30
Justification, 18	Testimony, 30, 36, 64
Loneliness, 64	Tolerance, 44
	Trials, 72

Joseph Smith, American Prophet, by Del Parson



*"This generation shall have my word through you" (D&C 5:10).*



*“Movies, magazines, television, videos, the Internet, and other media are there as guests and should only be welcomed when they are appropriate for family enjoyment. Make your home a haven of peace and righteousness. Don’t allow evil influences to contaminate your own special spiritual environment.”— Elder M. Russell Ballard*