

Ensign



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p. 20

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The Happy Family, by Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller

“And ye will not suffer your children that they go hungry, or naked; neither will ye suffer that they transgress the laws of God, and fight and quarrel one with another. . . . But ye will teach them to walk in the ways of truth and soberness; ye will teach them to love one another, and to serve one another” (Mosiab 4:14–15).

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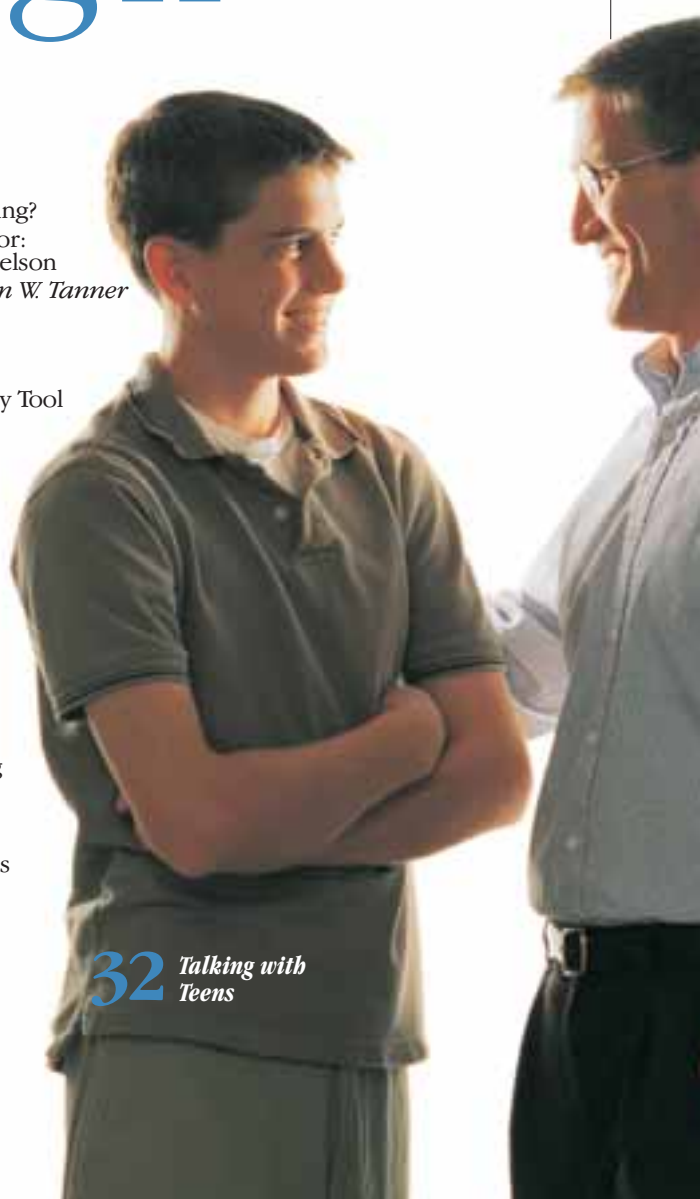


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Peace in Our Savior

BY PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON

First Counselor in the First Presidency

Some years ago, my wife and I visited a popular theme park with members of our family. For one ride, we boarded a boat which would carry us in a vertical dive that evoked screams from passengers as the boat roared down a waterfall and glided to a stop in the water below. Just before taking the plunge, I noticed on one wall a small sign declaring a profound truth: “You can’t run away from trouble. . . . Ain’t no place that far!”

These few words have remained with me. They pertain not only to the theme of that ride, but also to our sojourn in mortality.

Life is a school of experience, a time of probation. We learn as we bear our afflictions and live through our heartaches.

As we ponder the events that can befall all of us—even sickness, accident, death, and a host of other challenges—we can learn with Job of old, “Man is born unto trouble.”¹ Job was a “perfect and upright” man who “feared God, and eschewed evil.”² Pious in his conduct, prosperous in his fortune, Job was to face a test which could have destroyed anyone. Shorn of his possessions, scorned by his

friends, afflicted by his suffering, shattered by the loss of his family, he was urged to “curse God, and die.”³ He resisted this temptation and declared from the depths of his noble soul: “Behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high.”⁴ “I know that my redeemer liveth.”⁵ Job kept the faith.

It may safely be assumed that no person has ever lived entirely free of suffering and tribulation, nor has there ever been a period in human history that did not have its full share of turmoil, ruin, and misery.

When the pathway of life takes a cruel turn, there is the temptation to ask the question “Why me?” Self-incrimination is a common practice, even when we may have had no control over our difficulty. At times there appears to be no light at the tunnel’s end, no dawn to break the night’s darkness. We feel surrounded by the pain of broken hearts, the disappointment of shattered dreams, and the despair of vanished hopes. We join in uttering the biblical plea: “Is there no balm in Gilead?”⁶ We feel abandoned, heartbroken, alone.



*Like Job of old,
we are lifted
heavenward
by that divine
assurance and
precious promise:
“I will not fail thee,
nor forsake thee.”*



The experience of Elijah with the widow of Zarephath and her son illustrates the truth that when God speaks and His children obey, those children will always be right.

To all who so despair, may I offer the assurance found in the psalm: “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.”⁷

Whenever we are inclined to feel burdened down with the blows of life, let us remember that others have passed the same way, have endured, and then have overcome.

There seems to be an unending supply of trouble for one and all. We often expect instantaneous solutions, forgetting that frequently the heavenly virtue of patience is required.

Do any of the following challenges sound familiar to you?

- Children with disabilities
- The passing of a loved one
- Employment downsizing
- Obsolescence of one’s skills
- A wayward son or daughter

- Mental and emotional illness
- Accidents
- Divorce
- Abuse
- Excessive debt

The list is endless. In the world of today there is at times a tendency to feel detached—even isolated—from the Giver of every good gift. We worry that we walk alone and ask, “How can we cope?” What brings ultimate comfort to us is the gospel.

From the bed of pain, from the pillow wet with tears, we are lifted heavenward by that divine assurance and precious promise: “I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.”⁸

Such comfort is priceless as we journey along the pathway of mortality, with its many forks and turnings. Rarely is the assurance communicated by a flashing sign or a loud voice. Rather, the language of the Spirit is gentle, quiet, uplifting to the heart, and soothing to the soul.

Lest we question the Lord concerning our troubles, let us remember that the wisdom of God may not be easily understandable by mortals, but the greatest single lesson we can learn is that when God speaks and a man obeys, that man will always be right.

The experience of Elijah the Tishbite is illustrative of this truth. In the midst of a terrible famine; drought; and the despair of hunger, suffering, and perhaps even death, “the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath, . . . and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.”⁹

Elijah didn’t question the Lord. “He arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks: and he

called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.

“And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand.

“And she said, As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.

“And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son.

“For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth.”¹⁰

She did not question the improbable promise. “She went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days.

“And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah.”¹¹

Let us now fast-forward the pages of history to that special night when shepherds were abiding with their flocks and heard the holy pronouncement: “Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”¹²

With the birth of the babe in Bethlehem, there emerged a great endowment—a power stronger than weapons, a wealth more lasting than the coins of Caesar. The long-foretold promise was fulfilled; the Christ child was born.

The sacred record reveals that the boy “Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.”¹³ At a later time, a quiet entry records that He “went about doing good.”¹⁴

Out of Nazareth and down through the generations of time come His excellent example, His welcome words, His divine deeds. They inspire patience to endure affliction, strength to bear grief, courage to face death, and confidence to meet life. In this world of chaos, of trial, of uncertainty, never has our need

for such divine guidance been more desperate.

Lessons from Nazareth, Capernaum, Jerusalem, and Galilee transcend the barriers of distance, the passage of time, the limits of understanding as they bring to troubled hearts a light and a way.

Ahead lay Gethsemane’s garden and Golgotha’s hill.

The biblical account reveals: “Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

“And he took with him Peter and [James and John], and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

“Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.

“And he went a little further, . . . and prayed, saying,”¹⁵

“Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

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

“And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”¹⁶

What suffering, what sacrifice, what anguish did He endure to atone for the sins of the world!

For our benefit, the poet wrote:

*In golden youth when seems the earth
A summer-land of singing mirth,
When souls are glad and hearts are light,
And not a shadow lurks in sight,
We do not know it, but there lies
Somewhere veiled 'neath evening skies
A garden which we all must see—
The garden of Gethsemane. . . .*

*Down shadowy lanes, across strange streams
Bridged over by our broken dreams;
Behind the misty caps of years,
Beyond the great salt fount of tears,
The garden lies. Strive, as you may,
You cannot miss it in your way;
All paths that have been, or shall be
Pass somewhere through Gethsemane.¹⁷*



Elder David O. McKay wrote, *“The little headstones became monuments not only to the little babes sleeping beneath them, but also to a mother’s faith and devotion to the eternal principles of truth and life.”*

The mortal mission of the Savior of the world drew rapidly to its close. Ahead lay Calvary’s cross, the acts of depravity committed by those who thirsted for the blood of the Son of God. His divine response is a simple but profoundly significant prayer: “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”¹⁸

The conclusion came: “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus,”¹⁹ the Great Redeemer died. He was buried in a tomb. He rose on the morning of the third day. He was seen by His disciples. Words that linger from that epochal event course through the annals of time and bring to our souls even today the comfort, the assurance, the balm, the certainty: “He is not here: . . . he is risen.”²⁰ Resurrection became a reality for all.

Some time ago, I received a faith-filled letter from Laurence M. Hilton. May I share with you that letter’s account of surviving personal

tragedy with faith, nothing wavering.

In 1892 Thomas and Sarah Hilton, Laurence’s grandparents, went to Samoa, where Thomas was set apart as mission president after their arrival. They brought with them a baby daughter; two sons were born to them while they served there. Tragically, all three died in Samoa, and in 1895 the Hiltons returned from their mission childless.

David O. McKay was a friend of the family and was deeply touched by their loss. In 1921, as part of a world tour of visits to the members of the Church in many nations, Elder McKay, then of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, stopped in Samoa. Before leaving on his tour, he had promised the now-widowed Sister Hilton that he would personally visit the graves of her three children. I share with you the letter Elder McKay wrote to her from Samoa:

“Dear Sister Hilton:

“Just as the descending rays of the late

afternoon sun touched the tops of the tall coconut trees, Wednesday, May 18th, 1921, a party of five stood with bowed heads in front of the little Fagali'i Cemetery. . . . We were there, as you will remember, in response to a promise I made you before I left home.

"The graves and headstones are in a good state of preservation. . . . I reproduce here a copy I made as I stood . . . outside the stone wall surrounding the spot.

"Janette Hilton

Bn: Sept. 10, 1891

Died: June 4, 1892

'Rest, darling Jennie'

"George Emmett Hilton

Bn: Oct. 12, 1894

Died: Oct. 19, 1894

'Peaceful be thy slumber'

"Thomas Harold Hilton

Bn: Sept. 21, 1892

Died: March 17, 1894

'Rest on the hillside, rest'

"As I looked at those three little graves, I tried to imagine the scenes through which you passed during your young motherhood here in old Samoa. As I did so, the little headstones became monuments not only to the little babes sleeping beneath them, but also to a mother's faith and devotion to the eternal principles of truth and life. Your three little ones, Sister Hilton, in silence most eloquent and effective, have continued to carry on your noble missionary work begun nearly 30 years ago, and they will continue as long as there are gentle hands to care for their last earthly resting place.

*"By loving hands their dying eyes were closed;
By loving hands their little limbs composed;
By foreign hands their humble graves adorned;
By strangers honored, and by strangers mourned.*

"Tofa Soifua,

"David O. McKay"

This touching account conveys to the grieving heart "the peace . . . which passeth all understanding."²¹

Our Heavenly Father lives. Jesus Christ the Lord is our Savior and Redeemer. He guided the Prophet Joseph. He guides His prophet today, even President Gordon B. Hinckley. Of a truth I bear this personal witness.

That we may shoulder our sorrows, bear our burdens, and face our fears—as did our Savior—is my prayer. I know that He lives. ■

NOTES

1. Job 5:7.
2. Job 1:1.
3. Job 2:9.
4. Job 16:19.
5. Job 19:25.
6. Jeremiah 8:22.
7. Psalm 30:5.
8. Joshua 1:5.
9. 1 Kings 17:8–9.
10. 1 Kings 17:10–14.
11. 1 Kings 17:15–16.
12. Luke 2:10–11.
13. Luke 2:52.
14. Acts 10:38.
15. Matthew 26:36–39.
16. Luke 22:42–44.
17. Ella Wheeler Wilcox, "Gethsemane," in Al Bryant, comp., *Sourcebook of Poetry*, 3 vols. (1968), 2:435.
18. Luke 23:34.
19. Luke 23:46.
20. Matthew 28:6.
21. Philippians 4:7.

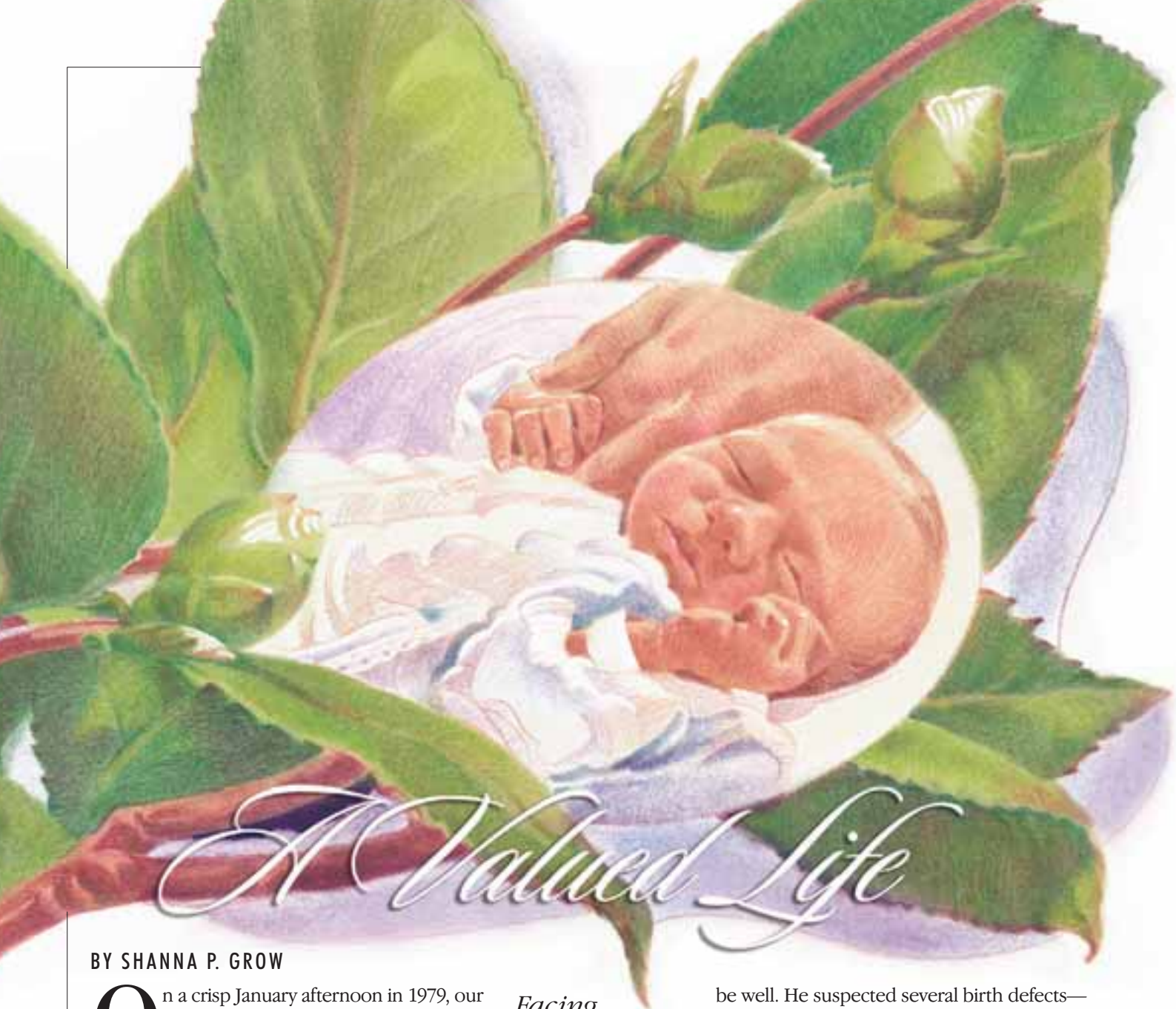
IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

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

1. Review the article's bulleted list of challenges. Invite family members to add to the list. Then read the first three paragraphs of the article aloud, and ask, "How can we cope?" Study together one or more of President Monson's scripture references or accounts to find answers to this question.

2. Ask four people to read aloud the words of the narrator, the Lord, Elijah, and the widow in 1 Kings 17:8–16. What does President Monson say we can learn from this account? Share an experience when obedience to God brought peace to your life.

3. Read together the account about the Hilton family and the letter from Elder David O. McKay. Invite family members to share experiences of how the Savior has helped them endure trials and find peace.



BY SHANNA P. GROW

On a crisp January afternoon in 1979, our daughter Camilla was born. The doctor did not pronounce the expected, “It’s a girl!” Instead, he urgently ordered for a specialist to be called, saying, “We have a problem here!” While the medical staff worked with Cami, I watched the second hand sweep around the clock and wished desperately that I could make time stop. Cami was taken quickly from the delivery room. My husband, after checking on me, went to check on our baby.

Later, the pediatrician brought my daughter to me. After placing her in my arms, he sat on the bed and, with tender compassion, explained some physical signs that indicated all might not

Facing the challenges of our daughter’s birth defects has taught us important lessons about faith, hope, and the love God has for His children.

be well. He suspected several birth defects—future tests would tell for sure. He expressed the hope that he was wrong, but in that moment I knew he was not.

At five months, Cami developed pneumonia. A heart catheterization showed she had a rare heart defect that the doctors felt would eventually take her life. We were given no hope and were told there was little time to enjoy her. We also learned she might have other problems such as blindness, deafness, and kidneys with congenital abnormalities.

Parents who have gone through similar experiences will understand the desperation we felt as we sought advice from many doctors.



One after another reported negatively to us. However, we found that the promise of eternal life is a sanity saver for sorrowing parents. We began to truly comprehend that the gospel of Jesus Christ is a gospel of hope, faith, and priesthood power in which all human life is valued.

Surgery, Tests, and Spiritual Lessons

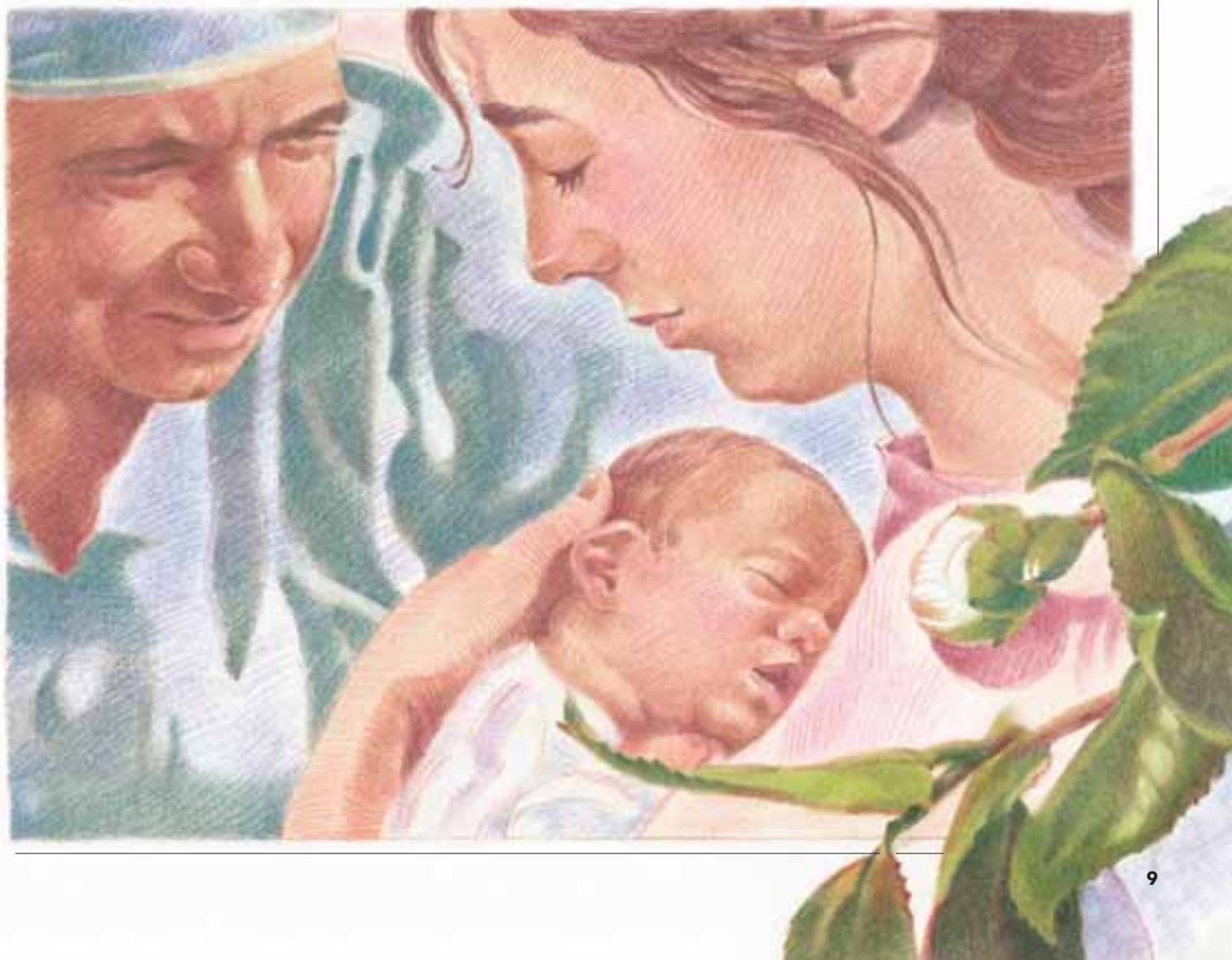
When Cami was one year old, she weighed less than 15 pounds. We learned then that she was not hearing normally and would need surgery. Her cardiologist said it was wondrous that she had lived that long and refused to give her anesthesia for ear surgery, fearing it would be too much for her heart and lungs to handle. So during the operation,

Cami's body was strapped to a papoose board, and I held her head.

The surgery improved her ear infections but not her hearing. Later, more sophisticated tests showed that Cami was, in fact, profoundly deaf. We realized that the cost of hearing aids was the exact amount we had put aside to pay our tithing. Our bishop counseled us to pay our tithing and said that, if needed, the Church would help.

We paid our tithing, and Cami was given a blessing. Then we took our daughter to Primary Children's Medical Center in Salt Lake City for final tests before getting her fitted with hearing aids. The technician was so astounded at the results of the test—"hearing within normal speaking

The doctor suspected several birth defects. He expressed the hope that he was wrong, but in that moment I knew he was not.





After two strong impressions not to do the graft, the surgeon ended the operation. I was grateful he listened to the promptings of the Spirit.

voice range”—that she thought the machine must have malfunctioned. We knew better.

My faith much reinforced, I wanted a complete cure. The Lord had given Cami her hearing, and I knew He had the power to make her whole. I pleaded with my husband, and he agreed to give her a blessing. His voice breaking and hands trembling, he gave her a treasured blessing filled with great promises. But he didn't bless her that she would be cured. At the blessing's close, my husband turned to me with tears streaming down his face and simply said, "The Spirit restrained me."

Then came my first real acceptance of Cami's physical limitations. Sometimes it takes more faith to accept the Lord's will than it does to invoke a miraculous healing.

A month or two later we had tests run on Cami's kidneys. The tests confirmed that they, too, had defects. The urologist informed me that she needed surgery within two weeks. Since the cardiologist said her heart couldn't withstand the surgery, the urologist could give us no hope that she would live. But following more fasting and prayers and another blessing, Cami's condition improved without surgery. Yet even though she continued to grow and develop, the doctors did not believe that she would live long.

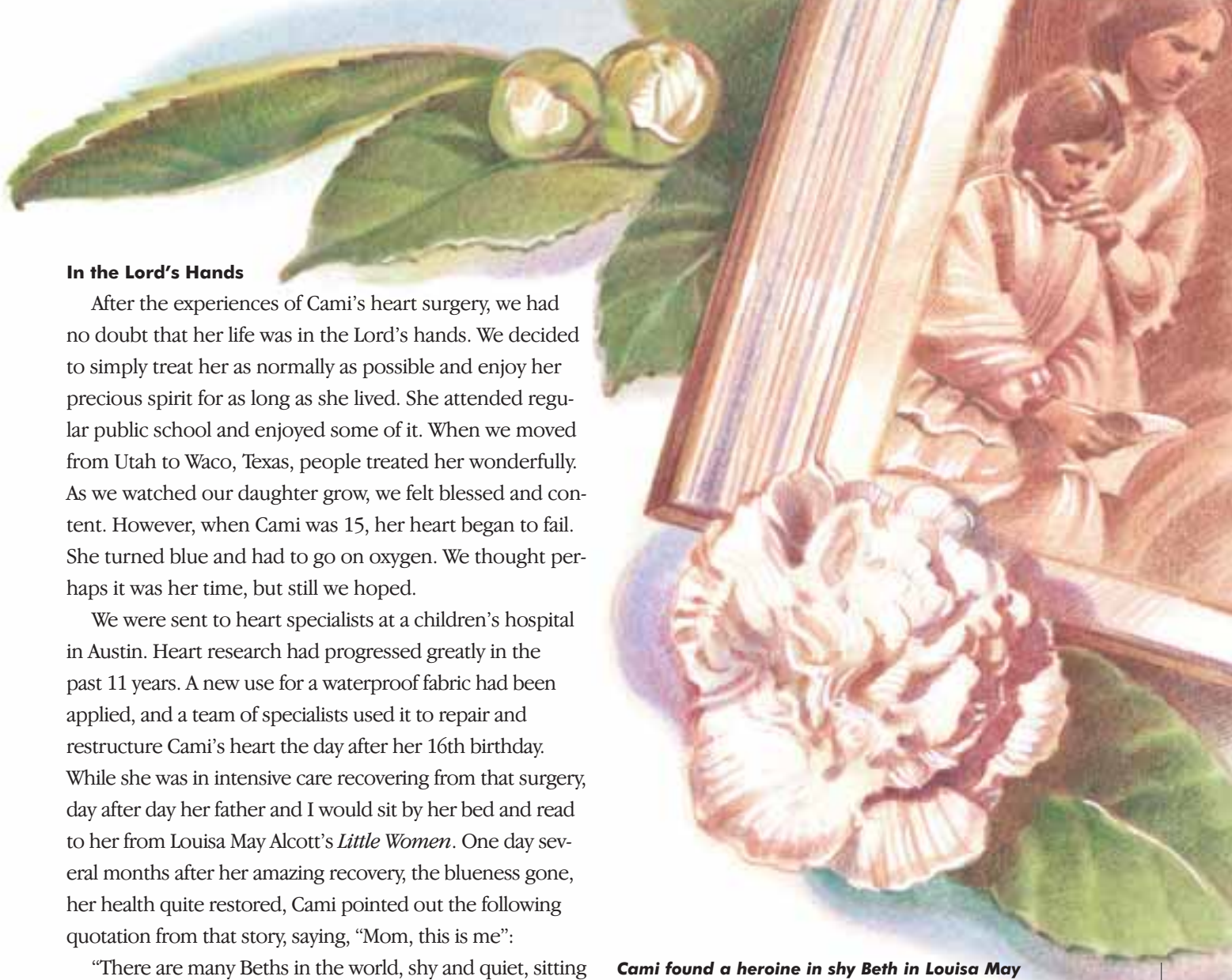
"Your Life Will Not Be Shortened"

When Cami was four, doctors began talking to us about an experimental heart surgery. After much prayer, we

received confirmation that our daughter would survive the surgery. Over the last few years we had learned to depend so much on spiritual guidance that we trusted those promptings. We gave our permission for the surgery, hoping that some good might come out of it. Perhaps the doctors would learn something that could help others. Perhaps they could help her. Whatever happened, we knew Cami would be okay.

The surgery was not successful. The surgeon, who seemed particularly upset, told me that when they had come to the experimental portion of the surgery, he had received a distinct impression that he should not attempt to do it. When he told the cardiologist, the cardiologist accused him of succumbing to fear, saying, "You've gone this far—you've *got* to try. If you don't, you are condemning her to no hope." So a second time the surgeon prepared to do the graft, but, as he explained, "The impression was even more distinct. This time I felt sure if I continued there would be a fatal blood clot to the lung." He then looked at me intently and said, "It was my decision as her surgeon to discontinue the operation." As I listened to his story, I recalled the words of Cami's pre-surgery blessing: "I bless you that your doctors will be inspired so that your life will not be shortened before its appointed time." I was grateful for a surgeon who listened to the promptings of the Spirit.

Cami recovered rapidly, and the doctors were amazed. Soon she was up and smiling at other children in the hospital.



In the Lord's Hands

After the experiences of Cami's heart surgery, we had no doubt that her life was in the Lord's hands. We decided to simply treat her as normally as possible and enjoy her precious spirit for as long as she lived. She attended regular public school and enjoyed some of it. When we moved from Utah to Waco, Texas, people treated her wonderfully. As we watched our daughter grow, we felt blessed and content. However, when Cami was 15, her heart began to fail. She turned blue and had to go on oxygen. We thought perhaps it was her time, but still we hoped.

We were sent to heart specialists at a children's hospital in Austin. Heart research had progressed greatly in the past 11 years. A new use for a waterproof fabric had been applied, and a team of specialists used it to repair and restructure Cami's heart the day after her 16th birthday. While she was in intensive care recovering from that surgery, day after day her father and I would sit by her bed and read to her from Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*. One day several months after her amazing recovery, the blueness gone, her health quite restored, Cami pointed out the following quotation from that story, saying, "Mom, this is me":

"There are many Bets in the world, shy and quiet, sitting in corners till needed, and living for others so cheerfully, that no one sees the sacrifices till the little cricket on the hearth stops chirping, and the sweet, sunshiny presence vanishes, leaving silence and shadow behind" ([1932], 38).

I realized that in her own way, Cami is our Beth; in her quiet, cheerful way she has taught our family much about sacrifice and love.

Surpassing Expectations

We have since moved to West Virginia, where Cami graduated from high school. Today she is 26 years old. Although her poor vision limits her from driving a car and doing many other things, Cami lives a very full, quiet life. She goes visiting teaching regularly, has given talks in church in spite of her slowness of speech, does much of the cooking and homemaking for our family, and even writes stories. She serves as our family's memory, reminding us of important

Cami found a heroine in shy Beth in Louisa May Alcott's Little Women. Cami, too, in her quiet, cheerful way, has taught our family about sacrifice and love.

appointments and dates. And she is constantly on the lookout for special toys for her nephews. Cami is an integral part of our lives.

I often wonder what would have happened if we had given up hope, if we hadn't trusted in priesthood blessings, if we hadn't accepted the Lord's will regarding our daughter. I am grateful for the blessings and the perspective that the gospel has given us. Our experiences with Cami have shown us the power of faith, of hope, and of the priesthood and have taught us the value of every human life. I know that Cami will live to fulfill her mission on this earth—however long that may be. ■

Shanna P. Grow is a member of the Cumberland Ward, Martinsburg West Virginia Stake.



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Question

My friend's father passed away recently. I'd like to help my friend, but I don't know how. What should I do?

After my husband died, a lot of people asked me how they could help. My standard answer was, "I don't need help right now." I really did need help; I just didn't want to bother anyone. The best help I received was from friends who kept their eyes open for a need they could fill and from members of my ward who stopped by unannounced with gifts, cards, loving wishes, even just a loaf of bread or plate of cookies.

Remember that everyone handles grief in different ways. Some don't want to be left alone. If that's the case, drop by often for a visit. Others want to be away from home and kept busy. Consider asking them to

accompany you on a trip to the store or a restaurant, or invite them to your home for dinner every now and then. Others may truly want to stay home and be left alone. Be sensitive to their wishes, but keep checking in on them and keep a watch over them.

*Christine S. Owens, Wilford Second Ward,
St. Anthony Idaho Stake*

In the face of such sorrow, we may want to reassure the bereaved that all will be well in the end. Though these comments are kindly meant, some can be hurtful. For example, a sweet sister may say, "It's all right; you're sealed as a family." The child thinks, "But how am I going to get through the next 60 years?" The widow thinks,

"How will I survive this week?" Other well-meaning people may say, "It's all right; you'll have more children." The parent thinks, "Yes, but I won't see this darling child again in this life!" No child can be replaced, no matter how many children a parent has.

A sorrowing soul receives love with gladness. To respond with love, simply say, "I'm sorry." Hold a hand or give a hug if appropriate. Loving comments lift the burden: "You're in my prayers." "Let me do your laundry . . . run the vacuum . . . clean your bathroom." "I'm bringing you dinner tomorrow." Send a card or take flowers. These gestures bring balm to the saddened soul.

*Susan S. Fox, Brentwood Second Ward,
Antioch California Stake*

Don't say, "I understand how you feel," or anything that begins with, "Well, at least . . ." Do share happy experiences you have had with the departed. Any little anecdotes are usually greatly appreciated.

*Faye Johnson, Connersville Ward, Muncie
Indiana Stake*

If your friend is a member of the Church, know that the gospel gives us answers and hope, but it doesn't remove the grieving process. Help your friend see that while more hope and peace can be found in the Lord's

plan than anywhere else, we still have to accept the pain of loss and allow ourselves time to heal.

Karen J. Gale, Mesa Hills Ward, Cedar City Utah West Stake

Ask your friend if you can make the telephone calls to share the news of his or her loss with appropriate people so they can offer condolences and support. Your friend will want others to know but may not be ready to get on the telephone to share the information.

Julia Holton Todd, Worthington Ward, Columbus Ohio North Stake

An experience a few years ago taught me a valuable lesson. A woman in my ward named Rebecca was expecting her fourth child. A few weeks before the delivery, she learned the baby had died. No one in the ward knew until the baby was born, and everyone was reeling in shock at the news. My husband told me I should visit Rebecca. Losing a child was my ultimate fear, and I couldn't deal with her grief, let alone my own. So I didn't do anything.

My mother, who was also in the ward, made a loaf of bread and went to visit Rebecca. But my mother later told me, "I wish I hadn't gone. I just made it worse. I sat on her couch and cried the whole time." I felt a little better about not visiting.

The gospel gives us answers and hope, but it doesn't remove the grieving process. We still have to accept the pain of loss and allow ourselves time to heal.

About a year later, at a ward party in the park, I happened to be sitting at the same table as Rebecca and a new sister in the ward. The new sister had also lost a baby, and I could hear them talking. Rebecca said, "The hardest thing for me was that almost no one did anything."

I was overcome with guilt. I slid down the bench and said to Rebecca, "I was one of those who didn't do anything. I just didn't know what to do."

Rebecca was forgiving, but she answered, "Well, no one did except your mom. She came over and we had a good cry together!"

My point is: do something! Just be there. Follow the Spirit and let your friend know you care, even if you think your efforts are inadequate. It's nice to make brownies or bread or even dinner, but sometimes all they need is you.

Julie Deschamps, Payson 14th Ward, Payson Utah Stake

You may feel your friend needs to be reminded of or taught the doctrine of Christ. But you cannot force this. Despite how deeply you wish to share, the best thing to do is offer your friendship and a listening ear and then to follow the Spirit. Your



PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEVE BUNDERSON, EXCEPT AS NOTED, POSED BY MODELS

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



Kind gestures can bring balm to the saddened soul.

caring and companionship of others.

*Diana Janson,
Rexburg Fifth Ward,
Rexburg Idaho Center
Stake*

Don't expect your friend's life to be "back to nor-

mal" soon. Your friend will grapple with the reality of his or her father's death for several months, even years. Be patient with this timetable.

After some time has passed, consider inviting your friend to social events. But don't get offended if he or she rejects your invitations. Socializing after the death

of a loved one can be uncomfortable. However, your efforts for inclusion will be an indication of your love for your friend. Invite him or her to activities that don't require a lot of social interaction, such as watching a movie or attending a play or musical performance. This can provide a needed diversion without requiring an explanation of your friend's somber mood to others. Initially, the smaller the group, the easier this transition will be.

*Sbaralyn Duffin, Salt Lake University 31st
Ward, Salt Lake University Second Stake*

The first year is the hardest, because it is the first year of Easter egg hunts, Christmas morning, and other special events without Dad. Be extra sensitive to your friend's needs

effectiveness in helping your friend will be directly tied to your ability to feel and follow the promptings of the Holy Ghost.

*James Garner, Carter Hill Ward,
Montgomery Alabama Stake*

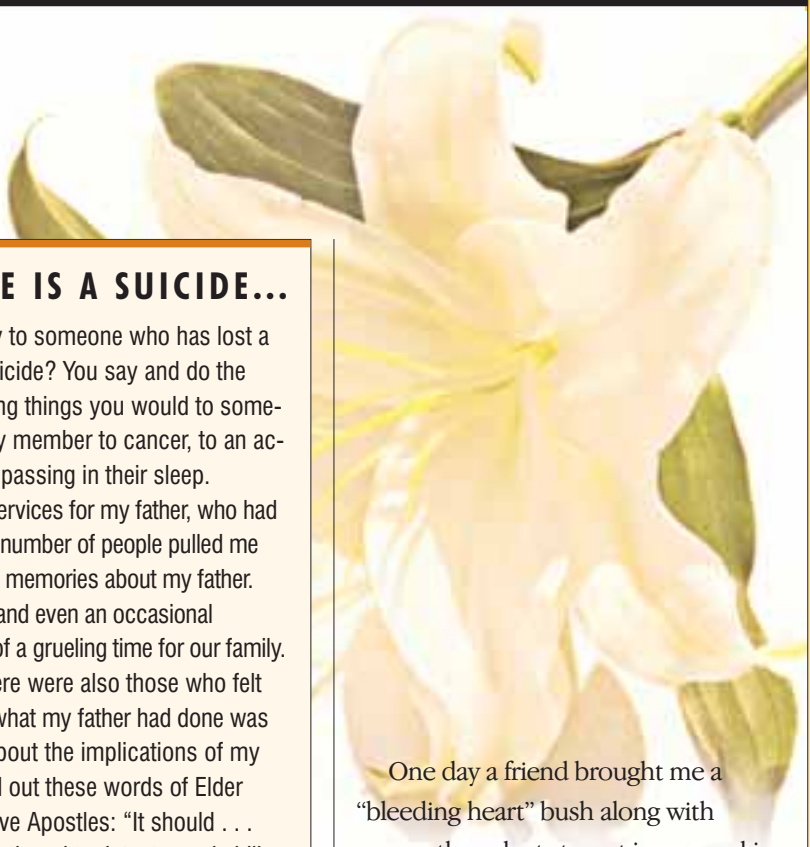
Real grief for me has always come six weeks or more after a loved one dies. You walk in rooms or pick up the telephone and then remember that person is no longer there. By then, the sympathy cards have come and gone, the telephone calls have ceased, and you are just lonely. *That* is the time when cards, telephone calls, and invitations to activities are most appreciated.

*Laura Church, Moorestown Ward, Cherry
Hill New Jersey Stake*

When my best friend's father passed away, I organized a special fast among our friends. Together we fasted and prayed for our grieving friend and her family members. We had a special dinner to break our fast together and invited our mourning friend, who found comfort in the

Sending a card can help comfort the bereaved, especially when weeks or months have passed since the death of his or her loved one.





PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG DIMOND



WHEN THERE IS A SUICIDE...

What should you say to someone who has lost a family member to suicide? You say and do the same kind, comforting things you would to someone who lost a family member to cancer, to an accident, to a peaceful passing in their sleep.

After the funeral services for my father, who had committed suicide, a number of people pulled me aside to tell me warm memories about my father. This brought a smile and even an occasional chuckle in the midst of a grueling time for our family.

Unfortunately, there were also those who felt the need to say that what my father had done was

a sin. I didn't need to hear that; I was already worrying about the implications of my father's actions. Thank goodness for a friend who pointed out these words of Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "It should . . . be remembered that judgment is the Lord's; he knows the thoughts, intents, and abilities of men; and he in his infinite wisdom will make all things right in due course."¹

Kind words go a long way for someone whose life has been twisted by the ugly circumstances of suicide. Staying away because you don't know how to react helps no one and actually causes more pain. Condolences and acts of service shouldn't be based on the manner in which someone died. Offer your heart without hesitation.

Kelly Lynette Drake, Highlands Ranch Ward, Highlands Ranch Colorado Stake

NOTE

1. As quoted in M. Russell Ballard, "Suicide: Some Things We Know, and Some We Do Not," *Ensign*, Oct. 1987, 7.

One day a friend brought me a "bleeding heart" bush along with some other plants to put in my yard in memory of my dad. She then helped me weed the flower bed so there would be room for the plants. Every time I see the bush in my backyard, I think of my dad, and I also think of my dear friend who went out of her way to help me at a difficult time.

Ramona Pixton, Canyon Creek Ward, Tooele Utah Valley View Stake

When some time had passed after my baby died, I appreciated being asked to help others. Even something as simple as a five-minute phone call from another mom asking for simple parenting advice could brighten my day. I enjoyed being asked to take a meal to another family or to help with a Relief Society enrichment night. Service is a balm to my soul and helps me deal with the cycles of depression that are common after the death of a loved one. ■

Janille Stearmer, Bonneville Second Ward, Provo Utah Bonneville Stake

around Father's Day and the anniversary of the death. Be proactive in checking up on your friend.
Wendi Dunford, Montpelier Ward, Montpelier Vermont Stake

If appropriate, consider asking friends and family to write down memories of your friend's dad or to donate photographs if they have them. Create a memoir for your friend.

I appreciated it when friends wrote me cards and referenced scriptures that gave them comfort. It helped when they shared how

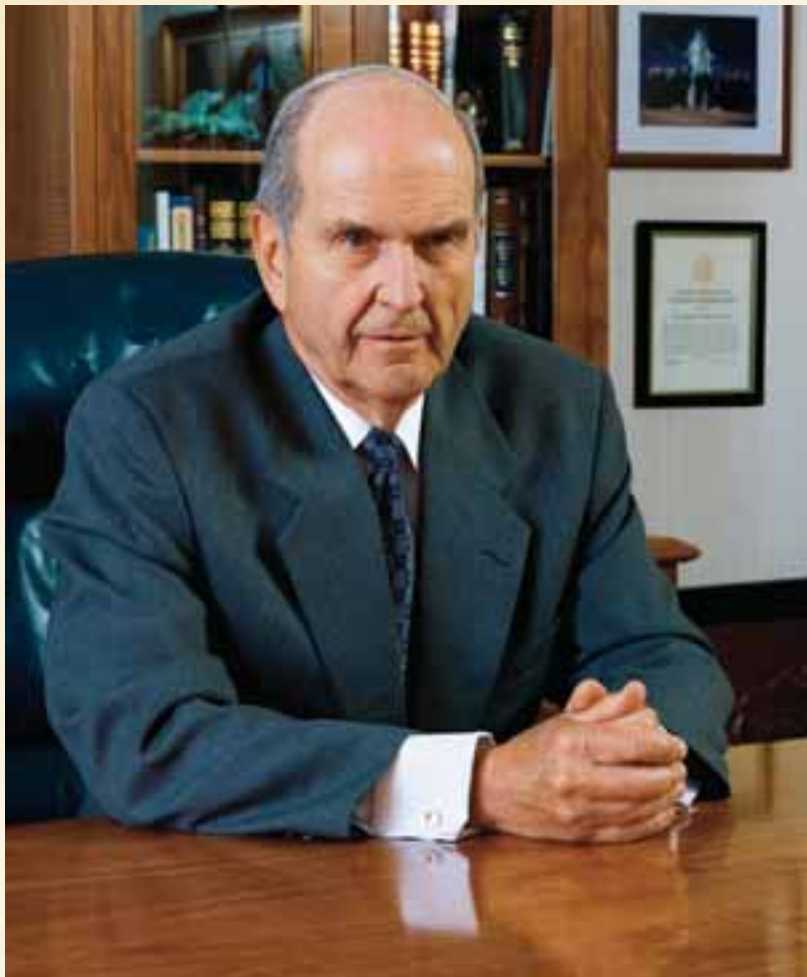
they had dealt with tragedy in their own lives.
Brooke Mellen, Manhattan Third Ward, New York New York Stake

What helped me the most was when others would listen. Being a good listener means focusing on your friend rather than telling your own story. It means understanding if your friend wants to keep some memories private. Your friend will probably appreciate this more than any advice you can give.

Steven T. McMaster, Rochester Third Ward, Rochester Minnesota Stake

The Mission and Ministry of the Savior

*A Discussion with
Elder Russell M. Nelson*



PHOTOGRAPH BY MATTHEW BEIER

Recently Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles met with a member of the Church magazines staff to discuss the calling of an Apostle and the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ. Here is a portion of their discussion.

Church Magazines: What is the difference between the office of Apostle and that of other General Authorities?

Elder Nelson: There are five offices in the Melchizedek Priesthood: elder, high priest, patriarch, Seventy, and Apostle. So, first of all, it's an ordination to a different office. There is a quorum of the Apostles. There are also quorums of the Seventy. One responsibility that Seventies and Apostles have in common is that they are each called to be special witnesses of Jesus Christ in all the world. The best way to answer the question is to refer you to Doctrine and Covenants section 107, which says that the Twelve Apostles, or traveling high council, under the direction of the First Presidency, regulate the affairs of the Church in all the nations, and they call on the Seventy to assist them (see vv. 23–26). The Lord is pretty clear about the difference.

Church Magazines: In all the world—that must involve a great deal of travel.

Elder Nelson: That's implicit in the name *Apostle*. It comes from the Greek *apóstolos*, meaning “one sent forth.” So the Lord called His special witnesses and asked them to go into all the world.

Church Magazines: What is the most difficult aspect of your calling?

Elder Nelson: As the Church grows—now



in the vicinity of 12 million people—and with the turnover, with bishops in office less than five years on average, our great concern will always be imposed by the growth of the Church. How can we have our bishops well trained? How can we keep the doctrine pure? How can we keep apostasy from working into the traditions of different wards and branches? That's our great concern.

Church Magazines: What is the most rewarding aspect of your calling?

Elder Nelson: Clearly the most rewarding aspect is on an individual plane. When you

see what obedience to the principles of the gospel does in the lives of people, it is so thrilling. For example, in West Africa, where those dear Saints have lived for so many years without the hope of a temple, we now have a temple in Ghana. To see the difference in the lives of those people, the happiness in the families, the hope and light that come into their lives—there's nothing quite like that.

Church Magazines: Many members struggle. What counsel would you give to people who wish they were more committed but find it difficult?

The Lord's mission in mortality was to accomplish the Atonement, which is a gift of immortality to every individual who has ever lived. . . . Part of that mission was to make eternal life a possibility for anyone who would qualify for it.



You come unto Christ to be yoked with Him and with His power, so that you're not pulling life's load alone. You're pulling life's load yoked with the Savior and Redeemer . . . , and suddenly your problems, no matter how serious they are, become lighter.

Elder Nelson: Those people need to have a little private time and ask themselves what they really want in life. Is it entertainment? Is it wealth? Is it fame? They need to decide what they really want to accomplish. No runner starting a race would ever start without knowing whether he's doing a hundred-yard dash or a marathon. Many people, in and out of the Church, have not really framed their objectives, what they want to accomplish more than anything else. But once they have made the decision to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, to emulate His example, to live according to His precepts, then their commitment is secure. That has to be done individually. No leader can do it for anyone else.

Church Magazines: In the scriptures the Savior says, "Come unto me." What does this invitation mean? How do we come unto Him?

Elder Nelson: "Come unto me," the Savior said, "all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). So you come unto Christ to be yoked with Him and with His power, so that you're not pulling life's load alone. You're pulling life's load yoked with the Savior and Redeemer of the world, and suddenly your problems, no

matter how serious they are, become lighter. That's what we mean by coming unto Christ, being yoked to Him.

Church Magazines: What are some of the steps involved in that process?

Elder Nelson: Faith, repentance, baptism, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and then enduring to the end. You never give up on yourself and those you love. You keep working. Many of our Saints don't understand what repentance really is. Repentance is more than just undoing the wrongs you've done. It's a whole change of your outlook on life. You want to think like the Lord. You want to talk like the Lord. You want to act like the Lord. You want to believe, you want to pray, you want to love the way the Lord does. And then you're converted. Often you see people whose first interest is somewhere else. They will have conflicts, because as they try to serve the Lord they have one foot in the stirrup and one foot dragging on the ground.

Church Magazines: What would you say to members who feel they are praying worthily but feel their prayers are not being answered?

Elder Nelson: We've all had that experience. We've prayed for something to happen, and it

didn't happen. Farmers pray for moisture, but moisture is parceled out so partially. I think we need to learn a lesson from the Lord Himself who taught us how to pray. In the Lord's Prayer He said: "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:9–10). If we can train ourselves to pray to God that we might conform to His will rather than have Him conform to our will, that problem will disappear. It's a matter of learning who is the Father and who is the son or the daughter. You pray to be consonant with the will of God and to let your life be consonant with His will and direction for you. Maybe that means you have to suffer through a death or an illness in the family in order to get the growth and the experience that will be to your eternal advantage. Remember who you are when you pray and to whom you're praying. Blessings are always granted upon obedience to the law upon which those blessings are predicated. I learned in doing surgery that all the prayers in the world could be undone by a single mistake because blessings are predicated upon obedience to laws. Therefore, if you really want a certain blessing, you'd better find out what the laws are that govern that blessing and then work on becoming obedient to those laws (see D&C 130:20–21).

Church Magazines: What would you want every member of the Church to know about the Savior?

Elder Nelson: As I go around to visit the members of the Church in stake conferences and regional conferences, often I ask them what they know about the life of the Savior. How can you describe what you know about the Savior in a word or two? And maybe I don't phrase the question very well, but quite often their answers are rather nebulous. I've learned that generally people in the world do not understand who the Lord is, what His mission was, or what His ministry

meant. The Lord's mission in mortality was to accomplish the Atonement, which is a gift of immortality to every individual who has ever lived. That is an incredible gift. Part of that mission was to make eternal life a possibility for anyone who would qualify for it. That is a gift conditioned upon obedience to the laws and temple ordinances and covenants. What was His ministry? His ministry was everything else that He did—His miracles, His teachings, His love, His focus on ordinances, His teaching us how to pray. His mission—the Atonement—was uniquely His. Only one was required to do that. He did it once for all. On the other hand, His ministry was to be an example for us. There is no limit to the number of people who can learn to love as He loved, to serve, obey,

pray, and endure to the end as He did. We can all emulate that example. We need to make a clear distinction between the things we can do that the Lord did and the things we need not worry about that the Lord did once for all. If we can understand that, then we can really emulate the Lord in our own lives and follow the example He set for us.

Church Magazines: Is there anything else you would like to say to the members of the Church?

Elder Nelson: Just to bear my testimony that this is the work of the Lord. We are engaged in His holy service. The Book of Mormon is another testament of Jesus Christ, as is the New Testament, as is the Old Testament. But the Book of Mormon is a very special document that teaches us more about the life, the mission, and the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ than any other book. I'm so grateful for the Book of Mormon. And I'm very grateful to be led by a living prophet. To have a prophet at the helm of this Church is a wonderful privilege. It is my testimony that we are engaged in the work of the living God in His living Church, the only true and living church upon the face of the earth. And I leave that testimony with you in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

PHOTOGRAPH BY LINDA LEEPER



We now have a temple in Ghana. To see the difference in the lives of those people, . . . there's nothing quite like that.

Strengthening Future Mothers



We must inspire young women to want to be wonderful wives, mothers, and homemakers.

BY SUSAN W. TANNER
Young Women General President

Several years ago my husband and I asked our children what they liked about the recent general conference. Our then-16-year-old daughter was elated. She said, “I loved it! I loved hearing inspired, intelligent prophets and leaders affirm motherhood.” Then she told us that this was one of the disturbing anxieties in her life: “I just don’t hear it from anyone—not at seminary, not in Young Women, and definitely not at school; nowhere except at home.”

I don’t know if her experience is similar to that of other young women, but I suspect it is. I know that for some time it has not been vogue for women to extol the virtues of motherhood or for young women to express the desires of their hearts to be mothers.

I particularly noticed this some time ago when I talked with a group of about 20 Laurels whom I had never met before. I asked them what their goals were. The first few mentioned educational goals such as getting a PhD; some said they would like to go on a mission—all worthy goals. Finally one girl timidly expressed the desire to be a mother. Then a few more girls talked about other goals. After one more girl mentioned motherhood, the rest of them joined in. But it was quite courageous for those first two girls to

admit they wanted to be mothers. And this was in a very safe setting.

Besides the fact that admitting this goal may set a girl up for ridicule, it may also set her up for feeling like a failure. She knows she doesn’t have complete control over achieving this goal, which may make her feel vulnerable in stating it. It is also a goal that requires great unselfishness; it may require setting aside other more glamorous goals. I am sensitive to the many issues facing our young women, but I still feel that I must teach eternal principles.

I would like to affirm motherhood, to talk about the newest phrase in our Young Women theme: “be prepared to strengthen home and family.” I will address five things we as parents and leaders must do for our young women.

1. We must teach young women how to strengthen their current homes and families.

All families, from the best to the most troubled, are in need of strengthening. Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “If we think other families don’t have any difficulties or any problems,

We must encourage young women to serve their families and nurture their relationships with family members.

we just don't know them well enough."¹ We need to encourage girls to turn to their mothers and fathers not only to receive help but to give help.

Several of our general board members grew up in homes with parents who were less active in the Church. One of them had a wise Young Women leader who counseled her to be with her family when they did recreational things on Sunday but to maintain her personal standards. So if they went to a swimming club, she would go with them to visit with them, but she herself would not go swimming. She was able to build a tender relationship with her family.

I know a young woman who ruefully saw her brother associating with the wrong group of friends. After praying fervently for him one night, she followed an impression to pick him up from the party he was attending. She drove around with him for some time just talking to him about who he was as a member of their family and who he was as a member of Heavenly Father's family and of his responsibility to honor those identities. He was able to turn things around in his life, partially because of the

love of his sister.

Youth often feel
lonely or





We can help young women see that homemaking skills benefit them spiritually as well as temporally. Making a home appealing physically will create an atmosphere that is conducive to the Spirit.

isolated either socially or spiritually. Friendships and close ties with their brothers and sisters are the best antidote. One teenager was rejected by a group of girls at her school. Her brothers and sisters eased her sorrow by including her in their activities and giving her extra doses of love.

All these are examples of young women who strengthened their homes and families. Serving families is a way of covenant keeping, and covenant keeping reaps the promised blessing of having the Spirit in our lives. We must help our young women begin where they are, in whatever kind of family they are in, to strengthen their homes and families.

2. We must prepare young women with skills, both temporal and spiritual, that will bless their future homes.

I believe that one way we can arm our girls spiritually is to help them develop temporal skills or talents. We know that to the Lord all things are spiritual (see D&C 29:34).

Homemaking skills are becoming a lost art. I worry about this. When we lose the homemakers in a society, we create an emotional homelessness much like street homelessness, with similar problems of despair, drugs, immorality, and lack of self-worth. In a publication called *The Family in America*, Bryce Christensen writes that the number of homeless people on the street “does not begin to reveal the scope of homelessness in America.

For since when did the word home signify merely physical shelter, or homelessness merely the lack of such shelter? . . . Home [signifies] not only shelter, but also emotional commitment, security, and belonging. Home has connoted not just a necessary roof and warm radiator, but a place sanctified by the abiding ties of wedlock, parenthood, and family obligation; a place demanding sacrifice and devotion, but promising loving care and warm acceptance.”²

So we must teach homemaking skills, including practical ones such as cooking, sewing, budgeting, and beautifying. We must let young women know that homemaking skills are honorable and can help them spiritually as well as temporally. Making a home appealing physically will encourage loved ones to want to be there and will help create the kind of atmosphere that is conducive to the Spirit.

Sunday lessons, Mutual, and Personal Progress are all programs that provide times and ways to teach these necessary lessons. I think of my own experience as a Laurel adviser. The young women in my stewardship had one year until they would be out in the world on their own. I asked them what they needed to know to be ready for that independence. From their list of needs—balancing a checkbook, applying for colleges and jobs, cooking something besides cookies, and so forth—we planned our Mutual activities. I no longer had any problems with attendance, because we were preparing skills the young women needed to fulfill their important future roles. I could see that in the process of learning temporal skills, some spiritual skills were developing simultaneously. There was more genuine friendship and concern for one another. Mothers told me that the spiritual tenor of their homes

improved as the young women shared some of their new-found skills.

This is what we as parents and leaders must do. We must help young women develop practical and spiritual skills that will bless their future homes.

3. We must inspire young women to want to be wonderful wives, mothers, and homemakers.

The two most powerful tools we have to inspire our young women are our examples and our sincere words.

I've seen many inspirational Young Women leaders who exemplify living their roles with nobility and joy. I remember the powerful example of my Laurel adviser, who was faithful in rearing her children in the Church even though her husband was less active. I know a young woman whose parents weren't active in the Church. She was impressionable and teachable and learned well from the examples of her leaders. She learned how to fast and how to hold family home evening by participating with her teachers in these activities.

My best and most consistent example in learning the joys of homemaking and mothering was my own mother. She told me many times every day how much she treasured being a mother and homemaker, and then she lived those words in every action. She sang as she folded laundry; she exulted over the clean smell in a freshly scrubbed bathroom; she taught me how to read and write, sew and cook, love and serve. Because she emanated the Spirit and the fruits of love, joy, peace, meekness, long-suffering, and temperance, I felt it, and I knew I wanted the same things in my life (see Galatians 5:22–23). Her example continues to teach me daily.

I want all of you to know the great joy I feel in being a mother, wife, and homemaker. We should express our joy often through our words, actions, and countenances.

Through our examples and our sincere words, we can help young women see the joy we find in being wives, mothers, and homemakers.

4. We must help young women have the courage to face a world that is desecrating families and family values.

It has been alarming recently to feel the full fury of Satan's attack on families. Alternative lifestyles, abortion, cohabitation, divorce, immorality, and violence are issues that are screaming in our faces at every turn.

Even though I feel alarm, I do not feel fear. Fear is the opposite of faith. Paul told Timothy that "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7).

I feel faith in Jesus Christ and in His restored gospel upon the earth. I feel empowered by the truths of the gospel succinctly stated in the proclamation on the family. It takes a stand on each of the issues I just mentioned, as well as others. For example:

Alternative lifestyles: "Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose. . . .



“ . . . We further declare that God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife.”

Abortion: “We affirm the sanctity of life and of its importance in God’s eternal plan.”

Cohabitation: “Marriage between man and woman is essential to [God’s] eternal plan.”

Divorce: “Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children.”

Immorality: “We warn that individuals who violate covenants of chastity . . . will one day stand accountable before God.”

Violence: “We warn that individuals who . . . abuse spouse or offspring . . . will one day stand accountable before God.”³

Not only do I feel strengthened by these truths, I feel loved by a wise and all-knowing Father in Heaven, who has blessed us with prophets and apostles to guide this Church. If our young women can know of His love, if they can have the truths of the gospel embedded in their hearts, they will not fear. With strong testimonies of the gospel and a firm knowledge of eternal doctrines, our young women will have the courage to face a world that is desecrating families.

5. We must emphasize to young women the eternal responsibility and privilege of motherhood and help them understand that each of them will make a home and influence children, whether or not they have the opportunity to have children in this life.

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) talked about the influence of strong women of God upon the world: “Much of the major growth that is coming to the Church in the last days will come because many of the good women of the world (in whom there is often such an inner sense of spirituality) will be drawn to the Church in large numbers. This will happen to the degree that the women of the Church reflect righteousness and articulateness in their lives and to the degree that the women of the Church are seen as distinct



With strong testimonies of the gospel and a firm knowledge of eternal doctrines, our young women will have the courage to face a world that is desecrating families.

and different—in happy ways—from the women of the world.”⁴

We are distinct and different in happy ways because we know who we are eternally. We are all divinely appointed to these womanly roles of mothering and nurturing.

My cousin Carrie was a sterling example of a single sister who was a happy, generous, loving woman, blessing all with whom she associated. She was killed in an automobile accident when she was in her late 30s, but her final act of goodness prior to her untimely death was finishing scrapbooks for each of her nieces and nephews. She was fulfilling her mission to the degree that she could within her opportunities.

Now a word to you wonderful Young Women leaders. I hope the Spirit will help you know how to simplify—by that I mean to spend your valuable time on the important things. Teach principles and doctrines. Give love. Be examples. Make your teaching appealing and as simple as possible.

While what we as leaders are doing with young women now is crucial to saving this world, what we are doing with our eternal callings is of even greater importance. We also carry a mantle for our callings as wives, mothers, and homemakers. We need to call upon the Lord for His Spirit to be with us in these eternal roles. Our homes may be our last and only place of refuge, as our prophets are prophesying. I am pleading with you to be exemplary leaders but not to neglect your home responsibilities.

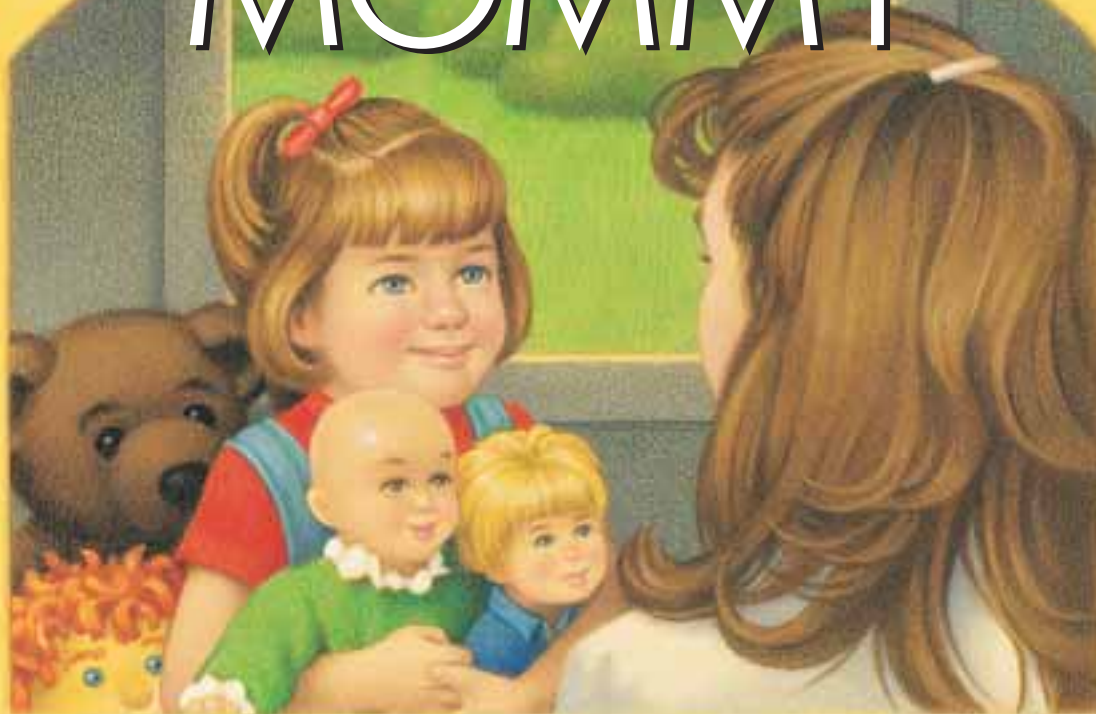
How significant are our roles as parents! How crucial are our roles as leaders! How imperative that we properly train the future righteous women of God! I know this work we are engaged in is His work, and I am grateful for the wonderful privilege we all have to be His instruments. ■

Adapted from a March 2004 Young Women open house address.

NOTES

1. “How Will Our Children Remember Us?” *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 10.
2. “HomeLess America: What the Disappearance of the American Homemaker Really Means,” *The Family in America*, Jan. 2003, www.profam.org/pub/fia/xfia_1701.htm.
3. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liabona*, Oct. 2004, 49; *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.
4. “The Role of Righteous Women,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 103–4.

TEACH ME, MOMMY



BY KARSEN CRANNEY

My two-year-old daughter, Katelyn, has a rich imagination and loves pretend play, especially mirroring adult life. Closets, space behind furniture, and other small areas often double as grocery stores, homes for her dolls, and other places to frequent in her make-believe world.

One afternoon Katelyn announced it was time to go to church, and her two favorite dolls were ready to put on their pretty dresses—one of Katelyn’s favorite Sabbath-day rituals. Afraid that she would want to put on a dress herself, I wondered if I needed to remind her that it was Thursday—not Sunday. Fortunately, Katelyn informed me that “church” was inside our large plastic playhouse and suggested we go inside.

After nestling her dolls in a corner, Katelyn settled herself and then looked up at me with large, eager eyes. “Teach me, Mommy,” she said. Delighted at the opportunity to capitalize on this moment, I jumped right into my role as “teacher.” I told some stories about Jesus and then sang a few familiar Primary songs. Leery of overextending

my daughter’s invitation to be taught and driven by an assumption that she would quickly tire of my instruction, I soon ended our discussion.

But once again those bright eyes turned up to me as she implored, “Teach me, Mommy.” Surprised by her attention span, I stepped it up a notch. I began to explain principles of the plan of salvation such as the Atonement, repentance, and forgiveness, supplementing them with corresponding Primary songs. She listened attentively, and at each pause, she would once again request, “Teach me, Mommy.”

There we sat, my toddler, her dolls, and me, inside our playhouse, talking about the truths of eternity. Although she was the one who requested to be taught, I am certain that I learned a lesson too. Children are willing and ready to learn in ways that we parents often do not realize. As a mother I have the sacred responsibility to teach my children the magnificent truths of the gospel, regardless of their ages. ■

Karsen Cranney is a member of the Monterey Ward, Monterey California Stake.

STRENGTHENING THE FAMILY

THE SACRED POWERS OF PROCREATION

A continuing series giving insights for your study and use of “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.”

“God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife.”¹

The Powers and the Plan

“Under the accepted plan,” explained President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Adam and Eve were sent to the earth as our first parents. They could prepare physical bodies for the first spirits to be introduced into this life.

“There was provided in our bodies—and this is sacred—a power of creation, a light,



so to speak, that has the power to kindle other lights. This gift was to be used only within the sacred bonds of marriage.

Through the exercise of this power of creation, a mortal body may be conceived, a spirit enter into it, and a new soul [be] born into this life.

“This power is good. It can create and sustain family life, and it is in family life that we find the fountains of happiness. It is given to virtually every individual who is born into mortality. It is a sacred and significant power. . . .

“The power of creation—or may we say procreation—is not just an incidental part of the plan: it is essential to it. Without it the plan could not proceed. The misuse of it may disrupt the plan.”²

Moral Agency and Chastity

Disrupting the plan is, of course, the focus of Satan’s attention, and encouraging the misuse of the power of procreation is one of his most pervasive and successful tactics. “Human sexuality,” wrote Terrance D.

Olson, “is presented in our culture as if it were the driving force—if not the ultimate need—behind all human endeavor. If the popular culture is right, sex is so compelling that societies must figure out ways to allow the regular, frequent expression of sex. . . . Indeed, . . . the popular culture sees humans as victims of sexual needs and feelings.”³

The scriptures teach us otherwise. “The children of men,” Lehi taught his son Jacob, “have become free forever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves and not to be acted upon, save it be by the punishment of the law at the great and last day. . . . Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself” (2 Nephi 2:26–27).

In this matter of chastity, we are not at the mercy of our physical bodies. We are moral agents, and these purported “needs” are no different than any other choices we face in mortality. We can choose obedience and spiritual life, or we can choose captivity, misery, and spiritual death.

Three Reasons to Obey

As president of Brigham Young University, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles offered three reasons for choosing chastity. First, according to scripture, the soul consists of both body and spirit (see D&C 88:15).



There was provided in our bodies . . . a power of creation, a light, so to speak, that has the power to kindle other lights.”

“In trivializing the soul of another (please include the word *body* there), we trivialize the Atonement. . . . We *cannot* then say in ignorance or defiance, ‘Well, it’s *my* life,’ or worse yet, ‘It’s *my* body.’ It is *not*. ‘Ye are not your own,’ Paul said. ‘Ye are bought with a price’ [1 Corinthians 6:19–20].”⁴

“Second, may I suggest that human intimacy . . . between a man and a woman is . . . a symbol of total union: union of their hearts, their hopes, their lives, their love, their family, their future, their everything.

. . . But such a total . . . union . . . can only come with the proximity and permanence afforded in a marriage covenant, with the union of *all* that they possess—their very hearts and minds, all their days and all their dreams. . . . Can you see then the moral [fracturing] that comes from pretending we are one, sharing the *physical* symbols and *physical* intimacy of our union, but then fleeing . . . all such other aspects . . . of what was meant to be a total obligation?”⁵

Third, “sexual intimacy is not only a symbolic union between a man and a woman—the uniting of their very souls—but it is also symbolic of a union between mortals and deity, . . . uniting for a rare and special moment with God himself and all the powers by which he gives life in this wide universe of ours. . . . Surely God’s trust in us to respect this future-forming gift is awesomely staggering. . . . We carry this procreative power that makes us very much like God in at least one grand and majestic way.”⁶

With good reason the inspired prophets of the Lord’s Church have declared “the means by which mortal life is created to be divinely appointed.”⁷ ■

NOTES

1. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liabona*, Oct. 2004, 49; *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.
2. “Why Stay Morally Clean,” *Ensign*, July 1972, 111.
3. “Chastity and Fidelity in Marriage and Family Relationships,” in David C. Dollahite, ed., *Strengthening Our Families: An In-Depth Look at the Proclamation on the Family* (2000), 51.
4. “Of Souls, Symbols, and Sacraments,” in *Brigham Young University 1987–88 Devotional and Fireside Speeches* (1988), 78–79.
5. “Of Souls, Symbols, and Sacraments,” 79–80.
6. “Of Souls, Symbols, and Sacraments,” 82, 84.
7. *Liabona*, Oct. 2004, 49; *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.

Family Home Evening

as a Missionary Tool

A night with the family can be a simple way to share the gospel with others.

Many Latter-day Saints are looking for ways to become better missionaries to family members or friends. Here some members describe how they followed the prophets' counsel to hold family home evening and found that it is not only a way to build stronger family relationships, but also a way to bring a glimpse of the gospel to others.

The Only Member

Being the only member of the Church in my family was not easy. I longed for a way to share all I had learned about the Church with my family but feared they would accuse me of trying to convert them. I struggled with doubts. I knew the Lord wanted me to share the gospel with my family, but for more than a year I was too afraid to suggest that we have family home evening.

Finally, with my heart racing in fear, I asked the Lord for courage and strength to invite my family to have family home evening. To my surprise they said an enthusiastic "Yes!" to the suggestion, and our relationship has never been better.

Through family home evening I have been able to share the gospel and my testimony with everyone from my mother to my three-year-old niece. What a blessing it has been to read the Book of Mormon with them and hear

that they believe what they are reading. In addition, the missionaries have been welcomed into our home to assist in our scripture study.

The greatest blessing is that in such a busy time of work, school, and other activities, my family is committed to meeting together every Monday and devoting an hour to learning more about the Lord. Laughing, singing, and kneeling together in family prayer have brought a tremendous sense of peace and love to our home.

Arlene Pryce, Don Valley Ward, Toronto Ontario Stake

A Tool for Retention

I can still remember the joy I felt the day I was baptized. However, not long after, I felt disappointment as the missionaries suggested I stop associating with some of my current acquaintances and find a more appropriate circle of friends. Their words seemed harsh to me, an 18-year-old high school senior, but trusting them, I did as they counseled.

Understanding my need for friends in the Church, the missionaries soon invited me to participate in family home evening with some ward members. I was eager to understand more about my new faith, so I gratefully went to the Shaffer family's home.

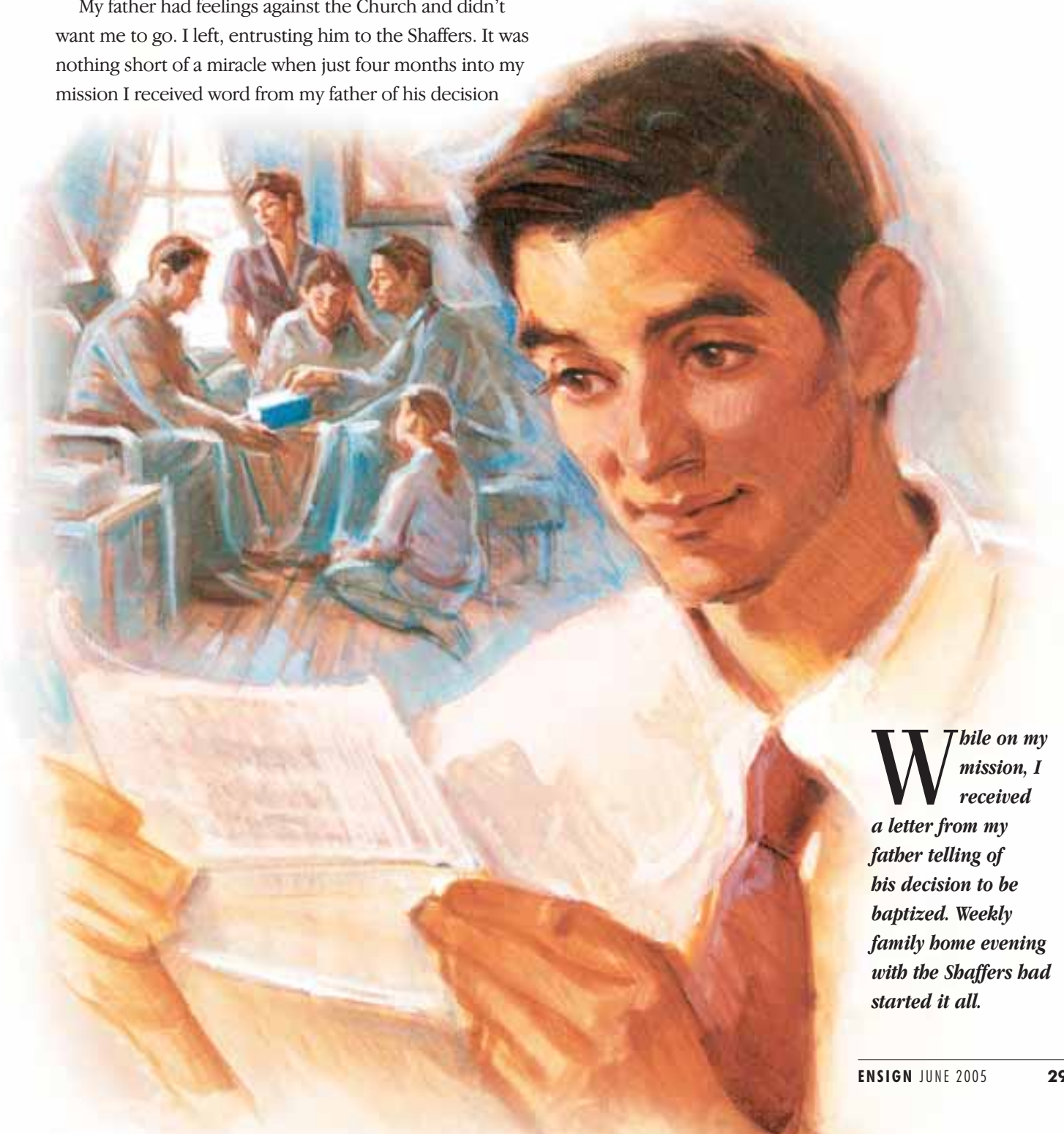
The Shaffers' home became a haven where, in the

nonthreatening atmosphere of simple family home evenings, I learned what it is to be a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. After dozens of family nights at the Shaffers' and a year of Church membership, I accepted a call to serve a full-time mission.

My father had feelings against the Church and didn't want me to go. I left, entrusting him to the Shaffers. It was nothing short of a miracle when just four months into my mission I received word from my father of his decision

to be baptized. The Shaffers had taken him into their home for home evenings, just as they had done for me. Their efforts made it easier for him to understand the gospel and become converted to it.

Ruben Perez, Cordova Ward, Memphis Tennessee North Stake



While on my mission, I received a letter from my father telling of his decision to be baptized. Weekly family home evening with the Shaffers had started it all.



The Spirit was very strong during our family home evening lesson on the Holy Ghost. It was the turning point for my husband.

To Feel the Spirit

Ten years had passed since I had been baptized into the Church, but I had been less active for about nine of them. During that time I had married and now had a seven-year-old daughter. My mother and siblings were living with us when a friend reintroduced them to the Church, and the missionaries started coming to our home. I had a testimony of Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon, but the knowledge I had acquired of the Church had melted away.

My husband became friends with the elders and, almost without knowing it, started taking the discussions. Each discussion took about a week; it was hard for him to accept the divinity of Jesus Christ. Nine months after being taught the first discussion, my husband felt he was not receiving answers to his prayers.

One morning when the missionaries came to pray with me for my husband, I felt impressed that I needed to help him recognize the influence of the Holy Ghost. The missionaries had given us a family home evening manual, and the next Monday I sat down with my husband and daughter and began my first family home evening by giving a lesson on the Holy Ghost. My husband listened in silence as he pondered the subject. The influence of the Spirit was very strong that night, and I could feel the Holy Ghost confirming the truthfulness of the Church, something I had not felt for a long time. The next day my husband bore his testimony to me and told me that the Spirit had borne witness to him and he had recognized it. That night we lit in our hearts a fire that was eternal and inextinguishable.

One week later my husband was baptized, and one year later we were sealed in the São Paulo Brazil Temple. We feel that sacrament meeting is the most important meeting we go to, and next in line is family home evening.

Elizabeth Duce de Mernies, Lezica Ward, Montevideo Uruguay North Stake

Not to Convert

My new husband and I knew the importance of family home evening in helping families learn to love each other and grow together, but our children were grown and on their own. It was hard for us to hold a family night until we decided to invite my husband's mother. At the time my mother-in-law was 74 years old and belonged to another church. She worked in a flower shop and scarcely ventured from her routine of going to work and then home.

At first she was a little hesitant to come because she knew nothing of our faith, but now she looks forward to Monday nights. We share dinners, laughter, and music and have become very close. We know that she does not want us to try to convert her, but she does allow us to share stories about our faith. One evening I read a talk from one of the Church leaders. We all felt the Spirit. We have had opportunities to show her the *Ensign*, and she looks at every page. We have taught her what temples are for, and she has watched Church videos. We do these things sparingly, as the Spirit guides us.

Before one of our family home evenings, I asked her to teach the lesson. She brought pictures of herself when she was young and of my husband when he was a baby. I heard stories of aunts, uncles, grandmas, and grandpas. The happiness in her eyes as she relived these experiences made my heart almost burst. I realized then that the commandment to have family home evening is divine instruction from our Father in Heaven.



FAMILY HOME EVENING PROMISE

"We have a family home evening program once a week [Monday night]

across the Church in which parents sit down with their children. They study the scriptures. They talk about family problems. They plan family activities and things of that kind. I don't hesitate to say if every family in the world practiced that one thing, you'd see a very great difference in the solidarity of the families of the world."

President Gordon B. Hinckley, "Family Home Evening," *Liahona and Ensign*, Mar. 2003, 3.

Many doors have been opened for my mother-in-law to learn things pertaining to the gospel. I don't know that she will become a member of the Church during her life on earth, but I do know that our family has been strengthened and our love increased.

Dani Jeanne Stevens, Logan Ward, Huntington West Virginia Stake

A Seven-Year-Old Missionary

Late one Monday night when my husband and I were busily working in our home, our seven-year-old son, Sergio, appeared. "Well, nobody remembered family home evening," he said.

"I guess you're not interested."

My husband had come home late, and he tiredly explained that we had been too busy and still had much to do before we could turn in for the night. At that we continued with our work.

After a few moments we realized Sergio was reading his illustrated *Book of Mormon Stories* reader all by himself. My husband and I looked at each other and silently agreed that, even if it was late, we shouldn't deny ourselves the chance to hold family home evening.

When we went into the living room, Sergio told us in all seriousness that we didn't need to be concerned because he had already started his "individual home evening" and had sung a hymn, said a prayer, and now he was giving the lesson. We stayed and listened as our boy talked about the First Vision.

That night our son was a powerful missionary to us, testifying of the importance of family home evening. My husband and I realized that often we try to teach principles that we are not completely willing to obey. What a wonderful experience we would have missed if we had not participated in that individual home evening. ■

Cecila Lozada, Maranga Ward, Lima Perú Maranga Stake

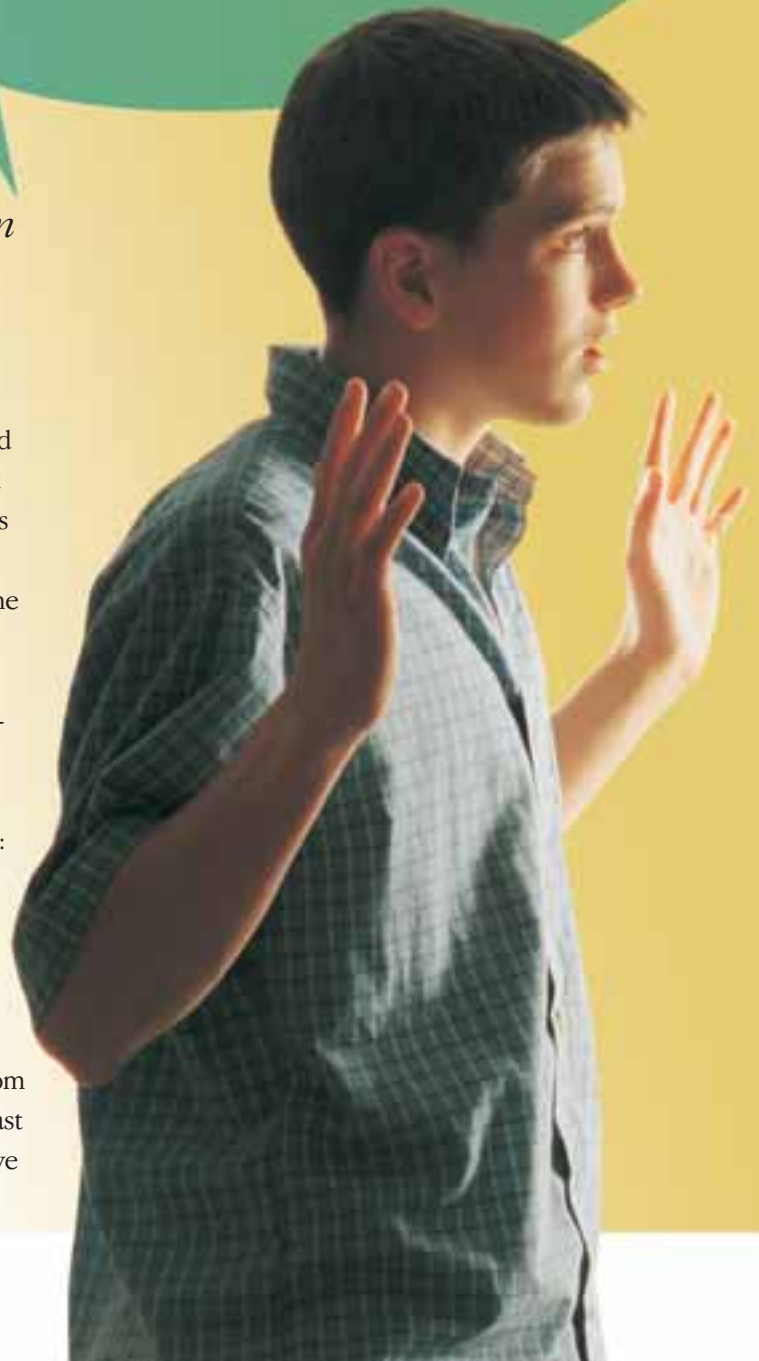
TALKING WITH TEENS

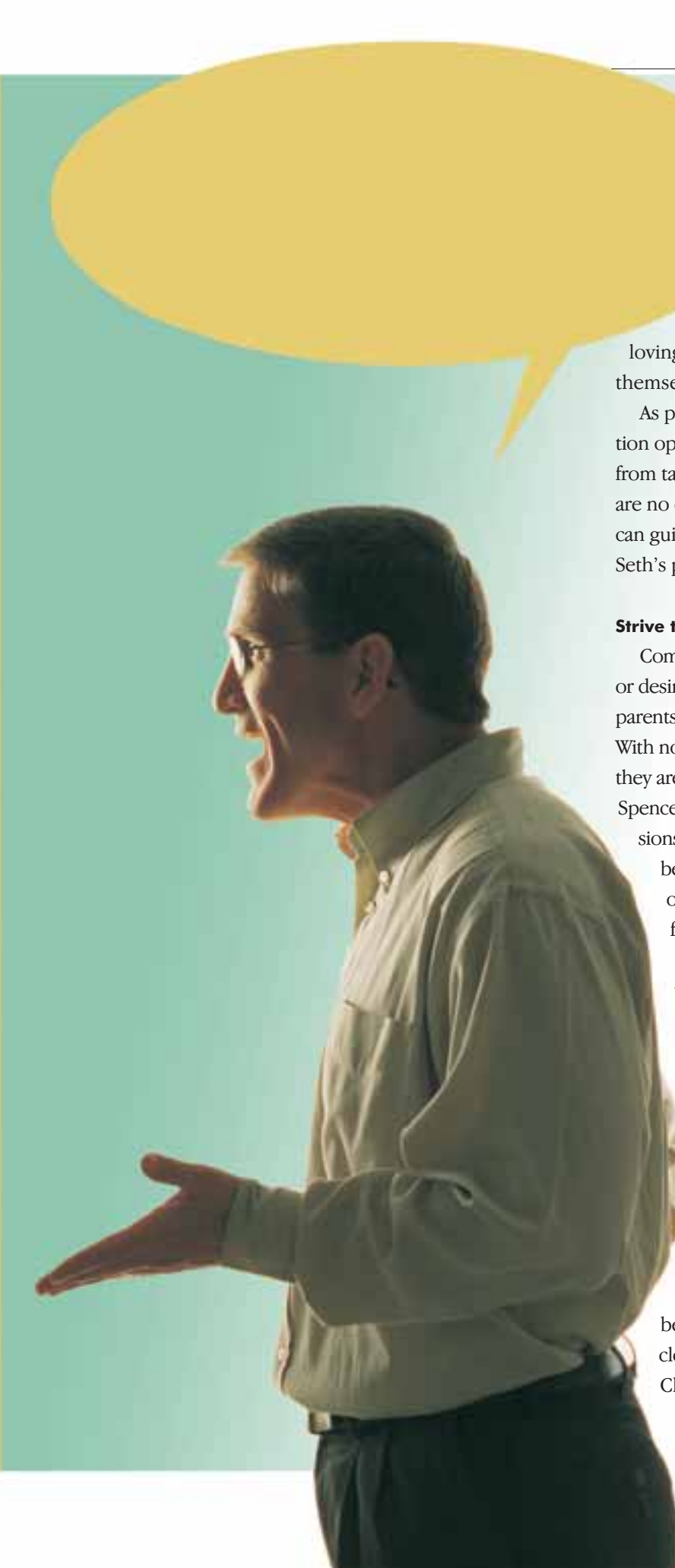
BY C. ROSS CLEMENT
Licensed Clinical Social Worker
for LDS Family Services

As we strive to become Christlike in our parenting practices, we will enhance the chances that our children will respond positively.

Bill and Rachael (names have been changed) sat at the dinner table with their 14-year-old son, Seth. Though Seth was within touching distance, Bill and Rachael had never felt so distant from him. Over the past few months, he had been spending more and more of his time with friends. School grades were declining, as was his interest in family activities. Seth did his chores at home and attended church, but he seemed aloof and removed from his parents and siblings. Bill and Rachael were concerned. They had tried to reach out to him, but he invariably pulled away. Questions seemed to irritate him, and he offered no explanations for his actions. Tonight, Bill and Rachael were determined to try again. Rachael began: "Seth, what's troubling you? Please talk to us. We see you headed in the wrong direction. We're worried about you." Taking offense, Seth stated that nothing was wrong, told his parents to leave him alone, and left the room.

Ironically, the time when children can benefit most from their parents' wisdom is often the time when they are least likely to accept it. Adolescent children, in particular, strive to become independent, and the urgency of that drive,





heightened by the pull of peers and worldly influence, sometimes draws them away from those who could help them the most. Sadly, their parents, wanting desperately to help, sometimes watch helplessly as they make unfortunate mistakes. Headstrong children, bent on doing things their own way, rebuff the most loving of fathers and mothers. Seth's parents found themselves in that position.

As parents, how can we keep the doors of communication open? How can we remove barriers that prevent us from talking about things that are important? While there are no easy answers, there are principles and practices that can guide us. The following recommendations helped Seth's parents strengthen their relationship with their son.

Strive to Become Christlike

Communication includes every thought, feeling, act, or desire that is shared verbally and nonverbally between parents and children. It is impossible not to communicate. With no real effort, people effectively communicate who they are and how they feel about things. As President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) observed, “Our expressions, our voice tones, our movements, our thoughts betray us.”¹ The greatest influence we can exert on our children occurs when our words and actions flow untainted from the purity of our hearts.

As parents we sometimes need to re-evaluate the way we relate to our children. Sometimes a change of heart is needed before good communication is possible. Some parents drive their children away through lecturing, moralizing, interrogating, judging, condemning, threatening, blaming, criticizing, and ridiculing. Seth's parents struggled with his emerging independence and tended to judge and criticize his every move. While their intent was to be helpful, Seth often felt he was a disappointment to them.

Jesus taught that the inner vessel should be cleansed first, “and then shall the outer vessel be cleansed also” (Alma 60:23; see also Matthew 23:26). Changes of the heart are reflected in the countenance and in the way we talk and listen to each other. As we turn our hearts to the Savior, we

become more Christlike, charitable, and tender toward others. Our ability to listen, understand, and to empathize increases. Our response to parenting challenges becomes more Christlike.

Show an Increase of Love

As parents, the single most important thing we can do for our children is to love them as the Savior loves each one of us (see John 13:34–35). When our children know that we truly love them, they are more likely to listen to our counsel, follow our example, and accept our discipline.

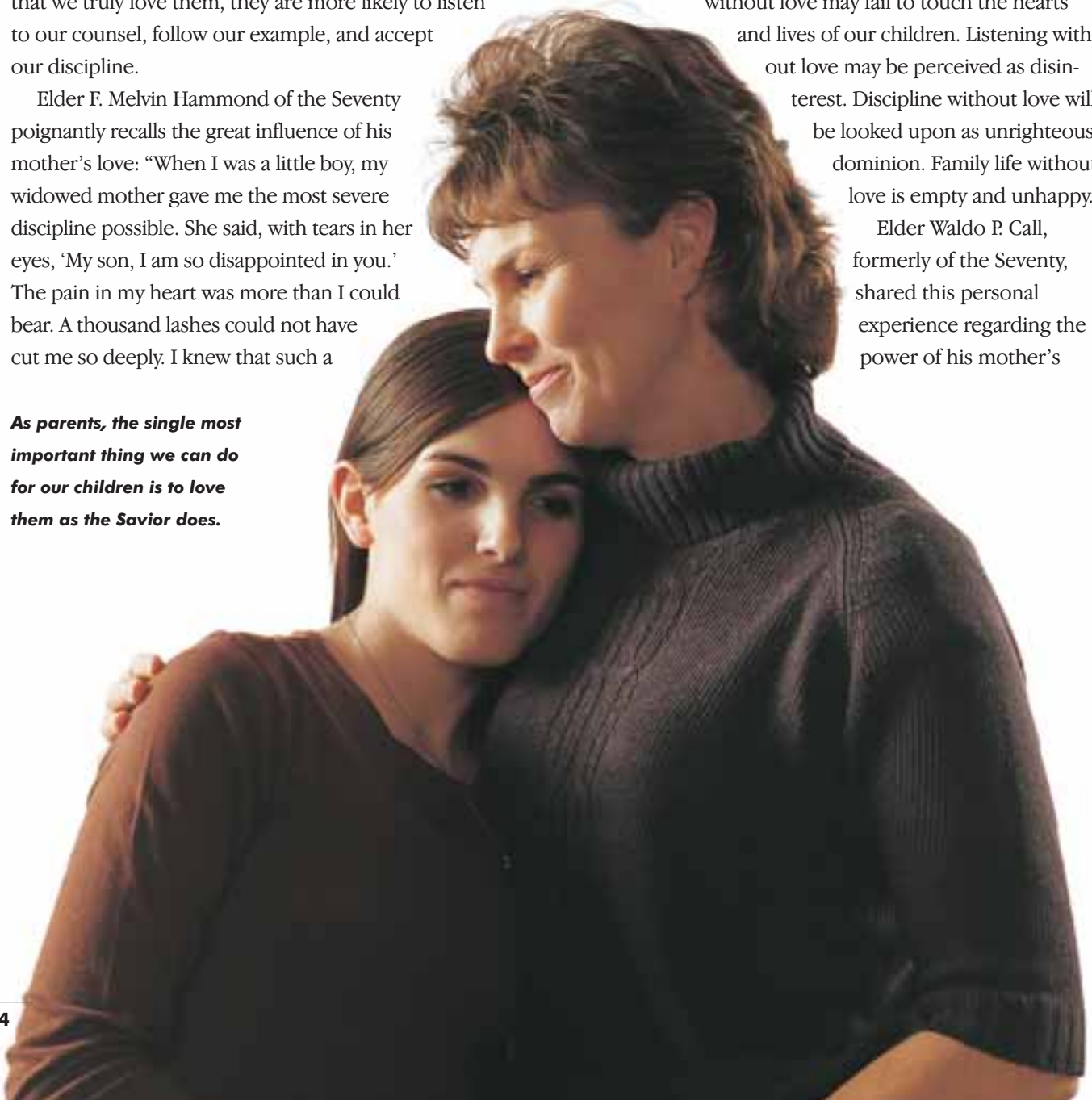
Elder F. Melvin Hammond of the Seventy poignantly recalls the great influence of his mother's love: "When I was a little boy, my widowed mother gave me the most severe discipline possible. She said, with tears in her eyes, 'My son, I am so disappointed in you.' The pain in my heart was more than I could bear. A thousand lashes could not have cut me so deeply. I knew that such a

rebuke could only have been made to me out of her pure love, for if there was one thing that I was certain of, it was that my mother loved me. I resolved never again to be subject to the disappointment and the broken heart of an angel mother. I believe that I have succeeded in that resolve."²

Love should motivate and guide all our involvement with our children. Without love, a parent's expression of disappointment can be perceived as rejection and, oft repeated, can damage the child's sense of worth. Teaching without love may fail to touch the hearts and lives of our children. Listening without love may be perceived as disinterest. Discipline without love will be looked upon as unrighteous dominion. Family life without love is empty and unhappy.

Elder Waldo P. Call, formerly of the Seventy, shared this personal experience regarding the power of his mother's

As parents, the single most important thing we can do for our children is to love them as the Savior does.





HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

love: “There was one time in my life . . . when the love I knew she had for me saved me. I knelt down one night to pray, as she had taught me. I was about to throw away everything that I had. As I started praying, I started thinking of her and of the love that she had for me. As I cried and prayed—and it took most of the night—I was so grateful that I knew she loved me.”³

Like the prodigal son, many lost and wayward children return to the arms of their parents when they feel genuinely loved and valued. Love should be the governing force in all of our interactions with our children.

Learn and Use Good Communication Skills

During the last three decades, parenting books, articles, and courses have taught communication skills to thousands of mothers and fathers, enhancing their ability to listen and talk with their children. Communication techniques are simple to learn but need to be practiced before they can be used effectively. They are particularly useful in helping children who are upset. A few of these skills include:

- Showing nonverbal interest in what your child has to say by paying attention, maintaining eye contact without staring, and appearing interested instead of distant or bothered.
- Asking questions that invite your child to talk, such as, “It looks like something is troubling you. Want to tell me about it?”
- Selectively rephrasing what you hear, such as, “You’re worried that others don’t like you.” Rephrasing conveys interest in and understanding of your child’s message. If you didn’t hear it accurately, your child can clarify the message.

1. Invite family members to act out in a fun way various situations that demonstrate how they tend to communicate with each other. Read the first story and ask what they would do if they were Seth’s parents. Use the suggestions in this article to teach your family principles and skills of good communication. Act out the same situations again using what you have learned.

2. Ask your family the two questions in the third paragraph. Use the six sections of the article to discuss how family communication can improve. Choose one idea to work on as a family.

Listening is particularly challenging when your child is upset with you. Most parents want their children’s approval and feel threatened, defensive, or rejected when criticized. However, a listening ear has healed many troubled relationships. Instead of re-

acting to your child’s anger, try listening, instead, without defending yourself. If your child is critical of you, acknowledge if there is truth in what he or she says. A child’s angry feelings often subside when listening occurs.

A parent may need to give up the need to be right and to be superior. By honestly admitting an error, you will take a major step toward rebuilding a trusting relationship with your child.



Like the prodigal son, many lost and wayward children return to the arms of their parents when they feel genuinely loved and valued.

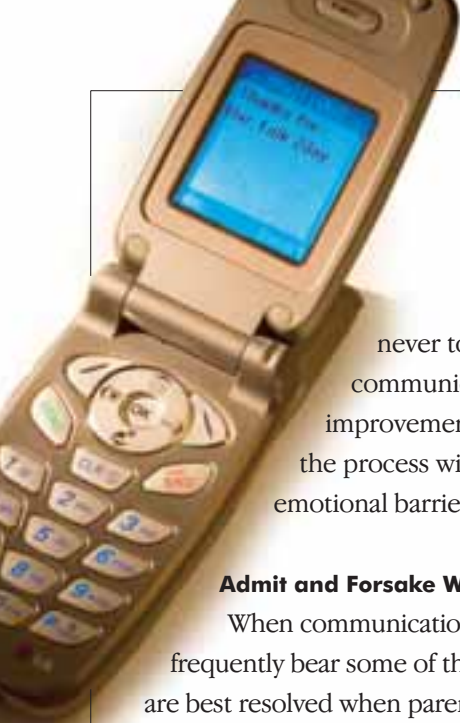
Recognize, Respect, and Respond to Feelings

Some parents have been reared in homes where feelings are discounted, ignored, or even punished. Having learned to fear, dislike, or deny the way they feel, they have difficulty recognizing, accepting, or tuning in to the feelings of their children.

We can greatly help our children by recognizing and responding to the difficult feelings they sometimes experience. Emotional moments provide opportunities to reach out, listen, comfort, and guide. As mothers and fathers, we will have few ex-

periences that offer us greater joy and satisfaction than helping our sons and daughters through difficult times. As we acknowledge their feelings and guide them in resolving underlying problems, we are helping them develop coping skills to address life’s many challenges.

Start responding to your children’s feelings when they are very young. If you wait until they are older, they, like Seth, may not share their feelings with you. However, it is



never too late to enhance your communication skills. You can make improvements at any time, although the process will be more challenging if emotional barriers are solidly in place.

Admit and Forsake Wrongdoing

When communication problems exist, parents frequently bear some of the responsibility. Problems are best resolved when parents adopt a “change first” philosophy, taking care of personal issues before expecting change in their children.

First, identify your contribution to the problem and stop making it. A mother shared how important this can be:

“Several years ago, I engaged in almost daily shouting matches with my teenage son. I couldn’t get through to him, and much to my dismay the problem seemed to get worse. I prayed that I might know what to do. One day I read an *Ensign* article that condemned anger as an inappropriate response to the provocations of others.⁴ The Spirit touched me as I read. I had the profound impression that I would lose Derek unless I overcame my angry feelings toward him.

“The experience was life changing. I vowed that I would never again yell at my children. It wasn’t easy, but I kept my promise, and in time my relationship with Derek dramatically improved. In the years that followed, Derek successfully completed high school, served a mission, graduated from college, and married in the temple. He is now successfully rearing a family of his own. I will be forever grateful that I learned to respond to my children without anger.”

Sometimes the things we do to remedy a problem make it worse. And when we see that our efforts aren’t working, we tend to do even more of the same thing, unwittingly escalating the problem. Derek’s mother did this but discovered the solution came when she took a different approach, following the Savior’s example of returning good for ill (see 3 Nephi 12:39–45).

Don’t Give Up

As we strive to relate to our children in a Christlike way—with love, kindness, and a willingness to listen and understand—most children eventually respond in a positive way. Sometimes behavioral changes do not come until the child is convinced that our course corrections are more than fleeting bursts of energy. Consequently, we must persist in our efforts, even when our children do not respond immediately. Such was the case with Seth, the young man described in the opening vignette. As Seth’s parents became more Christlike, loving, and skillful in their interactions with him, Seth began to rejoin his family socially, emotionally, and spiritually.

It is helpful to realize that we are accountable only for how we carry out our responsibilities as parents, *not* for how our children turn out. President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, declared that good parents are “those who have lovingly, prayerfully, and earnestly tried to teach their children by example and precept ‘to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord’ (D&C 68:28). This is true even though some of their children are disobedient or worldly. . . . Successful parents are those who have sacrificed and struggled to do the best they can in their own family circumstances.”⁵

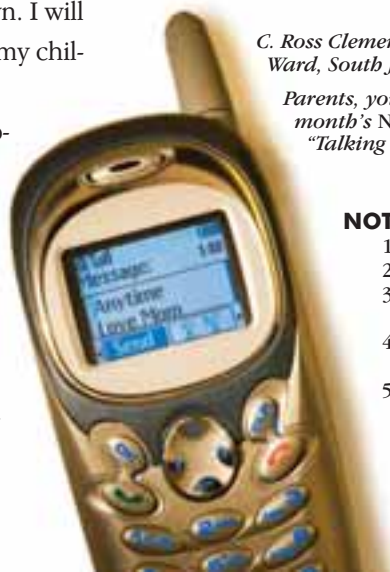
As we strive to become Christlike in our actions and incorporate good skills and principles in our parenting practices, we will enhance the chances that our children will respond positively, even though some may choose to take a difficult path. ■

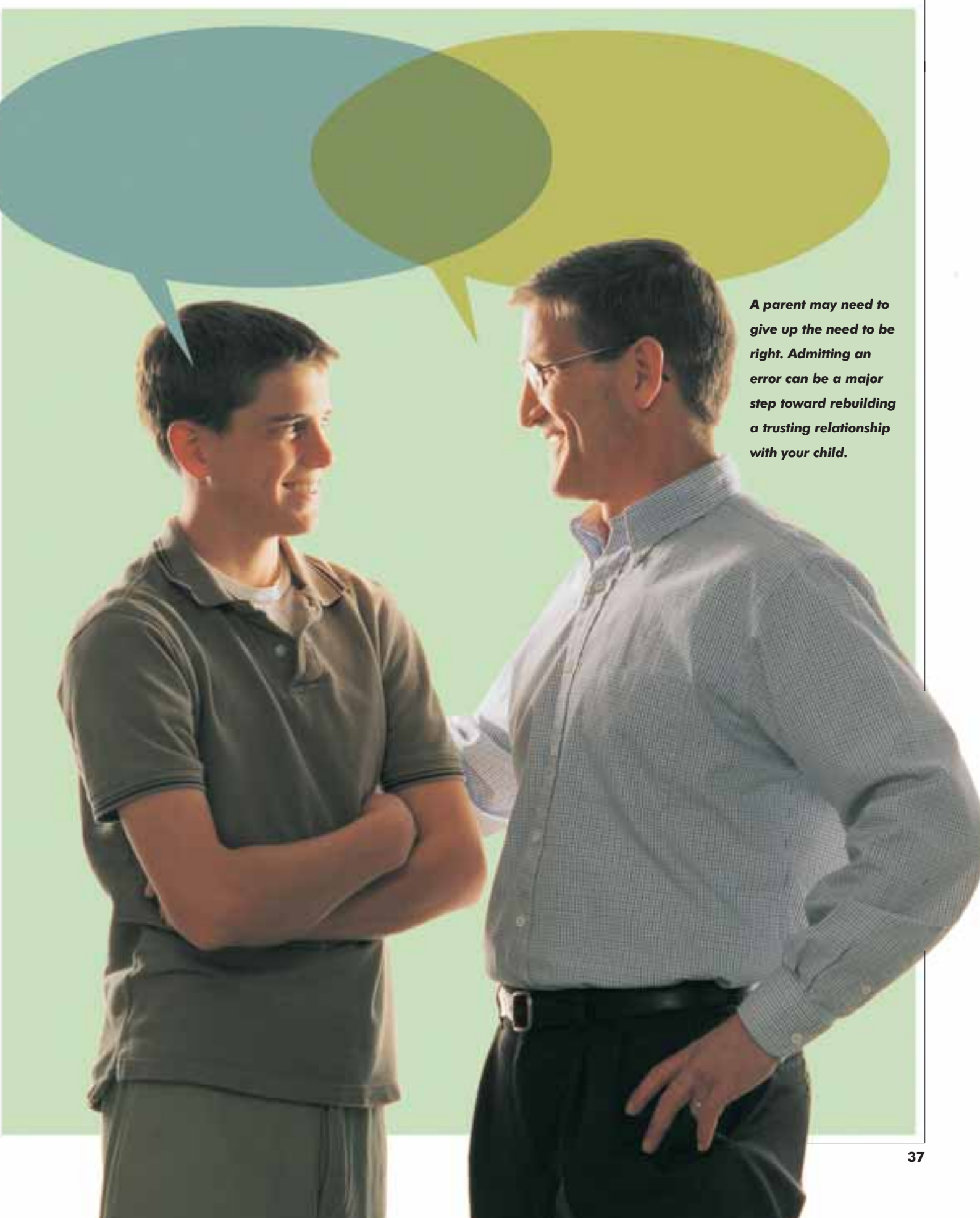
C. Ross Clement is a member of the Glenmoor Seventh Ward, South Jordan Utah Glenmoor Stake.

Parents, you may be interested to know that this month’s New Era contains a companion article to “Talking with Teens.”

NOTES

1. In Conference Report, Apr. 1954, 106.
2. “Dad, Are You Awake?” *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 99.
3. “This Is the Work of the Lord,” *Ensign*, May 1985, 84.
4. See Burton C. Kelly, “The Case against Anger,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1980, 9.
5. “Dear Are the Sheep That Have Wandered,” *Ensign*, May 2003, 61.





A parent may need to give up the need to be right. Admitting an error can be a major step toward rebuilding a trusting relationship with your child.



To every thing there is a
season,

and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

“A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; . . .

“A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; . . .

“. . . for there is a time . . . for every purpose and for every work” (Ecclesiastes 3:1–2, 4, 17).

As we learn in Ecclesiastes, our lives are filled with contrasting seasons. Following are images and a story that reflect some of the seasons of our lives and our relationships with one another across the generations.

A Man Swinging
(above) and Winter
Dancing (right), both
by Brian T. Kershnik,
capture the energy
and joy that come
when it is our “time
to laugh” and our
“time to dance”
(Ecclesiastes 3:4).

“One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh” (Ecclesiastes 1:4).

We see the joy and influence of overlapping generations in *Grandma*, by Anne Marie Oborn (right), and in the story “Grandma’s Gift,” by Monica Millward Weeks.



GRANDMA'S GIFT

BY MONICA MILLWARD WEEKS

When I was five years old, my grandmother Elsie Millward gave me a precious gift—a subscription to the *Friend* magazine. Although my father was raised as a member of the Church, he was not active, and my mother was not a member. We lived far away from my grandparents and other relatives who were Church members. So the *Friend* was essentially my first exposure to the Church.

I was a voracious reader, and I loved reading the stories in the *Friend*. There were stories about pioneer children from long ago, children who lived on the other side of the world, and children pretty much

like me. Although I didn't understand much about the Church's doctrine, I did understand what it meant to be kind and to share with others, and the stories reinforced the values my parents taught me.

But some of the ideas in the *Friend* were new to me. One concept that was particularly confusing to my young mind was that of the Holy Ghost. Was He really a ghost? Did He haunt people, like ghosts in the movies did? How could He help people and talk to them when He didn't even have a body? Then one day I read a story called “The Comforter” by Laura Dene Card (*Friend*, Mar. 1981, 32–34). The little girl in the story, Jenni Lynn, had the same questions I did. Jenni Lynn's mother explained to her that the Holy Ghost is also called the Comforter and that He helps us feel warm

and safe—like a comforter that you would wrap around your body.

Suddenly I understood what it meant to have the Holy Ghost with me. I had felt His presence before and not even realized it. Over the years, I experienced many small testimony-building moments like this while reading the *Friend*.

My grandmother renewed my subscription to the *Friend* every year until I was 12 and old enough to start receiving the *New Era*. That year, my mother, sister, and I were baptized by my reactivated father.

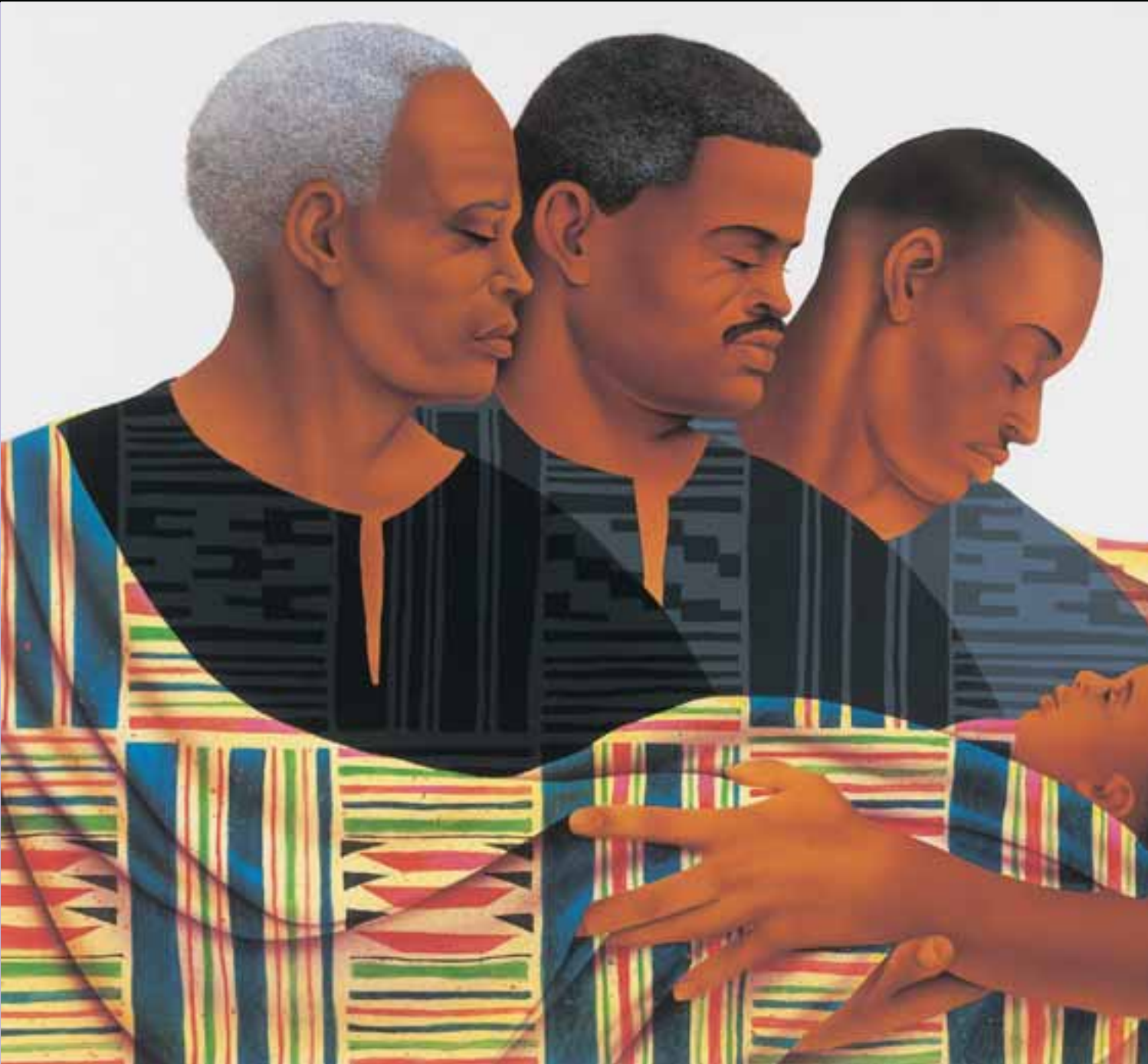
My grandmother has since passed on, but I am grateful to her for her gift. It must have seemed like a small gift at the time, but it was one with eternal rewards for our family.

Monica Millward Weeks is a member of the Dimple Dell Park Ward, Sandy Utah Granite View Stake.





As we pass through the seasons of our life, we gain experience. In **Grandma Is a Story-teller**, by Judith Mehr (far left), children listen eagerly to their grandmother's stories. In **Watermelon Patch**, by Mark Keathley



(left), a grandfather teaches his grandchildren simple truths about the law of the harvest.

In *Memories of Grandpa*, by Kimball Warren (below right), a grandfather and

grandson share a horse and time together.

In each of these works, hearts are being turned from “the fathers to the children” and from “the children to their fathers” as promised in

Malachi 4:5–6 (see also D&C 2:1–3).

In *Generations II: Circle of Strength*, by Keith Mallett (below left), we see the hearts of a father, grandfather, and great-grandfather being turned to the

newest generation. In the soft sculpture *Turning the Heart of a Child to Her Ancestors*, by Margery Sorensen Cannon (bottom right), we see a granddaughter looking to her grandmother to share memories of the past.





JOSEPH SMITH AND ZION'S CAMP

BY ALEXANDER L. BAUGH

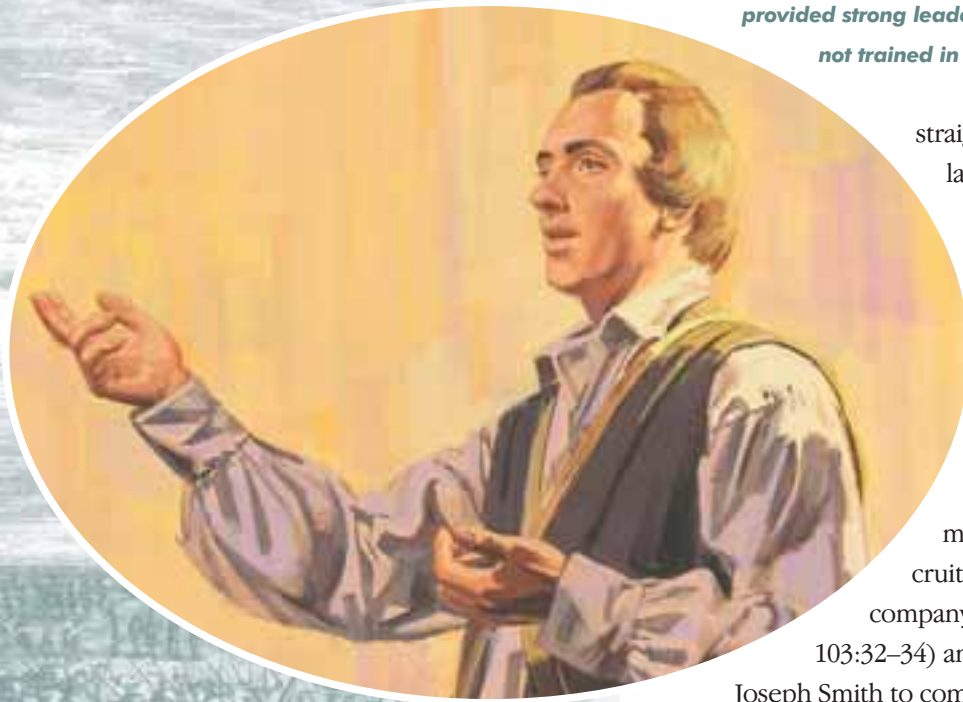
Associate Professor of Church History and Doctrine
Brigham Young University—Provo

The gospel lessons learned during the two months of Zion's Camp defined and refined the Prophet Joseph Smith and others as leaders of the Church.

On May 19, 1834, the Prophet Joseph Smith sat on the ground near Richmond, Indiana, with pen and paper in hand. Using his knees as support, he began to write a heartfelt letter to his wife, Emma: “I sit down in my tent to write a few lines to you to let you know that you are on my mind and that I am sensible of the duties of a Husband and Father and that I am well and I pray God to let his blessings rest upon you and the children and all that are around you until I return to your society.”¹

Two weeks earlier, on May 5, he had led 85 men and wagons loaded with provisions, armaments, and munitions

This 19th-century engraving records the arrival of Zion's Camp in Missouri (far left); the Prophet Joseph Smith (left) provided strong leadership though he was not trained in military ways.



ILLUSTRATED BY PAUL MANN, EXCEPT AS NOTED

straightway unto the land of my vineyard, and redeem my vineyard; for it is mine” (D&C 101:55–56).

A second revelation on February 24, 1834, called for a minimum of 100 recruits to make up the company (see D&C 103:32–34) and appointed Joseph Smith to command the entire operation (see D&C 103:21–22, 35).

Returning to the Prophet’s letter of May 19, we gain some insight into the weight of responsibility felt by the young 28-year-old leader: “[I] feel a satisfaction to write a few lines with my own hand. In this way I can have the privilege to communicate some of my feelings that I should not dare to reveal, as you know that [my] situation is a very critical one.”²

The task must have seemed daunting since the Prophet was inexperienced in military activities and affairs. The expedition would entail traveling more than 900 miles (one-way) through four states over rough roads and sometimes uncharted terrain. In addition, two months of supplies would be needed for more than 200 individuals. Perhaps most significant, however, was the fact that he would ultimately be responsible for the overall day-to-day operations and the physical well-being of the participants. For Joseph Smith, Zion’s Camp would test his leadership skills at an early stage in his prophetic ministry.

With him were men who had been recruited primarily from Ohio, New York, Pennsylvania, and Michigan. Many of them expected armed conflict and threats to their safety. For the more adventuresome types, such as 16-year-old George A. Smith, a younger cousin of the Prophet, the

as they marched from Kirtland, Ohio, in an expeditionary force called Zion’s Camp. They soon caught up with the first group of 20 men, who had left on May 1. The goal: to join forces in Jackson County, Missouri, with the state militia to restore lands to the 1,200 Latter-day Saints who had been driven from the area by local residents.

The organization of Zion’s Camp had been revealed on December 16, 1833, when the Lord summoned “all the strength of mine house, which are my warriors, my young men, and they that are of middle age also among all my servants, who are the strength of mine house . . . [to go]

prospect of participating in an extended overland adventure seemed exciting. But all would be tested physically and spiritually.

Again, the Prophet's letter, written in the quiet moments of May 19, reveals an inner perspective as he prepares to face such challenges. The Prophet Joseph indicated that he found "satisfaction and comfort" in a few lines Emma had sent. He also wrote, "I hope you will continue to communicate to me by your own hand for this is a consolation to me to converse [with] you in this way in my lonely moments which is not easily described."³

The March to Missouri

Zion's Camp was a long-distance march, and most company members walked the entire distance from Ohio to Missouri and back.

Nevertheless, for more than a month, additional men and volunteers fell in with the company, increasing their ranks and numbers. The expedition covered between 20 and 40 miles a day. Heat, humidity, torrential rains, mud, uncomfortable sleeping conditions, broken equipment, food shortages, and unhealthy food added to their suffering. Surviving records clearly reveal that fatigue, discomfort, sickness, hunger, and thirst proved to be trying ordeals.

One might expect that the Prophet would have received better treatment than the others. However, young George A. Smith, who had been selected by the Prophet to help him, reported, "The Prophet Joseph took a full share of the fatigues of the entire journey. . . . He walked most of the time and had a full proportion of blistered, bloody, and sore feet."⁴

George further recalled that the Prophet maintained a sense of optimism, though "most of the men in the Camp complained to him of sore toes, blistered feet, long drives, scanty supply of provisions, poor quality of bread, bad corn dodger, frowsy butter, strong honey, maggotty bacon and cheese. . . . Even a dog could not bark at some men without their murmuring at Joseph."⁵

Heber C. Kimball wrote: "I frequently invited the Prophet to ride, seeing him lame and footsore. On such occasions he would bless me and my team with a hearty good will."⁶

In spite of the physical hardships, Zion's Camp remained a spiritual venture. Group prayers were conducted morning and evening. Sundays were usually reserved for rest and for Sabbath worship, including partaking of the sacrament, singing, preaching, and bearing testimony. The company experienced several miraculous healings, divine intervention, and powerful demonstrations of faith. The Prophet had many opportunities to teach about living a more Christlike life. He related visionary experiences he received while with the company. One written revelation, now canonized, was also given (see D&C 105).



"The Prophet Joseph took a full share of the fatigues of the entire journey. . . . He walked most of the time and had a full proportion of blistered, bloody, and sore feet."

Separating "Sheep" and "Goats"

For future leaders such as Brigham Young and Wilford Woodruff, who served as second and fourth Presidents of the Church, respectively, Zion's Camp provided their first opportunity to be with the Prophet Joseph for an extended period of time, and they rejoiced in that which they learned from him.

Wilford Woodruff wrote: "We gained an experience that we never could have gained [in] any other way. We had the privilege of . . . seeing the workings of the spirit of God with [the Prophet], and the revelations of Jesus Christ unto him."⁷

Brigham Young was even more explicit: "I have travelled with Joseph a thousand miles, as he has led the Camp of Israel. I have watched him and observed every thing he said or did. . . . For the town of Kirtland I would not give the knowledge I got from Joseph from this Journey. . . . *This was the starting point of my knowing how to lead Israel.*"⁸

The trek became a time when some increased in their faith and loyalty, while others struggled and lost their faith. Sadly, the hardships generated frequent contention among some of the men. On June 3, after nearly a month's travel, the Prophet stood on the back of a wagon and issued a



warning. George A. Smith reported that the Prophet said “our murmuring and fault-finding and want of humility had kindled the anger of the Lord against us; and that a severe scourge would come upon the Camp and many would die like sheep with the rot. . . . But by repentance and humility and the prayer of faith, the chastisement may be alleviated but cannot be entirely turned away, for as the Lord lives this Camp must suffer a severe scourge for their wickedness and rebellion. I say it in the name of the Lord.”⁹ In spite of the pronouncement, some continued to display a contentious spirit. They would later learn that the Lord’s prophecies are fulfilled.

On June 5–6, 1834, following travel through Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, picking up recruits along the way, Zion’s Camp crossed the Mississippi River near the town of Louisiana, Missouri. On June 7 the troops arrived at a small branch of the Church known as Salt River, where they waited for 17 people from Pontiac, Michigan, who were under the direction of Hyrum Smith, the Prophet’s brother, and Lyman Wight.

The Prophet stood on the back of a wagon and warned the men that their murmuring and fault-finding would bring suffering upon the camp. Repentance, humility, and prayers of faith could alleviate it but not completely turn it away.

With the arrival of this last contingent on June 8, Zion’s Camp consisted of just over 200 men, 12 women, and 9 children. Final preparations were made for the push to western Missouri. Before leaving, the Prophet sent Parley P. Pratt and Orson Hyde to Jefferson City, the Missouri state capital, to meet with Governor Daniel Dunklin. On June 12 the army broke camp and commenced the trek across northern Missouri.

The Governor’s Decision

Brothers Pratt and Hyde expected to receive orders from the governor concerning the role Zion’s Camp would play in conjunction with the troops called out by the state. However, the governor changed his mind, refusing to intervene militarily, stating that he dared “not attempt the execution of the laws in that respect, for fear of deluging the whole country in civil war and bloodshed,”¹⁰ but he believed the Saints should continue their efforts through the courts. Governor Dunklin’s position was disturbing news. Without the immediate



support of state troops, the reinstatement of the displaced Missouri Saints in Jackson County could not take place.

Hurrying to report Governor Dunklin's position to the Prophet, Brothers Pratt and Hyde arrived on June 15. After learning of the governor's decision not to intervene, the Prophet decided to go to Clay County and meet with the Saints. He sought the will of the Lord for direction.

On June 22, 1834, the Prophet received the hoped-for revelation. The Lord informed Zion's Camp that because of present circumstances the redemption of Zion would not happen at that time (see D&C 105:9). Furthermore, they were assured that their journey and sacrifice had not been performed in vain. "I have heard their prayers, and will accept their offering," the Lord declared and then indicated that the journey had been undertaken "for a trial of their faith" (D&C 105:19). Meanwhile, they were instructed to return to Ohio, where they were assured that they would receive "a great endowment and blessing to be poured out upon them" (D&C 105:12)—a promise later

Sick with cholera, the Prophet Joseph and his brother Hyrum were praying for relief when Hyrum (standing) had an open vision of their mother praying for their lives.

fulfilled by blessings associated with the Kirtland Temple. To the Jackson County Saints, the Lord promised they would find "peace and safety" living among the citizens of Clay County (D&C 105:25).

Joy and Sorrow

Zion's Camp advanced about two miles east of Liberty, Missouri, and arrived at the home of A. Sidney Gilbert on June 23. Brother Gilbert had operated the Church storehouse in Independence and also acted as agent for the Church while in Jackson County. Here they experienced a joyful reunion with a number of Missouri Saints, including Bishop Edward Partridge, William W. Phelps, Isaac Morley, John Corroll, Thomas B. Marsh, Lyman Wight, and a number of Whitmer family members.

Their rejoicing, however, was short-lived. The following day cholera struck the camp. Individuals with severe cholera experience a rapid loss of fluid causing dehydration and shock, which can result in death in a matter of hours. For several days the disease ravaged the camp in fulfillment of

the foretold “scourge” the Prophet had warned would come because of contentious behavior. Sixty-eight members suffered in varying degrees from the effects of the disease.

Even the Prophet Joseph and Hyrum were taken ill for a short time. While the brothers were praying for relief, Hyrum sprang to his feet, exclaiming, “I have had an open vision, in which I saw mother kneeling under an apple-tree; and she is even now asking God, in tears, to spare our lives. . . . The Spirit testifies, that her prayers, united with ours, will be answered.”¹¹

Although Joseph and Hyrum subsequently recovered, others were not as fortunate. By week’s end, 15 Latter-day Saints had died; 13 were camp members, including one woman and a young girl. The dead were wrapped in blankets and buried in makeshift graves near Rush Creek.

On July 3 a general meeting was held for the Missouri Saints and the members of Zion’s Camp. In it the Prophet officially disbanded the camp. Camp members did not return to Ohio together in one large body but made their way home in smaller groups. The Prophet remained in Clay County, counseling with leaders before leaving about July 12. He arrived back in Kirtland about August 1.

Success or Failure?

Some members of Zion’s Camp subsequently apostatized because they fully expected they would fight, while others lost faith because the Missouri Saints were not restored to their homes and property; hence “Zion was not redeemed.” In short, there were some then and there are some today who may view the 1834 march to western Missouri as a failure. Yet Zion’s Camp was successful in many ways: (1) by responding to the call, the Saints in Ohio, New York, Pennsylvania, and Michigan demonstrated their loyalty to God and His Prophet and their love for members of the Church living in Missouri; (2) while in Missouri the Prophet organized the Missouri Stake, further strengthening the Church; (3) most important, for those who demonstrated their steadfastness, this

trial of faith prepared them for future leadership roles.

In 1835 the Prophet organized the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and the First Quorum of the Seventy. Significantly, nine of the original Twelve and all of the Seventy had marched with Zion’s Camp. The Prophet commented: “Brethren, some of you are angry with me, because you did not fight in Missouri; but let me tell you, God did not want you to fight. He could not organize His kingdom . . . unless He took [leaders] from a body of men who had offered their lives, and who had made as great a sacrifice as did Abraham.”¹²

Lastly, we should not overlook the fact that the Prophet Joseph Smith, as the commander, may have gained more from the experience than anyone else. Five years after Zion’s Camp the Lord revealed to the Prophet that all of the trials in his life “shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good” (D&C 122:7). Surely the Zion’s Camp experience was “for his

good.” Unquestionably, he learned valuable gospel lessons regarding “faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility, [and] diligence” (D&C 4:6). He also learned lessons regarding relationships with others, the need for preparation, and the consequences of one’s actions. In short, Zion’s Camp was an important chapter in the life of Joseph Smith that further defined and refined him as a prophet-leader to the Latter-day Saints. ■

Alexander L. Baugh is a member of the Highland Eighth Ward, Highland Utah Stake.



JOSEPH SMITH ORDAINING PARLEY P. PRATT AS AN APOSTLE BY WALTER RANE

Later, many leaders of the Church came from the ranks of Zion’s Camp. These men had demonstrated their steadfastness and their willingness to sacrifice and even offer their lives for the gospel.

NOTES

1. Joseph Smith to Emma Hale Smith, in Dean C. Jesse, *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* (2002), 340–41. Spelling and punctuation have been modernized throughout.
2. Joseph Smith to Emma Hale Smith, 341.
3. Joseph Smith to Emma Hale Smith, 341.
4. George A. Smith, “My Journal,” *Instructor*, May 1946, 217.
5. *Instructor*, May 1946, 217.
6. Quoted in Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball* (1888), 56.
7. *Deseret News*, Dec. 21, 1869.
8. Quoted in Leonard J. Arrington, *Brigham Young: American Moses* (1985), 45–46.
9. *Instructor*, Apr. 1946, 184.
10. Parley P. Pratt, *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt* (1985), 94.
11. Lucy [Mack] Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet and His Progenitors for Many Generations* (1853), 201.
12. *History of the Church*, 2:182, note.

My family was asleep in the boat, and the only thing that kept them from drifting into the night was the rope I held in my hands.

BY MICHAEL FITZGERALD

On the last night of our vacation on Lake Roosevelt in Washington, I beached our houseboat in a cove hidden behind a small island. The weather had been calm and clear the previous three days, so I made only a meager effort to anchor the boat to the shore for the night. The previous nights, I had buried the boat's two anchors in the sand as instructed by the boat rental staff, but this last time I casually draped one anchor line over a rock and the other around a large stump that had washed up on the shore.

A little later, I walked with my oldest daughter, Melissa, to a driftwood snag farther up on the beach. We were startled to find a large rattlesnake resting there in the shade. I had never been so close to a live rattler. As it slithered deeper into the cool shade, I wondered silently if this beach would be a safe place for our family for the night. I brushed off the feeling quickly, climbed onto the boat,

and relaxed the rest of the evening, settling into what I thought would be another night's peaceful rest.

Not long after going to bed, however, I was awakened by the sound of high winds from the west. Such a severe change in weather was completely unexpected. Heavy waves dashed against the side of our boat, causing it to drift away from the shore on the port side. I jumped ashore to retie the line that had pulled loose from the rock, but with little effort; I still didn't want to be bothered with setting the anchors correctly.

After my half-conscious effort to secure the boat again, I crawled back into my bunk exhausted, only to be roused again by the wind sometime after midnight. The wind and waves were beating so hard against the boat that the starboard anchor line dragged the stump across the beach to the water's edge. The boat made an awful grinding sound as it slid offshore and completely reversed direction. I leaped back to the beach, barely in time to grab a loose anchor line that nearly jerked me into the water.

Panic struck. My family was still asleep in the boat, and the only thing that kept them from drifting into the night was the rope I held in my hands. Suddenly I found myself in the most frightening



NIGHT ON RATTLESNAKE BEACH

situation of my life. I immediately realized how my neglect had placed my wife and three children in jeopardy. Guilt and fear overwhelmed me; my family was about to slip through my hands, drifting into open water toward the cliffs that towered above us to the east. I prayed intensely, pleading with the Lord for the strength to hold on to the boat. Then the winds abruptly changed direction, and the line went slack in my hands. With this miraculous shift in the wind, I was able to draw the ship hand over hand back to safety.

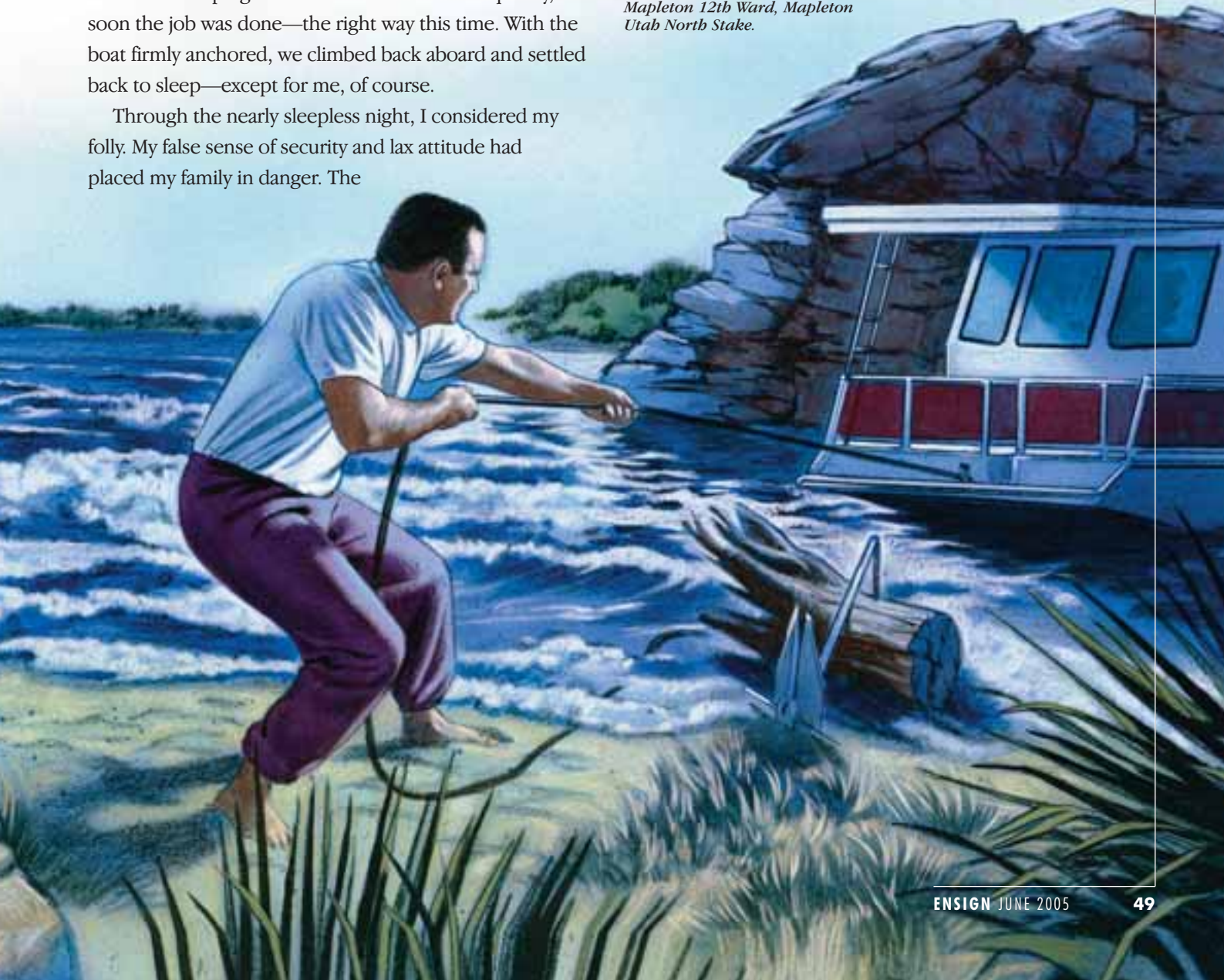
To my relief, Melissa and my wife, Cristi, came out onto the beach and helped me hurriedly set a temporary anchor. But then the beach presented another danger: by the light of my flashlight, we could see a rattlesnake—perhaps the one we had seen earlier—coiled nearby on a rock. While Melissa helped me dig deep holes for the anchors, I shined the light between us to make sure the rattler was keeping a safe distance. We worked quickly, and soon the job was done—the right way this time. With the boat firmly anchored, we climbed back aboard and settled back to sleep—except for me, of course.

Through the nearly sleepless night, I considered my folly. My false sense of security and lax attitude had placed my family in danger. The

gospel application was not lost to me. As the night wore on, I asked myself question after question: Are you too casual in your duties? What kind of a father and husband are you, really? Are you too relaxed about leading the family in prayer, scripture study, or family home evening? Who is going to do the job that you are supposed to do if you don't do it?

As dawn neared and the hours of self-examination ended, I came to a new determination. Through the unforgettable lesson that night, I knew what I must do to more safely anchor my family to the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. While it has taken repeated effort, our family has a consistent routine of scripture study, prayer, and family home evening. But no matter how well we do for a season, we still have to reset the anchor of faith every day, as I learned that night on “rattlesnake beach.” ■

Michael Fitzgerald is a member of the Mapleton 12th Ward, Mapleton Utah North Stake.



ILLUSTRATED BY ROGER MOTZKUS

THE HIGH PRIESTS QUORUM



During His mortal ministry Jesus Christ was the presiding high priest on earth. High priests' responsibility is to pattern their lives after Him.

The fifth in a series of articles about priesthood quorums and their purposes.

BY ELDER DAVID E. SORENSON
Of the Presidency of the Seventy

To be ordained a high priest in the Melchizedek Priesthood is a great honor and responsibility because the example for those holding this office is the Savior Himself. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Hebrews: “For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God. . . . And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that

said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. . . . Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec” (Hebrews 5:1, 4–6). Just as the Savior did not take this honor unto Himself but was called of God, so are all high priests in the Lord’s Church. Their responsibility is to pattern their lives after the Savior, to bear witness through their words and deeds of His gracious Atonement and the truth of His gospel.

A Brief History

Throughout the history of humankind whenever the gospel in its fulness has been on earth, the Lord has called high priests to preside over His work.

- Adam, Enoch, Noah, Melchizedek,



Abraham, Moses, and other righteous men were ordained high priests (see Alma 13; D&C 84:6–17; 107:41–53).

- After Moses’s time the Lord withdrew the Melchizedek Priesthood from the earth except among certain faithful men.

- Among the Book of Mormon peoples, the presiding spiritual authorities were high priests (see Alma 8:23; 30:20–23).

- During His mortal ministry Jesus Christ was the presiding high priest on earth (see Hebrews 3:1). And as the great high priest, the Savior made an eternal sacrifice and “obtained eternal redemption for us” (see Hebrews 9:11–12). He continues to preside over His Church.

- In the dispensation of the fulness of times, the first ordination to the office of high priest occurred at a conference of the Church held in Kirtland, Ohio, in June 1831. At that time 23 men were ordained high priests.

- For a time high priests quorums were organized in each ward, and each had its own presidency. But in 1877, shortly before his death, President Brigham Young directed that stake presidents should have responsibility over these quorums.

- In 1956 stake presidents began serving as presidents of the high priests quorums in their respective stakes.

- In December 1975 the First Presidency clarified that ward high priests groups function as part of the stake high priests quorum, with the stake president serving as president of the quorum and his counselors in the stake presidency serving as counselors in the quorum. Ward high priests group leaders function under the direction of the stake president.

Duties of High Priests Quorums

President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) said that “it is the duty of the High Priests’ quorum to teach the principles of government, of union, of advancement and of growth in the kingdom of God. They are indeed the fathers of the people at large. In our High Priests’ quorums are numbered the Presidents of Stakes and their Counselors, Bishops and Counselors, Patriarchs, and all that have been ordained to



PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN LUKE, POSED BY MODELS

One of the primary responsibilities of high priests is to serve as home teachers. As such they “represent the Lord, the bishop, and . . . group leaders.”

the office of High Priest in the Melchizedek Priesthood. . . . They should be united with the quorum in such a way that they give it all the force that they can impart for good.”¹

Responsibilities of High Priests

“The rights and responsibilities of high priests are to preside and to hold all the authority of elders (see D&C 107:10). Brethren are ordained high priests when they are called to a stake presidency, high council, or bishopric or when otherwise determined by the stake president.”²

High priests should be worthy of great trust. Those who are ordained to this office in the priesthood should be men of faith, honesty, and integrity. They should be dependable and devoted to the Church so they can be depended upon to stand up for the gospel under all circumstances.

One of the primary responsibilities of high priests is to serve as home teachers. As such they “represent the Lord, the bishop, and . . . group leaders. They support and serve all members of the families they visit. They nurture the friendship and respect of these members, showing genuine concern and love for them. . . . Home teachers are the

Church's first source of help to members. They consult with the head of the household about the family's needs and the ways to be most helpful. They offer help when members are unemployed, ill, lonely, moving, or have other needs."³

President Joseph F. Smith taught that every high priest should "set an example before the old and young worthy of emulation, and . . . place himself in a position to be a teacher of righteousness, not only by precept but more particularly by example—giving to the younger ones the benefit of experience of age, and thus becoming individually a power in the midst of the community in which [he] dwells. . . . Those holding this office are, as a rule, men of advanced years, and varied experience. . . . Their experience . . . is the ripened fruit of years of labor in the Church, and they should exercise that wisdom for the benefit of all with whom they are associated."⁴

The Role of High Priests in Relation to Temple and Family History Work

Group leaders and quorum members set an example in doing temple and family history work, including regularly attending the temple where circumstances allow. They help members prepare to receive their own temple ordinances. They also encourage members to identify their kindred dead and provide temple ordinances for them. Elders quorum presidents and high priests "group leaders should ensure that the doctrines, principles, and blessings relating to redeeming the dead are taught regularly in priesthood meeting and home teaching visits. They also encourage members to teach their children the importance of the temple. . . . Under the bishopric's direction, the high priests group leader coordinates temple and family history work in the ward."⁵

High priests are men who are mature in the gospel and are capable of presiding. They set an example for

brethren who are less experienced, especially for members of the Aaronic Priesthood. They, along with other priesthood holders, are "to teach, expound, exhort, baptize, and watch over the church" (D&C 20:42). High priests are a great stabilizing force in each ward, branch, district, and stake, assisting in the mission of the Church, which includes preaching the gospel, perfecting the Saints, and redeeming the dead. Above all, they are patriarchs in their homes and families, setting an example and establishing a pattern of righteousness for generations that follow. ■

NOTES

1. In Conference Report, Apr. 1907, 5.
2. *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2: Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders* (1998), 162.
3. *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2*, 169.
4. In Conference Report, Apr. 1908, 5–6.
5. See *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2*, 165, 265.



THE FIRE OF BROTHERHOOD

BY LARENE PORTER GAUNT
Church Magazines

Mitch Dunford has been a member of the high priests group in the Santee First Ward, Santee California Stake, for most of the 11 years he has lived there. “Our high priests group has studied the scriptures together and done missionary work together,” he says. “We’ve given blessings to each other and to others’ family members. Our camaraderie is a natural outgrowth of helping each other honor callings in the priesthood.”

On the night of Sunday, October 26, 2003, the high priests in the Santee stake, along with most residents of San Diego County, found themselves under attack by the largest wildfire in the history of California. For nearly 24 hours, 50- to 70-mile-per-hour (80- to 110-km-per-hour) winds had pushed 100-foot (30-m) flames and burned hundreds of homes, killing 13 people.

Mitch Dunford (left) and Randall Schimpf (center) with their sons.

Mitch Dunford stood alone in the hills behind his home with a garden hose in one hand and a shovel in the other. Earlier he had taken his wife, Cathy, and their five children to a hotel. When the evacuation order was lifted, he returned home to see what he could do.

“The fire was 4 feet [1.2 m] high and 30 feet [9 m] wide,” says Brother Dunford. “It was coming from two directions. It was so quiet. I just stood there, wondering if I could really stop this fire by myself.”

Meanwhile, stake president Chris Allred was atop the stake center with binoculars. With flames coming toward the Dunfords’ house, he began making phone calls.

“I was alone,” says Brother Dunford, with more than a little emotion in his voice, “and then one by one they came—the ‘boys’ from the quorum and their sons, each with a shovel. I was overwhelmed, yet it seemed just the way it ought to be.”

Fifteen minutes later the first wave of fire swept through.

“We beat the fire down and tossed dirt on it,” says Steven Schimpf, 15, who came with his dad, Bishop Randall Schimpf.

After the first wave was out, the second wave came. They beat back that one too.

A news cameraman climbed up to the group and was amazed to discover they were just some men and boys from a church helping one of their own.

“It was touching to have our home saved by my priesthood brethren,” says Brother Dunford. “It is so typical of the way they are. My neighbors couldn’t believe all those men and boys just showed up to help. But we know it’s what you do when you’re a member of a priesthood quorum.” ■



PHOTOGRAPH BY LARENE PORTER GAUNT

Three mothers share lessons they learned from their children.

Dress and feed the children, answer the phone, fix lunch, prepare Sunday's lesson, admire a child's drawing—is it evening already? In a mother's full day, children often bring work and worry. But Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles reminds us that even amid our Savior's tremendous responsibilities, He "found special joy and happiness in children and said all of us should be more like them" ("This Do in Remembrance of Me," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 68). From their uniquely unseasoned perspective, children often unexpectedly present their parents with insight and invaluable lessons in becoming like Jesus Christ. Here three parents share lessons they have learned.

Scott's Victory

They gathered at the starting line, 120 shoving, pushing, excited 10-year-olds. Our

T*he race started, but my son Scott tripped and fell. Nevertheless, with scraped knees and bleeding elbows, he got up.*

A Little Child Shall Lead Them

son Scott was among them. The annual cross-country race concluded months of anticipation and training. First Scott ran laps around the one-third-mile loop of driveway on our small farm. Then he began running three miles to school in the morning and finally five miles into town. When Scott struggled to feed the animals, go running, and still get to school on time, my husband would encourage him with comments like, "A champion is made of persistence." Soon our neighbors and friends noticed Scott's persistence, and even the coach at school couldn't outrun him. As the race neared, we heard predictions like "Scott is sure to come out of the race a winner" and "First place already belongs to him." Scott felt confident and prepared as he waited on the starting line for the three-quarter-mile race to begin.



The nervous chaos of the starting line contrasted with the calmness we had felt as we knelt in family prayer that morning, asking that Scott might do his best and feel good about his experience. The gun started the race, and anxious runners surged forward in one huge scramble. But before Scott even started, he was down. In the mad melee to start, he tripped, falling beneath the crowd that pounded over him. He managed to pick himself up, scraped knees, bleeding elbows, and all, but he was the last of the entire group.

We watched as he passed a few stragglers on the first hill and sprinted on, but it wasn't good enough—those in the lead had too much of a start on him. As they came into the last stretch, Scott gave everything, crossing the finish line and collapsing into our waiting arms. He had finished in 21st place.

Amid our tears and questions we struggled to accept the lost victory. After months of training, the hours spent anticipating this day seemed wasted. What was gained?

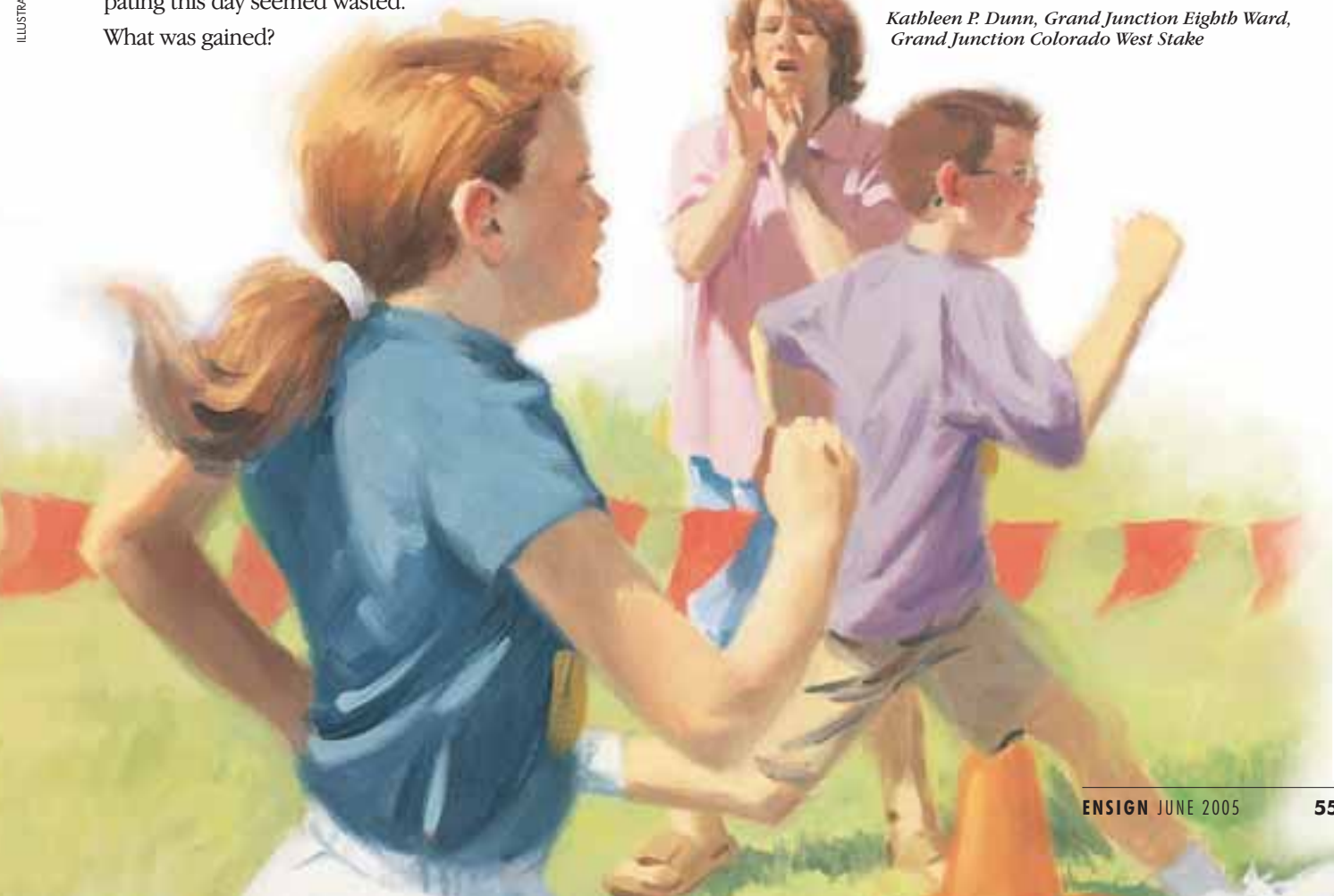
Where was the victory? I imagined the moment must be especially bitter for our exhausted runner.

"Well," said Scott, "I guess next year I'll have to train by running shorter distances at a time. I ran some long distances this year but didn't always do it my fastest." His voice was not dejected or low. He sounded happy, glad it was over, and glad for those who had won. "This race is for those who can run fast in short distances," he said. "I'll have to change my style of training next year."

I was amazed that a boy only 10 years old could be so wise. He didn't even blame those who had tripped him. Suddenly I understood the promise in the Doctrine and Covenants: "And let your diligence, and your perseverance, and patience, and your works be redoubled, and you shall in nowise lose your reward, saith the Lord of Hosts" (D&C 127:4). Scott taught me that victory does not always mean coming in first and champions are those who never give up! Scott had found his victory that day.

*Kathleen P. Dunn, Grand Junction Eighth Ward,
Grand Junction Colorado West Stake*

ILLUSTRATED BY GREGG THORNEILSON



I found my rough-and-tumble son sitting quietly in a baptismal service.



Finding Jeremy

“Where’s Jeremy?” The question flashed instantly into my mind as I prepared to leave after a particularly tiring Sunday at church. Jeremy, my then six-year-old, freckled, rough-and-tumble little boy, had been left behind before, and his tears had stopped only when I promised to not lose him next time. I instructed the children to wait outside while my oldest daughter and I searched the church. Sending her off one way, I stopped quickly by the Relief Society room. Inside, the baptismal font had been filled, and a baptism was just starting. I quietly stepped in, and to my amazement, there sat Jeremy on the front row, arms folded, his excitement evident. Briefly I considered motioning him to leave, but his shining example convinced me otherwise. Sending my daughter to invite the other children in, I watched as Jeremy sat through the

entire baptism without so much as a wiggle. When we sang the closing song, “The Spirit of God,” he sang with an expression on his face that revealed his simple faith.

I have since thought of two parents long ago with a child who also was once left behind:

“And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.

“And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple. . . .

“And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding” (Luke 2:45–47).

I too was astonished by Jeremy’s understanding, and I resolved to let his sweet influence direct me as I try to become more like a little child.

Susan Langdorf Walley, Riverside Ward, Provo Utah Edgemont Stake

Daffodils, Praying Mantis Eggs, and Rocks

“What a disaster!” I exclaimed, staring at the toys, books, and clothes scattered helter-skelter throughout the house by my three children. I could hear the baby crying in his room down the hall. Could he be awake already? Walking wearily to his room, I could smell from the door the reason he woke up crying. Diapers and disasters, I thought. So this was motherhood.

Hearing the doorbell chime, I hurried to the door, only to find that no one was there. Instead, a tattered basket sat on the doorstep, stuffed with daffodils, a praying mantis egg sac, rocks, bunches of fresh grass, and a folded piece of paper. “To Mom,” read the blue crayon scrawl. “We love you.”

I lingered a moment, halted by emotion and questions. I had chosen to leave behind a satisfying teaching career to become a homemaker, but now I wondered, Was I becoming a joyful mother of children or a martyr? Did I consider my children a blessing or a burden? Gazing at my children’s basket that spring morning, I realized


that in fact I *was* in a classroom of sorts. But this time my children were teaching me. Our course of study? Becoming like the Savior.

The lesson of the daffodils and praying mantis eggs was reinforced late one evening as I was busy finishing my remaining tasks. “Come see the sunset, Mom,” my daughter begged, rushing into the kitchen. In annoyance, I started to say, “I can’t, I’m too . . .,” but she grabbed my hand and pulled me outside to see a brilliant sky exploding with crimson and gold.

“Sunsets don’t wait,” she said.

While learning the ABCs, my children teach me laughter and joy. Digging up newly planted bushes or assembling a band to serenade our neighbors, my children teach me patience. Through daily, affectionate hugs, they teach me love. Along with diapers, messes, daffodils, praying mantis eggs, rocks, sunsets, and scrawled love notes, my children daily give me gifts of love and insight that tutor me toward becoming more like Jesus Christ and Heavenly Father. ■

Trisa Martin, Bountiful 30th Ward, Bountiful Utah East Stake



My daughter begged me to watch the sunset with her, and I started to say, “I can’t.”



FINDING HOPE IN THE SECOND COMING



In contemplating “the great and dreadful day of the Lord” (D&C 2:1), we may have a tendency to overlook the “great” and accentuate the “dreadful.”

BY ELDER SPENCER V. JONES
Of the Seventy

My wife and I felt our family home evening had been a success. We had discussed the prophecies about the events preceding the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and our need to be prepared for that day. We restocked our year’s supply, our emergency backpacks, and our first-aid kit. We taught the children how to shut off the natural gas line into the house as well as other utilities in the event of a disaster. We also taught them how to start our backup generator in case an electrical blackout occurred.

We felt prepared.

We did not realize the disturbing impact this experience had on our children until a few nights later. One of

our children was carrying a plate of food, when suddenly the lights went out. The plate went flying as our child instantly recalled the fearful prophecies we had discussed. We immediately reassured everyone that all was well; then when the lights came back on, we faced the chore of cleaning up macaroni and cheese strewn all over the kitchen.

“The Great and Dreadful Day”

Just as our child reacted in fear, many of us are apprehensive about the Second Coming. In contemplating “the great and dreadful day of the Lord” (D&C 2:1), we may have a tendency to overlook the “great” and accentuate the “dreadful.”

Some of the prophecies *can* seem overwhelming. Earthquakes, thunder, lightning, hailstorms, plagues, famine, waves of the sea heaving beyond their bounds, a desolating scourge, the sun darkened, and the moon turned to blood are all worldly conditions predicted to usher in that “great and dreadful day.” The inhabitants of the earth will endure weeping and wailing, wars and rumors of wars,



iniquity, false Christs and false prophets, men's hearts failing them, and the proud and the wicked burning as stubble.

Some prophecies are even quite grotesque, such as this one:

“Wherefore, I the Lord God will send forth flies upon the face of the earth, which shall take hold of the inhabitants thereof, and shall eat their

flesh, and shall cause maggots to come in upon them;

“ . . . And their flesh shall fall from off their bones, and their eyes from their sockets;

“And it shall come to pass that the beasts of the forest and the fowls of the air shall devour them up” (D&C 29:18–20).

In discussing this particular scripture during family home evening, one child, visualizing the swarms of flies and maggots, declared, “I’m gonna wear a beekeeper’s suit.”

As dreadful as these prophecies sound, let’s keep them in perspective. These fearful conditions contain a qualifying phrase indicating they are intended not for the righteous but for the wicked and unrepentant. For example, the verse immediately preceding the above scriptural passage is clear: “And it shall come to pass, because of the wickedness of the world, that I will take vengeance upon the wicked, for they will not repent” (D&C 29:17). A “desolating scourge” is prophesied for the inhabitants of the earth “if they repent not” (D&C 5:19).

Even if we are righteous, we may not be spared the effects of some of these plagues. But as we will discuss later, the Lord will support and help us. And for every dreadful prophecy directed at the wicked, there are wonderful prophecies that proffer signs and hope for the righteous. These prophetic signs or events could be divided into three categories: events the Lord controls, events Church leaders control as directed by Him, and events we personally control through the use of our agency.

Both the Lord and the leaders of the Church are



fulfilling their part. The Lord has brought forth the Book of Mormon and the Restoration of the gospel with its priesthood and keys. The Brethren continue to move forward with many details that must be completed to usher in the return of the Savior. These events are in the Lord’s hands as He works through inspired prophets, seers, and revelators. As members of the Church, we have no control over these events.

We do, however, have control over whether we

Home is the vital gathering spot. We find peace and safe haven as we gather for family scripture study and prayer.

personally will be prepared for the day when the Savior comes again. Our daily decisions will determine whether that day is “great” or “dreadful.”

The Importance of Preparation

The scriptural statement “if ye are prepared ye shall not fear” (D&C 38:30) is key to the Second Coming of Christ. Preparation creates a climate that is the opposite of fear: a spirit of assurance, peace, hope, confidence, and courage. To overcome fear, we must have our “feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace” (D&C 27:16). The gospel of Jesus Christ is the great preparer.

How do we prepare? How do we ensure that our feet are shod with the gospel? From the beginning, God has covenanted to gather His elect so that they may instruct and edify each other. The Lord has declared, “I give unto you a sign, that ye may know the time when these things shall be about to take place—that I shall gather in, from their long dispersion, my people, O house of Israel, and shall establish again among them my Zion” (3 Nephi 21:1).

The doctrine of gathering is eternal in nature and broad in scope. We shouted for joy while gathered in the Grand Council in the premortal life (see Job 38:7). Our prophets have wisely taught us to gather to the stakes of Zion in our homelands “for a defense, and for a refuge from the storm, and from wrath when it shall be poured out without mixture upon the whole earth” (D&C 115:6). We gather in general and stake conferences to receive counsel from our prophets and leaders. We gather each Sunday to be taught, to testify, and to renew sacred covenants. We gather for auxiliary and leadership meetings to get organized and to enjoy the company of other Saints. We gather in holy temples to redeem the dead and remind ourselves of holy commitments.

But the home is the vital gathering spot. We find refuge in our homes as we gather each Monday night in uplifting family home evenings. There is safe haven as we gather daily in family scripture study and family prayer. We gather



PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE BUNDERSON

for bonding conversation at meals. Each day we find a few moments of peace and calm in a troubled world as we gather up our scriptures and immerse ourselves in them. Our feet are shod with the gospel at each gathering. Each gathering is a defense and a refuge from the world. Indeed, each gathering strengthens, purifies, and prepares us. Remember, “if ye are prepared ye shall not fear.”

We live in a fearful world. Some of us live next door to the wicked and unrepentant. The calamities predicted for them can affect us. Our task is simple. We keep our shod feet on the narrow path by keeping all the covenants we

have made. It is a covenant people who receive the promise:

“All they who suffer persecution for my name, and endure in faith, though they are called to lay down their lives for my sake yet shall they partake of all this glory.

“Wherefore, fear not even unto death; for in this world your joy is not full, but in me your joy is full” (D&C 101:35–36).

We are not promised a life without problems but are assured that we will be supported in them. Alma affirmed, “I do know that whosoever shall put their trust in God shall be supported in their trials, and their troubles, and their afflictions, and shall be lifted up at the last day” (Alma 36:3).

Referring to the dreadful conditions we face today, Nephi made these reassuring statements: “He will not suffer that the wicked shall destroy the righteous”; “He will preserve the righteous by his power”; “The Lord will surely prepare a way for his people”; “He gathereth his children from the four quarters of the earth; and he numbereth his sheep, and they know him” (1 Nephi 22:16, 17, 20, 25). Twice he repeats, “The righteous need not fear” (vv. 17, 22).

I echo Nephi’s message. If we are prepared, and if we are trying to draw closer to the Savior every day, we need not fear the events of the Second Coming. ■

For more information on “the great and dreadful day of the Lord,” see 2 Nephi 12–14, 20–24; Isaiah 2–4, 10–14; Joseph Fielding Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. (1954–56), 3:1–79; Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, 2nd ed. (1966), 687–98.

Rejoice in the Restoration of Temple Ordinances and Covenants



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

D&C 124:40, 42: “Let this house be built unto my name, that I may reveal mine ordinances therein. . . . I will show unto my servant Joseph all things pertaining to this house.”

Why Do You Rejoice in Temple Worship?

President George Q. Cannon (1827–1901), First Counselor in the First Presidency: “Every Temple . . . lessens the power of Satan on the earth, and increases the power of God and Godliness, moves the heavens in mighty power in our behalf, invokes and calls down upon us the blessings of the Eternal Gods” (*Millennial Star*; Nov. 12, 1877, 743).

President Gordon B. Hinckley: “Just as our Redeemer gave His life as a vicarious sacrifice for all men, and in so doing became our Savior, even so we, in a small measure, when we engage in proxy work in the temple, become as saviors to those on the other side who have no means of advancing unless something is done

in their behalf by those on earth. . . . I encourage you to take greater advantage of this blessed privilege. It will refine your natures. It will peel off the selfish shell in which most of us live. It will literally bring a sanctifying element into our lives” (“Closing Remarks,” *Liabona and Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 104).

How Can Understanding Ordinances and Covenants Help You Find Joy?

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“We need to remember that a covenant is a promise. A covenant made with God should be regarded not as restrictive but as protective. Covenants with Him protect us from danger. . . . When we choose to deny ourselves of all ungodliness, we lose nothing of value and gain glory known only to those who obtain eternal life. Keeping a temple covenant is not constraining but enabling. It elevates us beyond limits of our own perspective and power” (“Prepare for Blessings of the Temple,” *Ensign*, Mar. 2002, 21).

Anne C. Pingree, second counselor in the Relief Society general presidency:

“My husband and I had traveled

to one of the most remote locations in our mission so he could conduct temple recommend interviews. . . . After all the interviews were completed, as my husband and I drove back along that sandy jungle trail, we were stunned when we saw . . . two sisters still walking. We realized they had trekked from their village—a distance of 18 miles [29 km] round trip—just to obtain a temple recommend they knew they would never have the privilege of using. These Nigerian Saints believed the counsel of President Howard W. Hunter: ‘It would please the Lord for every adult member to be worthy of—and to carry—a current temple recommend, even if proximity to a temple does not allow immediate or frequent

use of it’” (“Seeing the Promises Afar Off,” *Liabona and Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 13). ■





Blessed

by the

Word of Wisdom



BY ELDER MASAYUKI NAKANO

Area Authority Seventy
Asia North Area

I took it upon myself to obey the Word of Wisdom as a sign of my obedience to God, despite any social pressure I might face.

When I was investigating the gospel before my baptism at age 15, I learned about the Word of Wisdom, as revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1833 (see D&C 89). I took it upon myself to obey this commandment as a sign of my obedience to God, despite any social pressure I might face.

In the Japanese business world, it is customary for sales representatives to entertain prospective customers at nightclubs and bars. Accordingly, alcohol is an integral part of professional life for many people. But I have seen the consumption of alcohol become a stumbling block. In some cases it leads to serious illnesses. Many businesspeople spend so much of their time working and entertaining after hours that they neglect their families. Often excessive alcohol consumption eventually results in a loss of status at work and a ruined career.

When I was 28, I was meeting with the manager of the trade department of a large

corporation and coffee was served. I politely declined, explaining that I am a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and that I do not partake of alcoholic beverages, coffee, tea, or tobacco. The trade manager quickly accepted this and even praised me for my faith.

Ever since then, whenever I have needed to discuss business with my customers, I have taken them only to restaurants for dinner. I have never been asked to accompany them to bars. During the Christmas season I invite my customers to Christmas dinner shows that celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. I have been able to share the gospel frequently on these occasions.

It is widely known at my company and within our industry that I am a member of the Church, and I believe this knowledge has contributed to my success at work. I believe firmly in the promise the Lord gives to those who will obey His law:

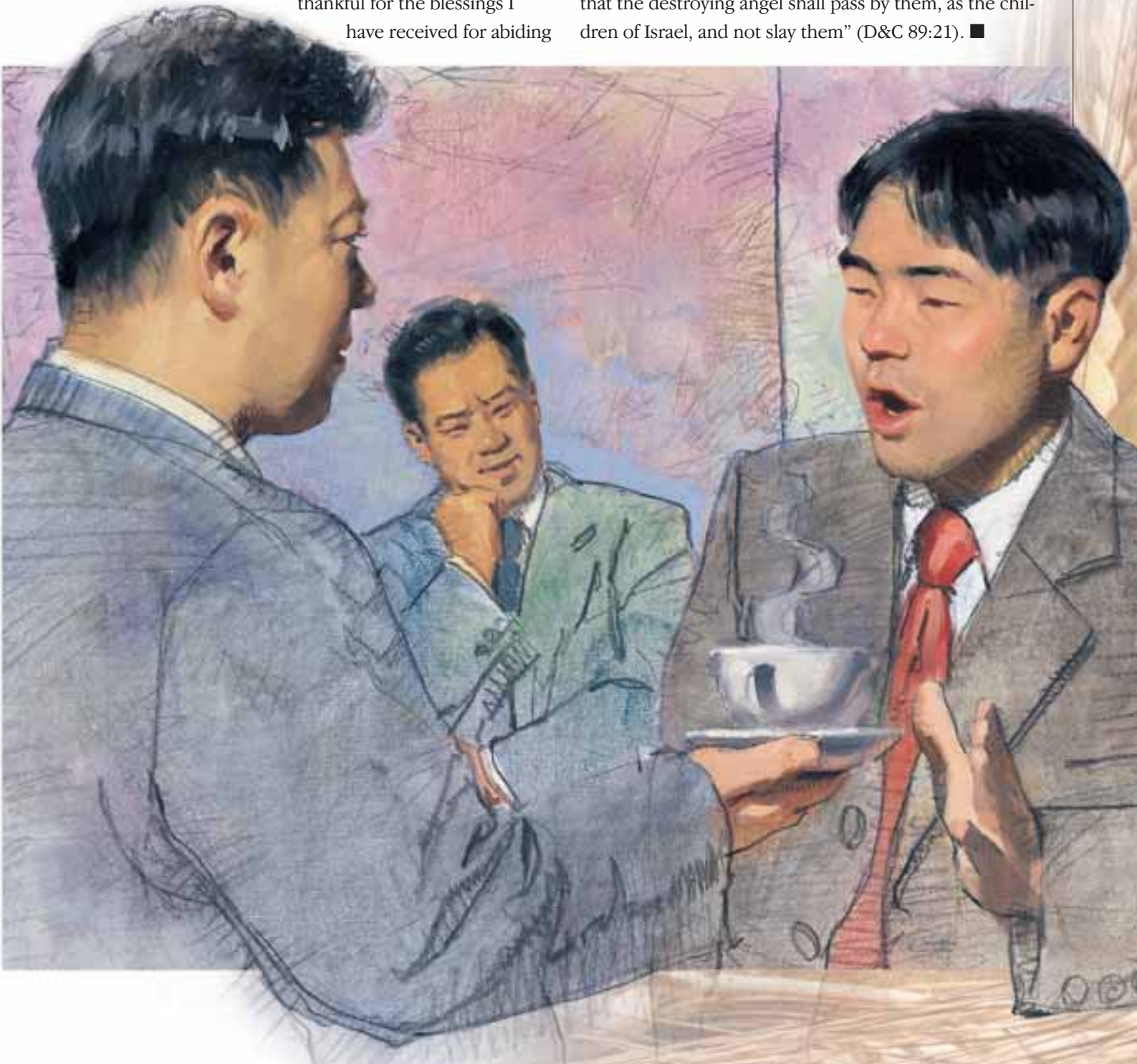
“And all saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments, shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones;

“And shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures;

“And shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint” (D&C 89:18–20).

My testimony of the Word of Wisdom is strong. I am thankful for the blessings I have received for abiding

by this principle. It is my conviction that as we obey the Word of Wisdom—despite any pressure we may face from those around us—we can become worthy to receive the blessing promised by the Lord at the end of this great revelation: “And I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them” (D&C 89:21). ■





CONFESSIONS OF A PERFECTIONIST

BY KELLI ALLEN-PRATT

I started life as a perfectionist. My mother tells stories of my color-coded closet and sock drawer. If I had order, I felt I had control. Even as a child I was passionate about life and the successes I would make for myself.

I married at a young age in the temple, and we had four children in six years. With the birth of each new baby, I obsessed about losing weight and exercised myself down to my pre-pregnancy size and sometimes even smaller.

I worked from sunup until sundown trying to keep my house a place of order. When people visited, I felt sure they thought I was lazy because my home was not perfect. Though my mother often told me, “You wouldn’t worry so much about what people thought of you if you understood how infrequently they do think about you,” I believed that people were judging me as harshly as I judged myself. I would make excuses. It was a source of embarrassment and heartache, so I tried harder to keep things clean and orderly.

Finances were tight. I sewed most of my children’s clothing, baked homemade bread twice a week, and canned fruit and vegetables from our garden. On top of it all, I was in the Relief Society presidency, sang in the choir, and was visiting teacher to five sisters. I was just plain overburdened with what I required of myself! I found myself slipping into depression.

Back to Work

A series of employment mishaps for my husband left me with the need to go back to work. My skills as a graphic designer had become obsolete with the technical explosion of the personal computer. With four children, I headed back to school. It was exhausting! I struggled with my studies to maintain a 4.0 grade point average in addition to everything else.

Before long I found a job. All my children were enrolled in school, and I began to feel that I was getting a grip on things. Then I discovered that my husband and I were expecting our fifth child. I was both excited and scared—happy to have a new baby but nervous because the birth would mean that our family income would drop dramatically if I stopped working. After our baby was born, I struggled to work part-time but just couldn’t keep up.

My husband and friends pleaded with me to not be so hard on myself. Instead, I stole time to attend classes on how to improve my life. I read every self-help book that I could get my hands on. All of this training got me excited to be more productive, but I found myself once again running faster than I had strength. I would break down, and with each new failure to “perform,” depression would take a tenacious grip.

I woke up each morning and prayed that I could accomplish everything on my “to do” list, only to be discouraged as I dropped into bed after midnight.



A Family of Robots?

One day I was joking with a friend about how I didn't want much in life —just perfection! My friend asked me what I thought perfection was. I said that I would be happy if my home were completely organized (not one thing out of place) and clean all the time. I wanted my family to pick up after themselves and be on time to all their obligations. I wanted the children to do their homework and come to family scripture study without complaining. I wanted to adhere to a strict schedule and not deviate from it. Early to bed, early to rise. Discipline! I didn't need expensive, new things—I just wanted the possessions I had stewardship over to be in perfect condition.

I was stunned by what my friend said next: "Really? You just described my hell." Then it hit me. It finally hit me! I was trying to force my family to meet my expectations, to make them do exactly what I wanted. I couldn't even match my own expectations; how could I expect my family to? I knew that using force was not right. What I wanted ultimately was to surround myself with beauty and order. So what I was seeking was righteous. But using force was Satan's plan. Did I really want my family to be robots,



HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

1. Invite family members to begin marching in place. Add another task for them to do while marching, like clapping their hands. Add more simultaneous tasks until they become overburdened. Ask how they felt as the tasks multiplied. Make a list of the author's tasks (see sections one and two). How was the activity like her life? Discuss the portions of the section "Christ's Example" that will be most helpful to your family.

2. Have the family review the "Seven Thoughts." Discuss each situation and how following it can help bring peace. Consider choosing one to work on as a family.

with me as the controller?
I knew the answer was no.

Christ's Example

I prayed for forgiveness. I asked Heavenly Father to help me see things as they really were. I fully expected all my sins and character flaws to be displayed as in some kind of showcase for me to review and begin to make the needed changes. What I experienced instead was the most beautiful outpouring of love and acceptance I have ever felt.

Soon, through my prayers, scripture study, conversations with my husband and friends, and observations, I found truths that helped me shift my attitude. I embraced the words in Mosiah 4:27: "It is not requisite that a man should run faster than he has strength." I realized that I was trying to run faster than I had strength. My drive for perfection and task orientation was overshadowing everything.

I was losing sight of compassion. I felt physically sick at the realization that I was not enjoying my children and husband as much as I could.

Slowly I came to understand that we are required only to do our best. I saw that I had imagined an ideal person that had all those qualities I so admired. There was just

one problem—that person did not exist! I came to understand that Christ is the only perfect being. We come unto Him and try to be like Him. He is our example.

The burden of our redemption is not completely on our shoulders. Christ's Atonement is the core of the gospel. Sometimes we mistakenly believe that the Atonement works only for other people, that somehow we must earn exaltation by ourselves. We don't. We can't! President John Taylor (1808–87) said, "Let us seek to magnify our callings and honor our God, and the Lord will take care of the

SEVEN THOUGHTS THAT ARE HELPING ME IN THE JOURNEY TO PEACE

1. *Pray for guidance.* Many of our choices as Latter-day Saints are between good things. Prayer can help us discern our best possible options.

2. *Don't compare yourself to others.* Chances are you compare your weaknesses to other people's strengths.

3. *Be gentle with yourself.* Christ is a gentle teacher. He is gentle with us, and we also need to be gentle with ourselves. Acknowledge you are doing the best you

can. Be accepting of your efforts and those of others.

4. *Forgive yourself.* If you fall backward—brush yourself off and start where you left off. All is not lost.

5. *Don't worry what others are thinking of you.* It is really only important that you know how the Lord feels about you.

6. *Acknowledge the fruits of your labors.* Write them down in a journal. Even during the Creation of the earth, the Lord

acknowledged the beauty and effectiveness of his tasks each day: "God saw that it was good" (Genesis 1:12).

7. *Be thankful.* We know that Heavenly Father wants us to be happy. "Men are, that they might have joy" (2 Nephi 2:25). Rejoicing in Christ and in our many blessings is the best way to show gratitude. A daily closing prayer is a great opportunity to thank the Lord for all your abundance.



ONE STEP AFTER ANOTHER



“We don’t have to be fast; we simply have to be steady and move in the right direction. We have to do the best we can, one step after another. . . .

“The only thing you need to worry about is striving to be the best you can be. And how do you do that? You keep your eye on the goals that matter most in life, and you move towards them step by step. . . .

“That is easy enough. We don’t have to be perfect today. We don’t have to be better than someone else. All we have to do is to be the very best we can.”

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “One Step after Another,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 26.

balance.”¹ That is one reason we call Him our Savior.

It is human to feel inadequate at times. Even our own prophet has struggled with feelings of inadequacy. President Hinckley told a personal story in the October 2003 general Relief Society meeting about attending a stake conference in the eastern United States many years earlier. He felt his service had been a failure. He felt he had not touched anyone for good. He said that on his trip home he was miserable with a sense of inadequacy.

It was amazing to me that our own prophet has felt feelings of inadequacy. President Hinckley finished his story by saying that at a later conference a man came up to him and said that he had been in attendance at the first conference. “You said something that started me to think,” he continued.

“It touched me and stayed with me and stirred me. I decided to alter my course. It turned my life around. Thank you.”²

I believe happiness comes from striving for a better understanding of ourselves. Striving for perfection is the journey, not the destination in this earthly existence. It does not need to be an obsession. We must learn to exercise faith in the Savior and seek His help in making

our weaknesses become strengths (see Ether 12:27). The answers truly are all in the gospel of Jesus Christ. We only need to listen and come unto Him. ■

Kelli Allen-Pratt is a member of the Highland 31st Ward, Highland Utah Stake.

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: John Taylor* (2001), 168.
2. “To the Women of the Church,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 113–14.

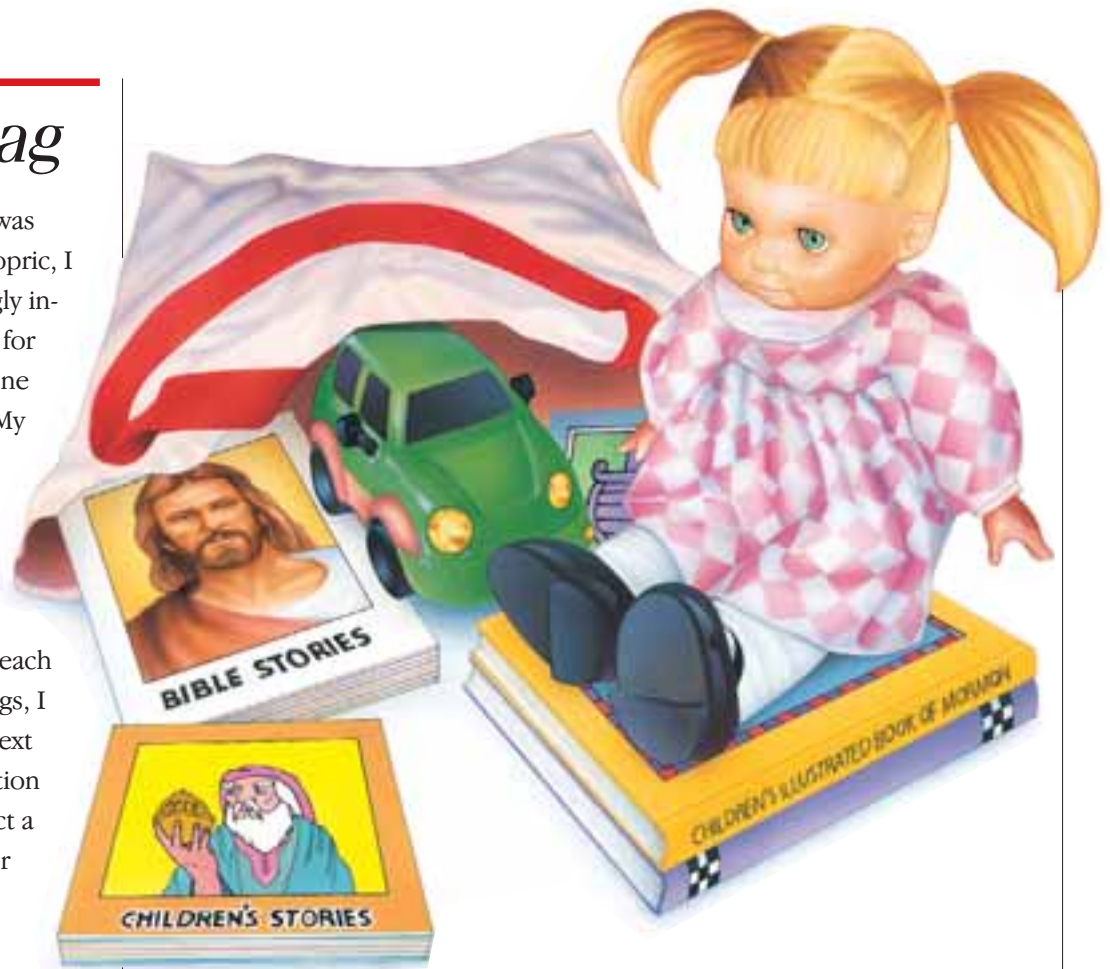
I realized that I was trying to run faster than I had strength and that I was not enjoying my children and husband as much as I could. I resolved to slow down and focus on the things that really matter.



It's in the Bag

When my husband was called to the bishopric, I faced the seemingly insurmountable task of caring for my three young children alone during sacrament meeting. My first few attempts didn't go well, but over time I began to succeed. One of my key discoveries was taking a well-prepared bag of only the essentials. By packing it each Sunday after Church meetings, I always had it ready for the next week. This advance preparation allowed me to carefully select a book and one or two toys for each child. If I selected too many toys, we experienced chaos the following sacrament meeting. The same was true for snacks. In fact, I could usually eliminate them altogether if I fed my children an hour before church. Because times of meetings vary, some parents may need to pack a few snacks, but I recommend keeping it simple.

With my bag in hand each Sunday and children in tow, we began arriving 15 minutes early thanks to effective Saturday-evening clothing and bath preparations. Though arriving early was difficult at first, the extra time allowed us to listen reverently to the prelude music, thus setting a peaceful precedent we had rarely



experienced before.

Initially, I thought I would be alone in my endeavors to care for my children at church. But other gracious ward members have helped. Together we encourage my children to stay in

one place during the meeting—no wandering. With a little preparation, I have been able to help even my youngest child to sense the sacredness of sacrament meeting.

Kim Durfey, Colorado Springs 17th Military Ward, Fountain Colorado Stake

Résumés That Work

In today's competitive job market, you need a sharp résumé to make a good first impression. As the human resource director of a power-supply business, I review many résumés, the bulk of which are not prepared carefully. To represent

yourself as a professional, consider what makes a résumé work:

- Be truthful and accurate in stating your education and job experience.
- Research the possible employment opportunities available and tailor your résumé to highlight



FAMILY NIGHT THEMES

With our young children, we have found that short, repetitive lessons provide our most successful family home evenings. One year we devoted 13 weeks to learning the Articles of Faith. Each Monday night we'd discuss the meaning of a particular article of faith. Then the following week we'd practice reciting it every day at breakfast. During the subsequent family night we'd repeat all the Articles of Faith we knew and add the new one. Our Primary-age children soon

learned all 13, and our one-year-old even chimed in on "We believe."

Since we like to choose themes for family night, we have also studied the missionary discussions, the Ten Commandments, President Hinckley's Six Bs, and the 15 latter-day prophets. The Gospel Art Picture Kit (item no. 34730; U.S. \$30.00) makes this last idea particularly easy to implement since the back of each picture contains information about each

prophet. The pictures could also be checked out from your meetinghouse library.

Successful family home evenings don't necessarily require a lot of advance preparation. Your family may want to add more activities, but we have found that starting with simple lessons helps us to gather consistently each Monday night.

Anita Wells, Aspen Hills Ward, Sandy Utah Granite South Stake



applicable skills and experience.

- List related skills through volunteer and Church-service work. This information can be especially helpful if you have a limited job history. For instance, full-time homemakers can highlight skills acquired through managing a home and family or volunteering outside the home.

- Proofread with meticulous care. Let others read it and offer suggestions.

- Use high-quality paper and dark, readable type if you're submitting your résumé in person or by mail. If applying online, make sure the file is easily accessible.

R. Larry Choate, Big Thompson Ward, Loveland Colorado Stake

Determining Your Body Mass Index

Body Mass Index (BMI) can be a reliable indicator of total body fat for adult men and women.

According to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, determining your BMI is one of three key measures in

assessing your risk for developing obesity-associated diseases.

To automatically calculate your BMI, you can input height-weight information on a variety of Internet sites. Or you can use one of the equations at left.

Though a good indicator, the BMI isn't perfect. It may overestimate body fat for those with muscular builds or underestimate it for anyone who has experienced muscle mass loss. Your doctor can help you evaluate your BMI and discuss any health-care concerns you may have.

$$\frac{\text{Weight in pounds}}{(\text{Height in inches})^2} \times 703 \quad \text{or}$$

$$\frac{\text{Weight in kilograms}}{(\text{Height in meters})^2}$$

Example: $\frac{\text{Weight} = 160 \text{ lbs.}}{\text{Height}^2 = (69 \text{ in.})^2} \times 703 = 23.6 \text{ BMI}$

BMI	Status	BMI	Status
Below 18.5	Underweight	25.0–29.9	Overweight
18.5–24.9	Normal	30.0 and above	Obese

My Tithing Tire

By Sarah Westbrook

My husband and I were struggling financially due to a recent career change. He had joined the United States Army to further his education and had taken a huge pay cut to do so. We were barely making ends meet and were deeply in debt. We had cut up our credit cards to avoid more debt, had used up all our savings, and were living on our year's supply of food.

I have always had a testimony of the gospel, but I was literally living on faith. After an incredibly difficult

month I was daunted by our pile of bills and knew we just weren't going to make it. For the first time in my adult life I was tempted not to pay tithing. I thought, "I need the money more than the Lord does. The amount I'm going to pay won't even pay the electric bill for the stake center, but it would make a huge difference to me."

After selfishly considering the many places the money could go, I had a scripture come to mind: "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have

robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings" (Malachi 3:8). I knew I had to pay tithing. Somehow things would work out. I wrote the tithing check, placed a stamp on the envelope, and put it in the mail.

The next morning I had to run a few errands. I walked to my car and to my utter despair realized one of the tires was almost completely flat. Frustrated, I drove to a nearby repair shop.

A flat would cost a few dollars to repair. I sat in the waiting room and prayed that Heavenly Father would

watch over us. A few minutes later the attendant called me to the cash register. He told me the tire had a nail in it, but the nail was positioned in such a way that the tire could not be repaired. It would have to be replaced, costing even more than I had mentally prepared myself for. I said, "I want to see it." The attendant patiently showed me the nail and explained

why it would be impossible to repair the tire. With tears in my eyes I asked him to please replace my tire with the cheapest one possible.

I went back to the waiting room and pleaded silently with Heavenly Father for help. We could not afford a new tire, but we had to have the car.

A few minutes later the attendant called me to the register again. He explained that my tires had locking lug nuts and without the key the tire

T*he attendant patiently showed me the nail and explained why it would be impossible to repair the tire.*



would not come off. I told him I didn't have the key. He apologized and explained that their shop did not have the proper tools to remove my tire. He recommended another shop. He then put air in my tire free of charge and sent me on my way.

I climbed back into the car and broke down in tears. Why was this happening? We had done everything right. We paid our tithing; we had a year's supply; we were trying to get out of debt; we were going to church every week. Why would the Lord allow this to happen?

I drove to the other shop and quickly explained my situation to the attendant. We picked the cheapest tire, and I proceeded to the waiting room. After what seemed like forever my name was called. I walked slowly to the register, dreading what I was about to hear.

"We have run your tire through the water about five times," the attendant told me. "Three of us have searched for the nail. There is nothing. You still have a lot of wear left on your tires. There is absolutely no reason to replace any of them." I stared blankly at the attendant. I had seen the nail with my own eyes. I knew it had been there. I thanked him, and he sent me on my way, again free of charge.

We have since been transferred to a new duty station and have driven about 8,000 miles (13,000 km) on that tire. I know the Lord blesses us and there is safety in obedience. ■

Sarah Westbrook is a member of El Paso First Ward, El Paso Texas Mount Franklin Stake.



Tuning In to the Spirit

By Mark Paredes

While traveling alone to visit friends on a holiday weekend, I decided to follow a rural highway instead of taking a long detour to a major interstate highway. It was dusk, and I wanted to arrive at my friends' home before midnight.

Mine was the only car on the road for long stretches of the highway, and in order to relieve boredom I turned on a radio station. As I sang along to a favorite tune, I received a distinct spiritual prompting to turn off the radio—and listen. At first I ignored the prompting, reasoning that it would be absurd to drive alone in silence on a deserted road. The prompting became more insistent, however. I reluctantly turned off the radio, sat back, and quietly told the Lord that now I was listening.

In short order I received three additional promptings to slow down immediately. These impressions

seemed to be much stronger, and they reached a much more receptive and focused mind. I obediently braked three times, slowing the car substantially.

Shortly I encountered a 90-degree unmarked curve. I had no time to react in the darkness and went through the curve, stopping at the edge of a ridge overlooking a deep ditch. Shaken, I got out to inspect the damage and found my car wholly intact but with its front bumper protruding over the precipice. Had I been going any faster, I would certainly have plunged into the ditch and been injured or killed. I offered a prayer of gratitude.

I made the rest of the trip in silence as I reflected on the need to eliminate "radios" from my life. I wondered how many times I had allowed the frivolous things of the world to take priority over spiritual matters. Although I have not given up listening to the radio at home or on the road, I do take time on a regular basis to turn off the music—and listen. ■

Mark Paredes is a member of the Santa Monica Second Ward, Los Angeles California Santa Monica Stake.

I Felt at Home

By Marina Petrova

I grew up in Russia in a close and loving family. My parents worked hard, and I stayed with my father's mother, Anastasiya Vasilyevna Ustavshchikova. She was always bustling about the kitchen, making wonderful flowers to put on

hats, and reading. She read all kinds of books, but I especially remember that she read the Bible. She would tell me about God and how she loved Him and awaited her meeting with Him. She said that if we would live God's commandments, we would return

to Him and inherit one of His kingdoms. That memory has warmed me all my life.

My life before joining the Church is a story with many trials and experiences. But I always loved hearing my grandma's simple, sincere prayers. She would start with the words "Heavenly Father," and I would get goose bumps.

In June 1993 I arrived at my mother's home in St. Petersburg,

When the time for my baptism arrived, I still had terrible tonsillitis. It was so cold we could see our breath, but I knew I was doing the right thing.



where a friend invited me to study English with her. We called a number we found in the newspaper, and a young woman answered. She told us to come at noon the next day. Her name was Tat'yana. After the lesson we invited her out for tea or coffee. We were quite surprised when we heard, "I don't drink tea or coffee."

"Why?"

"I'm a Mormon."

"What's a Mormon?" I asked.

"I'm a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. If you're interested, come see us Sunday morning at 11:00."

She wrote down the address. I was very interested to find out what kind of church this was.

The week passed slowly, but Sunday finally came. The meetings were held in a music school. Some young men were at the entrance, and they were smiling. When they found out that I had come for the first time, they took me into the chapel. A lot of people were there, but I felt out of place. I very much liked the opening hymn though, and then a miracle happened. A man walked to the front, and the first words of his prayer were "Heavenly Father." That is what I had been searching for. Suddenly I felt at home. I was at peace.

After the meeting two young ladies approached me.

"Are you already meeting with the missionaries?" they asked.

"No."

"Could we teach you about the gospel?"

"Of course," I said. "That would make me very happy."

At one of our discussions they began telling me about three kingdoms. I stopped them and said, "May I tell you what my grandmother told me when I was little?" Now it was their turn to be surprised. The more we talked, the more I wanted to learn. On August 15, my missionaries asked if I would like to be baptized.

"Yes." That was already my desire.

My baptism was to take place in a lake the following Sunday, August 22. The weather had been hot and dry. But on Monday, August 16, a steady rain began, and the temperature dropped sharply. Friday morning I awoke with terrible tonsillitis. My whole throat was congested, and I was running a fever. I thought it would pass before Sunday.

The missionaries came on Saturday to interview me. Elder Parker, a young and very tall missionary, asked me the questions. He also agreed to baptize me. I said nothing about my illness.

The day of my baptism arrived. When I woke up I found that my throat was still the same. It was then I realized for the first time in my life what the Lord wanted from me. I said to myself, "I'll do whatever I have to for Him. I will be baptized. Everything will be fine. The water will be warm, and my sickness will disappear after I am baptized."

On the way to the lake I told the sisters what had been going on with me. They both looked in my mouth and said, all bundled up in their raincoats, "This is no joke. Should we move everything to a pool?"

"No, no." I had firmly made up my mind to go ahead with our plans.

It was beautiful when we got there. The lake was like a mirror, without even a ripple. It was about a hundred meters from the changing room to the water. It had rained all week and was muddy. When I came out of the changing room, I saw Elder Parker in his white clothes walking confidently through the mud toward the lake. That was a stunning sight.

We stood in a circle and sang a hymn. We could see our breath, but we were not paying attention to the weather anymore. As I took my first step into the water, I knew I was doing the right thing. It felt warm. And when I came up out of the water, I was happy and healthy. Everyone laughed and cried. I had taken my first step on the path home. Our Heavenly Father loves us and gives us trials, expecting us to make the right decisions, to not doubt what is good.

I will remember that miraculous day for the rest of my life. It will live in my heart with the memories of my grandmother, who sowed the seed that sprouted so many years after her death. ■

Marina Petrova is a member of the Kortrijk Branch, Antwerp Belgium Stake.



President Gordon B. Hinckley, center, and the counselors in the First Presidency, President Thomas S. Monson, left, and President James E. Faust, have served together for 10 years.

First Presidency Celebrates 10 Years

By Chad Phares, Church Magazines

A decade after being called to lead the Church, President Gordon B. Hinckley and the counselors in the First Presidency, President Thomas S. Monson and President James E. Faust, discussed in a

news conference many of the challenges and achievements within the Church during the last 10 years and expressed continued optimism for the future.

President Hinckley remarked that several

significant things have blessed the lives of members and others since the day he became the 15th President of the Church.

He mentioned the announcement and success of establishing the Perpetual

Education Fund, the construction of the Conference Center, the distribution of more than 50 million copies of the Book of Mormon in the last 10 years, and the allocation of a significant amount in humanitarian aid to those in need.

President Hinckley spoke briefly about the traveling he has done since 1995. He has traveled to more than 70 nations and logged more than one million miles (1.6 million km).

“It becomes very tiring, very wearisome, but it’s very faith promoting,” he said. “When you get out among the people and see their strength and their capacity, their devotion and their love, it’s a wonderful thing, really. You just can’t believe it until you experience it, and it’s tremendous.”

President Hinckley praised his counselors as men of wisdom, faith, and devotion, saying he couldn’t find any two men better suited to serve with him.

President Monson and President Faust spoke of their admiration for the work President Hinckley does.

“He is a man of vision who does not take counsel from

FIRST PRESIDENCY TIME LINE

March 12, 1995 The First Presidency is set apart.

September 23, 1995 The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles issue “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.”

February 28, 1996 International Church membership surpasses U.S. Church membership.

April 6, 1996 President Hinckley announces plans to construct the Conference Center.

May 27, 1996 President Hinckley becomes the first Church President to visit mainland China.

April 5, 1997 The office of Seventy is added to the call of Area Authorities, a part-time regional leadership position created two years earlier

October 4, 1997 President Hinckley announces plans to build smaller temples.



1995 TO 2005 AT A GLANCE

- 3 million** Increase in membership from 9.1 million in 1995 to 12 million in 2005
- 87** Temples dedicated, rededicated, or announced
- 19** Additional languages into which all or part of the Book of Mormon has been translated, reaching 106 total languages



- 641 million** U.S. dollars provided in humanitarian assistance, including \$105 million for emergency response in 111 countries
- 98,763** Wheelchairs donated to people in 95 different countries
- 40** Countries where clean water systems have been installed
- 1 million +** Miles (1.6 million km) traveled by President Hinckley to visit more than 70 countries

PHOTOGRAPH BY RAVELL CALL/COURTESY OF CHURCH NEWS



Since President Hinckley was called as President of the Church in 1995, 87 temples have been dedicated, rededicated, or announced.

his fears,” President Monson said. “He plans, he prepares, he prays, then with that prophetic influence which comes to him . . . he moves forward with faith.”

President Hinckley said he was not concerned about

what he and his counselors will be remembered for. “We just do our very best today and leave the rest for whatever happens,” he said. ■

Deseret Morning News contributed to this report.

Church Fourth Largest in United States

While a lot of attention is paid to worldwide growth, Church growth within the United States continues as well.

According to the 2005 *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches*, of those churches providing figures, the Church is now the fourth-largest denomination in the United States, with more than 5.5 million members reported in 2004. The Church, which was the fifth-largest faith in the country one year ago, “continues to grow remarkably,” according to the yearbook, experiencing a 1.71 percent growth rate in the United States during 2004.

The growth of the Church worldwide is also noteworthy. According to the statistical

report given during April general conference, membership worldwide had nearly reached 12.3 million at the end of 2004. More than 240,000 converts were baptized during 2004, and children of record increased by nearly 100,000.

The growing number of members led to the creation of 41 new stakes, 1 new mission, 2 new districts, and 433 new wards and branches during 2004. Three new temples were also dedicated.

President Gordon B. Hinckley, who has seen Church membership increase by more than three million members since he was sustained as President of the Church in 1995, said the work of the Lord will continue to go forth.

November 1997 Worldwide Church membership reaches 10 million.

January 1, 2000 The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles issue “The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles,” a declaration of their apostolic witness of the Savior.

April 1–2, 2000 First general conference is held in the new 21,000-seat Conference Center.



March 31, 2001 President Hinckley announces the establishment of the Perpetual Education Fund.

June 27, 2002 President Hinckley dedicates the rebuilt Nauvoo Illinois Temple.

January 11, 2003 First-ever global leadership training meeting is transmitted by satellite in 56 languages to more than 97 percent of the Church’s priesthood leaders.



“A new day has come in the work of the Almighty,” he said. “That work has grown and strengthened and moved across the earth. It has now

touched for good the lives of millions, and this is only the beginning” (“The Dawning of a Brighter Day,” *Ensign*, May 2004, 83). ■

Four Temples Set to Open by October Conference

In March the First Presidency announced the open house and dedication dates for four temples on three different continents. The San Antonio Texas, the Aba Nigeria, the Newport Beach California, and the Apia Samoa Temples will be dedicated before general conference in October.

San Antonio Texas Temple

The open house for the San Antonio Texas Temple was held from April 16 through May 7. Following the open house, the temple was formally dedicated on Sunday, May 22, in four dedicatory sessions.

The San Antonio Texas Temple is the fourth operating temple in Texas and serves nearly 50,000 members of the Church who reside within the temple district’s boundaries.

Aba Nigeria Temple

The Aba Nigeria Temple’s open house will take place from June 18 through July 2. A cultural celebration will be held on August 6. The temple will be dedicated in four dedicatory sessions the next day, August 7. The temple will be open for ordinance work on August 8.

The Aba Nigeria Temple will join the Johannesburg South Africa Temple and the

Accra Ghana Temple as the third temple in Africa.

Newport Beach California Temple

The open house for the Newport Beach California Temple will be held from July 23 through August 20 every day except Sundays. A cultural celebration will be held Saturday, August 27. The temple will be dedicated in four dedicatory sessions on August 28. The temple will be open for ordinance work the next day, August 29.

The Newport Beach California Temple will be the sixth dedicated temple in California.

Apia Samoa Temple

After being destroyed by fire more than two years earlier in 2003, the rebuilt Apia Samoa Temple will be dedicated on September 4, in four dedicatory sessions.

The temple, which was gutted by flames while it was being renovated and enlarged in July 2003, will open its doors to the public every day except Sundays from August 6 to August 27.

A cultural celebration will be held on September 3, the day before the dedication. The temple will open for ordinance work on September 5. ■

Mormon Tabernacle Choir Getting Acquainted with Conference Center

By Adam C. Olson, Church Magazines

Until the renovation of the historic Salt Lake Tabernacle on Temple Square for seismic upgrades and additions to the choir facilities is complete in late 2006, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir has had to move to the Conference Center.

For many members, their only opportunity to see the choir perform is during general conference, which has been held in the Conference Center since 2000. So it is easy for members to assume that over the past five years, the choir has become accustomed to performing there.

However, aside from general conference and a handful of other performances each year, the majority of the choir’s performances, including the weekly *Music and the Spoken Word* broadcast, have continued to take place in the Tabernacle. That changed with the decision to renovate the choir’s namesake and home since the building’s dedication in 1867.

Aside from the logistical challenges associated with moving—the choir’s library and wardrobe remain across the street under Temple Square—the choir and organists have had to make some adjustments to meet the challenges presented by a building with drastically different acoustics.

Whereas the Tabernacle

seats about 5,000 people, the 21,333-seat Conference Center auditorium is believed to be the largest theater-style auditorium ever built. The second-largest, the Auditorio Nacional in Mexico, has about 11,000 seats. But the very thing that makes the Conference Center unique has created one of the greatest challenges.

Large enough to comfortably hold a Boeing 747, the auditorium has a volume of 8.5 million cubic feet. The Tabernacle’s volume is 1.5 million cubic feet. The famed London Royal Albert Hall is just over one-third the volume of the Conference Center with 3 million cubic feet.

What’s more, the auditorium is carpeted, its seats are upholstered, and its ceiling and walls are acoustically treated to reduce reverberation—ideal for the spoken word, the building’s primary purpose, but a challenge for the choir and its accompanists.

Sound is made by moving air. There is so much air to move inside of the auditorium that Craig Jessop, music director of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, says performing there “is like singing outside.”

Even a choir as large as the Mormon Tabernacle Choir can’t fill that space properly without some

amplification—a process requiring continual adjustments depending on each performance. Not only is amplification necessary for the audience to enjoy the musical experience, but speakers are located throughout the choir seats because the singers need to be able to hear each other.

The room's size also required an organ capable of filling the space with sound when performing without the

choir, but still capable of accompanying the choir without overwhelming it. And while many organ-playing techniques remain the same from one organ to the next, each organ is unique with different sounds and different console layouts.

"Every organ has its own personality," says John Longhurst, Tabernacle organist. "Each is designed and built specifically for the room in which it is housed.

The organist has to become acquainted with each instrument on its own terms." (See accompanying sidebar on the Conference Center organ.)

However, Brother Jessop feels the choir's extended stay in the Conference Center is actually helping them solve these challenges.

"These acoustic issues have to be addressed every time we perform there," he says. "Performing there on a regular

CONFERENCE CENTER ORGAN UNIQUE IN OWN RIGHT

Aside from the buildings' sizes, one of the most notable differences between the Tabernacle and the Conference Center for the Mormon Tabernacle Choir is in the two organs.

The Tabernacle organ is famous for its history, sound, and size—on most lists it is ranked among the 15 largest organs in the world with more than 11,600 pipes in 206 ranks.

While the Conference Center organ is smaller (7,667 pipes in 130 ranks), it is still a commanding instrument. In order to fill the enormous

Conference Center auditorium, many of the instrument's pipes use higher than usual wind pressure, provided by six blowers totalling 38 horsepower, to power its notes. It is one of only a few organs in the world to have two stops that descend into the ground-shaking 64-foot range, reaching GGGGG# (roughly an octave below the range of a grand piano). And its five-manual (or keyboard) console puts it in an unusual class.

"There aren't many five-manual organs built," says Clay Christiansen, Tabernacle organist. "And in our lifetime, there hasn't been an organ built with so grand a bass section as this instrument. It's a remarkable instrument."

The creation of the organ was a seven-year project from conceptualization to the final "voicing" (or acoustical testing) of each pipe in the auditorium. Installation of the thousands of pipes was a three-year process by itself, one that the organ's builder,



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN LUKE

The Conference Center organ is made up of 7,667 pipes, most of which are housed behind the 170 pipes that can be seen by the audience.

Schoenstein & Co., didn't complete until 2003, well after the first general conference held in the building in April 2000. During that conference, the choir was accompanied by an electronic organ.

"During that first conference, the only pipes installed were the ones you can see," says John Longhurst, Tabernacle organist. "That's about 170 out of the 7,700."

But the organ was worth the work and the wait.

"To anyone who sees it, it makes a statement," says Brother Christiansen. "To those who hear it, it does the same." ■



Daily Organ Recitals Continue Through Renovation

Since 1900, few days have gone by when visitors to Temple Square haven't been treated to an organ recital on the Tabernacle organ. Though renovation to the Tabernacle has made the organ unavailable, no one wanted to give up the daily recitals.

Until the Tabernacle reopens, the half-hour daily organ recitals will be open to the public in the Conference Center at 2:05 p.m. on Sunday, and at 12:05 p.m. from Monday through Saturday. An additional recital will take place each Monday through Saturday at 2:05 p.m. between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

"Organ recitals have been taking place in the Tabernacle for more than 100 years," says Brother John Longhurst, Tabernacle organist. "But now we have another magnificent instrument across the street, and people owe it to themselves to hear it live. I think they will not be disappointed." ■



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN LUKE

The organ's pipes come in all shapes and sizes, ranging from about 3/4 inch (44 mm) to nearly 40 feet (12 m) in length.

basis has forced us to solve some problems that we didn't have time to address before because we were only there two to three times a year."

In spite of some of the building's challenges for the choir, those involved believe the Conference Center was "absolutely inspired," according to Brother Jessop.

"The Conference Center was as revolutionary in 2000 as the Tabernacle was in 1867. Tens of thousands of members who want to attend general conference

can sit and listen in the physical presence of the apostles and prophets," he says. He also points out that the building "is a powerful tool for presenting the gospel message around the world," equipped with state-of-the-art studio and broadcasting equipment.

"Culturally, the world is slowly discovering that this is one of the great halls of the world. Even the greatest cities in the world do not have a facility like the Conference Center." ■

share their beliefs with those of other faiths. More than half of those who visited the exhibit were not members of the Church.

The Dead Sea Scrolls, which is a collection of biblical and nonbiblical writings found in caves along the Dead Sea in 1947, contain writings dating as far back as 300 B.C. In the early 1990s, the Dead Sea Scrolls

Foundation approached BYU to discuss the possibility of supplying an electronic version of the writings. The initial database was finished in 1999.

The exhibit's tour, which ended in May, included Austria, Belgium, the British Isles, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and Switzerland. ■

In the News

Hinckleys Help Create Endowed Scholarship at LDS Business College

President Gordon B. Hinckley visited the campus of LDS Business College in March to participate in a ceremony honoring his parents, Bryant S. and Ada Bitner Hinckley, who made significant contributions to the school. President Hinckley's parents were both employed by the school from 1899 to 1910. His father became principal in 1900, and his mother was a teacher.

The highlight of the ceremony was the announcement of the Bryant S. and Ada Bitner Hinckley Faculty Scholarship. The scholarship, which was originally created in 2000 by faculty members, became an endowed scholarship last year, meaning that all scholarship money awarded is taken from the interest accrued in the fund.

In the past, the fund provided about four partial or

full scholarships annually. Upon learning of the fund last year, President Hinckley requested that it become an endowed fund and made the first contribution. The scholarship has now grown to U.S. \$260,000 and will provide about eight full scholarships or 16 partial scholarships annually.

More than 100 descendants of Bryant S. and Ada Bitner Hinckley attended the ceremony.

Dead Sea Scrolls Exhibit Travels Across Europe

Brigham Young University's Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS) sponsored a traveling exhibit on the findings and importance of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which exhibit has proven to be an effective missionary tool in Europe.

The exhibit helped strengthen relations with leaders and dignitaries in European countries and allowed Church members to

New DVDs Cater to Home and Family

In an effort to provide families greater access to Church videos for use in the home, in personal study, and in home evening groups, the Church has created the new Home and Family Collection of DVDs.

The first installments of the Home and Family Collection, which is a compilation of previously released films and programs that were originally found only on VHS, are currently available for purchase.

The first three DVDs are *To This End Was I Born* (the full-length version of *The Lamb of God*), *Book of Mormon Stories*, and *The Mountain of the Lord*.

To This End Was

The new Home and Family Collection is making already existing videos available to members on DVD.

I Born tells the story of the last hours of the Savior's life on earth, His visit to the spirit world, and His Resurrection. While the other Home and Family Collection DVDs are currently available only in English, *To This End Was I Born* is available in 18 languages, including American Sign Language. Because of



DVD technology, all languages are available on one disc.

The *Book of Mormon Stories* DVD provides still pictures and text from *Book of Mormon Stories*, a simple, illustrated version of the Book of Mormon designed for children. The four-hour DVD is designed to supplement family home evening and Church lessons.

The Mountain of the Lord, a film that recalls the history of the construction of the Salt Lake Temple, is available in English and ASL. The DVD includes a bonus feature: black-and-white photographs taken when the temple was under construction.

Church History, the fourth installment in the collection, is scheduled to be released shortly. This three-disc set contains 27 feature videos on the history of the Church.

Although not a part of the Home and Family Collection, the Church has also made *Legacy* available on DVD, a film about the travails of the early Saints who were driven westward. *Legacy* is available in English, French, German, Japanese, Portuguese, Samoan, Spanish, and Tongan.

The DVDs are available at distribution centers or may be ordered online at www.ldscatalog.com. ■

Comment

"A Balanced Life"

Thank you so much for "A Balanced Life" by Brent L. Top in the April 2005 issue. I read it with grateful tears. His article was refreshing and uplifting. It came as a beautiful answer to desperate prayers. I am immensely grateful for the help and hope it brought me.

Valerie Stephens, Brigham City
16th Ward, Brigham City Utah
South Stake

Adoption Blessings

I just finished reading the Comment section of the March *Ensign*. I would like to reply to the mother who put her baby up for adoption three years ago. I hope the Lord blesses you abundantly for making such a wise and loving choice. I want to thank you in the way I know your

daughter will thank you when she is my age. I was adopted through LDS Family Services nearly 24 years ago. Every day I wish I could thank my birth mother for the great sacrifice she made. My adoptive parents waited seven years for me. They are wonderful parents. Because of their great love for me, I have grown to understand Heavenly Father's great love for me.

Nine months ago they joined me in the temple as I was sealed to my husband. If it were not for my birth mother's wise choice, my parents would not have had the chance to experience such joy in their posterity in this life. I hope, wherever she is, that she knows through the Comforter that she made the correct choice, that I am happy, and that I love her dearly for

what she has gone through for me.

Suzanne Fei, Market Street
Branch, Beaverton Oregon Stake

Single Sisters

I am a single senior sister serving a proselyting mission in England. My companions and I have become a bit puzzled over the fact that whenever the *Ensign* publishes articles about senior missionaries, all references to such are of senior couples—never any mention of single sisters who go away from their families, out into unfamiliar places, most having recently lost a spouse. I don't know how many senior sisters actually do proselyting missions, but for me it is truly a wonderful experience. Other senior sisters serve temple or family history missions; their work is of great value to those they serve. Thank you for a wonderful publication. I look forward to reading it every month.

Sister T. Fernstrom, England
London South Mission

Grateful for Newel Whitney

Thank you for the article about Newel K. Whitney in the April 2005 *Ensign*. In 2003 I reached the point in my life where I believed that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was true. I prayed to God to show me somehow that the Church was true. While I was visiting Newel Whitney's store, the Holy Ghost came upon me for the first time in my life and confirmed to me that the Church is true. I am extremely grateful for Newel K. Whitney.

Ken Sisler, Newmarket Ward,
Brampton Ontario Stake

Correction: D&C Chart

In "Doctrine and Covenants Times at a Glance" on page 22 of the January 2005 *Ensign*, under section 27, August 1830, the text should read, "Newel and Sally Knight desired to partake of the sacrament." Sally Coburn, the first wife of Newel Knight, died in 1834. He married Lydia Goldthwait in 1835.

Call for Articles

If you have had experience with the following situation, we invite you to share your suggestions: *I am a young single adult and would like to get married, but I have never been very successful at dating. I'm doing all I can to improve myself, but sometimes I get discouraged. How can I continue to hope for marriage when I rarely date?*

Send responses by July 15, 2005, to *Ensign* Editorial, 50 E. North Temple St., Room 2420, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA, or to cur-editorial-ensign@ldschurch.org. Clearly mark your submission "Questions and Answers," and at the top of your submission, write your name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, and ward and stake (or branch and district).

While we cannot acknowledge receipt of individual responses, authors whose submissions are selected for publication will be notified. If you would like your manuscript returned, enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope and allow up to a year. ■



MAKING THE MOST OF THIS ISSUE

J U N E 2 0 0 5

rescue the Saints in Missouri, page 42.

An Interview with Elder Nelson

Do you wish you were more committed to the gospel but can't seem to get it all together?

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles tackles this and other important questions. See page 16.

Confessions of a Perfectionist

Could your idea of the perfect life be someone else's idea of hell? When this wife and

mother discovered she was using Satan's methods to achieve righteous goals, she took a closer look at her life and adjusted her attitude. See page 64.

The Second Coming

When you think about the "great and dreadful day of the Lord," do you overlook the "great" and accentuate the "dreadful"? Elder Spencer V. Jones shows us how to find hope in the Second Coming. See page 58.

Stories for Teachers

If you need a story for your lesson about conversion, listening to spiritual

promptings, or the blessings from paying tithing, see Latter-day Saint Voices, pages 70–73.

Grieving

What do you say to someone who has lost a loved one? *Ensign* readers offer wise counsel on page 12.



How to help a grieving friend, page 12

Home Teachers, Visiting Teachers

Find the monthly messages on pages 2 and 61.

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Affirming Motherhood

"I want all of you to know the great joy I feel in being a mother, wife, and homemaker," writes Susan W. Tanner, Young Women general president. "We should express our joy often through our words, actions, and countenances." Too often the realities and expectations of our modern world crowd out this message, but our young women need to hear it. See page 20.

Talking with Teens

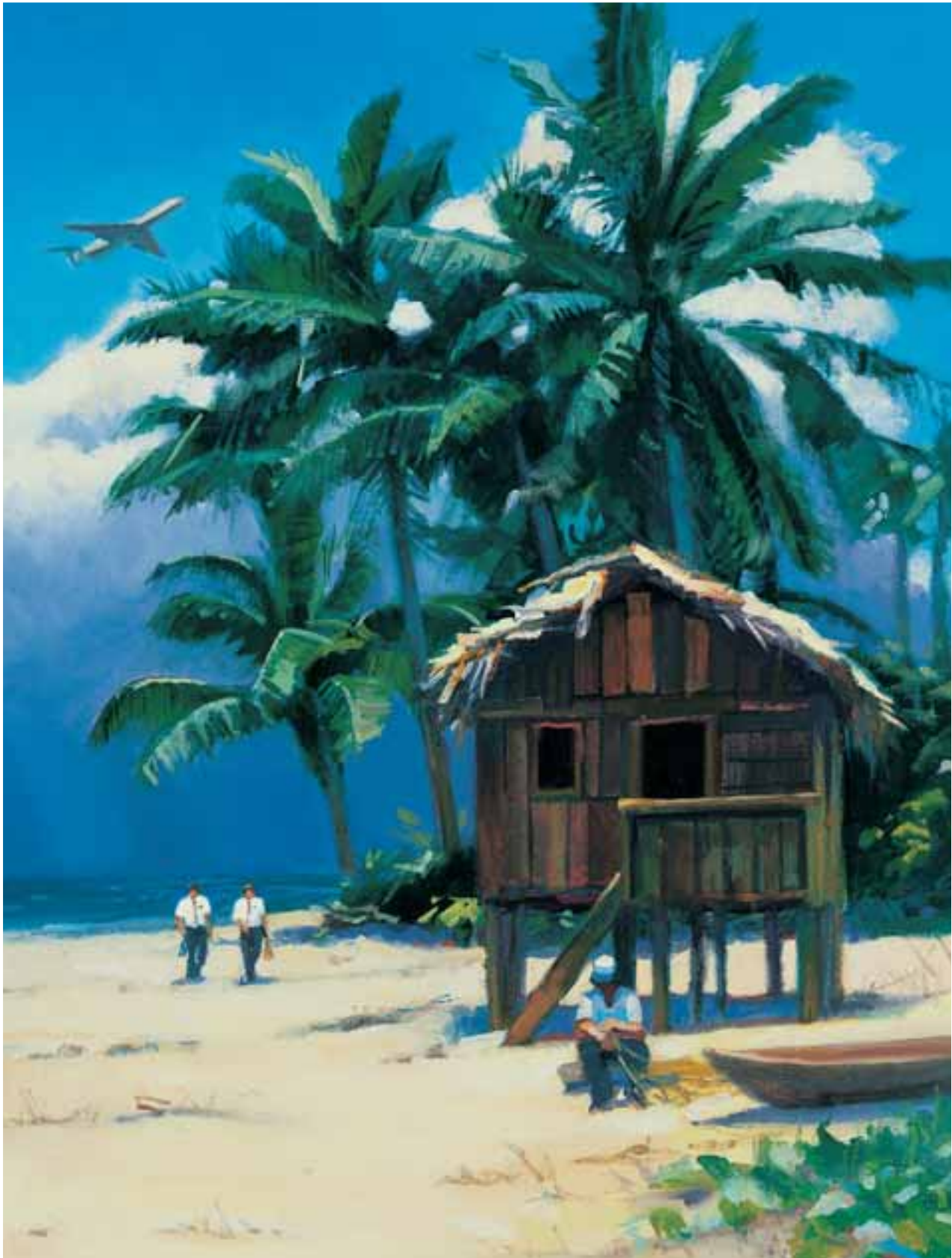
Has your teen tuned you out? Do the two of you live in the same house but maybe not the same universe? C. Ross Clement gives six suggestions that might help you reconnect with your troubled teenager. See page 32.

Zion's Camp

Some members of Zion's Camp felt it was a failure, but for the Prophet Joseph Smith and other early Church leaders, Zion's Camp was a refining and defining experience. See Alexander L. Baugh's discussion of this march to



Confessions of a Perfectionist, page 64



Unto the Islands of the Sea, by Mark Buehner

*“Send forth the elders of my church unto the nations which are afar off; unto the islands of the sea; send forth unto foreign lands; call upon all nations, first upon the Gentiles, and then upon the Jews”
(D&C 133:8).*



If our young women can know of His love, if they can have the truths of the gospel embedded in their hearts, they will not fear. With strong testimonies of the gospel and a firm knowledge of eternal doctrines, our young women will have the courage to face a world that is desecrating families.” See Susan W. Tanner, “Strengthening Future Mothers,” p. 20.