

Ensign



**Priesthood:
The Power of
Godliness, pp. 8,
19, 44**

**Single in a Family-
Oriented Church, p. 48**

**Education: My Path Out
of Poverty, p. 60**

**75 Years of Service and
Self-Reliance, p. 81**



The Sacred Susquehanna, by Glen S. Hopkinson

On May 15, 1829, near Harmony, Pennsylvania, John the Baptist appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. Acting under the direction of ancient Apostles Peter, James, and John, he laid his hands upon the heads of Joseph and Oliver and conferred the Aaronic Priesthood.

John the Baptist then directed Joseph that he should baptize Oliver and that Oliver should then baptize Joseph in the

Susquehanna River. Then they were to ordain each other to the Aaronic Priesthood. (See Joseph Smith—History 1:68–72; D&C 13:1.)

A few weeks later, Peter, James, and John appeared to Joseph and Oliver near Harmony, conferred upon them the holy Melchizedek Priesthood, and ordained them to be Apostles (see D&C 27:12; 128:20).



4

MESSAGES

FIRST PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

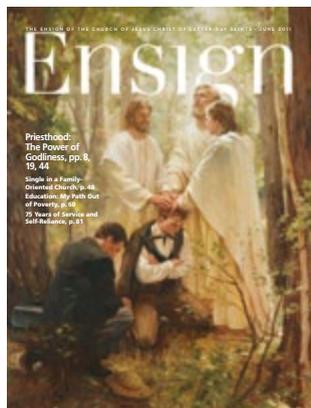
- 4** **The Blessings of Tithing**
President Henry B. Eyring

VISITING TEACHING MESSAGE

- 7** **Strengthening Families through Temporal Self-Reliance**

ON THE COVER

Front: *Restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood*, by Walter Rane.
Back: Photo illustration by Matthew Reier.



FEATURES

22 **The True Path to Happiness**

Elder Quentin L. Cook
Five keys to happiness.

34 **Mom's Commitment to Modesty**

Kelly Ann Petersen
It was the 1960s, and short hemlines and sleeveless shirts were in high fashion.

36 **Questions & Answers**

How do I maintain a modest appearance when appropriate clothing is difficult to find?

40 **A Mormon Panorama**

James Gordon Holmes
Before there were movies there was C. C. A. Christensen and his panoramic history of the Church.

44 **Priesthood Blessings: Learning to Trust God**

Mark L. Grover
How I realized the importance of priesthood power in our home.

48 **Single in a Family-Oriented Church: Advice from One Single Adult Brother to Another**

Todd L. Goodsell
Why the Church is exactly where single adults need to be.

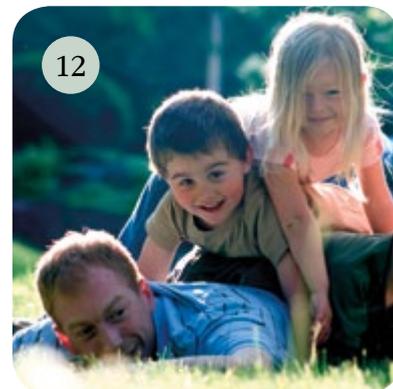
OUR HOMES, OUR FAMILIES

12 **Defending the Family in a Troubled World**

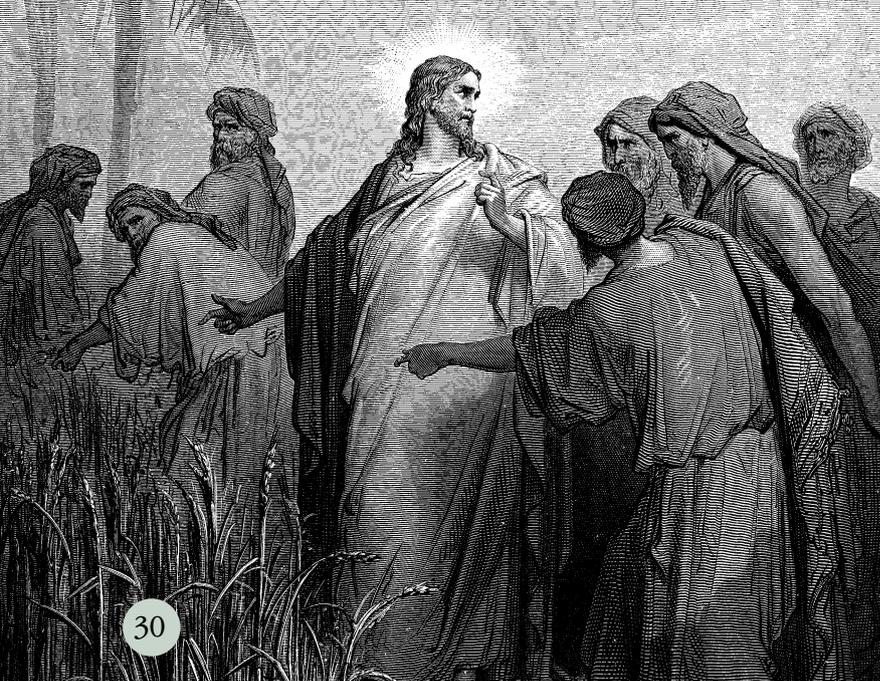
Elder Bruce D. Porter
Our duty is to defend the family and rear the rising generation in righteousness.

19 **The Power of a Righteous Example**

Jerry Stringam
I considered general conference a free weekend until one young woman taught me a valuable lesson.



12



LIVING AS LATTER-DAY SAINTS

20 The Prison & the Dandelion

Andrew D. Olsen

We can choose our attitude.

28 The Healing Power of Hope

Name withheld

His love healed my wounds.

47 Reaching Out to Single Adults

Allison L. Weiss

What can we do to support single adults?

TEACHING, LEARNING, SERVING

30 The Heart and a Willing Mind

Elder Donald L. Hallstrom

Five ways we can give our heart and mind to the Lord.

BY STUDY AND BY FAITH

52 The Latter-day Saint Concept of Marriage

President Hugh B. Brown

This divine perspective, adds glory to the idea of marriage.

GOSPEL SOLUTIONS

56 I Desperately Wanted to Stop

Name withheld

How I overcame my decades-long struggle with pornography.



PROVIDENT LIVING

60 The Power of Education

Suzy Taggy Coelho Caldas Nelsen

My mother said education was the one thing that could lift me out of poverty.

64 Making Spiritual Education a Priority

Joel Childress

Where was I going to find time for institute?

8



DEPARTMENTS

WHAT WE BELIEVE

8 The Priesthood Is the Authority to Act in God's Name

Our Heavenly Father governs the heavens and the earth through His priesthood authority.

WE TALK OF CHRIST

10 He Carried My Sorrows

Jane Bleak

Peace comes as we surrender our will to our Heavenly Father and rely on Christ's Atonement.

SERVING IN THE CHURCH

39 Blessed by Councils

Elder M. Russell Ballard

A family in financial trouble is blessed by their ward council.

66 LATTER-DAY SAINT VOICES

Are you prepared to bless others through your priesthood?

70 SMALL AND SIMPLE THINGS

73 Family Home Evening Ideas

74 News of the Church

79 In Other Church Magazines

UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN

80 Building on a Sure Foundation

Joshua J. Perkey

How a foundation of spiritual witnesses can become an unshakable testimony.

COMING IN JULY

- Choosing Happiness
- Saints on Lake Titicaca
- Mi Vida, Mi Historia

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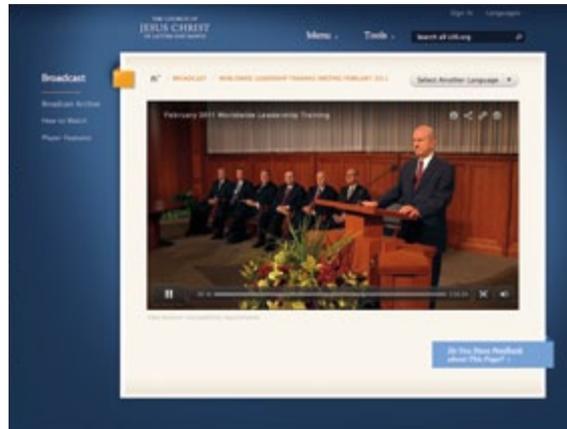
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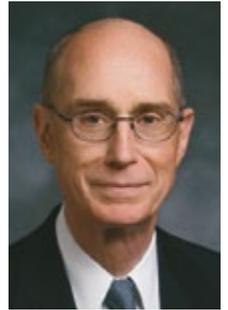
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By President
Henry B. Eyring
First Counselor in the
First Presidency



THE BLESSINGS OF

Tithing

God's purpose in giving us commandments is to bless us. He wants to give us eternal life, the greatest of all His gifts (see D&C 14:7). To receive the gift of living with Him forever in families in the celestial kingdom, we must be able to live the laws of that kingdom (see D&C 88:22).

He has given us commandments in this life to help us develop that capacity. The law of tithing is one of those preparatory commandments. The law is that we give to the Lord one-tenth of all our income. It is simple enough that even a child can understand it. I have seen children hand a bishop a tithing envelope that contains one-tenth of the coins they earned.

One of the blessings that comes from paying a full tithing is developing faith to live an even higher law. To live in the celestial kingdom, we must live the law of consecration. There we must be able to feel that all we are and all we have belong to God.



There are at least three ways that paying a full tithe in this life prepares us to *feel* what we need to feel to receive the gift of eternal life.

First, when we pay our tithes to the Church, our Heavenly Father pours out blessings upon us. Anyone who has consistently paid a full tithe knows that is true. The blessings are sometimes spiritual and sometimes temporal. They are given in the Lord's time and according to what He knows is best for us.

As those blessings come, our faith is increased that God is the source of everything that is good in our lives. It becomes easier to see that consecration simply recognizes the truth that all of God's creations are His. It makes us *feel* gratitude that He asks only 10 percent of what He has already given us. So we are better prepared to live the law of consecration when it will be asked of us.

Second, all of us who have paid a consistent full tithe *feel* greater confidence in asking God for what we and our families need. He has promised blessings even greater than we can receive when we have been faithful to our covenant to pay our tithes (see Malachi 3:10). So one of the great blessings of tithing is confidence in

what the future holds. Whatever our circumstances may be, things will work out for the best. As we keep our promises, He will keep His. A feeling of peace is one of the great blessings of paying a full tithe. Those who have kept the commandment of tithing can testify that the blessing of peace is real and precious.

Third, those who pay tithing *feel* an increase in their love of God and of all God's children. That increase of love comes from understanding how the Father uses the tithes we offer to bless people in this world and for eternity.

Through His authorized servants, He expends the tithes with great care. The tithe payer helps the Lord build temples, where families can be sealed forever. The tithe payer helps Him send the gospel to people everywhere. The tithe payer helps Him relieve hunger and suffering in His own way through His servants. Any of those servants can tell you how love increased because tithing was used to bless people. And so can the faithful tithe payer.

Tithing settlement is months in the future. I pray that you and your family will begin now to plan and prepare to qualify for the blessings that God pours out on all those who can declare to Him that they are full-tithe payers. ■

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

- Sometimes the best way to teach a certain principle is to demonstrate it (see *Teaching, No Greater Call* [1999], 164). Consider asking a family member to demonstrate what one-tenth represents. He or she could demonstrate it by separating one item from a group of 10 items. To conclude, consider inviting a family member to show how to fill out a tithing slip.
- "Those you teach will benefit from each other's participation" (*Teaching, No Greater Call*, 63). Invite family members to share what they believe President Eyring means by the statement "*feel* what we need to feel to receive the gift of eternal life." Consider discussing the three ways in which paying tithing prepares us to feel what we need to feel to receive God's blessings.

YOUTH

Enough Money

By Fabiano dos Santos da Silva

I met the missionaries when I was 17. At that time my older brother and I lived together. Our mother had passed away the year before, and life was difficult. When the missionaries taught me, I could see that this Church was the church I had always sought. But the influence of my friends prevented me from going to church on Sundays.

One time I went to a Church activity during the week. Seeing all the young people laughing and playing brought me great joy. The missionaries, with the youth, took that opportunity to teach me a gospel lesson, and I felt so good I resolved to be baptized.

But even after I joined the Church, I faced challenges. I was the only member of the Church in that part of town and lived far away from the meetinghouse. My nonmember friends no longer wanted anything to do with me. When I felt alone, I prayed and felt the love of the Lord.

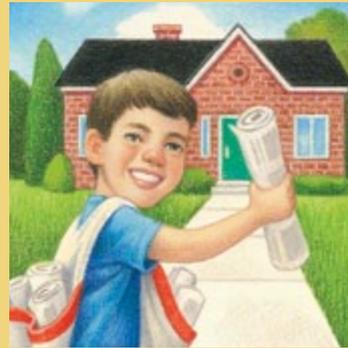
Each month, I received a small allotment of money from a fund my mother left. It was difficult to sustain myself with so little money. But I determined to be obedient. I paid tithing and also had to pay for transportation to seminary and Sunday meetings. I didn't understand how, but at the end of the month, I found that there had been enough money to do it all.

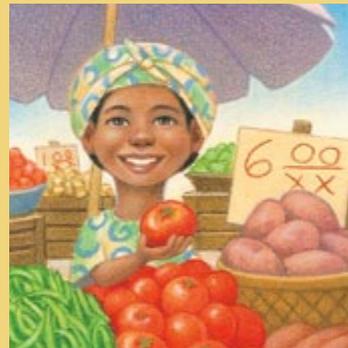
I know that I have been blessed by paying tithing. Obeying this commandment helped me gain a stronger testimony, serve a mission, and recognize blessings so I can strengthen new members who are facing challenges.

CHILDREN

I Can Pay Tithing

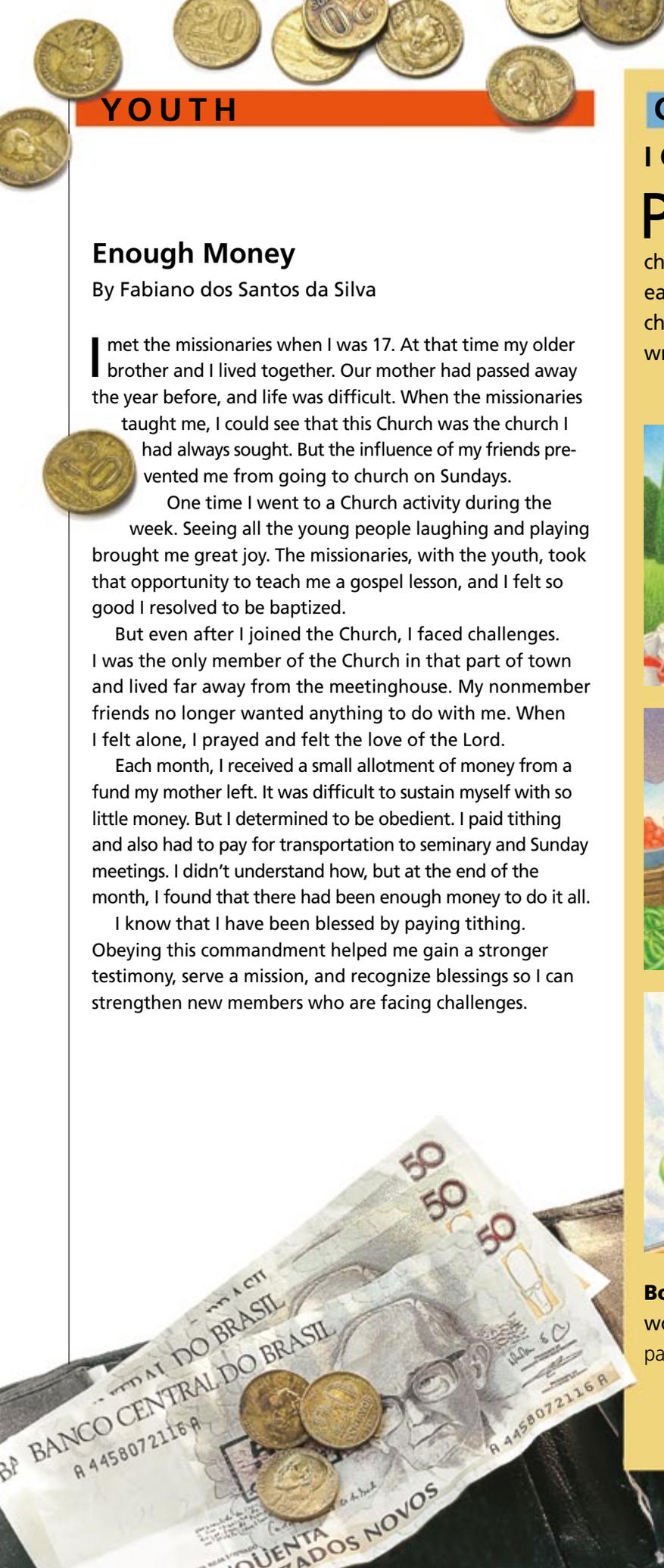
Paying tithing means **giving 10 percent** of what we earn to the Lord. Look at these three children doing jobs. On the first blank space by each drawing, write how much you think each child might earn for the job. On the second line, write how much the tithing would be.







Bonus question: Which of these tithe payers would receive the most blessings? (Hint: See the last paragraph of President Eyring's message.)





Faith • Family • Relief

Strengthening Families through Temporal Self-Reliance

Developing self-reliance—the ability to care for ourselves and our families—is the responsibility of every sister. We become self-reliant as we learn to love work, as we seek inspiration to find the best ways to provide for ourselves, and as we work with family members to meet basic needs.

When we are self-reliant, we use our blessings and resources to prepare for and avoid problems. Self-reliance, however, is enhanced as we pray for the courage to meet with faith the challenges that will surely come. Self-reliance also enables us to keep our covenant to care for others.

In Relief Society, we are taught self-reliance principles and skills. Sisters can learn about budgeting, debt relief, employment qualifications, the scriptures and the gospel, teaching others to read and learn, technology, physical health, fitness, addiction prevention and recovery, social and emotional health, preventing illness, gardening, food production and storage, emergency preparedness, and many other things that will help us become self-reliant.¹

Julie B. Beck, Relief Society general president, explains that “providing for ourselves and others is evidence that we are disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. . . . When [my mother-in-law] passed away suddenly last year, she left evidence of her self-reliant life. She had a current temple recommend and well-used scriptures and gospel study manuals. We lovingly divided up the pots, pans, and dishes with which she had prepared thousands of meals. She left us quilts she had made from old clothing. She believed in the old adage ‘Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without.’ We saw the supply of food she had grown, preserved, and stored. Particularly touching were her little account books in which she faithfully recorded her expenditures over many years. Because she lived providently, she left some money she had saved for emergencies, and she left no debts! Most importantly, she had taught and inspired many others with the skills she had acquired during her faithful life.”²

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

What Can I Do?

1. How can I help my sisters and their families improve in temporal self-reliance?
2. How can I improve my own temporal self-reliance?

For more information, go to www.reliefsociety.lds.org.

NOTES

1. See *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 9.4.2.
2. Julie B. Beck, “The Welfare Responsibilities of the Relief Society President,” *Basic Principles of Welfare and Self-Reliance* (2009), 6.
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* (1997), 231.

From Our History

Relief Society sisters have always participated in the work of saving souls temporally and spiritually. Each week as the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo met, sisters reported on people in need. Donations of money, goods, talents, and time were dispersed to relieve the needy. This foundational work of relieving suffering has continued to be the work of Relief Society through the generations.

When the Saints arrived in the Salt Lake Valley, President Brigham Young (1801–77) counseled sisters to assist those in need and to learn skills that would allow them to take care of themselves. He said, “Learn to sustain yourselves; lay up grain and flour, and save it against a day of scarcity.”³ Under the direction of the priesthood, Relief Society continues to teach self-reliance, to safeguard the family, and to encourage personal righteousness and acts of charity, the pure love of Christ.

From the Scriptures

John 13:34–35; James 1:27; Mosiah 4:26; Doctrine and Covenants 29:34–35; 38:30; 44:6



PRIESTHOOD

IS THE AUTHORITY TO ACT IN GOD'S NAME

Our Father in Heaven governs the heavens and the earth. By His eternal power the universe is kept in perfect order. To govern His Church on earth, He delegates a portion of His power and authority to worthy male members of the Church. This delegated authority is called priesthood. We see this pattern of delegated responsibility in the New Testament, when Jesus Christ gave His Apostles the authority to act in His name (see Matthew 16:19).

This is God's pattern of government. It is in place upon the earth today. Those who hold the priesthood are authorized to act in God's name in leading His Church and in administering the sacred ordinances necessary for salvation, such as baptism, confirmation, administration of the sacrament, and temple marriage. Every faithful Latter-day Saint man, woman, and child needs priesthood ordinances and is blessed by receiving them.

Offices of the Priesthood

There are two divisions of the priesthood: Melchizedek and Aaronic. The Melchizedek Priesthood contains greater authority than the Aaronic Priesthood.

Within these two divisions are specific offices, or areas of responsibility. The offices within the Aaronic

Priesthood are deacon, teacher, priest, and bishop. Within the Melchizedek Priesthood, the offices are elder, high priest, patriarch, Seventy, and Apostle. Those who hold these offices are organized into quorums, or groups. Each office has certain duties assigned to it.

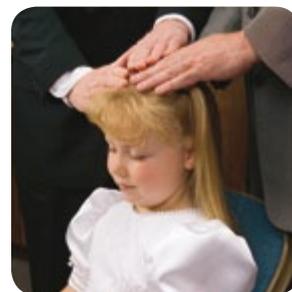
Keys of the Priesthood

The term *keys* refers to the authority to preside over specific Church units or jurisdictions. In stakes and wards, for example, only the stake president, the bishop, and quorum presidents hold priesthood keys. The keys are given by the laying on of hands by a priesthood holder authorized to confer them.

- Presidents of Melchizedek Priesthood quorums receive the keys of presidency and the administration of spiritual things (see D&C 107:10, 18–19).
- Presidents of Aaronic Priesthood quorums receive the keys of the ministering of angels and performing ordinances such as baptism and the sacrament (see D&C 107:20).
- The President of the Church holds all the priesthood keys for the entire Church (see D&C 81:1–2).

The offices and some of the duties of the Melchizedek Priesthood:

1. Elders “confirm those who are baptized into the church, by the laying on of hands for the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost” (D&C 20:41).



The offices and some of the duties of the Aaronic Priesthood:



2. High priests “administer in spiritual things” and have “a right to officiate in” the offices of elder, priest, teacher, and deacon (D&C 107:12).



3. Patriarchs give patriarchal blessings (see D&C 107:53; 124:91–93).



4. Seventies preach the gospel and are special witnesses of Jesus Christ under the direction of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (see D&C 107:25, 34).



5. Apostles serve as “special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world” (D&C 107:23).



1. Deacons pass the sacrament.



2. Teachers “watch over the church always, and be with and strengthen them” (D&C 20:53).



3. Priests “teach, . . . baptize, and administer the sacrament, and visit the house of each member” (D&C 20:46–47).



4. Bishops are presidents of the priests quorum and, as high priests, preside over all members in a ward (see D&C 107:87–88). ■

“Without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh” (D&C 84:21).

He Carried My Sorrows

“Surely he has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows” (Mosiah 14:4).

By Jane Bleak

ADVERSITY CAN LEAD TOWARD GOD

“There are those who have met disaster, which almost seems defeat, who have become somewhat soured in their natures; but if they stop to think, even the adversity which has come to them may prove a means of spiritual uplift. Adversity itself may lead toward and not away from God and spiritual enlightenment.”

President David O. McKay (1873–1970), *Treasures of Life*, comp. Clare Middlemiss (1962), 107–8.

I will never forget the summer and fall of 2009. On June 9 my father died after suffering from dementia for over 10 years. On June 25 our 22-year-old son died unexpectedly, and less than a month later, so did my cousin. On August 13 my 82-year-old mother had open-heart surgery and began a lengthy recovery. On October 18 my 41-year-old brother died. On October 31 my husband had a massive heart attack and flat lined for eight minutes. The firefighters, paramedics, and a priesthood blessing brought him back to us.

People often asked me how we handled all of these events. My consistent answer was that we would turn to the Savior, and He cared for us. He did not leave us alone in our trials. I felt ministered to and carried by the heavens. Truly, He “has borne [my] griefs” (Mosiah 14:4).

Comfort also came in the form of family, friends, and members of our ward and stake. They took loving care of us in countless ways. Our 13-year-old granddaughter, Krystal, wrote us a letter after

our son Michael’s death. She reminded us that we were not alone when she wrote, “God is carrying you.” Her letter reminded me of the scripture in Doctrine and Covenants 84:88: “I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up.”

I gained strength by reading a talk by Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles titled “Trust in the Lord.” He said: “Just when all seems to be going right, challenges often come in multiple doses applied simultaneously. When those trials are not consequences of your disobedience, they are evidence that the Lord feels you are prepared to grow more. He therefore gives you experiences that stimulate growth, understanding and compassion, which polish you for your everlasting benefit. To get you from where you are to where He wants you to be requires a lot of stretching, and that generally entails discomfort and pain” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 16–17).



In Gethsemane, Jesus Christ set a perfect example of trust when He asked His Father that “if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” But then He said, “Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (see Matthew 26:39–44).

He said that questions such as “Why does this have to happen to me?” or “Why do I have to suffer this now?” lead us into blind alleys. Rather, Elder Scott suggests asking questions like “What am I to learn from this experience?” “Whom am I to help?” and “How can I remember my many blessings in times of trial?”

I have resisted the temptation to ask, “Why?” Instead, I have asked for Heavenly Father’s guidance through my trials. He has blessed me with hope in

the future, helped me to heal my heavy heart, heightened my awareness of the goodness around me, given me opportunities to serve, deepened my compassion for others, and magnified my love for family and friends.

Through it all, I have gained a testimony that our challenge is to surrender our will to our Heavenly Father because only then can we personally be refined and polished in the ways He has specifically designed for each of us. ■

Handling Grief

- We are not left alone in our grief because Jesus Christ—“a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief” (Isaiah 53:3)—has borne our sorrows as part of the Atonement.
- We can strive to resist the temptation to ask, “Why?” Instead, we can ask for the Lord’s guidance.
- We can accept the challenge to surrender our will to our Heavenly Father.

For more information on this topic, see Proverbs 3:5–6 and Joseph B. Wirthlin, “Sunday Will Come,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 28–30.

WHY CAN WE TRUST IN THE LORD?

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles helps answer this question in his general conference talk “Trust in the Lord” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 16–18).

1. God knows what He is doing. When we pass through trials for His purposes, we can trust Him to help us.
2. God’s plan is to exalt us so we can return to live with Him.¹
3. Overcoming trials is part of that plan. As we do so, we gain strength, understanding, faith, and trust in God.²

Consider sharing Elder Scott’s talk “Trust in the Lord” with someone who is struggling.

NOTES

1. See *Gospel Principles* (2009), 10–11.
2. See *Gospel Principles*, 17–21.

*Those who
honor the
calling
of righteous
parenthood will
find their souls
refined,
their hearts
purified, and
their minds
enlightened
by the most
important
lessons of life.*





By Elder
Bruce D. Porter
Of the Seventy



Defending

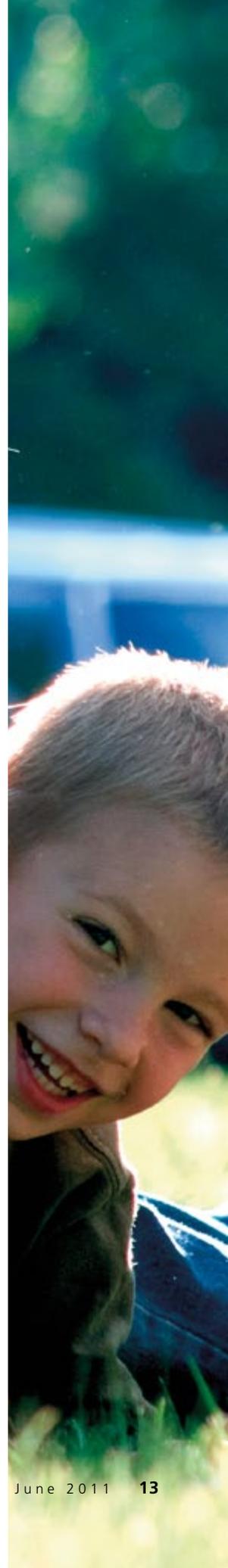
THE FAMILY IN A TROUBLED WORLD

Latter-day Saints have been blessed with revealed truths regarding families that remain unknown to the world at large. We understand that the family is an eternal institution ordained by God from before the foundation of the world, with the potential to continue on forever beyond this mortal sphere. Happy, loving families, though imperfect and falling short of the ideal, are the closest thing we have on earth to a small-scale model of eternity, a tiny seed of unimaginable glory to come.

We also know that gender, as declared in “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” is “an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose.”¹ The differences between men and women are not simply biological. They are woven into the fabric of the universe, a vital, foundational element of eternal life and divine nature.

The family is intended by God as the great entryway into mortal life. It is central to the salvation of the human race, the perpetuation of civilization, and the birth and rearing of each new generation.

PHOTOGRAPH BY APRIL NEWMAN





seem to have lost their bearings when it comes to understanding the vital importance of the family.

This crisis was foreseen and foretold by ancient prophets who saw our day in vision. Their words of sober prophecy and warning are coming to pass before our very eyes. Here are a few such prophecies from ancient scripture:

The Apostle Paul: “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

“For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy . . .

“Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God . . .

“Led away with divers lusts,

“Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Timothy 3:1–2, 4, 6–7).

The Lord Jesus Christ: “And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold” (Matthew 24:12).

Isaiah: “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” (Isaiah 5:20).

We live in a day when the love of many, even toward their own children, is waxing cold; a day when so many people love pleasures more than God; a day when good is called evil and evil good. Those who defend the traditional family, who stand for fidelity and chastity and all that once was considered wholesome and praiseworthy are mocked and ridiculed. On the other hand, those who see no problem with fatherless homes, who advocate abortion, who fight all attempts to limit pornography, and who seek to redefine the very essence of what a family is, are praised and upheld as champions of tolerance. Truly, the world has turned upside down.

In 1920 the divorce rate in the United States was 8 per 1,000 married women; by 1979, it had reached nearly 23, a nearly threefold increase.² It has since dropped slightly,³ but this is likely due to a large increase in cohabitating couples, now an estimated 6.6 million,⁴ whose separations, including from children, are not recorded in official statistics. By many measurements, the United States has the highest divorce rate in the world. Evidence of the toll is that today in America a heartbreaking 40 percent of all births are out of wedlock.⁵

In families more than anywhere else children learn the values, practical life skills, manners, and fundamental truths that enable them to rise up and be successful in the world. They learn the all-important attributes of love, unselfishness, sharing, giving, and hard work that someday will be essential for them to form families of their own and to rear up a new generation in order that the great wheel of life may roll onward. So vital is the family to the cycle of human life and the renewal of each generation that it is fair to say that if the family breaks down, everything breaks down. If families do not fulfill their divinely appointed purpose of carrying on the light of truth and the torch of civilization to the next generation, then we can throw any amount of money or ideas or programs at our world's problems, and we will assuredly fail.

The Family Is in Crisis

In our contemporary world, in many dimensions, the family is in crisis. The crisis is both *internal* to many families and it is *external* or societal in the sense that many of society's leaders and opinion-makers increasingly

One consequence of family disintegration has been a rising generation among whom many no longer seek to perpetuate the cycle of family formation that is at the heart of human existence, and for that matter, at the heart of eternal life. Many young people across our nation, who in the natural course of life should grow up, marry, and rear children, are instead trapped in a world where sexual intimacy is casual, responsibility and long-term commitments are denigrated, and children are viewed as a burden, a distraction from the pursuit of happiness and personal fulfillment. They have lost connection with the divine purpose of mortal life, arriving instead at the sterile apex of the me generation.

At least one secular scholar, James Lincoln Collier, recognized the danger of these trends 20 years ago. Collier traces how in the course of the 20th century, selfishness, sexual immorality, and the deterioration of community values damaged America's social fabric. His foremost concern is for the family:

"We have abandoned our children. Between a soaring divorce rate and an equally soaring rate of children born to unwed mothers, it is now the case that the majority of our children will spend at least a portion of their childhoods in single parent homes—in effect being raised without fathers. A large minority will spend their entire childhoods essentially without fathers, and a considerable number will not even know who their fathers are.

"This is an extremely unusual circumstance—perhaps unique in human experience. *In no known human society, past or present, have children generally been raised outside of an intact nuclear family.* The nuclear family is one of the most basic of all human institutions, a system of doing things so fundamental that until this century it occurred to very few people that life could exist without it."⁶

The disintegration of millions of families has taken place in part because popular media and

culture have glorified the pursuit of self: of the wholly autonomous individual unconnected with social or moral obligations, free to pursue whatever ends he or she chooses so long as it does not cause direct physical harm to other aggrandizing selves.

In the mad pursuit of self that prevails in the world today, many believe that they may make up their own rules as they go along, putting on their personal concept of morality or "lifestyle" like a change of clothing. Such is a violation of divine law and as such is doomed to failure. This is what the Lord said of those who seek to become their own law:

"That which breaketh a law, and abideth not by law, but seeketh to become a law unto itself, and willeth to abide in sin, and altogether abideth in sin, cannot be sanctified by law, neither by mercy, justice, nor judgment. Therefore, they must remain filthy still" (D&C 88:35).

Yet the messages we constantly hear in media, entertainment, and advertising sound like this:

"You're number one."

"Do your own thing."

"You're special."

"Find yourself."

Such messages are so pervasive that we unconsciously absorb them and sometimes repeat them. Yet they are diametrically opposite from the message of the Savior, as recorded in similar language in every one of the four gospels: "He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matthew 10:39).

Successful families require that men and women make substantial and long-term sacrifices of their time, money, and personal fulfillment in order to dedicate their efforts to rearing the next generation.



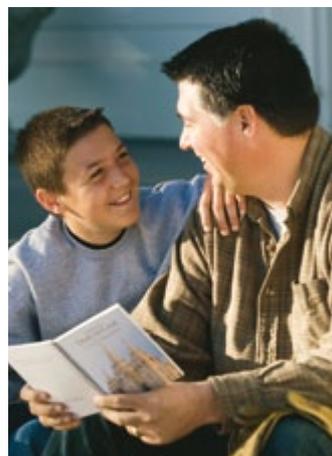
Happiness through Selflessness and Obedience

We gain happiness and salvation not by blindly pursuing our own self and our own will. We gain salvation by submitting our will, indeed our very selves, to the will of God. We must lose ourselves to find ourselves.

The family by its very nature is an institution based upon righteous self-denial and sacrifice. It is not an individualistic or self-centered organization, but a highly cooperative and other-centered institution. Successful families require that men and women make substantial and long-term sacrifices of their time, money, and personal fulfillment in order to dedicate their efforts to rearing the next generation. Selfishness in any form or degree weakens the bonds that hold families together. The rise of selfishness in our society is the fundamental underlying trend that undermines families and makes successful marriages so difficult. Many today find it irrational to devote so much time and energy to the welfare of the next generation, but if this commitment is not deeply rooted in society, civilization will decline and perish, while children grow up in a moral wasteland, confused, unguided, and unloved.

Moreover, the sacrifices that fathers and mothers make for their children ultimately will result in the greatest possible happiness for those making the sacrifices. In all of human experience, there are no joys more tender, no love more sweet, no fulfillment higher than that found in the family. Those who honor the calling of righteous parenthood will find their souls refined, their hearts purified, and their minds enlightened by the most important lessons of life. They will rise to far greater heights of happiness than those who engage in the narrow and ultimately unsatisfying pursuit of self.

In Lehi's vision of the tree of life, he saw a strait and narrow path leading to the tree of life, which represented the love of God (see 1 Nephi 8:20; 11:21–22). The world at large is not interested in any moral path that is strait and narrow, but prefers its avenues to be as broad as possible. Latter-day Saints are often accused of narrow-mindedness or lack of tolerance and compassion because of our belief in following precise standards of moral behavior as set forth by God's prophets. Let us consider, therefore, what is meant by the strait and narrow path.



God has given His children commandments, laws, and revelations that define the pathway leading back into His presence. His laws and commandments are intended to bless us, to uplift us, and to bring us joy. They mark the path of safety amidst the storms and mists of mortal existence. This means that *the strait and narrow path is a path of divine love*, a path laid down by a God of perfect charity, whose only desire is to bless. To the degree that any human being strays from that path, he or she inevitably experiences inner conflict, distress, and loneliness. To leave the strait and narrow path is to leave the one path congruent with our own eternal nature. When we invite people to lay aside the things of the world and come unto Christ, we are inviting them to the one sure path that leads to lasting joy and inner peace.

To some the very idea of a strait and narrow path will seem intolerant of those who choose different paths. By holding up a divine ideal of what family ought to be, they claim we are guilty of intolerance toward those who choose other paths, other standards, other definitions of right and wrong. But is this really true?

The Shifting Definition of Tolerance

Until recently in our national history, tolerance referred to racial and religious non-discrimination. It meant civility in the political arena; in other words, respecting the right of others to express their views, even if we do not agree with them. It meant treating all people with decency and respect. Such tolerance is an important and vital part of our American heritage.

Today, however, the world is in danger of abandoning all sense of absolute right or wrong, all morality and virtue, replacing them with an all-encompassing “tolerance” that no longer means what it once meant. An extreme definition of tolerance is now widespread that implicitly or explicitly endorses the right of every person to choose their own morality, even their own “truth,” as though morality and truth were mere matters of personal preference. This extreme tolerance culminates in a refusal to recognize any fixed standards or draw moral distinctions of any kind. Few dare say no to the “almighty self” or suggest that some so-called “lifestyles” may be destructive, contrary to higher law, or simply wrong.

When tolerance is so inflated out of all proportions, it means the death of virtue, for the essence of morality is to draw clear distinctions between right and wrong. All virtue requires saying no firmly and courageously to all that is morally bankrupt.

Curiously enough, this new modern tolerance is often a one-way street. Those who practice it expect everyone to tolerate them in anything they say or do, but show no tolerance themselves toward those who express differing viewpoints or defend traditional morality. Indeed, their intolerance is often most barbed toward those of religious conviction. But let there be no misunderstanding or deception: the First Amendment right of free speech applies to religious speech as well as to other kinds of speech. Believers of all faiths have every right to participate in and share their

convictions in the public arena.

Now let us go one step further. Even in its original and correct connotation, tolerance is surely a secondary virtue in comparison with the far higher virtue of love. Certainly it is good to be tolerant of those who are different than we are, treating them with kindness and civility. But love, or charity, is the highest of all, and it is far better to genuinely love those with whom we differ. When we truly love all of God’s children in a Christlike way, we will desire to bring them unto Christ, the fountain of all happiness. This means proclaiming the truth, defending that which is right, and in a mild voice inviting all to walk the path of Christ. By defending the traditional family, Latter-day Saints bless all people whether others recognize it now or not.

So perfect and exalted was Christ’s love for God’s children that He took upon Himself the penalty for their sins, descending below all things in the Garden of Gethsemane and dying for us on the cross at Golgotha. Yet He never compromised virtue nor tolerated sin in the slightest degree (see D&C 1:31). He treated the woman taken in adultery with love and respect, putting her accusers to shame; nevertheless He said, “Go, and sin no more” (John 8:11). The Master abhorred sin, because *sin is the enemy of the human soul*.

God’s love is sometimes described as unconditional. It is true that God loves all of His children on earth no matter how often or how far they may stray. But while God’s love is all-encompassing, *His blessings are highly conditional*,

God has given His children commandments, laws, and revelations that define the pathway leading back into His presence. His laws and commandments are intended to bless us, to uplift us, and to bring us joy.





including the very blessing of being able to feel and experience His love. The further human beings stray from the path of righteousness, the less they will be capable of feeling divine love, because it is conveyed into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. This does not mean that God loves us less when we stray, only that we, by our choices and actions, have distanced ourselves from His love. How wondrous, then, is the gift of repentance, by which we can be brought back into accord with His will and feel again of His love.

Regardless of what the future may hold, God has ordained that in the dispensation of the fullness of times, the parents of the Church will be given power to help save their children from the darkness around them.

Our Responsibility to Defend the Family

In the family proclamation, the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles declare, “We warn that the disintegration

of the family will bring upon individuals, communities, and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets.”⁷ The Church is a small institution compared with the world at large. Nevertheless, the Latter-day Saints as a people should not underestimate the power of our example, nor our capacity to persuade public opinion, reverse negative trends, or invite seeking souls to enter the gate and walk the Lord’s chosen way. We ought to give our best efforts, in cooperation with like-minded persons and institutions, to defend the family and raise a voice of warning and of invitation to the world. The Lord expects us to do this, and in doing so to ignore the mocking and scorn of those in the great and spacious building, where is housed the pride of the world.

Regardless of what the future may hold, God has ordained that in the dispensation of the fullness of times, the parents of the Church will be given power to help save their children from the darkness around them. As the hearts of fathers and mothers turn to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents, we eventually will witness the rise of a generation refined and prepared to meet the Savior at His coming. The triumph of God’s kingdom in the latter days will be a triumph not only of the Church as an organization but of tens of thousands of individual families who by faith have overcome the world.

May we as members of the Church rise up and assume our divinely appointed role as a light to the nations. May we sacrifice and labor to rear a generation strong enough to resist the siren songs of popular culture, a generation filled with the Holy Ghost so that they may discern the difference between good and evil, between legitimate tolerance and moral surrender. May we arise in faith and in love so as to prepare the way for the great millennial reign of Christ, a day to come when in every village and city of the world, boys and girls will play in innocence, and every child of God know the peace of a happy home. ■

Adapted from an address given at a conference held at Brigham Young University on March 5, 2010.

NOTES

1. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
2. Susan B. Carter, et al., *Historical Statistics of the United States*, Millennial Edition, Vol. 1, 688–689.
3. 16.9 divorces per 1,000 married women ages 15 and older in 2008. See W. Bradford Wilcox and Elizabeth Marquardt, eds., *The State of Our Unions: Marriage in America*, 2009, 75.
4. *America’s Family and Living Arrangements: 2009*, U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Surveys, March 2009. See Table UC1. This source estimates 6.6 million cohabitating couples.
5. Brady E. Hamilton, et al., “Births: Preliminary Data for 2008,” *National Vital Statistics Reports* 58:16 (April 2010), 5.
6. James Lincoln Collier, *The Rise of Selfishness in America*, (1990), 246.
7. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” 129.

The Power of a Righteous Example

By Jerry Stringam

In April 1992 my family and I were living in Provo, Utah, where we had moved from Canada so I could complete a degree in engineering at Brigham Young University. My son Jase, who was 17, had become friends with a young woman named Krista.

On the Saturday evening of general conference weekend, Jase came into the living room and asked if he could borrow the car to take Krista out for a milk shake. I tossed him the keys, and he went into the kitchen to call her. I could hear one side of the conversation, which went like this:

“Hi, Krista,
it’s me, Jase.

I was wondering if you would like to go out for a milk shake.” **Silence.**

“You mean after priesthood meeting?
Well, OK,
I’ll call you then.
See ya.”

Jase hung up the phone and came back into the living room.

“So are you going out with her?” I asked.

“She said she would like to go,” he replied, “but she told me to call her back after I get home from the priesthood session.” With a dejected look on his face, he slunk off to his room.

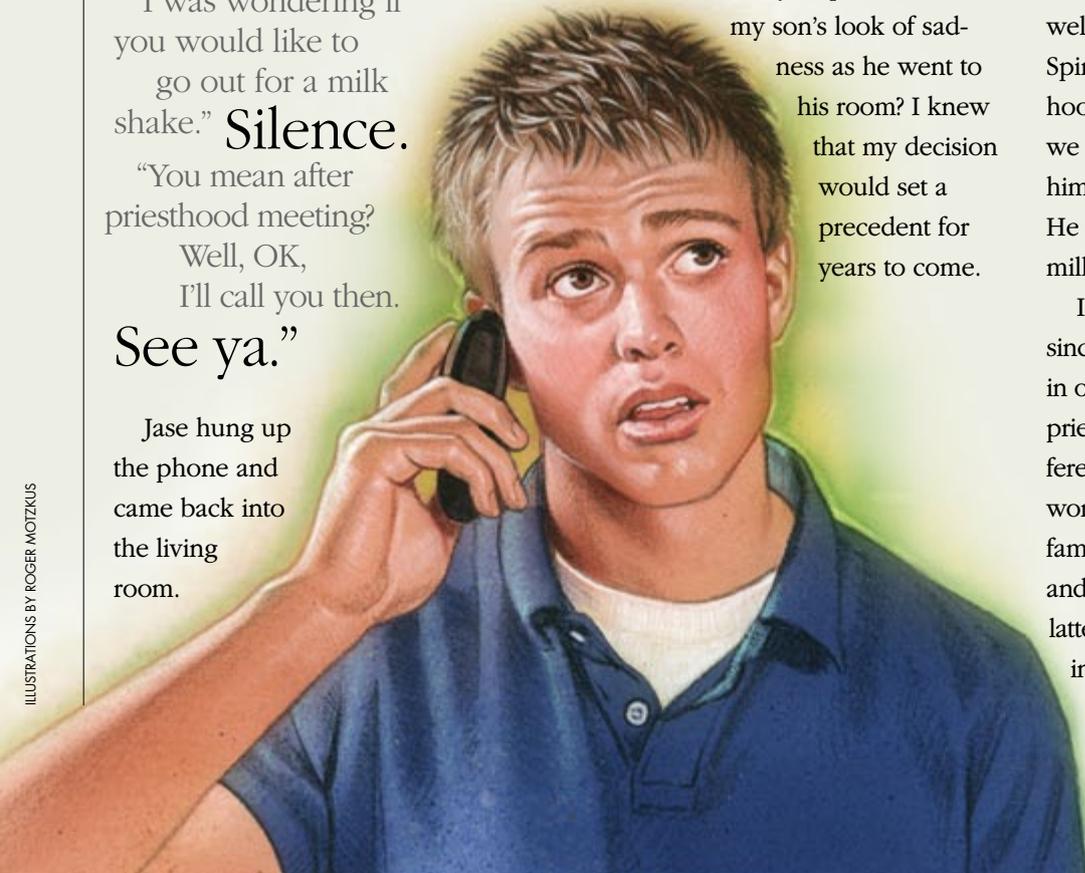
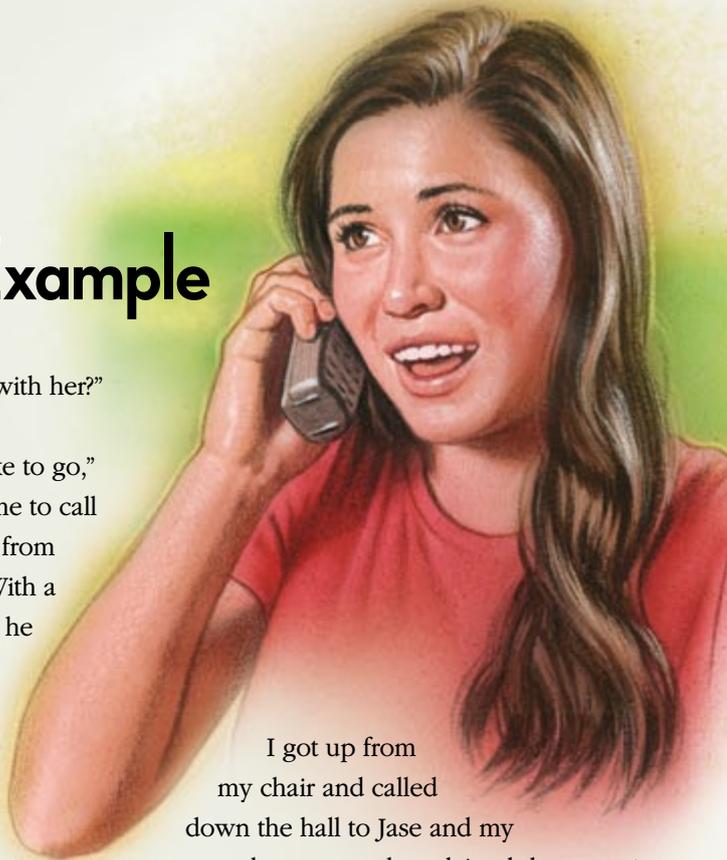
Something hit me like a ton of bricks. I had grown up in southern Alberta, nearly 80 miles (130 km) from the stake center. No one had expected me or even my parents, who had leadership positions in our branch, to show up for conference sessions, let alone the priesthood session. Now someone was counting on it.

What would my response be to my son’s look of sadness as he went to his room? I knew that my decision would set a precedent for years to come.

I got up from my chair and called down the hall to Jase and my second son, a newly ordained deacon, “Change your clothes. We have 10 minutes to get to the priesthood session at the stake center.” I hurried to get ready, and when I came out of my bedroom, both boys were ready, and we headed for the car.

I don’t remember the talks very well, but I remember that we felt the Spirit. It felt good to be at the priesthood session with my sons. When we came home, Jase felt good about himself, which made me feel good. He called Krista, and they went to get milk shakes.

In the two decades that have passed since that day, the priesthood holders in our family have not missed a single priesthood session of general conference. Because a righteous young woman stood up for her beliefs, our family had the opportunity to change, and we continue to hear the words of latter-day prophets and feel the Spirit in the priesthood session of general conference. ■



THE PRISON & THE DANDELION

By Andrew D. Olsen

As a missionary, I learned to face difficulties with hope and faith instead of becoming a prisoner of discouragement.

These are the areas I'll be assigning you to," our mission president said when he met his three newest elders. I felt excited about the first two places he mentioned but reluctant about the third. It was a town with four prisons. Later that day, I felt somewhat relieved when I was assigned to one of the other areas. This reprieve was only temporary, however, as I was transferred to that town several months later.

I arrived by bus on a bitterly cold January night. A ward member brought my companion to pick me up, then drove us to an old house that had been divided into apartments. Missionaries often live in humble dwellings, but this was unlike any I'd seen before. "I haven't let my bare feet touch the floor since I got here," my companion said.

I soon learned why. Parts of the floor were spongy with decay. Not to be outdone, the ceiling sagged ominously. Wallpaper was peeling off the walls. Leaky radiators were hissing. When I opened the old latch-style fridge, I saw two boxes of breakfast cereal. "That's how we keep out the cockroaches," my companion explained. I was sure that those who said there were only four prisons in town had miscounted.



During the next few weeks, almost everything seemed to go against us. Despite working hard, we found very few people to teach. Of those we were teaching, two or three moved out of town. Adding to our difficulty was the worst winter anyone could remember. Icicles from our roof were five feet long. I defaulted to discouragement.

Apparently I expressed some of these struggles in my letters to family and friends. In response, I received a letter that breathed spring into my winter. “Bloom where you’re planted,” it said. This phrase helped me realize that I couldn’t blame adverse circumstances for the prison walls I felt rising around me. Instead, I was building the town’s newest prison with my own attitude.

Seeking a change of heart and mind, I turned to the Book of Mormon. I began to see spiritual parallels between my situation and the many accounts of people being freed from prison and other bondage. For example, as Alma and Amulek prayed for deliverance, “they broke the cords with which they were bound” (see Alma 14:26–29). And when Helaman’s sons Nephi and Lehi were cast into prison, the power of God freed them (see Helaman 5:20–49). I didn’t need anything so dramatic. All I needed was some hope and some guidance—I found both in abundance.

I also had an unexpected accomplice in my prison break: a dandelion. Before my mission, I spent a summer doing lawn care, and dandelions had been my enemy. One morning in the mission field, I walked outside and made peace. Surrounded by patches of late snow was a single dandelion. Instead of blooming in rich soil, it shone radiantly from a crack in the sidewalk. “Bloom where you’re planted,” I thought, surprised to find myself admiring the very flower I’d held in contempt.

Because of the dandelion’s ability to thrive in almost any environment, I adopted it as a symbol to help me do the same. Gradually I stopped letting difficult conditions control my outlook. I came to recognize the irony that in this place where so many people were forcibly denied their freedom, I had been surrendering the most fundamental freedom—the power to choose my

response to my circumstances—without much of a fight.

My missionary journal shows a remarkable change. My negative outlook had been self-fulfilling. As I developed positive expectations, they also became self-fulfilling. My pleadings changed from silently hoping I wouldn’t be sentenced to that area to openly asking to stay. “I love these people,” I wrote repeatedly, and “I love this place.”

Soon I saw a connection between my field of labor and these words of the Lord from the Doctrine and Covenants: “I have much people in this place, . . . and an effectual door shall be opened” (D&C 100:3). Through some of the doors that were opened, the blessings of the gospel are now extending into new generations and even into other nations.

I also saw a connection between the town where I was serving and these similar words of the Lord: “I have . . . many people in this city, whom I will gather out in due time . . . through your instrumentality” (D&C 111:2). To me, this scripture suggested that in some small way, the Lord’s work in that town depended on the missionaries being good instruments. My earlier attitude had limited my potential as such an instrument. Changing my attitude did much more than improve my personal capacity; it also made me a better instrument for the Lord to work through.

The town I once hoped to avoid continues to bless my life more than 30 years after my reluctant departure. To this day, I cherish the friendships. And I still benefit from the discovery that I can choose to bloom wherever I am planted, whenever the season, whatever the challenges. As life progresses and greater challenges arise, the prison and the dandelion still face off against each other from time to time. But before I get very far with my concrete and razor wire, I summon this experience as a missionary, and the prison walls collapse.

“Behold, he did deliver them because they did humble themselves before him; and because they cried mightily unto him he did deliver them out of bondage; and thus doth the Lord work with his power in all cases among the children of men, extending the arm of mercy towards them that put their trust in him” (Mosiah 29:20). ■

THE TRUE PATH TO Happiness

As we pursue the true path to happiness in our families and professions, I pray we will use our knowledge and influence to bring greater righteousness, peace, understanding, and freedom to people all over the world.

The recipe for “the good life” has been debated for centuries. When the Apostle Paul was in Athens on Mars Hill, he encountered “philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks” (Acts 17:18). The Stoics believed that the highest good was virtue, while the Epicureans believed that the highest good was pleasure. Many Stoics had become proud and used the philosophy as “a cloak for . . . ambition and iniquity.” Many Epicureans had become hedonists who took as their motto “Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.”¹

Many in the academic world have long pointed to Aristotle’s advocacy of “intellectual contemplation” as a blueprint for “the good life.” A reviewer writing in the *New York Times Book Review* asserted that modern philosophers “have concluded that there is no single right balance of elements that constitutes ‘the good life for man.’”²

An article in the *New York Times* asserted, “Marital happiness is far more important than anything else in determining personal well-being.” The author challenged colleges

to spend less time “preparing students for careers” and more time “preparing them to make social decisions.”³

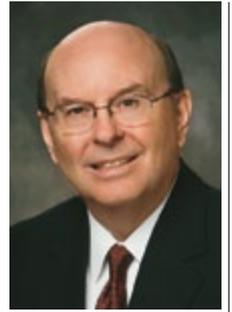
As I read these statements, I reflected on what the Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it; and this path is virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God.”⁴

In the spirit of the statement in the *New York Times* about marriage and the Prophet’s optimistic declaration, I am confident that we can have the happiness that we desire and that God wants for us. What must we do to attain it?

Be Grateful for Your Heritage

Always be grateful for your blessings, especially your heritage. When we are blessed with goodly parents, we should be grateful. This is the debt each of us owes for our heritage.

An old Chinese proverb reads, “When you drink the water, don’t forget the well from whence it sprung.” It is clear from the



**By Elder
Quentin L. Cook**
Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

scriptures that we are to honor our parents. A proverb reads, “My son, keep thy father’s commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother” (Proverbs 6:20). The great German philosopher Goethe put it this way:

*What from your fathers’ heritage is lent,
Earn it anew, to really possess it!*⁵

It is clear that we need to be grateful for our parents and take positive action to acquire that

which they would hope to bestow upon us. This is a step toward personal happiness.

Commit Yourself to the Family

Second, commit yourself to the eternal institution of the family as the foundation for happiness. In the world at large, many are choosing not to get married or are delaying marriage. The family is an eternal institution ordained of God from before the foundation



I assure you that the joy, love, and fulfillment experienced in loving, righteous families produce the greatest possible happiness we can achieve.



of the world. Most people will marry and be blessed with children. There is no greater blessing in this life than having children. Some of the most poignant passages in all of scripture capture the sublime significance of children in our Heavenly Father's plan. They are truly "an heritage of the Lord" (Psalm 127:3).

When I was in my 20s, President David O. McKay (1873–1970) gave a prophetic message about marriage and children. He was 95 years old and in the last year of his life. He taught that the pure love between a man and a woman "is one of the noblest things on earth, and the bearing and rearing of children the highest of all human duties."⁶

President McKay then shared his concern about the increasing acceptance of divorce. In 1969 California was the first state in the United States that allowed what has been called "no-fault divorce." Prior to that time, there had to be a reason for the termination of a marriage,

such as infidelity or other extreme conditions. President McKay was obviously concerned that the institution of marriage was in trouble. He stated, "The increasing divorce rate in the United States today is a threatening menace to this nation's greatness."⁷

When we look back at what President McKay taught, it was truly prophetic. The current editor-in-chief of *U.S. News and World Report* has chronicled the history and consequences that have occurred since then. He reports that "divorce rates have more than doubled since the 1960s," and births to unwed mothers "have risen from 5 percent in 1960 to about 35 percent today." He explains the results and the adverse impact on children. He makes it clear that "the stable family of two biological parents . . . turns out to be the ideal vessel for molding character, for nurturing, for inculcating values, and for planning for a child's future."⁸

The *New York Times* article concludes, “Modern societies . . . have an affinity for material concerns and a primordial fear of moral and social ones” and, as a result, they have a “spiritual blind side.”⁹ Isn’t this what President McKay prophesied?

Let me assure you that the vast majority of marriages between faithful members of the Church are happy and successful. For those not yet married, you should move forward with faith and confidence toward the ultimate goal of marriage and family. I would counsel you to find a righteous spouse

whom you admire and who will be your best friend. I assure you that the joy, love, and fulfillment experienced in loving, righteous families produce the greatest possible happiness we can achieve. That happiness is the foundation for a successful society. Those who are righteous and are not able to accomplish this goal are entitled to every blessing that our Father in Heaven has for His children.

Be Involved in a Positive Way

Third, be involved in the world in a positive way and be a powerful

force for good. A significant challenge is to adhere to the scriptural injunction to live in the world but not of the world (see John 17). President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972), as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught that though we are in the world, “we are not of the world in the sense that we are under any necessity to partake of . . . evil customs, . . . fashions, . . . follies, false doctrines and theories.”¹⁰ In addition, your contribution to the place where you live is part of your challenge to be an example, share



the gospel, and live according to the truths you have been taught by parents and prophets.

To accomplish this challenge, you will want and need to be involved in the world in a positive way. We must be tried and tested and found worthy of a greater kingdom. As President Thomas S. Monson has taught, “Decisions determine destiny.”¹¹

This is not an easy life; it was not meant to be. Nevertheless, we know that the Lord will cause our trials to bless us and be for our good. He will give us the strength to stand firm despite opposition. Righteousness is its own reward, and the scriptures promise us that the reward for righteousness is “peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come” (D&C 59:23). I counsel you to be involved in the world in a positive way.

Live and Communicate Your Standards

Fourth, live and communicate your standards to those you interact with. Challenges will come to many of you as you seek employment. You will need to be wise. My recommendation would be to let potential employers know you have high ethical and moral standards, including a commitment to your family.

I learned the significance of this early in my career. After finishing my education at Stanford Law School, I focused on working for a particular law firm. No members of the Church were

associated with the firm, but its lawyers were individuals of character and ability. After a morning of interviews, the most senior partner and two other partners took me to lunch. The senior partner inquired if I would like a pre-lunch alcoholic drink and later if I would like wine. In both cases I declined. And the second time, I informed him that I was an active Latter-day Saint and did not drink alcoholic beverages.

I received an offer of employment from the firm, and a few months later the senior partner told me that the offer of alcoholic beverages was a test. He noted that my résumé made it clear that I had served a Latter-day Saint mission. He had determined that he would hire me only if I was true to the teachings of my own church. He considered it a significant matter of character and integrity.

In my years in San Francisco, California, USA, I knew some members who avoided letting their associates know they were Latter-day Saints. Invariably, they were drawn into compromising situations that could have been avoided had they forthrightly declared what they believed.

Be a Light

Finally, be a light to the people where you live. When my wife and I were starting out as a newly married couple in the San Francisco Bay Area in the mid-1960s, the Latter-day Saint population was relatively small. In addition, the San Francisco Bay Area had become a magnet for drug abuse

and all manner of promiscuous and sinful conduct. A concerned stake president back then asked the leadership of the Church if leaders should encourage Church members to remain in the San Francisco Bay Area.

President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973), then a senior member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, was assigned to address the issue. He met with a group of priesthood leaders and told them that the Lord had not inspired the construction of a temple in our area only to have the members leave. His counsel was to:

1. Create Zion in our hearts and homes.
2. Be a light to those among whom we live.
3. Focus on the ordinances and principles taught in the temple.

If we will follow President Lee’s counsel today, we can successfully be in the world but not of the world. However, we must each determine whether we will look to the world or focus on the temple.

Over our lifetime we will face many worldly challenges. One of these challenges is that we will find that the Church and its teachings are not understood and are sometimes misrepresented. A few years ago Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles called on Church members to let their voices be heard in defending the faith and correcting false information. He pointed out that it is particularly important for us to participate in the “‘new media,’ made

possible by the Internet.”¹² In a world with diverse communications and with members spread all over the globe, there is a need for Latter-day Saints to respond to and defend against irresponsible and inaccurate descriptions of the Church when they occur. We are grateful for what has transpired since Elder Ballard’s article, and I reiterate his challenge.

I am confident that we can attain the happiness we desire and that God wants for us. It is my prayer that as we pursue the true path to happiness in our families and professions, we will use our knowledge and influence to bring greater righteousness, peace, understanding, and freedom to people all over the world. ■

From an address delivered at Brigham Young University–Hawaii on April 10, 2010. For the full text in English, visit <http://devotional.byuh.edu/node/416>.

NOTES

1. Frederic W. Farrar, *The Life and Work of St. Paul* (1902), 1:535–36.
2. Jim Holt, “A Word about the Wise,” *New York Times Book Review*, Mar. 14, 2010, 12.
3. David Brooks, “The Sandra Bullock Trade,” *New York Times*, Mar. 30, 2010, p. A23.
4. Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*, 5:134–35.
5. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust*, trans. Bayard Taylor (1912), 1:28.
6. David O. McKay, in Conference Report, Apr. 1969, 9.
7. David O. McKay, Apr. 1969, 8.
8. Mortimer B. Zuckerman, “Family-Unfriendly Policies,” *U.S. News and World Report*, Oct. 5, 2007, 72.
9. David Brooks, “The Sandra Bullock Trade,” p. A23.
10. Joseph Fielding Smith, in Conference Report, Oct. 1916, 70.
11. Thomas S. Monson, “Invitation to Exaltation,” *Tambuli*, Sept. 1993, 4; *Ensign*, June 1993, 4.
12. M. Russell Ballard, “Sharing the Gospel Using the Internet,” *Liahona*, June 2008, N1; *Ensign*, July 2008, 60.



Be involved in the world in a positive way and be a powerful force for good.

THE HEALING POWER OF

Sin, divorce, and disappointment left me wounded. The Savior helped me through them all.

Name withheld

I always knew I would come back to the Church. Still, it came as a surprise to me when the Holy Ghost whispered that now was the time. I hadn't exactly been living in a way to invite the Holy Ghost to speak to me.

But the whispering of the Spirit was persistent.

My parents had been blessed to learn of the gospel in their teens, not long after they began dating. After their marriage they were diligent about sharing this precious gift with their children. I grew up in the Church, watching my parents serve faithfully in leadership callings. In my teens, though, I dropped out, determined that I must experience life on my own terms to learn if what I had been taught was true.

Still, I never denied that the gospel is true, and a part of me knew I needed to come back. Despite the worldly lifestyle I was living, I just knew somehow that I would be married in the temple—someday.

When the Spirit spoke to me, I was in my mid-20s living far from home, in a major city of the country where I was born, and enjoying my job as a flight attendant. My parents believe those spiritual promptings came to me as a result of blessings that were pronounced on them by President Thomas S. Monson after my father was called as a mission president. President Monson promised that they would receive unexpected blessings as a result of their desire to serve and their willingness to accept the call.

I was comfortable in my lifestyle—not ready to give up what I now call “my sugar-coated years,” although I was discovering that there was little substance under the sugar coating. A breakup with a man after two years of dating opened the way for me to consider a more important relationship—with my Savior. One day while I was feeling dejected over that breakup, the words came to my mind, “I have to go back to Church.” I began attending meetings when I had Sunday off, and later I requested that I be given every Sunday off. My request was granted,

even though this privilege was almost unheard of in my line of work.

My next step in the repentance process was prayer. I had always been taught that Heavenly Father answers prayers. I turned to Him for help in making the changes that were needed in my life. With His help, the doors opened wider for me to come back.

At that time, I had a Primary child's basic understanding of repentance and forgiveness. When I was taught more fully how the Savior's Atonement really applied to me, I learned I could be forgiven for those parts of my life that were not acceptable in the Lord's eyes. The words of Mosiah 26:29 came to have deep meaning for me:

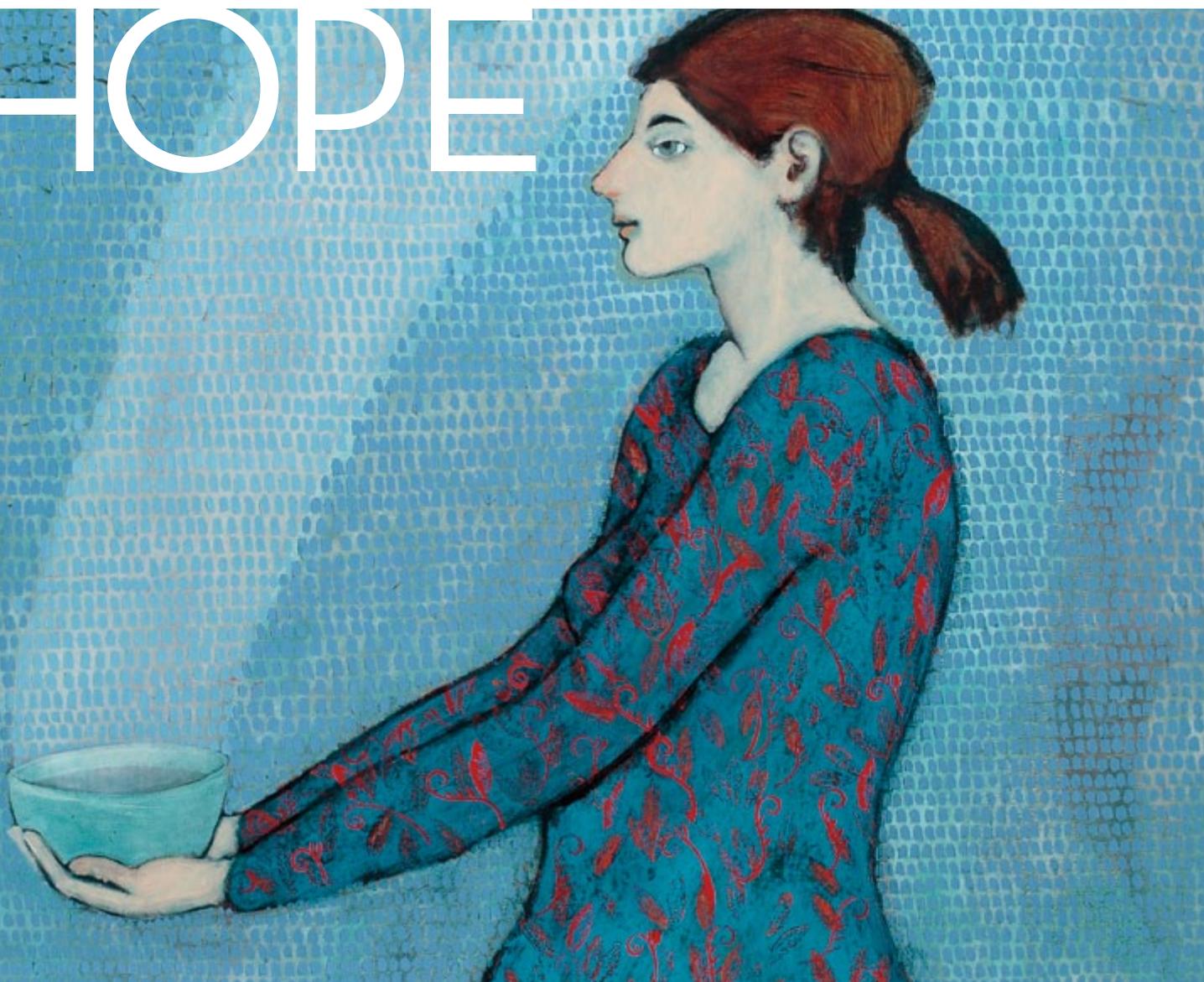
“Whosoever transgresseth against me, him shall ye judge according to the sins which he has committed; and if he confess his sins before thee and me, and repenteth in the sincerity of his heart, him shall ye forgive, and I will forgive him also.”

After much sincere repentance, I was able to go to the temple with some friends to do baptisms for the dead. I found there a few loving people who had known me since my birth. In the temple I felt overwhelmed by a sense of accomplishment. I was worthy at last to be within those walls! As a group of youth from another part of the country prepared to do baptisms for the dead, I watched them, hoping they would stay close to the gospel as they grew older, and that they would be stronger against temptation than I had been, because it never stops.

I had gained an excitement about studying the gospel, and every time I read in the scriptures, especially the Book of Mormon, I felt an increasing certainty that all I read was true. It was exciting to feel worthy to partake of the sacrament each week. For me, the feeling was like being given a precious gift all over again.

When I was able to receive my own endowments in

HOPE



the temple, and then to be sealed to a returned missionary and to move to his country, I felt this was the fulfillment of a dream.

Unfortunately, part of that dream would soon be lost. In just over a year, my marriage ended. The decision was not mine, and even though I did not want the outcome, nothing I could do would change the situation.

Watching that part of my new life crumble was more painful than I could ever have imagined. Divorce was emotionally shattering. I was alone—in my ex-husband's homeland and far from my family—wondering how to deal with the hurt. There were many tears, and it would have been easy to become bitter. But I could not, because my Heavenly Father continued to sustain me as I turned to Him in prayer and by attending the temple regularly. He has been there to comfort

me each time I needed Him, to soothe my aching heart. I know now that the Atonement of His Son can help to heal this wound too. I also know that the healing has been helped by the love of my family and the support of good friends that my Heavenly Father has placed around me.

Sometimes I look back and marvel at how He changed my life. Sometimes I still look back and wonder too how some things went wrong—the things I could not control. I suppose no one would willingly choose the pain and testing I have gone through. However, through these experiences, I have come much closer to my Heavenly Father, and I would not give up any of what I have come to know and understand about His love for me.

He still sustains me and lifts me up, and with the strength He gives me, I look to the future in hope. ■



**By Elder
Donald L. Hallstrom**
Of the Presidency of
the Seventy

THE Heart AND A WILLING Mind

In 1951 Masako Kato met the missionaries in her hometown of Yokohama, Japan. When the missionaries began to speak of spiritual things, she felt something and allowed them to teach her about the restored gospel. During this time both Masako's older sister and mother died. She was emotionally devastated but still attended the Church's little branch—even on the Sunday after her mother passed away. During the opening hymn, the power of the Spirit brought her to tears, and she gained a witness of the eternal nature of life.

Masako wanted to be baptized, but her father would not give his permission. She was of legal age, but out of respect for her father, she honored his wishes. However, she continued to attend Church meetings and participate in Church activities.

The missionaries suggested that it might be good for her to share the gospel message she had come to know. Seemingly unafraid, she invited co-workers to attend church with her. A few came to some social activities, but one, Shozo Suzuki, also came to Sunday meetings. He had a good feeling about what he heard, and he consented to receive the missionary discussions. After several months Shozo accepted the challenge to be baptized. Masako decided it was time to again seek her father's permission to be baptized, which he gave. On August 4, 1952, Masako and Shozo were baptized.

A few months later a young missionary approached them and suggested they think about marriage—to each other. This surprised them, especially Shozo. However, it prompted him to think about Masako in a different way than he had before. Not long afterward, on April 29, 1953, they were married.

Brother and Sister Suzuki were blessed with nine children. Seven of their children served full-time missions. Eight married, all in the temple. Brother Suzuki has served as a branch president, district president, mission president, president of the Japan Missionary Training



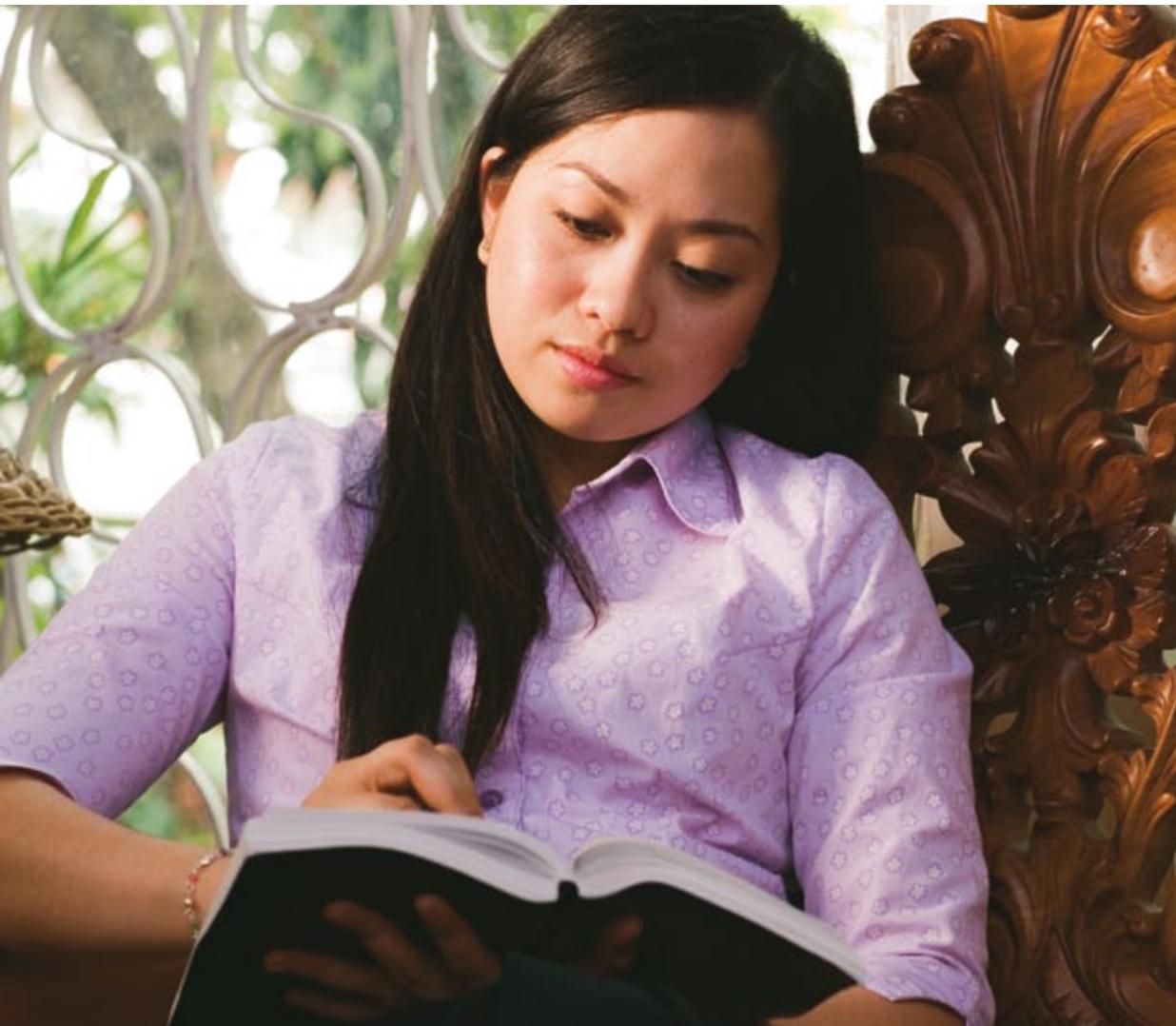
Masako and Shozo Suzuki. Shozo served as mission president in the Sapporo Japan Mission, 1976–79.

Center, regional representative, and patriarch. From Masako's determined desire to join the Church have come 54 righteous members of the Suzuki family. Indeed, "out of small things proceedeth that which is great" (D&C 64:33).

These same blessings can be found everywhere the Church is established. They can even happen in your own family.

The Heart and a Willing Mind

How do such blessings come? That question is answered in scripture: "Behold, the Lord requireth



When we live by covenant rather than by convenience, we direct our lives toward our heavenly home.

the heart and a willing mind; and the willing and obedient shall eat the good of the land of Zion in these last days” (D&C 64:34).

This doctrine is affirmed in the experience of Jesus with the Pharisaic lawyer who asked him:

“Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

“This is the first and great commandment” (Matthew 22:36–38).

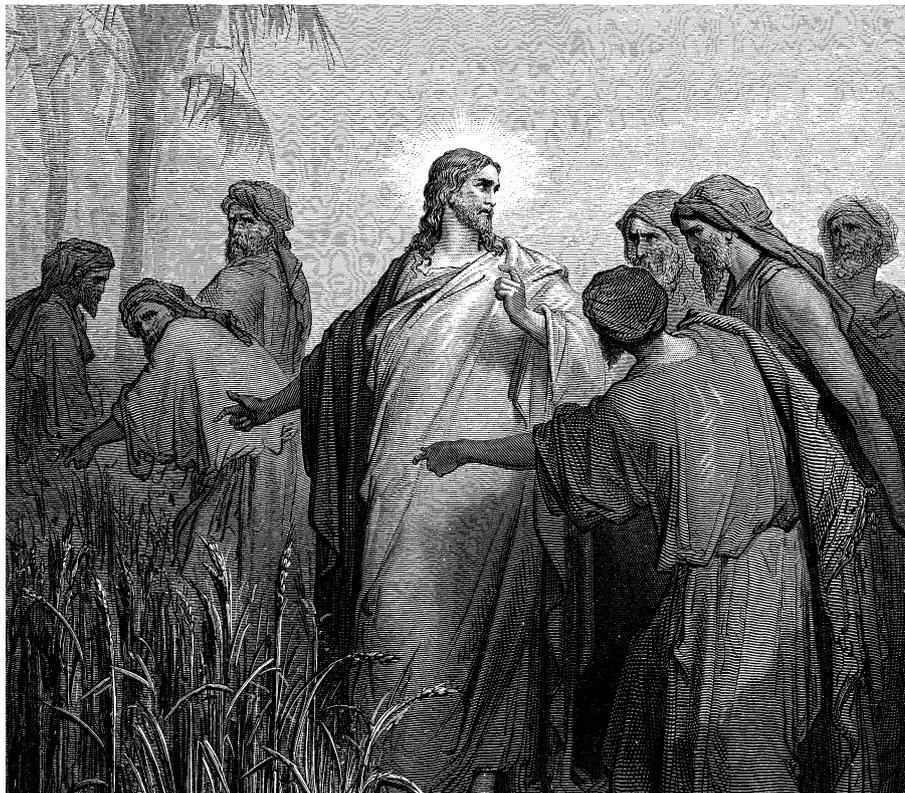
From these words we understand that both the *heart* and the *mind* must be fully engaged in this holy process.

The heart is symbolic of love and commitment. We make sacrifices and bear burdens for those we love that we would not endure for any other reason. If love does not exist, our commitment wanes.

If we love the Lord with all our heart, we are willing to give Him everything we possess. Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) said: “The submission of one’s will is really the only uniquely personal thing we have to place on God’s altar.

“Master, which is the great commandment in the law?”

“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind” (Matthew 22:36–37).



circumstances.

I wish to suggest five ways we can genuinely seek to give our heart and mind to the Lord:

1. Gain and constantly nurture your own testimony. Our testimonies should include knowledge of, and love for, God the Father, Jesus

. . . The many other things we give to God . . . are actually things He has already given us, and He has loaned them to us. But when we begin to submit ourselves by letting our wills be swallowed up in God’s will, then we are really giving something to Him. . . . There is a part of us that is ultimately sovereign, the mind and heart. . . . And when we submit to His will, then we’ve really given Him the one thing He asks of us.”¹

Having “a willing mind” connotes giving our best effort and finest thinking and seeking God’s wisdom. It suggests that our most devoted lifetime study should be of things that are eternal in nature. It means that there must be an inextricable relationship between hearing the word of God and obeying it.

The Apostle James said, “Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only” (James 1:22).

Some of us “hear” selectively and “do” when it is convenient. But for those who give their heart and mind to the Lord, whether the burden is light or heavy makes no difference. We demonstrate a consecrated heart and mind by consistently following God’s commandments no matter how difficult the

Christ, and the Holy Ghost. We should also testify of the glorious gospel plan, the centrality of the Savior and His Atonement, the Restoration of the Lord’s Church through the Prophet Joseph Smith, and the role of apostles and prophets.

If you do not feel the power and security that this knowledge brings, I ask you to study the exhortation found in Moroni 10:3–5.

2. Honor priesthood ordinances and covenants. Ordinances are sacred ceremonies in which we enter into solemn covenants with the Lord. As covenant children, we have been promised all that is required for eternal success if we are true to our promises. Prepare for the ordinances yet to be performed in your life, and be guided in your decisions by the covenants you have made. When you are evaluating alternatives, ask yourself, “Is this choice consistent with my covenants?”

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said: “The importance of having a sense of the sacred is simply this—if one does not appreciate holy things, he will lose them. Absent a feeling of reverence, he will grow increasingly casual in attitude and lax in conduct.

He will drift from the moorings that his covenants with God could provide. His feeling of accountability to God will diminish and then be forgotten. Thereafter, he will care only about his own comfort and satisfying his uncontrolled appetites. Finally, he will come to despise sacred things, even God, and then he will despise himself.”²

When we live by covenant rather than by convenience, we direct our lives toward our heavenly home.

3. Root out duplicity. A duplicitous person is double-minded in thought, speech, or action with the intent to deceive. Such a person often acts one way in public and another way in private. Often the purpose of our deception is to hide our sins, but as Jonah learned when he fled to Joppa, you cannot hide from God (see Jonah 1). Our deceit will be found out eventually, and the damage caused may be irreversible.

One way to test whether we have “an eye single to the glory of God” (D&C 4:5) or a secondary eye to the evil of the world is to evaluate how we act when we are alone. What sites do we visit on the Internet? What television programs or videos do we watch? What kinds of books and magazines do we read? Would we be comfortable doing the same activities if others were watching?

4. Continually study the doctrine. When we know the commandments of God and “liken all scriptures unto us” (1 Nephi 19:23), we will change the way we think and act.

Studying and following the counsel of living prophets is vital. Having prophets of God on earth has become so commonplace for us as members of the Church that we may underappreciate their profound importance and role.

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has stated: “Looking for the path to safety in the counsel of prophets makes sense to those with strong faith. When a prophet speaks, those with little faith may think that they hear only a wise man giving good advice. Then if his counsel seems comfortable and reasonable, squaring with what they want to do, they take it. If it does not, they consider it either faulty advice or they see their circumstances as justifying their being an exception to the counsel. . . .

“Another fallacy is to believe that the choice to accept

or not accept the counsel of prophets is no more than deciding whether to accept good advice and gain its benefits or to stay where we are. But the choice not to take prophetic counsel changes the very ground upon which we stand. It becomes more dangerous.”³

5. Establish a life of service. When I was still in my 20s, I was called to be the bishop of an 850-member ward. Two weeks before, a partner and I had founded a company and hired several new employees. At the time, my wife and I had three energetic children ages one to seven. The daunting responsibilities to properly care for my young family, to assist the Saints entrusted to my stewardship, and to create a viable business seemed impossible.

As I now reflect on the events of the ensuing years, I am convinced that service to others (most important, service to my family) has been one of the great blessings of my life. Without the continual humility and life perspective that service engenders, the allure of the world could easily have entrapped me.

By serving others, we emulate the ultimate act of service offered to each of us by the Redeemer of the world. Service is a way for us to show gratitude for the blessing of salvation, which comes only through Jesus Christ.

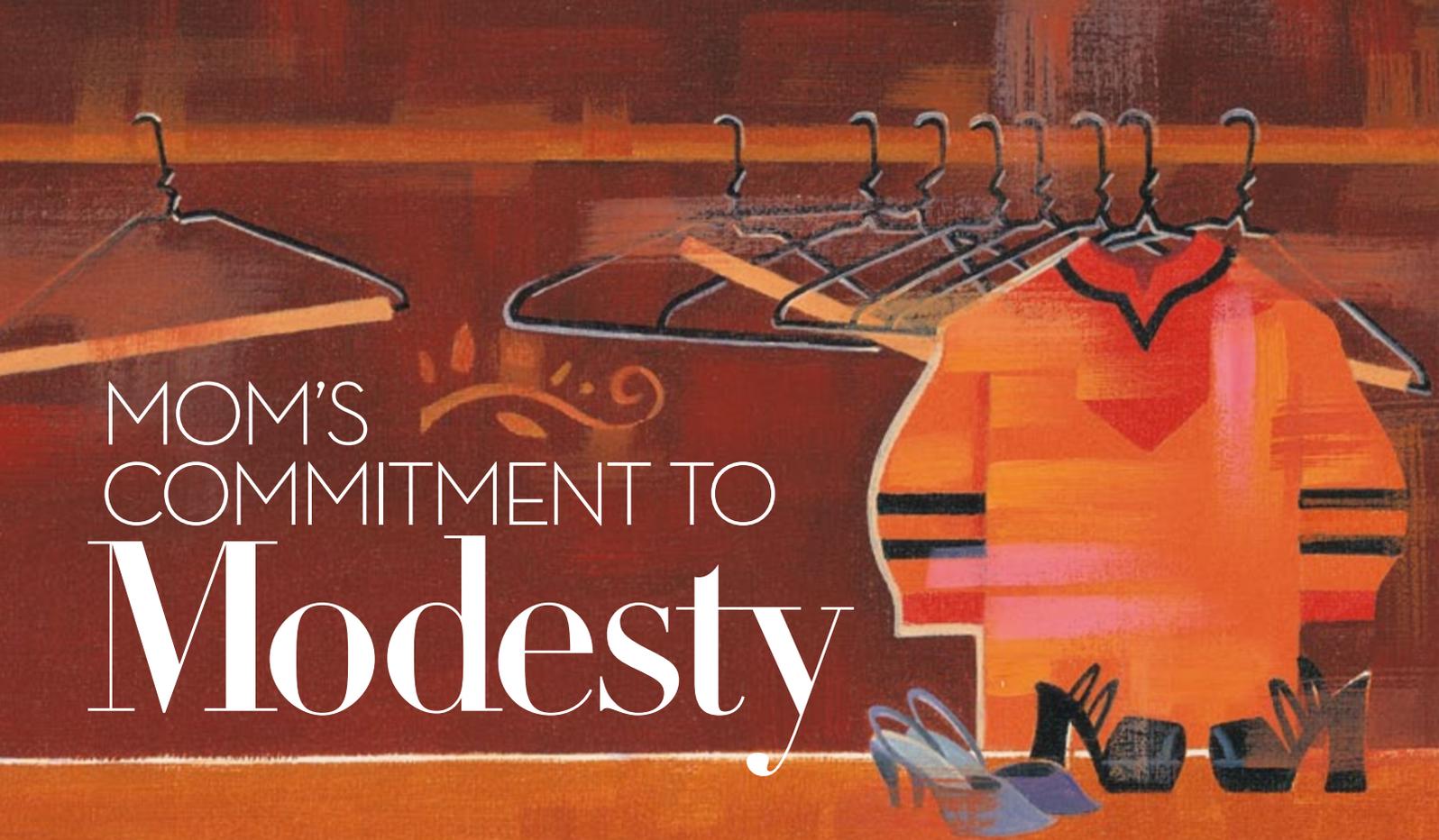
No Other Way

Submitting our will—completely giving our heart and mind to God—is not easy. But I am comfortable with, and comforted by, the “great plan of happiness” (Alma 42:8). There is no other way. I would not want another way. I testify of Him whose plan it is, God the Eternal Father, and of Him who is central to the plan, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer. I bear witness of apostles and prophets, whose counsel I gladly follow. With all my heart and mind I testify of these truths. ■

From a devotional address given at Brigham Young University—Idaho on May 17, 2005.

NOTES

1. Neal A. Maxwell, “Sharing Insights from My Life,” in *Brigham Young University 1998–99 Speeches* (1999), 4.
2. D. Todd Christofferson, “A Sense of the Sacred” (Church Educational System Fireside for young adults, Nov. 7, 2004), www.ldscs.org.
3. Henry B. Eyring, “Finding Safety in Counsel,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 25.



MOM'S COMMITMENT TO Modesty

By Kelly Ann Peterson

My mom joined the Church after she married my dad. It was the mid-1960s, and mini skirts, sleeveless shirts, and short hemlines were the fashion. As she learned more about the gospel and especially about the temple, my mom knew she would need to make a decision.

She was aware that her clothing would need to be modest to cover the temple garment she would be wearing. Going to the temple meant a great deal to her because it meant that Dad and I could be sealed to her and that we could be a family eternally. That is what she chose.

I was less than two years old, so I don't remember the sealing experience, but Mom told me that it was beautiful. She also told me that when I was brought into the sealing room, she could not hold back the tears.

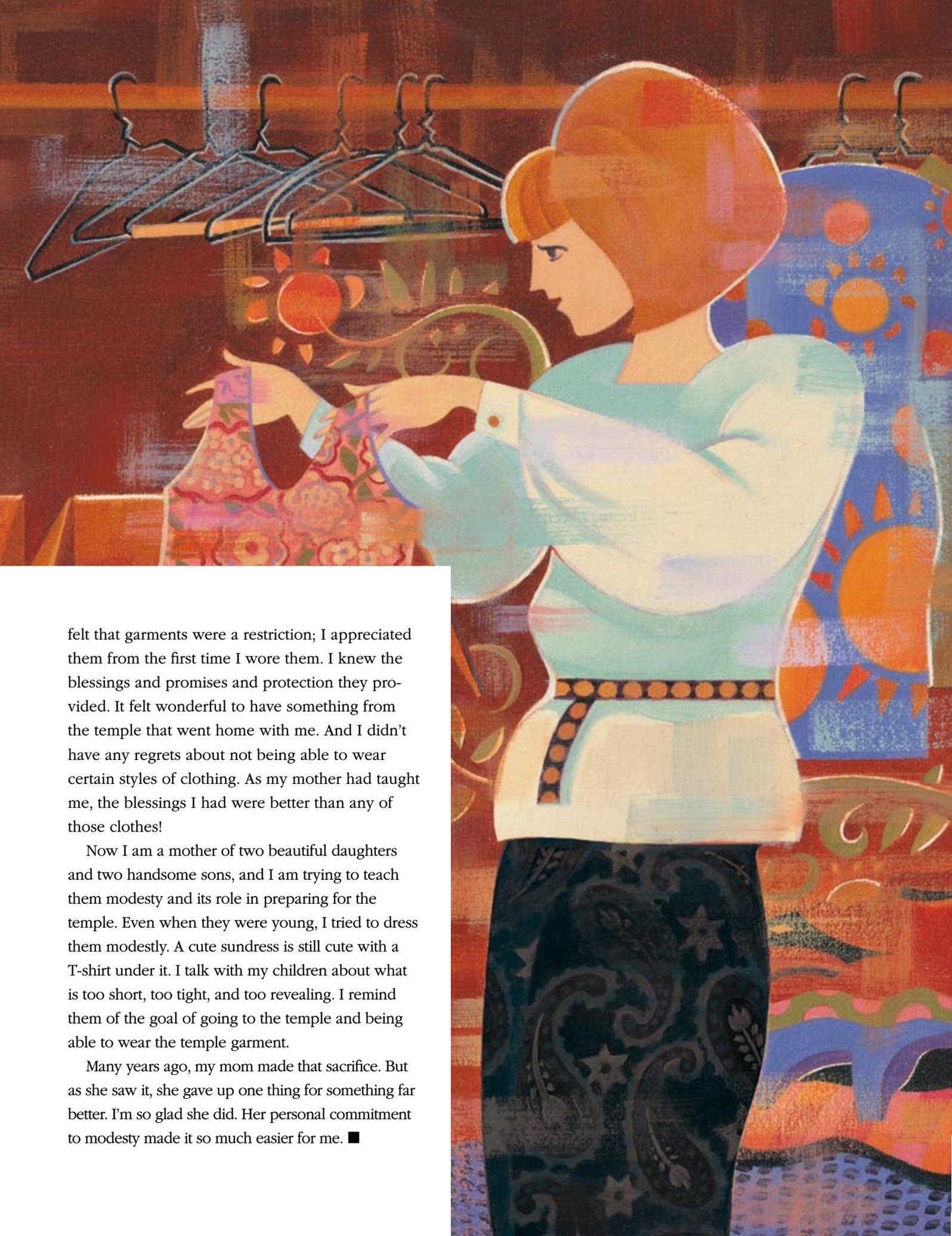
When my mom came home, she went through her wardrobe and gave away most of her clothing. But she considered it a small sacrifice. She knew the blessings of the temple were better than any of those clothes.

As I grew up, she taught me modesty. She wanted me to understand how to dress appropriately so that I wouldn't

have to change my wardrobe after I went to the temple.

My mom sewed for me, helped me choose modest clothing, and told me of her decision years before. When I was in high school looking for a formal gown to wear to the prom, she took me shopping. We searched and searched for something appropriate, and finding nothing in our area, we drove three hours to Salt Lake City. There we found a beautiful and perfectly modest pink gown. Her sacrifice of time showed me that dressing modestly was important to her. And it was at that dance I realized how important it had become to me as well. I felt like a princess in my dress. I noticed how uncomfortable some of the other girls seemed to be in their dresses. Many of them spent the evening keeping tiny straps on their shoulders or tugging at the bodices of strapless gowns. They did not look like they were having much fun.

When I later married my sweetheart in the Logan Utah Temple, I didn't have to change my wardrobe afterwards. Mom had prepared me; I had only one dress I could no longer wear. She had also prepared me by teaching me how sacred and special the garment was and what a privilege it was to be able to wear it. I never



felt that garments were a restriction; I appreciated them from the first time I wore them. I knew the blessings and promises and protection they provided. It felt wonderful to have something from the temple that went home with me. And I didn't have any regrets about not being able to wear certain styles of clothing. As my mother had taught me, the blessings I had were better than any of those clothes!

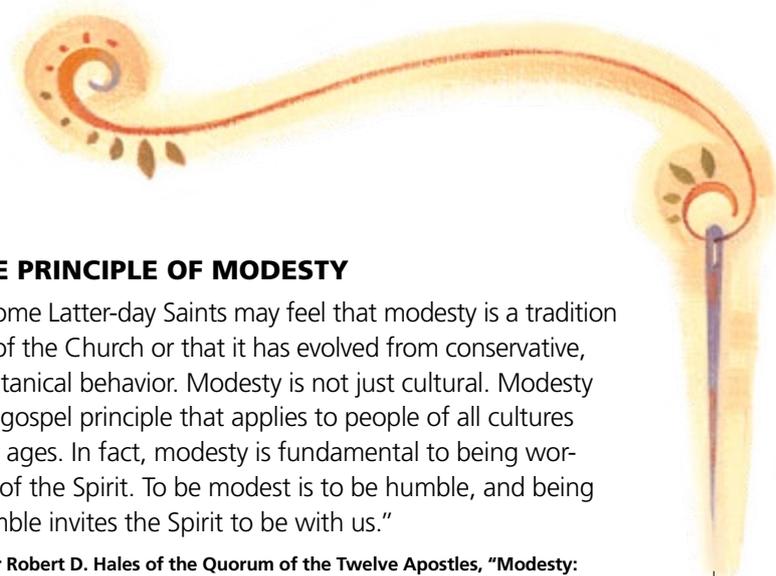
Now I am a mother of two beautiful daughters and two handsome sons, and I am trying to teach them modesty and its role in preparing for the temple. Even when they were young, I tried to dress them modestly. A cute sundress is still cute with a T-shirt under it. I talk with my children about what is too short, too tight, and too revealing. I remind them of the goal of going to the temple and being able to wear the temple garment.

Many years ago, my mom made that sacrifice. But as she saw it, she gave up one thing for something far better. I'm so glad she did. Her personal commitment to modesty made it so much easier for me. ■

Questions & Answers



Today's clothing trends aren't always modest, but it is still possible to maintain an "attitude of humility and decency in dress, grooming, language, and behavior."¹ In what ways can I be modest, specifically in finding and wearing appropriate clothing?



As a mother of five daughters, I am constantly looking for ways to help them dress modestly while still looking fashionable. My sewing skills have been invaluable in converting sleeveless prom dresses into modest ones. I've also found that if we can't find long-enough shorts, we'll convert pants into shorts or capris. I've made sure that I'm passing down these values and skills to my daughters through the Personal Progress program so that they can, in turn, adjust their clothing to meet the standards of the Church.

Other things we've done include deciding that if a skirt does not meet the suggested length, we just won't buy it. I also know that prayer works. Before shopping, I often say a prayer that we will find the item we're looking for at a price that will fit our budget, and it works! The Lord is mindful of even our smallest desires to be obedient to His commandments.

Adrienne Vanderkooi, Ontario, Canada

My sister served as a Young Women president in Alaska for several years. I have loved and followed her advice for modesty for girls and women. She used the "Head Shoulders, Knees, and Toes" method. We all know the song, but it works very well for modesty as well.

Head: Put your hands on your head. If any skin shows around your middle, your clothing is not appropriate.

Shoulders: Put your hands on your shoulders. If you can feel bare skin, the clothing is not modest.

Knees: Put your hands on your knees. You should not expose anything at the neckline of your shirt.

Toes: Put your hands on your toes. You

THE PRINCIPLE OF MODESTY

"Some Latter-day Saints may feel that modesty is a tradition of the Church or that it has evolved from conservative, puritanical behavior. Modesty is not just cultural. Modesty is a gospel principle that applies to people of all cultures and ages. In fact, modesty is fundamental to being worthy of the Spirit. To be modest is to be humble, and being humble invites the Spirit to be with us."

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Modesty: Reverence for the Lord," *Liahona*, Aug. 2008, 18; *Ensign*, Aug. 2008, 34.

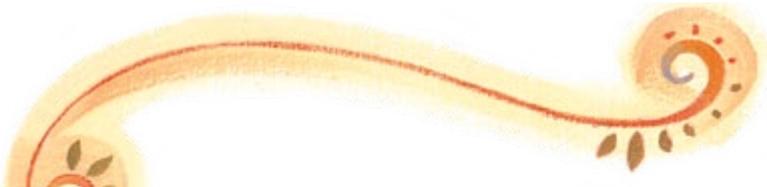
should not be exposing any skin on your backside.

I have found this to be a good exercise for checking my modesty and hope that it can be helpful to others as well.

Linda B. Fielding, Utah, USA

In a world that is ever pushing the boundaries of modesty, I have watched my mother set the example for not only my sisters but for me as well. While most often we think of modesty as only applying to girls, guys can choose to be modest also. Mom always evaluated what my siblings and I were wearing using the "arms held high" test—if skin was showing around our waist when we lifted our arms, we would choose another outfit. In addition, Mom had to approve any clothes we wanted before we bought them.

While my mother was always making sure we were modest in dress, she quietly set the example for us to follow. When my sister got married, for instance, my mother couldn't find a modest dress. She looked for weeks, but in the end, her sister made a dress for



SHARE YOUR IDEAS

An upcoming Questions & Answers feature will focus on the following question:

I haven't been active in the Church for years. I have sometimes felt like coming back, but I'm afraid of not knowing anyone or not knowing as much about the gospel as other people. I'm so intimidated. Where do I start?

If you'd like to contribute your ideas and experiences, please label them "Coming Back to Church" and follow the submission guidelines under "Do You Have a Story to Tell?" on page 3 of the Table of Contents. Please limit responses to 500 words and submit them by July 16.

her a week before the wedding. It was probably the most beautiful dress I had ever seen. Another aunt, trying to teach her five-year-old daughter about modesty, said it best: "Look, Honey, you can be pretty *and* modest at the same time."

Stephen Larson, California, USA

I like to keep up on the current styles, but I always add my own modest twist to them. If I see an outfit in the store and think it's cute but it just doesn't cover me up enough, I find a T-shirt in a coordinating color to wear under it. A friend who is not a member of the Church once told me that she likes how I can stay both stylish and modest. There is no reason to dress immodestly when you can make your own modest style.

Devynn Bohn, Florida, USA

As members of the Church, we have covenanted to take upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ and to "stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places" (Mosiah 18:9). Whenever I face a question or issue, I try to think of how the Savior would respond or act. When it comes to modesty, I believe the Savior's clothing was simple and plain, never detracting from His special message or attracting attention to Himself.

For us to be modest, we can dress and act in the same manner. Is what we're wearing or doing detracting from the Spirit? Is it putting other peoples' attention where it ought not to be? These are some questions that I ask myself when selecting my wardrobe. I do enjoy looking nice, but I always strive to stand as a witness of God, even in what I am wearing. ■

Brian Fleming, Arizona, USA

NOTE

1. *True to the Faith* (2004), 106.



MORE ON THIS TOPIC:

- "Dress and Appearance," *For the Strength of Youth* (2001), 14–16.
- "Modesty," *True to the Faith* (2004), 106–108.
- Silvia H. Allred, "Modesty: A Timeless Principle for All," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Jul. 2009, 28–32.
- Robert D. Hales, "Modesty: Reverence for the Lord," *Liahona*, Aug. 2008, 18–23; *Ensign*, Aug. 2008, 34–39.
- Joseph Walker, "More than Hemlines and Haircuts," *Ensign*, Feb. 1992, 22–25.
- D. Todd Christofferson, "A Sense of the Sacred," *Liahona* and *New Era*, Jun. 2006, 28–31.

BLESSED BY Councils

By Elder M. Russell Ballard

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



Some years ago when I was serving as a bishop, a family in our ward experienced a crisis when the father lost his job.

I was concerned about their well-being, and I visited their home to counsel with them and to offer Church assistance. Interestingly, they were reluctant to respond to my offer of temporary assistance, and so I took the matter to the ward council. In a spirit of loving confidentiality, I shared with them my concern for this wonderful family and asked for their ideas as to how we could bless them.

Our Relief Society president volunteered to visit with the mother to ascertain their temporal needs and to work with them in obtaining any commodities they needed—which, of course, was her responsibility according to the program of the Church. Within a couple of days, she had accomplished what I had been unable to accomplish, and the family humbly and gratefully accepted commodity assistance. The elders quorum president counseled with the father of the family—which, of course, was his right and duty—and worked with him on ways to find a job. Our Young Men president noticed that the family’s house was in desperate need of painting, and he arranged for his priests to work with the high priests group to paint the house.

During the course of my conversation with the parents, I discovered that they were

STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO NEED HELP

“Ward council members strive to stay informed about the needs, well-being, and spiritual progress of members in their organizations. They also stay informed about members who face special challenges or changing circumstances. This information allows them to strengthen those who most need their help.”

Handbook 2: Administering the Church (2010), 4.5.1.

Handbook 2 and the November 2010 and February 2011 worldwide leadership training broadcasts are available at LDS.org. Click “Menu” and then “Serving in the Church.”

heavily in debt and were in arrears on their mortgage. Following approved welfare guidelines, I inquired about the ability of their extended family to help but received little information. Our Relief Society president, however, was able to learn that the mother had a brother who was wealthy.

“There’s no reason to contact him,” the mother said. “We haven’t even spoken in years.”

I understood her dilemma, and yet I felt it was important to follow the order of the Church. And so I counseled with her and eventually received her permission to contact her brother, who lived in a distant city. I called him and explained the difficult circumstances in which his younger sister was living. Within three days he arrived in Salt Lake City and helped get his sister’s financial affairs in order. Meanwhile, our elders quorum president helped her husband find a steady job with a good income.

More important, however, was that they were closer and more united as a family. I don’t think I’ll ever forget that tender moment of reunion between the mother and her brother after years of estrangement. Although her brother had become alienated from the Church, there was an immediate spirit-to-spirit bonding. As a result, the brother eventually returned to full activity in the Church and renewed his relationship with his family.

All of this happened because of the inspired work of a faithful ward council functioning according to the program that God has outlined for His children through His servants. ■

From Counseling with Our Councils (1997), 15–17.



A M O R M O N

Family Memories of C. C. A. Christensen, His Great Panorama, and Two Special Paintings

By James Gordon Holmes Jr.

Our great-great-grandfather Carl Christian Anton Christensen (affectionately known as C. C. A.), has been referred to as “undoubtedly the finest 19th-century genre painter of Mormonism and Utah.”¹ An early pioneer artist from Denmark, he is best known for his Mormon Panorama—a series of 23 large oil-on-canvas paintings, each measuring 6.5 feet (1.98 m) tall by 9.5 feet (2.9 m) wide, sewn together in continuous runs. Each scene served as a pictorial record of one of the many poignant events in early Church history. I recall Grandmother sharing with me her memories of traveling with her father and C. C. A. to various Latter-day Saint settlements throughout Utah to show the panorama to local congregations. Grandmother told me that as a teenager she helped load the panorama into long wooden boxes, then into the wagon where they were covered with canvas and quilts to protect them. When they arrived at their destination, they enlisted the help of the local brethren



to unload the panorama and prepare it for presentation inside the meetinghouse.

The panorama was wound out vertically. Poles attached to tripods served as “reels,” which two men—one at each pole—rolled it out slowly so as to provide a synchronous presentation as if it were a motion picture. The direction and intensity of light thrown by the oil lamps was controlled by shades, screens, and mirrors.

Grandmother provided the background music by playing the piano. Her music consisted of a combination of various tunes and hymns, giving an added dimension of drama to each scene. It was not uncommon for the congregation to sing along with the hymns that Grandmother played.

Grandmother told me that C. C. A. “in a thick Danish accent, would then tell the story of our people. Invariably, the Saints were moved to a level of high emotion.” The experience “was especially moving for those who had actually participated in or witnessed the events being presented.”



RIGHT: PHOTOGRAPH BY R. SCOTT LLOYD, COURTESY OF DESERET NEWS; TOP, ALL PAGES: PAINTINGS COURTESY OF BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.



P A N O R A M A



Far left:
Photograph of
C. C. A. Christensen,
courtesy of Church
History Archives.

Left: Paul
Anderson, curator
of the BYU Museum
of Art, stars as
C. C. A. Christensen
in a reenactment of
C. C. A. presenting
his panorama.

Across the top of
this page and the
next are 20 of the
23 paintings in
C. C. A.'s panorama,
courtesy of the BYU
Museum of Art.



Two Companion Paintings

Throughout my youth, the painting *Winter Quarters, 1846–47* (above), shared the space on the wall above the piano in Grandmother’s neatly kept home in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA. It depicts the temporary settlement on the west bank of the Missouri River in Nebraska Territory, USA, of the Saints who fled from Nauvoo, Illinois, USA. Hanging next to it was the painting *Sugar Creek* (above right), depicting another site specific to the Mormon exodus. These paintings hung side by side in Grandmother’s home for as far back as I can remember, seemingly enjoying an inseparable companionship. We believe that both paintings were created in the 1880’s in the upstairs studio of C. C. A.’s home, unlike the panorama scenes, which were likely painted in his nearby granary.

As is commonly the case with things of a sentimental nature, the pair of paintings remained in our



family for five generations. Years ago our aunt donated *Sugar Creek* to the Church. For the last 25 years, it has hung next to its longtime companion *Winter Quarters, 1846–47* in the main gallery of the Church History Museum. However, unlike *Sugar Creek*, which is owned by the Church, *Winter Quarters, 1846–47* has been on loan from our family.

In December 2009, we, as the five children of Jeanette Taggart Holmes (deceased), came together in a unanimous decision to donate the painting to the Church.

Now the two companion paintings, which had shared the space on the wall above the piano in Grandmother’s home for so many years, have been permanently reunited. I feel sure that our great-great-grandfather, my mother, and all others who have acted as generational custodians of this wonderful work would be pleased. ■

NOTE

1. Richard L. Jensen and Richard G. Oman, *C. C. A. Christensen, 1831–1912: Mormon Immigrant Artist* (1984), 31.

C. C. A. CHRISTENSEN: LEFT: WINTER QUARTERS, 1846–47 AND SUGAR CREEK. GIFT TO THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS FROM THE FIVE CHILDREN OF JEANETTE TAGGART HOLMES (2009); LEFT, BOTTOM: THE MAINTI TEMPLE; RIGHT, TOP: HANDCART PIONEERS’ FIRST VIEW OF THE SALT LAKE VALLEY, COURTESY OF SPRINGVILLE MUSEUM OF ART; RIGHT, CENTER: EMIGRANT SHIP AND RIGHT, BOTTOM: SCENE FROM FJORD ON NORWAY’S WEST COAST. COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM



C.C.A. CHRISTENSEN'S LIFE TIME LINE:

- November 28, 1831: Born in Copenhagen, Denmark.
- 1840: Amid poverty, C. C. A.'s mother developed hope and character in her children.
- 1842: Placed in an orphanage, where his artistic talent was discovered.
- 1847–53: Attended the Royal Academy of Art in Copenhagen.
- September 26, 1850: Baptized in Copenhagen. He said, "I felt like a newborn."
- 1850–65: Served five missions in southern Scandinavia, during which he organized the first branch in Oslo, Norway, in 1853. Spent one month in Drammen, Norway, jail for proselyting in 1854.
- April 24, 1857: Married Elise Scheel Haarby of Norway on the *Westmoreland* before they cleared Liverpool harbor in England.
- September 13, 1857: Arrived in Salt Lake Valley in the 7th Handcart Company.
- 1859–62: Eventually settled in Ephraim, Utah Territory.
- 1863: Painted scenery in newly completed Salt Lake Theater.
- 1868: Worked on roadbed in Echo Canyon for Transcontinental Railroad.
- 1879: Began exhibiting first seven scenes of Mormon Panorama.
- 1881: Painted murals for the St. George Utah Temple.
- 1886–87: Painted murals for the Manti Utah Temple.
- 1887–89: Served final mission to Scandinavia.
- 1890: Ordained a patriarch.
- 1901: Worked in Church Historian's Office preparing history of Scandinavian Mission.
- July 3, 1912: Died in Ephraim, Utah.

By Mark L. Grover

I never asked God for anything that He didn't then give me," my wife, Deborah, said. This statement still astonishes me even though I was with her throughout its fulfillment. And it probably astonishes all those who know of Deborah's seven-year struggle with systemic lupus, her two-year fight with breast cancer, and her eventual death on September 19, 1990. But those who are amazed and astonished may not understand priesthood blessings or their fulfillment. It was with difficulty that I learned for myself what it means to hold the priesthood and to exercise it to bless others.

Although my parents were both active in the Church and faithful to its precepts, I don't remember the priesthood being a specific spiritual influence in my childhood. I don't recall being sick enough to need a blessing and have no memory of priesthood blessings administered to others in my family.

This lack of emphasis on priesthood blessings carried over into my own family when I married and my wife and

of my uneasiness about giving blessings and seldom asked for the additional spiritual help she may have desired.

In March 1989, when the doctor announced that my wife had cancer, our lives were altered. Because of the exotic nature of her cancer, it had eluded physicians for two years. By the time it was finally diagnosed, it had spread and her chance for recovery had significantly diminished. Knowing we were in a struggle we could not win on our own, we further opened our lives to spiritual help. Our ward fasted for Deborah, and we gratefully accepted the care of the Relief Society. Her battle became one fought by many. A friend who had endured the same chemotherapy my wife was about to receive confided that during the most difficult periods of the treatment, he had requested and received priesthood blessings. He advised us to do the same—to seek spiritual help in order to tolerate the effects of the treatments.

The chemotherapy was difficult. My wife experienced all the expected reactions. She was sick for several days after

Priesthood Blessings

LEARNING TO TRUST IN GOD

I had children. I gave priesthood blessings if someone was seriously ill or was having an operation. I also gave my wife a few blessings for emotional help, but those occasions were rare.

Giving a blessing was always a positive experience for me. But a lack of understanding and a shortage of self-confidence limited my exercise of this priesthood function. I struggled to know the words to say, unsure if what came into my mind was really what God wanted.

This situation changed little when my wife discovered she was suffering from systemic lupus. Those years of battling a disease of exhaustion and discomfort were aided by only occasional priesthood blessings. My wife was aware

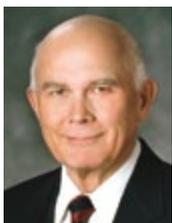
a treatment. She spent most days in bed, and eating was a chore. But little by little we learned how to confront each challenge as well as possible.

During this difficult period, my wife, as our friend had advised, called on me for priesthood blessings. I gave her a blessing to help ease the anxiety she experienced the first week of chemo. Through a priesthood blessing, the fear accompanying an operation—though not completely eliminated—decreased. Long periods of vomiting stopped and sleep replaced restless nights as I laid my hands on her head and blessed her. These blessings gave us promises of help and comfort, intermingled with glimpses of the future. They filled us with warmth and joy.

*Every blessing
was fulfilled—
even though we
didn't get what
we desired
most.*



I wish I could say that giving blessings became easier for me then, but I can't. I gave the requested blessings, but my difficulty in exercising the priesthood persisted. I never mentioned my discomfort to my wife, but she could sense my reluctance. However, these were difficult trials, and she knew she was entitled to help and I was the conduit through which she could receive it. So when she needed help, she asked.



IN HARMONY WITH HIS WILL

"As we exercise the undoubted power of the priesthood of God and as we treasure His promise that He will hear and answer the prayer of faith, we must always remember that faith

and the healing power of the priesthood cannot produce a result contrary to the will of Him whose priesthood it is. This principle is taught in the revelation directing that the elders of the Church shall lay their hands upon the sick. The Lord's promise is that 'he that hath faith in me to be healed, *and is not appointed unto death*, shall be healed' (D&C 42:48; emphasis added)."

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Healing the Sick," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2010, 50.

Before giving any blessing, I knew what I wanted to bless her with: I wanted more than anything to bless her to be healed. And she wanted that too. But that blessing never came. What did come were blessings of comfort, which didn't take the trial away but made it easier to bear.

Slowly I began to understand better how the priesthood and priesthood blessings work. Giving blessings wasn't a tool to get what I wanted but rather a way to receive needed help. I learned to trust in the Lord and His will instead of what I thought needed to be done. I gained confidence that the words that came to my mind were indeed the words God wanted me to say. And while giving blessings has never become easy for me, I have learned to trust in the feelings I have while giving blessings.

After Deborah completed her treatments, we began

the difficult phase of waiting to see if the drugs had been effective. We enjoyed this time free of doctor's appointments, tests, and treatments. However, in the back of our minds was the fear that some cancer had been able to survive the onslaught of the poisonous anticancer drugs and was reestablishing itself.

Little by little, small physical signs convinced us of our greatest fear: the treatments had not been successful. The doctors were upbeat, but we knew it was a matter of time.

The last six months of Deborah's life were incredibly calm. After one last procedure failed, we decided to discontinue the treatments and to go home and enjoy what time was left. Some may not believe that it was a wonderful few months, but it was the best time of my life.

During this period some concerned friends and family suggested that we needed to be more assertive with the Lord in our battle to save her life. They told me that I had the priesthood and should use it to cure her. Though I understood their feelings, these friends didn't understand what was happening. There was nothing I wanted more than to promise Deborah life, but those words never came while I was giving her a blessing. There was little she would have desired more than to have a blessing of health, but she never felt she should ask. We both believed in miracles but also recognized our limited perspective on an experience that fits into an eternal plan.

What did happen was a greater miracle. In the blessings, she was never promised life but was given the indisputable assurance that what was happening was God's will. She was not promised ease but was given help to endure the difficult times. She was not allowed to stay and raise our children but was assured of eternal bonds. She passed away with only limited pain and discomfort, with her family at her side.

I know that God does exist and deeply cares for us. He provides us with comfort and assistance when we need strength and understanding. Though life is difficult, the Lord has promised to help us through our trials, and one way help comes is through priesthood blessings. Knowing this, my wife was able to say, "I never asked God for anything that He didn't then give me." ■

REACHING OUT TO Single Adults

By Allison L. Weiss

As I reflect on my life as a single adult, I recognize that although there is much that I can do to build relationships with fellow ward members, many kind gestures have strengthened my resolve to stay faithful and helped me feel that I belong to my ward family. Below are a few ideas that may help you to strengthen the single members in your ward.

Relationships with Ward Leaders

Occasionally, busy fathers and mothers who are also leaders in the Church forget what it is like to participate in Sunday services as a single adult. It means so much to me when a member of the bishopric, the Relief Society president, or elders quorum president confidently calls me by name and shakes my hand. I love when families invite me to sit with them at church. Those little acts tell me, “We know who you are. We want you here. You’re not alone.”

Faithful Home and Visiting Teachers

Church family *is* my family. As a single adult, I am particularly dependent on monthly visits and friendly phone calls from visiting and home teachers. I appreciate those who make it easy to ask for what I need,



whether it’s a priesthood blessing, a shoulder to lean on, a compassionate ear, or a good laugh.

Appropriate Physical Touch

Growing up in a large family, I had ample opportunities to hug and cuddle babies, tousle the hair of young children, joke around with brothers and sisters, and sit close to parents. As a single adult, I don’t always know if or when I can interact this way with ward members. I appreciate when female ward members give me a hug and let me know that it’s OK to interact with and hug their young children. These small gestures help me feel the love and support of my Heavenly Father.

Social Opportunities outside Church

I am glad to socialize with ward families during the week, but sometimes I feel a little bashful inviting myself into their lives. I appreciate the moments I can spend in a family

home evening, family prayer, family outing, or Sunday dinner. It is a true gift when I can experience the Spirit and blessings of the priesthood operating in a Latter-day Saint home.

Life Goals

I am taking advantage of my season as a single adult to continue my education and engage in worthwhile projects inside and outside of the Church. I thrill at the chance to share with ward members what I am doing with my time and talents. I love it when they are sincerely interested in my personal and professional pursuits.

Acceptance

Single adults of all ages are confronted daily with the fact that they are operating alone in the world. Most of us, given enough time, prayer, and trials, come to grips with this fact and come closer to the Savior as a result—a blessing I deeply treasure. It lifts my heart when ward members interact with me as openly as they do with other families and married couples.

As brothers and sisters in the gospel, we are all children of God trying to live faithful lives. Remembering this shared commitment can make it easier for all of us to share in the joys and sorrows of life and to greet, fellowship, and love one another. ■



Single

IN A FAMILY- ORIENTED CHURCH

By Todd L. Goodsell

People sometimes wonder how I thrive in the Church. This is what I tell them.

Some time ago I was talking with a gentleman I had met at a civic event. I learned that he had been raised a Latter-day Saint but was no longer active in the Church. As we swapped stories about our lives, he shook his head and exclaimed that it was difficult to understand how I—someone in his mid-30s who had never been married—could remain active in the Church when some members are

insensitive toward singles and particularly toward single men. He told me that after finishing school, he purchased a home at age 30 and hoped to marry soon thereafter, but when that did not happen, some members of the Church stopped interacting with him. Some, he said, even started saying unkind things about him. He resolved the discomfort he felt by leaving the Church.

I am sorry for this brother. I tried to

explain how I felt about the Church, what I do in it, and what the gospel does for me. I hope he comes back someday soon.

The Church is *exactly* where single adults belong. It has had a profound influence in my life, but I understand that being a single adult in the Church—and especially a single man—can bring with it some difficulties. There are several things that have helped me get along in a Church that is decidedly (and rightfully) pro-family.

Don't Be Resentful

In my early 20s, I met some never-married singles in their 30s who were resentful or depressed about their situation. Although I earnestly did not want to be over 30 and single, I decided then that no matter what course my life took, I would not harbor negative feelings toward those who had family blessings I hoped to have myself. Instead, I choose to congratulate those I know when they marry or have children. As a sociologist I have studied young couples with children, and I now live in a ward with lots of recently married couples and young children. It can hurt to hear some married men complain that they do not want children since I have not had the opportunity to become a father. Still, I seek to learn from married people and remind myself that someday I will receive the blessings of marriage and parenthood too.

Fully Participate in the Ward to Which You Belong

Every time I move into a new ward, I schedule an appointment with the bishop. In that appointment, I introduce myself, telling him what I am doing in my life, explaining how I feel about the gospel, and placing myself at the Lord's service. This usually leads to my receiving some responsibility in the ward, at which I try to do my best.

I have occasionally heard some single men complain about not being able to hold certain callings because of their marital status. Although it's

true that there are some callings that a single brother cannot hold—he cannot be a bishop, for example—I have found that there are many more ways I *can* serve than ways I cannot. The way I see it is that this is Christ's church, not mine. I want to do everything I can to help His work succeed.

I also try to get to know the other members of the ward, married and single. For instance, when I have been new to a ward, I obtain a copy of the ward list. Then, either before or after church, I call someone I do not yet know and ask if I can

deliver some bread or other treats I have made. When I deliver them, I usually have an opportunity to talk with the ward members I'm visiting and get to know them a little bit. Later, after getting to know most members of the

ward, I pay attention to new families who attend the ward, writing down their address and delivering treats to them during the upcoming week. Many have appreciated that someone noticed them and welcomed them into the ward. Doing this has helped me to get to know people in the ward and feel as though I can talk to and do things with them.



There are many more ways I can serve than ways I cannot. The way I see it is that this is Christ's church, not mine. I want to do everything I can to help His work succeed.



in a God of miracles.” He requires that we “go with all [our] might and with all [we] have” to do what He has commanded “*and cease not [our] diligence*” (D&C 124:49, emphasis added). I do not have to be perfect right now; I just have to do my very best—and not give up. Heavenly Father will take care of whatever I cannot do for reasons beyond my control. I cannot stop trying.

Instead of “giving up,” make big decisions with reference to the blessing you want to receive. I decided I would do things that would make me more marriageable in time, whenever that time came. So I went ahead with my schooling and started my career. I realized I do not have to wait until I am married to put myself in a position to support a family. However, I made sure that along the way I was still available to date and willing to marry. I like the way German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer put it: “We must be ready to allow ourselves to be interrupted by God.”¹ In addition, I have tried to make sure that I do not get so set in my ways that I would be unable to adjust to having a wife and children with me too. Finally, I try to give meaningful service and become a more interesting person than I would be if I just sat around watching television. In the course of doing so, I have met other people who are trying to accomplish something good.

Teach the Full Gospel

Some single adults get offended when the concept of family is discussed at church. I would be offended if we did *not* talk about families at church! Families are central to the gospel. Our purpose in being here is to create eternal families composed of exalted individuals. We are not perfect yet, but we can be made so through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. I personally welcome teachings about family in Sunday School and priesthood. On a practical level, I want to learn how to be a good husband and father before I get there. On a spiritual level, I want to feel the Spirit when we talk about the gospel of Jesus Christ—not the sense of emptiness that comes when we skip some portion of the gospel out of fear or distaste.

Don't “Give Up”

I put “give up” in quotation marks because that is what many single adults say they are doing when they

I welcome teachings about family in Sunday School and priesthood. I want to feel the Spirit when we talk about the gospel of Jesus Christ—not the sense of emptiness that comes when we skip some portion of the gospel out of fear or distaste.

stop hoping for promised blessings and instead do things that make the promised blessings less likely. For instance, when people “give up,” they might stop attending church meetings or singles activities, or they might date, cohabit with, or marry someone not of our faith. If I were to “give up,” even if it were only for a short time, that might be just the time when I could have met a wonderful woman. I do not want to miss the opportunity.

And the opportunity can still come. As one friend told me: “We believe

Respond to Rude Comments with Kindness

Sometimes members assume that the lack of a blessing is the result of a person's unrighteousness, and occasionally they can say things without considering others' feelings. At times all I can do is remind myself that the Church exists as a means of helping imperfect people become perfected through the Atonement of Christ. Other times I find that I can do more than this. Many married people do not know how to talk about singlehood. They do not have concepts or experiences that express what it is like.

Once, in a public setting, a local church leader made a remark about my marital status that left me embarrassed. Wanting to resolve the situation and also treat him with respect, I called him a week or two later. I told him that I was glad that he was concerned about my welfare, and I hoped he would feel comfortable talking with me about my marital status. It turned out that he was unsure how to bring up the subject. I suggested that in the future, instead of doing it the way he had, he could ask me—privately—“What have you been through?” “How do you feel about it?” and “Is there anything I can do to help?” In this manner, we established a means by which we could talk about this topic.

On another occasion, a different married brother made an unkind remark about unmarried men in

general. That created an awkward situation, but I understood it as an unfortunate mistake by a brother who was basically good. Later that day he caught me between meetings and apologized. He said that he had not realized that I was not married, but even if I were married, he said, his comment would have been inappropriate. I felt better. One evening a couple of days later, there was a knock on my door. I opened the door to find that same brother. I invited him in, and he again apologized for what he had said the previous Sunday. He said his comment was flippant, irresponsible, and wrong. I

STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE

“Remember that we have all been single, are now single, or at some time may again be single; so being single in the Church is not extraordinary. . . .

“If you are striving for excellence—if you are trying your best day by day with the wisest use of your time and energy to reach realistic goals—you will be a success whether you are married or single.”

President James E. Faust (1920–2007), “Welcoming Every Single One,” *Ensign*, Aug. 2007, 5–6; *Liahona*, Aug. 2007, 2–6.

felt gratitude and love for this brother who was trying to repair any damage he had caused.

Live As Much of the Gospel As You Can

When my stake presidency asked stake members to obtain a home storage supply, I set about doing that. I laughed at my awkward attempts to be obedient and at how some foods come in containers so large that much of the food, when the container was opened, would spoil before an individual could eat it all. But I built my home storage anyway, in containers that made sense for a single person who lives alone.

Likewise, I do not yet have a wife I can take to the temple, but because I plan to attend regularly with my wife when I am married, there is no reason I cannot establish the habit of regular temple service while I am single. For now, I can invite the Spirit to attend me in my daily scripture study. Someday my wife will be able to add her insights too as we study the gospel together.

These practices and attitudes have helped me as a single member in the Church. As I explained to the gentleman I met at the civic event, even though some promised blessings have not come yet, that does not mean they will never come. What matters is that we do things now to keep ourselves available to receive the blessing. ■

NOTE

1. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Faith in Community* (1954), 99.

The Latter-day Saint Concept of Marriage



Hugh B. Brown was born on October 24, 1883, in Granger, Utah. He was ordained an Apostle in 1958. He served as a counselor to President David O. McKay for eight years. The following article is an excerpt from his book *You and Your Marriage*.

By President Hugh B. Brown (1883–1975)

First Counselor in the First Presidency

Marriage is and should be a sacrament. The word *sacrament* is variously defined, but among Christian people it signifies a religious act or ceremony, solemnized by one having proper authority. It is a pledge, or solemn covenant, a spiritual sign or bond between the contracting parties themselves and between them and God. That marriage was instituted and sanctified by the Lord Himself is shown by the following quotations:

“And the Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. . . .

“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and

shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:18, 24).

When Jesus departed from Galilee and came into the coasts of Judea beyond Jordan, a great multitude followed Him, and the Pharisees questioned Him regarding divorce.

“And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,

“And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?

“Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined

together, let not man put asunder” (Matthew 19:4–6).

Marriage Fulfills God’s Purposes

It is plain that God intended that man and woman should become one. By personally officiating at this first wedding, He sanctified the institution of marriage. It is a normal, healthful, and desirable state and was instituted to fulfill God’s purpose in the earth.

It is the central element in the domestic establishment. It is more than a human institution to be regulated solely by custom and civil law. It is more than a contract under the sanction of moral law. It is or should be a religious sacrament by which men and women solemnly undertake to cooperate with God in His avowed purpose to make earth life and mortality available to His spirit children and to bring to pass their immortality and eternal life.

There are those who say that the highest, most dedicated, and most desirable life may be achieved outside the marriage covenant. In other words, they would forbid those who seek the highest glory to be “contaminated by physical and animal-like associations.” There



is no warrant in the scripture for such doctrine. In the book of Proverbs we read, “Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord” (Proverbs 18:22). . . .

And in the Doctrine and Covenants we read, “And again, verily I say unto you, that whoso forbiddeth to marry is not ordained of God, for marriage is ordained of God unto man” (D&C 49:15).

Temple Marriage Brings True Happiness

The Latter-day Saints believe that in order to attain the best in life and the greatest happiness in this world and for the next, men and women must be married in the temple for time and eternity. Without the sealing ordinances of temple marriage,

man cannot achieve a godlike stature or receive a fulness of joy. . . .

To a Latter-day Saint, there is only one kind of marriage that is wholly acceptable: temple or celestial marriage, which is performed only in the temples of the Church. Temples are erected and dedicated in holiness to the Lord to provide a place where spiritual and eternal ceremonies and ordinances may be performed. While we recognize civil marriages performed by ministers of other churches and civil marriages performed by officers of the law or others legally qualified to perform them, we believe that only in a temple of God can a marriage for time and eternity be performed and then only by one having the authority which Christ gave to Peter when

He said, “Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven” (Matthew 16:19).

This authority is referred to in the scriptures as “the keys of the

kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 16:19), and in celestial marriage those keys open the door to that kingdom.

Needs Are Fully Realized

Man has certain basic needs—moral, social, biological, and spiritual—and these can only be fully realized in the God-ordained institution of eternal marriage.

To live the abundant life here and eternal life hereafter, man must love and be loved, serve

Latter-day Saints believe that in order to attain the best in life and the greatest happiness in this world and for the next, men and women must be married in the temple.



blessings are intended to continue throughout the eternities to come. But to enjoy the privileges and advantages of eternal love as it relates to husbands and wives, parents and children, the ordinance that authorizes and sanctifies this most beautiful of all relationships is not acceptable if it contains the limitation “until death do you part.” For family relationships and conjugal associations to be eternal, the marriage contract must

authoritatively state, “for time and for all eternity.”

All people should realize their responsibility to their offspring and to the covenants they make with respect thereto. When the Lord said, “We without them cannot be made perfect” (D&C 128:18), He was referring to a chain whose links extend into the future as well as the past. In fact, we may

have more direct responsibility for those entrusted to us in this life than to our ancestors. We cannot be held responsible for the sins, either of commission or of omission, of our ancestors, but He has warned that in case of failure on the part of our

Latter-day Saints believe that God is actually the third partner in this marriage relationship and that bringing children into the world within the divinely sanctioned institution of marriage is part of His plan.

and sacrifice, have responsibility and exercise his God-given creative powers. “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

But perhaps the greatest value of marriage is not that which accrues to the individual man and woman. The purpose of their union in the beginning is indicated by the Lord’s commandment: “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it” (Genesis 1:28). In proper marriage, there is opportunity for man to realize his natural urge to be creative and productive. This can be completely fulfilled and properly enjoyed only in the marriage relationship, in child bearing and child rearing. Parents should remember that the children born to them—their children—are also the children of God. He is the Father of their spirit bodies, and during the pre-earth existence He wisely made provision

for eternal element and eternal spirit to be inseparably connected and receive a fulness of joy. Latter-day Saints therefore believe that God is actually the third partner in this relationship and that bringing children into the world within the divinely sanctioned institution of marriage is part of His plan to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.

The Eternal Nature of Marriage

When the Lord Jesus designated love of God and love of fellowmen as the two great commandments, He glorified love. In fact, we are told that God is love. Therefore, as God is eternal, so love must be eternal, and its fruits and



posterity, if it can be attributed to our failure in our duty to them, then the sins will be upon our heads.

Among the blessings of those who attain the highest degree in the celestial kingdom is the blessing of eternal increase, which, among other things, means that even after death men may continue to cooperate with God in bringing to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.

Progressing as Eternal Companions

The Latter-day Saint concept of eternal progression includes eternal development, eternal increase of knowledge, power, intelligence, awareness, and all the characteristics and capacities that make for godhood. But in the economy of God, man cannot attain this state of continuing perfection in his unfinished or unmarried state. There must be growth and increase of the whole man—in other words, the man who has found and been united to his other half.

This concept of marriage, with its divine perspective, gives new meaning and adds importance, dignity, and glory to the idea of marriage. With this concept the thoughtful person will be more careful and selective in the choice of his eternal companion. Certainly before entering into such an eternal contract, both men and women should be humble and thoughtful and should prayerfully seek for divine guidance.

The religious sanctity and sanction of the marriage relationship [are] greatly enhanced and appreciated where the couple, before marriage—and they must, necessarily, be of the same faith—start with the same goal in mind. They must prepare and be worthy to receive the sacred ordinance in edifices where only the worthy may enter. Here they receive instruction, make covenants, and then at the altar pledge eternal love and fidelity, each for the other, in the presence of

God and of angels. Surely such a concept and practice, with its accompanying obligations, makes for the permanence of the home, the glorifying of the institution of marriage, and the salvation of the souls of men.

An Act of Faith

Such marriage is essentially an act of faith, solemnized in the presence of a divine partner. There must be faith and courage to see it through, to endure to the end, despite the difficulties, trials, disappointments, and occasional bereavements which may be encountered.

When one accepts the conditions and obligations of this eternal partnership, he must realize that failure here is almost total failure. Whatever his successes may be in other fields of activity, if a man fails to discharge the obligations imposed by the eternal covenant, the appalling penalty will be the loss of celestial glory, accompanied by responsibility for the losses sustained by those with whom he made the contract and for whom he is responsible.

“Marriage is ordained of God unto man.

“Wherefore, it is lawful that he should have one wife, and they twain shall be one flesh, and all this that the earth might

answer the end of its creation;

“And that it might be filled with the measure of man, according to his creation before the world was made” (D&C 49:15–17). ■

Subheads added; punctuation and capitalization standardized.



NO BLESSINGS WITHHELD

“What of the many mature members of the Church

who are not married? Through no failing of their own, they deal with the trials of life alone. Be we all reminded that, in the Lord’s own way and time, no blessings will be withheld from His faithful Saints. The Lord will judge and reward each individual according to heartfelt desire as well as deed.”

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Celestial Marriage,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 94.



I DESPERATELY
WANTED TO
STOP

Name withheld

How I am overcoming my addiction to pornography.

My struggle with pornography began during my youth, when others introduced me to inappropriate materials and behaviors. The gospel was not a major part of my life then. Although my family had attended church through my Primary years, by the time I was 13 or 14, we stopped going altogether. As a result, the teachings of the gospel did not really play a role in my decision making.

It never occurred to me to tell my parents what neighbors and so-called friends were introducing me to. I was too embarrassed to bring up what I had seen and experienced. I had no idea how to deal with it. For decades to come, my pornography addiction would remain my secret.

Influence of the Gospel

Shortly before I graduated from high school, a seemingly small miracle happened, an event that would turn my life in another direction. Despite the distance between my actions and gospel standards, one Sunday morning I followed a strong prompting to go to church and pay tithing. When I arrived at the chapel, I asked for people I knew. One of the names I gave was the Young Men president I had when I was a deacon, the last time I had attended church. He was now serving as bishop of the ward.

That good bishop helped bring me back into the Church. I confessed my sins, and he worked with me to set up a progress plan. Over several months I

repented. I advanced in the priesthood. I held a calling. I was doing so well, in fact, that I was called to serve a mission, and I had a period of several years when my addiction was under control.

Caught in the Net

When I returned home from my mission, I did not struggle with pornography; I simply did not have access to it. That changed in the late 1990s, when the Internet became increasingly pervasive. I accidentally stumbled across some pornographic images online, and I returned to pornographic sites over and over again during the following months. The web had ensnared me.

I wanted to reach out to someone for help, but I wasn't sure whom—or how. How could I talk to my parents about this? How could I admit to my bishop that even though I had made so much progress, I couldn't stop engaging in this immoral behavior? I desperately wanted to stop, but I was too embarrassed by my weakness to confide in anyone, so I kept my addiction to myself.

I didn't even tell my wife, whom I married in 2000. I wanted to tell her about my struggle when we were dating, but I was terrified that she would look down on me or, worse yet, refuse to marry me. So I lied. And I continued to do so in our marriage. I found myself being sneaky to prevent being caught. I hid pictures on my computer. When my wife asked me about particular Internet links, I denied knowing what she was talking about. Addictions

are like that; they create great liars. I knew it was creating a wedge in our marriage and causing her great pain, but I would not acknowledge that I had a problem. What mattered most to me was not my behavior but how people perceived me.

My double life—and the resulting loss of the Spirit—made me vulnerable to increasingly serious sins, including infidelity. My wife had strong impressions that something was wrong and told me about them. With great remorse, I admitted to what I had done.

That was my lowest point, the point at which I realized that *I had to change*. Sitting across from me was the woman I loved. She loved me. I had betrayed her. I determined then to do whatever it took to save our relationship and our family.

Recovery

I began meeting with my bishop regularly in working through the repentance process and Church discipline. He recommended I attend meetings of the addiction recovery program, offered through LDS Family Services. I had never heard of the program. I learned that the group held free, confidential meetings based on the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, adapted into a framework of the doctrines and principles of the Church.

I admit that during the first few meetings, I thought, "I don't need to be here. I don't really have a problem with pornography. I can quit any time." That, of course, wasn't true.

DELIVERANCE: ONLY IN GOD



“Are you struggling with some sin or weakness? It can be something as simple as not having the willpower to rise in the morning early

enough to have time for scripture study and prayer. It can be something so powerful, such as Internet pornography or lack of moral self-control, that you feel you have been pulled down into an abyss and there is no hope for you. Do you find yourself hating what you are doing but not able to find the willpower to turn away from it? Then reach out and humble yourself. The Lord’s enabling power is sufficient to change your heart, to turn your life, to purge your soul. But you must make the first move, which is to humble yourself and realize that only in God can you find deliverance.”

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Be Strong in the Lord,” *Ensign*, July 2004, 12.

With my bishop’s encouragement, I continued to attend. My pride began to melt away, and I began to work the steps of the program: honesty, hope, trust in God, truth, confession, change of heart, humility, seeking forgiveness, restitution and reconciliation, daily accountability, personal revelation, and service. For the first time in a long time, I was living a “sober” life, a life free of pornography. Recovery isn’t ever really “over,” but I had been introduced to a new level of freedom. It came because as I participated in the 12 steps, I came to understand what was behind my addiction.

I learned that most people battling addictions have turned to some kind of “self-medication” to fill the voids they feel in their lives. Pain, sorrow, loneliness, fear, or other kinds of discomfort can act as triggers that can entice people to use this self-medication to make them feel better. Some people use prescription drugs. Others use illicit drugs. Others use alcohol. For me, pornography offered the short-term, artificial “quick fix” I thought I needed.

Knowing what triggered my addiction was one thing. Avoiding environments that aided my addiction was another. This stance requires being vigilant 24 hours a day, seven days a week for the rest of my life. I cannot get online “just to browse.” In fact, if I am by myself, I don’t go online at all. I can’t look at an ad and entertain thoughts in my mind. We don’t have cable TV in our home. When I commute to work, I avoid taking certain roads because I know there are billboards along those roads that could trigger inappropriate thoughts. If I start to slip and my mind begins to wander, I turn to my wife, to my bishop, and to prayer for strength.

My addiction affects the most minute parts of my life, but taking these precautions is worth it. I cannot neglect these defenses because I know what my addiction can do to me and to those I love.

Reliance on Deity

It’s not just a matter of avoiding the bad, though. I also must make

constant, conscious efforts to turn to the good. Several of the 12 steps have helped me do this by bringing me closer to God.

Every day when I wake up, I get on my knees and thank Heavenly Father for giving me the opportunity to repent of my sins and to come to Him through the Atonement of His Son, Jesus Christ. I ask Him to let me know His will so that I can do it. I ask Him to lead me away from temptation. I pray as though I rely on Heavenly Father every minute of the day—because I do—and I keep that prayer in my heart throughout the day. I pray again each night. I also spend some time in the scriptures daily so that I can focus my thoughts on virtuous things. If I don’t make these a habit, I don’t have the Spirit in my life. And left on my own, I am not strong enough to resist temptation.

For a long time I believed I could overcome my behavior anytime I wanted to by my own willpower. But I failed miserably. After a while I got tired of doing it on my own, especially when “on my own” wasn’t working. I realized that I could not do what I needed to do without the Lord’s help. Ether 12:27 helped me understand this better. The Lord told Moroni, “My grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them.”

Once I went to Him, still doing all I could do (see 2 Nephi 25:23), I realized that I could do much better and

become much more with His help than I ever could dream of by relying on my own merits (see Alma 7:14).

My wife and I now serve as facilitators at the addiction recovery program meetings. She has learned—and is helping others understand—that the Atonement is for not only those who are working to overcome an addiction but also those who have been affected by the addiction through no choice of their own. If we turn to the Savior, His grace can work in all of our lives.

To those who are battling addiction and to the people they love, I can attest that there is hope. There is always hope in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Hope in the Savior

I am deeply grateful to Jesus Christ because He literally saved me from the chains of sin. Addiction is like being held by chains that “bind the children of men, that they are carried away captive down to the eternal gulf of misery and woe” (2 Nephi 1:13). When I realized I was in trouble, I didn’t know where to turn. I was desperate because I could not free myself from my predicament. But the Lord could free me. When I turned to Him, He was there to help.

I can relate with Ammon: “Yea, I know that I am nothing; as to my strength I am weak; therefore I will not boast of myself, but I will boast of my God, for in his strength I can do all things” (Alma 26:12). I know that God *can* help us do all things, including overcoming the chains of addiction. ■



HELP IN OVERCOMING PORNOGRAPHY

The *addiction recovery program*, offered through LDS Family Services, includes free, confidential support meetings for people dealing with addictions to alcohol, drugs (both prescription and illegal), tobacco, coffee or tea, pornography, inappropriate sexual behavior, gambling, codependency, and eating disorders. To find a meeting near you, visit www.ldsfamilyservices.org. Your priesthood leader may also have information about nearby meetings.

Even if you cannot attend one of the meetings, you may benefit from the program study guide. *Addiction Recovery Program: A Guide to Addiction Recovery and Healing* (item no. 36764) is available in many languages from Distribution Services or as a PDF at www.recoveryworkbook.lds.org.

CombatingPornography.org is a Church-sponsored website offering help for individuals facing addiction. It can also help their spouses, parents, and priesthood leaders.

Let Virtue Garnish Thy Thoughts (item no. 00460) is a booklet designed to help those struggling with pornography. It discusses how to recognize destructive media, resist and avoid the temptation of pornography, and abandon pornography addictions. It also lists scriptures and other Church resources on repentance, the sanctity of the body, and overcoming worldly influences. Church leaders and family members can share the booklet with loved ones struggling with pornography. The booklet is available from Distribution Services in many languages. It is also available in American Sign Language on DVD.

Other talks and articles on this topic are listed at www.liahona.lds.org.

THE POWER OF Education

By Suzy Taggy Coelho
Caldas Nelsen

My mother grew up knowing nothing but abandonment, starvation, and poverty. She didn't receive much formal schooling, but she knew the value of education and its power to change lives. In sewing together scrap pieces of paper to make me a notebook for school, my mother made one thing clear: education could help me escape a life of poverty.

Humble Beginnings

I was born in northern Brazil more than three months premature. Thirty years ago, there was almost no chance for a premature baby to survive in the cockroach-infested public hospital. The doctors told my mother that I would be dead within a few hours. I did not die. The Lord helped me survive.

When I was about five years old, my father left my mother, my four siblings, and me. My mother had also been abandoned by her parents when she was small, so she had no family to turn to for support. We didn't have

My mother told me to work hard in school because it was the one thing that could overcome poverty.

enough money to rent a house, so instead we rented a plot of dirt. We built our home of scrap wood, paper, and plastic with a roof made of dried leaves. We had no furniture other than a hammock, which two or three people would often share, and our bed, which we made from a few flattened cardboard boxes. We had no running water, no electricity. We had nothing.

Mom worked as a housekeeper and did people's laundry. I went with her to the river and helped the best I could; then we would walk for hours delivering the clothes. This time working side by side was precious for me. It is when I built a relationship with my mother.

Even though we worked hard, we never seemed to have enough money. Sometimes we would have hardly anything to eat. My mom gave us her food and sometimes went for days without any for herself. We would drink water and go to bed because it was all we could do to avoid the hunger pangs.

Do you know how to split one egg among six people? I do.

I had a small group of friends when I was young, but as we grew up, we took different paths. The girls turned to selling their bodies to make money, and the boys would steal. When they invited me to join them, I felt something inside tell me it wasn't right. I know the Lord was aware of me even then, before I was a member of the Church, and I have continued to see evidence of His hand in my life.

Refusing to Give Up on School

My siblings and I had long been on a waiting list for public schools. When our opportunity to enroll



finally came, my mother told me good things about school. She said if I took education seriously, I would be someone someday. I will never forget her words: “I am sorry that I am not able to provide a good life for you. I am sorry that you had to learn the hard way the importance of work so early in your life, but now you will have the opportunity to get an education. Whatever happens, never give up school because it is the only thing that will take you away from this life.”

Once I was in school, we had to be inventive to come up with school supplies. I would find blank pieces of paper in garbage cans and bring them home. My mother sewed them together to make a notebook. She would buy a pencil to divide in three so my two sisters and I could each take a section to write with at school. Our other two siblings were not yet old enough to come to school with us.

My mother sent me off to school with a homemade notebook and a third of a pencil.

A New Faith

Because my mother had suffered so much her entire life, she didn't believe there could be a God. Throughout my childhood, neither did I. But as I got a little older, I started asking questions about God. I asked myself why my family never had a chance to have a good life and why I never had toys, enough food, or new clothes. Every time I asked these questions, I felt somehow in my heart that I wasn't alone. This feeling comforted me for many years.

When I was about 13 years old, Latter-day Saint missionaries came to our home. They answered all of my questions and taught me about Jesus Christ. They told me there was a church where I could learn more about the gospel in special classes for people my age. They taught me how to pray. They told me about the Book of Mormon. When I was baptized, none of my family came.

I felt lonely, but I knew I was doing the right thing. I was introduced to a new life—a life of hope, happiness, faith, and love. My peers, I knew, were seeking solace in drugs and immorality. I found mine in a loving Heavenly Father and the gospel of His Son. After my baptism I knew that the Lord had been aware of me my entire life.

I learned a lot about the gospel. I met people who shared my beliefs. Some of the members got to know a little bit about my life when they visited me at home. They generously helped me buy clothes and shoes for



OBTAIN TRAINING

“The Lord wants you to educate your minds and hands, whatever your chosen field. Whether it be repairing refrigerators, or the work of a skilled surgeon, you must train yourselves. . . . You will bring honor to the Church and you will be generously blessed because of that training.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), “A Prophet’s Counsel and Prayer for Youth,” *Liahona*, Apr. 2001, 34; *Ensign*, Jan. 2001, 8.

When I was accepted into the nursing program, I knew it would be hard, but I also knew the Lord would be with me.



INSTITUTE

No matter where you obtain your education, you can gather with other young adults at one of the more than 500 institutes of religion around the world. To find a location near you, contact your local priesthood leaders or visit www.lds.org/institutes.

church and notebooks for school. I babysat regularly for Church members and made more money than I ever had before. Because I was so young, it might have been easy for me to stray from the gospel. But with the support of Church members, I remained firm in my newfound faith.

The gospel truly changed my life. After I was baptized, I felt I had more energy to learn in school. I learned a lot and became a tutor. If I did not

know a subject, I would study until I knew it so well *I could* teach it. I used the money to help at home.

I received my patriarchal blessing and was counseled to serve a mission because the Lord reserved a special blessing in my mission that would change my life forever. I didn’t know what that meant, but I knew I would understand in time if I was obedient.

New Opportunities

I served in the Brazil Curitiba Mission from 2000 to 2002. Through my association with a particular

companion, I was able to go to the United States to study. I knew this would indeed change my life forever. I knew my Heavenly Father was aware of me and had a specific plan for me. This opportunity to further my education was an answer to my prayers.

I knew that it would be challenging to learn a second language, but I also knew it was possible if I worked hard enough. I studied at the Brigham Young University English Language Center and spent up to 10 hours a day in the library. One of my teachers suggested we pray for the gift of tongues, so every night I prayed and asked Heavenly Father for this gift. He certainly helped me.

After I completed my studies at the English Language Center, I was accepted at several universities. I decided to attend Brigham Young University–Idaho and apply for the nursing program. I heard that it was very difficult to get into the program, especially for international students. So I studied my hardest. My friends teased me, saying I should move into the library because I spent so much time there. Even when it closed, I went home and kept studying.

When times were difficult, I remembered the words of President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008): “You need all the education you can get. Sacrifice a car; sacrifice anything that is needed to be sacrificed to qualify yourselves to do the work of the world.”¹ I knew those were the words of a prophet of God, and I took them seriously.

“Sacrifice anything that is needed to be sacrificed to qualify yourselves to do the work of the world.”

I knew those were the words of a prophet of God, and I took them seriously.

When I was accepted to the nursing program, my heart filled with gratitude and happiness. I knew it would be hard and I would have to continue to make sacrifices, but I knew the Lord would be with me.

While in school, I met my husband, and we were married in 2007. My mother also joined the Church that year. She told me that she had never known why I was so happy, even with all the terrible things that had happened to us. But once she joined the Church, she understood. The gospel of Jesus Christ has blessed my family, and I'm happy to see my mother blessed after all the sacrifices she has made. I will always be grateful for her.

By the beginning of 2010, I was preparing for graduation—and was pregnant with our first child. Two months before I was to graduate from the nursing program, I had complications with my pregnancy, and our baby was born via cesarean section. My teachers told me I should take time off from school and graduate later. But I was so close—only two months away!

So my husband and I carefully organized our time so we could properly balance our priorities and I could complete my education. I scheduled my study time so I could give my husband and our son the attention they needed. Sometimes my husband's parents stayed with our son while I was in class. Two great classmates helped me review class materials. I felt that the Lord had sent all of these people to support me through this difficult time.

A Better Life

After graduation I passed the state certification exam and started working as a nurse to help support our family while my husband completes his education. Even though I am not planning on working once my husband starts his career, if a tragedy or economic hardship requires me to work in the future, my education helps me feel prepared to do so.

Mom was right: education *does* have the capacity to change lives. It has changed mine, and it will change the lives of my children. I hope they will realize that I am successful because I followed the Lord's plan for me. He wanted me to get an education, and He helped me every step of the way. I hope my children learn how to work like I did and that they come to value education as much as I do. ■

NOTE

1. Gordon B. Hinckley, “A Prophet's Counsel and Prayer for Youth,” *Liahona*, Apr. 2001, 34; *New Era*, Jan. 2001, 8.

PERPETUATING EDUCATION

The Perpetual Education Fund (PEF) was established in 2001 to help members of the Church obtain the education and training they need to be self-reliant. Members of the Church who qualify for the program receive a loan to help pay for their education. They repay the loan after gaining employment. In order to qualify for a PEF loan, an applicant must do several things, including the following:

- Be a worthy, active member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Single male applicants between 19 and 26 must be returned missionaries or have an approved exemption.
- Be endorsed by priesthood leaders.
- Enroll in an institute of religion, unless married or over age 30.
- Live, work, and attend school in a PEF-approved country. PEF loans are available to members in over 40 countries.
- Commit to pay as many school costs as possible with personal money, graduate and gain better work, and fully repay the loan.

If you are interested in applying for a loan through PEF, contact your local priesthood leader. Learn more about the program by visiting pef.lds.org.

MAKING Spiritual Education A PRIORITY

Attending institute has helped me study more effectively. In addition, it has helped me to be a better husband and father when I am at home.

By Joel Childress

One Saturday afternoon at the beginning of a new semester of college, I called a good friend whom I had not seen for several months. He and I talked for a while and caught up on each other's lives. I asked him what his schedule was like, and he mentioned that he was taking some business classes and an institute class. He admitted that he had initially signed up to get the free parking the institute offered to its students, but he also said that he was really enjoying the course.

I thought about that for a moment. I had spent four years at Arizona State University and had not attended a single institute class. In the past I usually rationalized this by saying that I didn't have time (I was attending school and working full time). After all, I am married, and certainly my family needed my time and attention. I did not want to take more time away from them by adding more classes, but at that moment while talking to my friend, I realized that maybe I *could* fit institute into my schedule. (Besides, I thought, free parking would be nice!) I talked it over with my wife and then enrolled in a class.

The parking spot, I'll admit, was great, but it was just a convenience. The real blessing of institute was found in the classes I took. Over the next several weeks, I realized what I had been missing the past

four years—a regular, midweek spiritual uplift. I was able to study the scriptures, sing beautiful hymns, and feel the Spirit. I couldn't believe I had cut myself off from such spiritual nourishment just to save a bit of time two days a week.

As I have made institute part of my remaining college experience, I have found that even with the extra commitment, I still have plenty of time to complete my assignments for my other classes—in some cases, well before the due date. I am able to study more effectively at school and at home. In addition, it has helped me to be a better husband and father when I am at home.

When I read the scriptures, instead of just checking it off my to-do list, I am reading with "real intent" (see Moroni 10:4; see also 2 Nephi 31:13) and finding passages that have new meaning to me. Institute has also helped me to be more vigilant in keeping my covenants and has brought me closer to my Heavenly Father. In short, the investment of my time spent at institute has repaid me tenfold.

I cannot get back the missed opportunities from the years when I did not attend institute, but I can take advantage of the ones I have going forward. I am grateful for the blessings I have found in making spiritual learning a priority. ■



PRESIDENT MONSON WANTS TO SEE YOU

About 15 years ago I was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. Four years later my health was steadily declining, and I was using a wheelchair. I felt extremely frustrated by my condition because for my entire life, I had been very active.

About that time I went to a conference in Dundee, Scotland, attended by President Thomas S. Monson, then a counselor in the First Presidency. Following the meeting, a member approached me.

"Brother Sharkey?"

"Aye?"

"Come down to the front to see President Monson."

I had no

intention of doing that, but a few minutes later the man returned.

"Brother Sharkey," he said, "President Monson is waiting to see you."

"But he doesn't know me," I replied.

"Even so, he is waiting to see you. He has heard about your illness."

I agreed and went to see President Monson. He greeted me warmly and asked whether I would like a priesthood blessing. I told him I would.

We found a room, and President Monson asked whom I would like to anoint me.

I asked if we could send for my bishop. When someone left to

find him, one of President Monson's traveling companions reminded him that if they didn't leave soon, they would not make it to the Edinburgh airport on time.

President Monson smiled and, referring to himself and to me, responded, "When you're our age, you learn to prioritize. We'll be there in time."

When my bishop arrived, he and President Monson administered to me. The blessing President Monson gave me was not a blessing of healing; it was about managing my condition and its accompanying ailments. It was also a blessing for my family to be able to help me in managing my disease.

Now, a decade later, I still have Parkinson's, but at age 74 I am doing well. I have indeed found ways to manage my illness. I feel good, and I have not used a wheelchair since the day I received the blessing. My doctor calls me his "star patient."

I will always be grateful to President Monson for his kindness in speaking to and blessing a man he didn't know. But I'll also be grateful for what he taught me about using the priesthood.

We hold different keys and offices in the Church, but we hold the same priesthood. President Monson's kind act taught me that the priesthood isn't about who holds it but about how we use it to bless the lives of Heavenly Father's children. ■

George Sharkey, Scotland

President Monson greeted me warmly and asked whether I would like a priesthood blessing.

BLESSED BY THE PRIESTHOOD

I joined the Church as a single mother in 1996, several years after my twin sister, Theresa, joined. When Theresa was baptized, a mutual friend said to me, “Why would she join that church? They make their women stay in the background.”

From association with members of the Church, I knew that my friend’s understanding was inaccurate—the marriages I saw among members of the Church were some of the strongest and most equal I had ever seen. I knew that only men in the Church held the priesthood, but I sensed that they used the priesthood to benefit all.

That truth was reinforced to me when I was diagnosed with breast cancer 11 years after my baptism. Upon hearing the news, I received a spiritual prompting that I should seek a priesthood blessing, which I did that evening. In the blessing, I was promised that the cancer would leave my body, that my body would be made whole, and that the Spirit would guide my doctors.

That blessing was the first of many I would receive over the next three years of treatment and surgeries. It gave me faith to know that healing would come physically if it was the Lord’s will or that it would come spiritually—and I would be given strength to deal with my trial.

I experienced the second kind of healing one night following an



Upon hearing the news that I had breast cancer, I received a spiritual prompting that I should seek a priesthood blessing.

operation. I remember waking up in extreme pain. Just then this thought entered my mind: “You know that you will get better. You have been promised that your body will be made whole. You know you’re going to get through this.”

On another occasion I woke up in the middle of the night worried about the future. “What is going to happen to me?” I wondered. That panic lasted for a couple of hours, but

it was the only time during my three-year battle that I felt such anxiety. The peace from the priesthood blessings I received sustained me and enabled me to get through things I thought I couldn’t endure.

The priesthood continued to strengthen me through a postoperative infection and a serious fever. One night during this time my brother-in-law came to the hospital and gave me a blessing. My temperature had been rising all day, but after the blessing it steadily declined. I was amazed but not surprised.

I saw the promise come to fruition that my doctors would be guided. When I awoke after one of my operations, the surgeon came to see me.

“I was all done,” she explained, “but something told me to go deeper, and I found additional problem areas, which I was able to remove. We’re fortunate to have found them.”

She is not a member of the Church, but the promise of the blessing I had received early on had come to pass. The Spirit had guided her.

I am grateful for the worthy priesthood holders in my ward and family who have reached out to me and used the priesthood to bless my life. I am grateful for their wives who support and sustain them as they honor their priesthood and use it to bless others. Most of all, I am grateful that Heavenly Father has blessed us with His power on earth, a power that blesses all of His children. ■

Virginia Gillis, Massachusetts, USA

DAD, I NEED YOU

I was moving sprinkler pipes on a section of our farm in northern California, USA. This particular day was a treat because Dad was there to help me. When we finished, we jumped on our all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and headed for home with dinner on our minds. Dad led the way.

Our farm was bordered on one side by the Pit River. We rode on the edge of the field so we wouldn't flatten the alfalfa with the big tires on our ATVs. The field was on our right, and the river, at the bottom of a steep embankment, was on our left. We couldn't see very well because it was misty.

We were cruising along fairly fast when I veered off the trail and hit a clump of sagebrush with my right rear tire. The impact forced me to turn the ATV sharply to the left toward the river and down the embankment. I tried stopping, but the bank was too steep and I was going too fast. I thought for sure I was going in the river. Fortunately, there was a tree on the bank right in my path. The next thing I knew, I was looking down at the ATV—from the tree! I was as scared as I had ever been.

I felt that I had just had a brush with death, but other than a few scratches and bruises, I was unhurt. After I calmed down and took a few breaths, I realized there was no way I was going to get the ATV back up the bank by myself. I kept expecting my dad to poke his head over the edge of the embankment, looking for me, but he

didn't. That made me feel even worse.

I scrambled to the top of the bank, but my dad was nowhere in sight. I said a silent prayer to my Father in Heaven, asking Him to send Dad back to get me. Then I started walking.

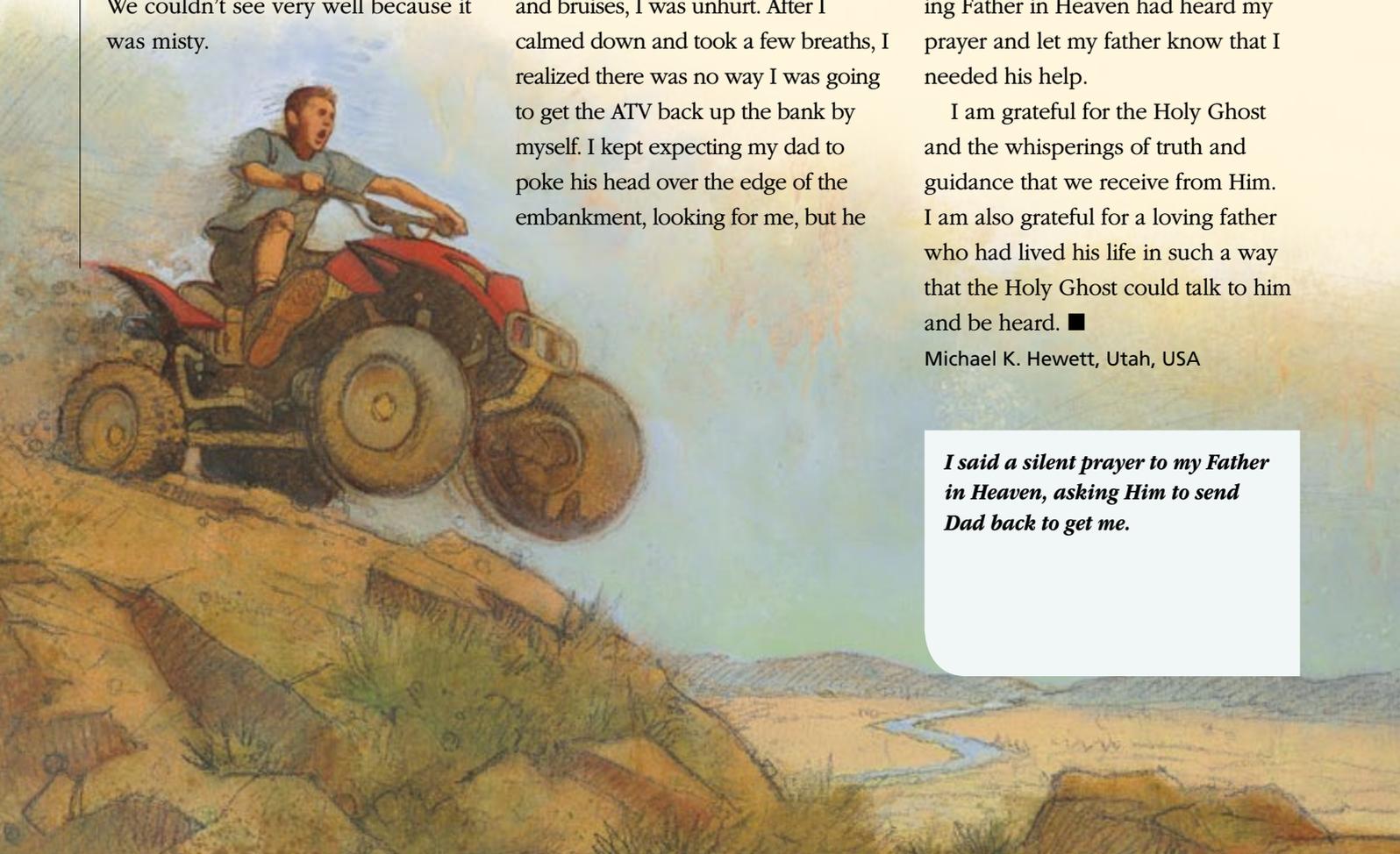
Meanwhile, Dad was almost home when he thought he heard me call out to him. He looked back for the first time since we had left the field. Only then did he notice that I wasn't behind him. He knew something was wrong and came looking for me until he found me.

Dad later told me that he had heard me say, "Dad, I need you!" At the time, he was more than two miles (3 km) away. I knew then that a loving Father in Heaven had heard my prayer and let my father know that I needed his help.

I am grateful for the Holy Ghost and the whisperings of truth and guidance that we receive from Him. I am also grateful for a loving father who had lived his life in such a way that the Holy Ghost could talk to him and be heard. ■

Michael K. Hewett, Utah, USA

I said a silent prayer to my Father in Heaven, asking Him to send Dad back to get me.



WOULD YOU LIKE A BLESSING?

One morning I was walking up a steep hill on the south side of the Brigham Young University campus when I heard a crash behind me. I turned around and saw a young man lying facedown on the pavement, his bike several yards away in pieces. I stood in shock until he weakly tried to lift his head. Then I hurried toward him, along with four other people who had been walking up the hill.

The student who reached the biker first carefully turned him over, revealing severe cuts on the biker's lips, nose, chin, and eyebrow. Another student called for help on his cell phone. A young mother standing next to me offered a piece of cloth, and the first student stanching the biker's bleeding lip with it. A second woman and I stood by, anxiously waiting for paramedics to come.

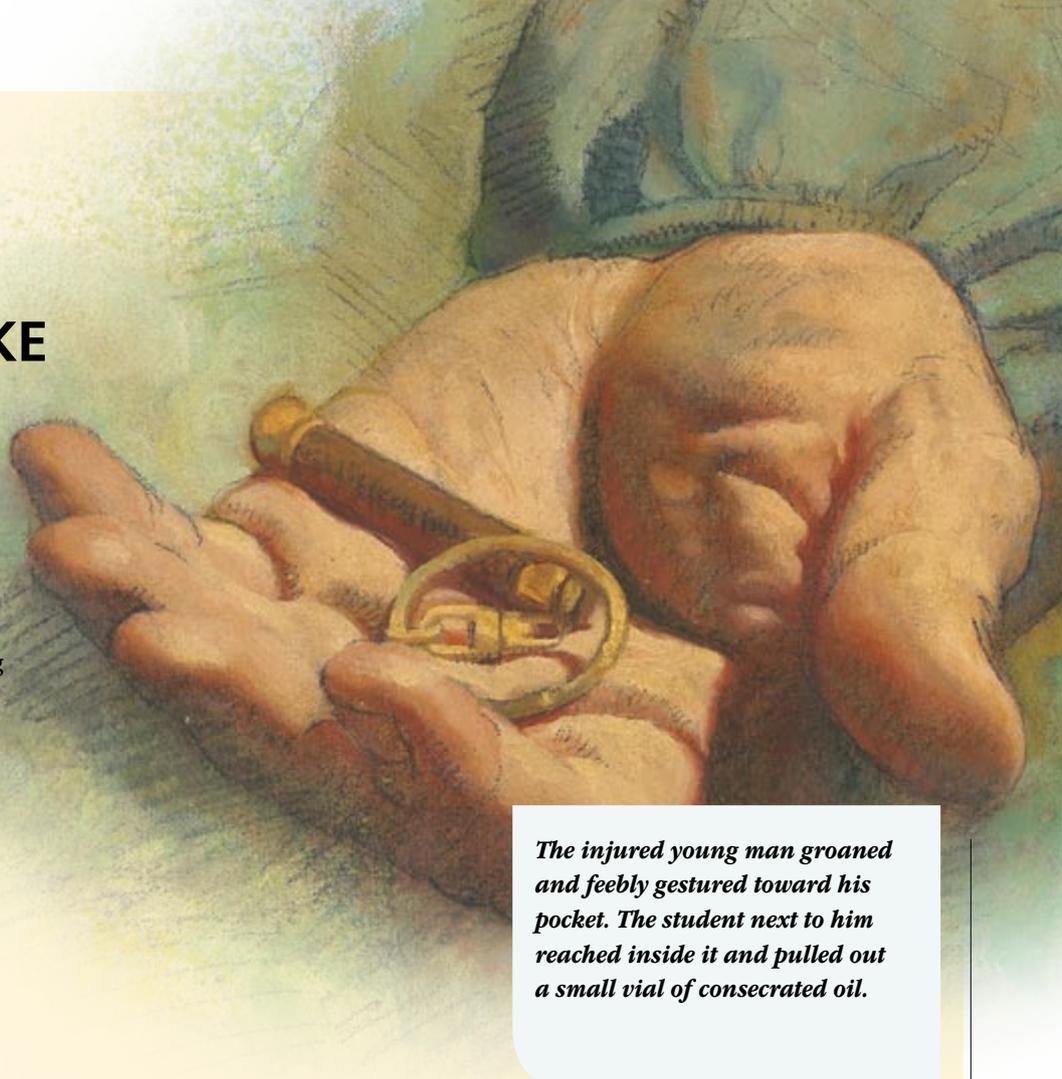
The injured man's eyes flickered open, and he looked in confusion at the faces around him.

"Where am I?" he said. "What happened?"

The student holding the cloth to his lips answered, "You're on the south side of campus. You crashed your bike."

The biker groaned. "It hurts," he said. "Help me."

The student said that help was on



The injured young man groaned and feebly gestured toward his pocket. The student next to him reached inside it and pulled out a small vial of consecrated oil.

the way and asked the young man his name.

"David," he said, sobbing softly. "Where am I?" he asked again.

An older man in a suit—likely a professor—approached and asked David if he wanted a blessing. He nodded gratefully.

The professor paused. "I don't have any oil, though," he said, looking around. Those nearby shook their heads. The injured young man groaned and feebly gestured toward his pocket. The student next to him reached inside it and pulled out a large key ring with a small vial of consecrated oil attached.

"He has some!" exclaimed the student.

The biker calmed down as soon as the professor and the male students

laid their hands on his head and gave him a blessing. A feeling of calm came over me too as the professor promised the young man that he would recover, be at peace, and draw nearer to the Savior through this experience.

Soon the paramedics came and took the biker away. As I walked to class, I realized that he carried consecrated oil with him so he could use the priesthood to bless someone in need. This day, however, he himself was blessed. I left with a deep feeling of love for faithful men who live ready to bless others and for the Lord, who also blesses them. ■

Lia McClanahan, Utah, USA

Small & Simple Things

*“Out of small things proceedeth that which is great”
(D&C 64:33).*

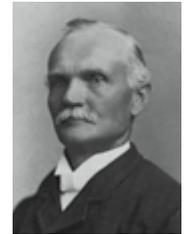
CHURCH HISTORY AROUND THE WORLD

Germany

Although missionary work began in Germany in the 1840s, it wasn't until 1851 that two people who were likely the first converts there were baptized. The same year, President John Taylor, then of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, went to Hamburg to help supervise the translation of the Book of Mormon into German. A branch was organized in Hamburg in 1852, but most of the early converts emigrated to Utah because of persecution. These included Karl G. Maeser, who later became president of Brigham Young Academy in Provo, Utah.

After World War I, Germany experienced great growth in Church converts, particularly from 1921 to 1925. The German Mission was divided into the German-Austrian Mission and the Swiss-German Mission. The East German Mission was created in 1937. Missionaries were pulled out of Germany during World War II. When they returned in 1947, the

country had been divided into East Germany and West Germany. However, missionary work continued, and on June 19, 1985, the Freiberg Germany Temple was dedicated in East Germany—the first temple in a communist country. Another temple was dedicated two years later, in Frankfurt, West Germany. The country was unified in 1990.

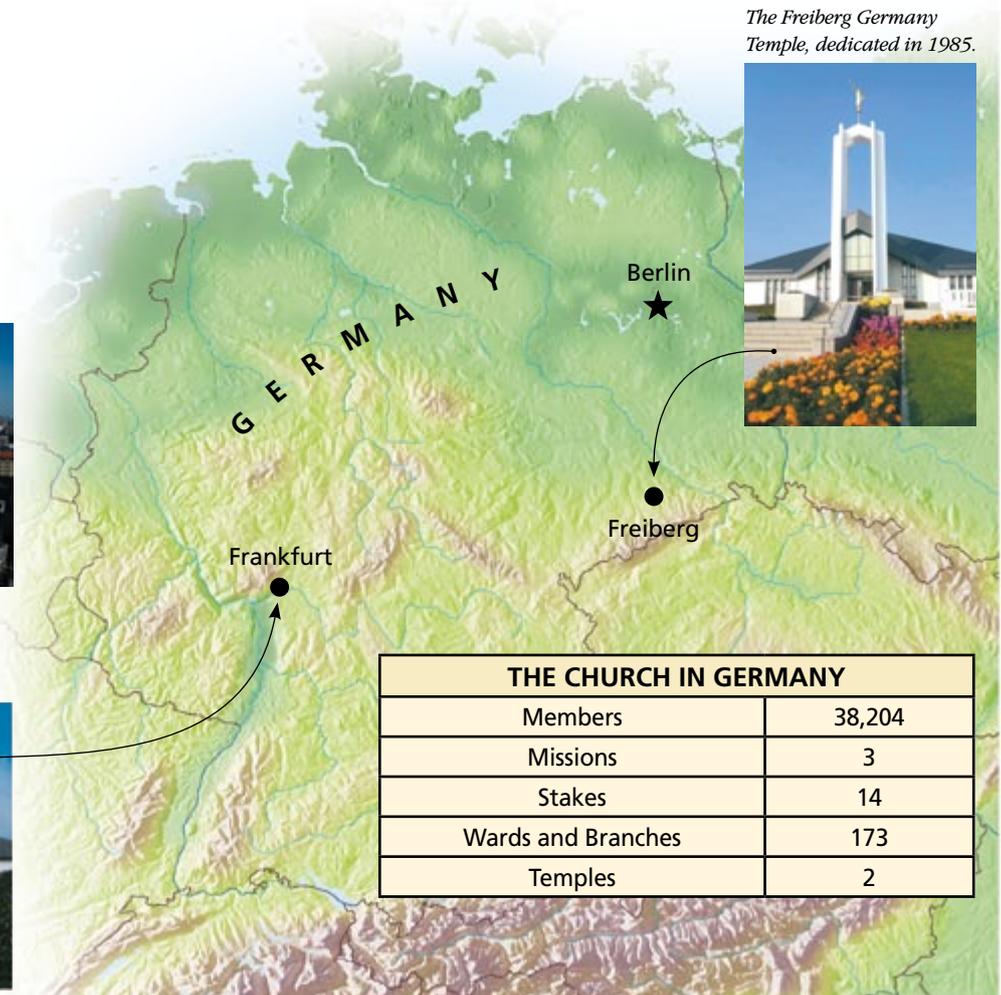


Karl G. Maeser emigrated from his native Germany to Utah, arriving in 1860.

The Freiberg Germany Temple, dedicated in 1985.



Above: A view of Munich, Germany. Below: The Frankfurt Germany Temple, dedicated in 1987.



THE CHURCH IN GERMANY	
Members	38,204
Missions	3
Stakes	14
Wards and Branches	173
Temples	2

The Gospel Comes First

Missionaries found and taught my great-grandfather in Samoa. In joining the Church, my grandfather had to forsake some of the traditional beliefs and religious practices of his people. Our family is proud of our Samoan heritage, but because of my grandfather's example, we have learned that the gospel comes first.

When I was a young man, my dad talked to me about the tribal band tattoos that are common and some of the popular foods that wouldn't necessarily be in harmony with the teachings of the Church. Dad said, "Don't participate in any of that. You're a child of God before you're Samoan, before you're a big, tough guy from the islands." That is something I have always remembered.

Today my wife and I live in Costa Rica. There are traditions and cultural etiquette here, as there are everywhere, that do not align with what the Church teaches. Sometimes we have to have the courage to turn from these practices and to the teachings of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Morgan Sa Mataalii, Costa Rica

Create a Profile on Mormon.org

Members of the Church across the world can share the gospel by creating a profile on Mormon.org. Visitors to the site use these profiles to learn about the Church directly from members. Create a profile and share your testimony by following these steps:

1. Visit mormon.org/create. Sign in using your LDS account. If you don't have an LDS account, register for a user name and password by providing your membership record number and date of birth. Find your membership record number on your temple recommend or by contacting your ward or branch membership clerk.
2. Provide information in the following fields: "About Me," "Why I Am a Mormon," "How I Live My Faith," "Frequently Asked Questions," "Personal Stories," and "Additional Information."

3. When creating your profile, keep in mind that you are talking to people who are not members of the Church. Avoid phrases they may not be familiar with. For example, you might say, "I teach a class of adult women once a month from the words of living prophets," instead of, "I serve as the Teachings of Our Time instructor in Relief Society."
4. Provide your picture, first name, and a short introduction. You can also link your profile to your blog, Facebook account, or Twitter account, though this isn't required. Avoid including detailed personal information, such as your last name or city of residence.

Once your profile is complete, it will be sent to moderators for approval. Once the profile is approved, visitors to the site will be able to read your testimony and contact you for more information about the Church.



Presidents of the Church Quiz

Match each item below to the President of the Church with whom it is associated.



1. Sunglasses. Worn by this President of the Church as he traveled to visit settlements throughout the Utah territory.

2. Top hat. This item is indicative of this prophet's renown for refined appearance and behavior.



3. Medal of Distinguished Service. This Church President received this award for his service as Secretary of Agriculture in the cabinet of U.S. president Dwight D. Eisenhower.

4. Welfare commodity tokens. This President initiated and led the Church welfare program during the Great Depression.

5. Saddle. This prophet loved his horse named Sonny Boy.



6. Journal. This prophet was committed to preserving Church history, and his records are among the most valuable histories of the Church.

7. Photo of BYU Jerusalem Center. This Church President negotiated to obtain land in Jerusalem to build the center.



8. Miniature microphone. This President used this device, mounted on his glasses, because several throat operations treating cancer affected his voice.

A. Joseph Smith Jr. (1805–44)

B. Brigham Young (1801–77)

C. John Taylor (1808–87)

D. Wilford Woodruff (1807–98)

E. Lorenzo Snow (1814–1901)

F. Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918)

G. Heber J. Grant (1856–1945)

H. George Albert Smith (1870–1951)

I. David O. McKay (1873–1970)

J. Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972)

K. Harold B. Lee (1899–1973)

L. Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985)

M. Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994)

N. Howard W. Hunter (1907–95)

O. Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008)

P. Thomas S. Monson (1927–)



9. Cane. This President used a cane in his later years, which he lovingly waved in the air to greet groups of Latter-day Saints.

10. Tithing slip. This President emphasized Joseph Smith's teachings on tithing.

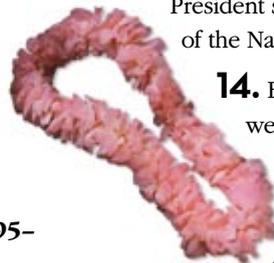
11. *Fiddler on the Roof*. This President loves literature and has quoted this classic on more than one occasion.

12. Typewriter. This President was one of the Church's most prolific writers.



13. Sword. This Church President served as commander of the Nauvoo Legion.

14. Floral lei. This prophet went to Hawaii at age 15 as one of the first Latter-day Saint missionaries there.



15. Pocket watch.

This item was worn by this prophet on the day of the Martyrdom at Carthage Jail.



16. Scouting Silver Buffalo Award. This President was the first major promoter of Scouting in the Church.



LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH OF BYU JERUSALEM CENTER BY D. KELLY OGDEN; PHOTOGRAPH OF CANE BY JOHN LUKE; PHOTOGRAPH OF SILVER BUFFALO AWARD BY CHRISTINA SMITH

News of the Church

Building History, Building Testimonies

By Heather Whittle Wrigley

Church Magazines

The Lord commands us to remember (see D&C 21:1), but history, like a photograph bleached by time, often fades until it is lost—unless someone steps in and stops it from being lost.

Steven L. Olsen, senior curator of the Church History Department and former member of the Church Historic Sites Committee, is one of those people. The Historic Sites Committee collaborates with several departments to help stop time in its tracks by preserving places of historical value to the Church.

“We preserve sites to help provide an experience that opens a person’s heart and soul to the message [of the gospel],” he said. “Many have found the beginnings of their testimonies when they have gone to the historic sites and had the Spirit bear witness to them.”

The Church History Department stewards the historical accuracy of the messages, furnishings, and settings found at historic sites.

The Missionary Department takes care of managing the sites daily, welcoming visitors, giving tours, and answering questions.

The Temple and Special Projects Departments are responsible for managing any maintenance concerns for temples and for the construction of major new projects.

The Meetinghouse Facilities Department ensures that each site is properly constructed and maintained and that the site stays accurate, attractive, and appropriate.

These departments work with historians, architects, archaeologists, lawyers, artisans, contractors, and groundskeepers to preserve historic sites, landmarks, and markers.



In Missouri, Saints can tour a replica of Liberty Jail, where Doctrine and Covenants 121 to 123 originated as the Prophet Joseph Smith and others were subjected to many hardships.

Historic Sites

Historic sites are places where events of great significance to Church history occurred, such as the Joseph Smith farm or historic Kirtland. About two dozen historic sites dot the United States, with one site outside the United States, Worcestershire’s Gadfield Elm Chapel, the first chapel of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in England.

Historic Landmarks

Historic landmarks, of which there are about four dozen, comprise temples, tabernacles, and meetinghouses that are distinctive in architectural or aesthetic value. According to Brother Olsen, these landmarks exist to celebrate the importance of worship in the Church.

“In our history, we have invested a lot of energy to create spaces that are appropriate for the nature of that worship,” he said. “Temples do that in a way

Church to Restore Harmony Site

In April 2011, the First Presidency announced plans to restore a historic site formerly known as Harmony (near present-day Susquehanna), Pennsylvania, USA, where the Prophet Joseph Smith translated much of the Book of Mormon and where John the Baptist restored the Aaronic Priesthood in 1829.

The project will include construction of historic buildings and the farm setting at Harmony as well as monuments commemorating the restoration of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods in 1829. The groundbreaking is expected to take place in 2012, and the project is estimated to take two years to complete.

Church leaders have invited members who are interested to make a small, one-time contribution to the project. This can be done by specifying “Priesthood Restoration Site” on the “Other” category on the tithing slip that is available from bishops and branch presidents.

“Our historic sites help us tell the unique story of the Latter-day Saints,” said Elder Marlin K. Jensen, Church historian and recorder. “Each site is filled with historically accurate details and engaging exhibits to help people better understand who we are and what is important to us.”

that . . . allows us all to receive those blessings. Tabernacles and meetinghouses provide another way to worship.”

Historic Markers

Finally, because not every important site can be restored, historic markers—more than 100 of them—identify other places the Church desires to preserve in the hearts and minds of Latter-day Saints. Markers can also designate areas (such as the Far West Temple site) where there is not enough information to restore the site accurately.

There are dozens of international historic markers; often a marker being placed is the first step to a location becoming a historic site.

“People recognize that a place is important to them and to the Church, and many work to get a marker in that location,” Sister Lund said. For those who are interested in marking a location, she said, “there’s a policy and a process; they just need to contact the Church History Department.”

The Importance of Historic Sites

One of the qualifications for a place to become a historic site is that the site communicate key gospel messages, which Brother Olsen explained are “the simple messages of the Restoration that anchor our identity . . . as Latter-day Saints—the reality of the First Vision, the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, and the organization of the Church, for example.”

Today in upstate New York, families walk along paths through the Sacred Grove, imagining Joseph Smith kneeling among the low-lying ferns and sun-splashed leaves. In Missouri, Saints can tour a replica of Liberty Jail, where some of the most beloved parts of the Doctrine and Covenants, sections 121 to 123, originated as the Prophet Joseph Smith and others were subjected to many hardships.

“Places give people a really strong connection to the events of the Restoration of the gospel,” Sister Lund said. “There’s no substitute for being . . . in the very place and being able to imagine what happened there.”

Part of the power of those experiences comes from the veracity of the structures and settings found at the Church’s historic sites.

“We want to make it all as true to the experience as the message is,” Brother Olsen said. “A setting [often] can evoke a dimension of understanding about the First Vision or the Book of Mormon that can’t be achieved just by reading about it.”

Each log home, frame house, brick building, landscape, stone structure, and furnishing—including flooring, appliances, curtains, and other knickknacks—is exhaustively researched and re-created to be as true to the original as possible.

Artisans strive to match time period, region, economic status, and cultural forces present at that place and time, right down to the methods used historically to create each setting and object.

Brother Olsen said that he hopes that as people catch a glimpse of modern-day history, their knowledge of Church history will grow and their testimonies of the gospel will be strengthened. ■

DI Partners Employees with Success

Ariela had just immigrated to the United States from Peru, and although she spoke English and Spanish and had a college degree, she was unfamiliar with the work environment in the United States and felt unsure about finding a job. Her bishop suggested she work with Deseret Industries (DI), a nonprofit, vocational rehabilitation facility sponsored by the Church that doubles as a thrift store.

Soon after beginning work at her local DI, Ariela enlisted in DI's business partnership program, where she was able to have an internship-type



experience at a local government justice service company that taught her basic business procedures. She soon felt comfortable with her career skills and was able to find permanent employment.

Ariela's is just one of thousands of success stories that have come out of the business partnership program, which exists at each of DI's 43 locations as well as at 12 employment centers—3 of which are in Mexico, the Philippines, and Haiti.

In this program, DI partners with local companies to allow associates to train in their field of

interest. It's a win-win-win situation: DI fulfills its mission to help people help themselves by paying the associate's wages, liability, and workers' compensation; the company receives an employee resource free of charge; and the associate receives pay and training. Many partnerships end with a job offer or recommendation.

The program began in 2008; today, nearly 1,500 people have been placed in business partnerships through DI. Roughly half of those have been hired into full-time, benefit-paying jobs. Eight out of every 10 placements are done with companies that have partnered with DI in the past.

"At first businesses want people to come because it means free help," said Danny Brock, who helped create the program. "But after a while, they . . .

decide what they really like is being able to help someone."

Before entering the business partnership program, DI associates are rigorously screened and evaluated, cleared for work, and instructed in character, work habits, and business relationships to ensure they are capable and informed.

"The beauty is that the associates get to do something they

actually want to do," Brother Brock said. "Dog grooming, contracting, bookkeeping, welding, medical assisting—you name the occupation, and we can make a partnership."

Besides the increase in skills, the certifications, and the financial benefits, he said, the program supplies the emotional benefits of fulfilling dreams and providing prayed-for opportunities for both those in the program and employers.

"Every day I get to see [people] find hope and happiness," Brother Brock said, "and I see the Lord's love for His children." ■

Deseret Industries is not just a thrift store; through its business partnership program, associates have the opportunity to get on-the-job training in their field of interest.

Young Single Adults, Leaders See Benefits of Reorganization

In an effort to improve the experience of single Church members ages 18 to 30, the Church is reorganizing young single adult wards and stakes throughout Utah.

YSA wards have been realigned geographically and included in newly formed YSA stakes. Student wards have been discontinued. Some 40,000 young single adults have been affected by the change.

Young single adults may choose to attend the YSA ward or the conventional ward in which they live.

“This age group tends to drift a little bit, to different units, different wards,” said Elder Steven E. Snow of the Presidency of the Seventy. “We hope [the change] will provide enhanced opportunities for them to serve in leadership positions, to teach, and to lead. . . . We hope it enhances their opportunities to meet other people and to do meaningful service, and we want to deliver these opportunities in their geographic area.”

Young single adults and their leaders in areas where the change has taken place are already experiencing a difference.

Wess R. Greene, president of the Logan Utah YSA Fourth Stake, said the change has created a feeling of belonging. “In regards to what President Monson has said about rescuing the one, it has really facilitated that process,” he said.

The transition began in Ogden in April 2010, and stakes in Logan, Cedar City, St. George, and Ephraim have also made the change. Utah’s Salt Lake, Davis, and Utah Counties will have made the change by this month. At this time, there are no plans to extend the changes into other areas. ■

Mesa Easter Pageant Teaches of Christ

Each year the Mesa Arizona Easter Pageant draws more than 100,000 people, who watch the story of Christ’s life, mission, and Resurrection unfold through speech, music, dance, and drama played out on a 9,600-square-foot (890 square meter) stage.

Many who attended this year’s performances April 13–16 and 19–23, 2011, as well as the nearly



PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE PORTER

Participants in the Mesa Arizona Easter Pageant portray the story of Jesus Christ’s life, mission, and Resurrection.

1,000 cast and crew members, say that the pageant brought them closer to the Savior.

“I know that the people who come to our pageant leave with a peace and a hope in their heart that maybe wasn’t there when they came,” said Nanci Wudel, who has directed the pageant for nine years. “We want so much to bring to the heart of every person sitting in the audience [the message that] there is peace, there is hope, because Jesus lives and He loves them.”

Tabernacle Organists Share Talents to Bless Church, World

The pipes of the Tabernacle organ on Temple Square almost have become an icon for the Church; they're easily recognizable, both by their sheer size and by their rich sound.

But what of the people behind those pipes, the ones producing that sound?

In April, Church News and Events featured a three-part series about the Temple Square organists: Clay Christiansen, Richard Elliott, and Andrew Unsworth. To read the stories of how these three men came to be full-time organists on Temple Square, visit news.lds.org and use the keyword "organist" in the search box. (Be sure to use the search box for News and Events, located just above the Global Church Events box, rather than the LDS.org search box in the top right corner.)

Orchestra at Temple Square Musicians Dedicate Time, Talent

Anyone who has watched and listened to a professional orchestra would agree that a performance is quite an undertaking. From the harmony of the music itself to the unison of movement among the strings to the aesthetics of the stage, orchestral concerts take a lot of work.

Which makes the Orchestra at Temple Square all the more remarkable.

The orchestra—which was first assembled in 1999—operates in a way that no professional orchestra does, from the scheduling of events to the dedication of performers. News and Events includes an April article about all the people—musicians, librarians, staging crew, and others—who devote their time and talent to the orchestra and its mission. Find the story at news.lds.org. ■

WORLD BRIEFS

Museum Exhibit Engages Children in Book of Mormon History

A new exhibit, *A Book of Mormon Fiesta: A Latin American Celebration* uses state-of-the-art technology to engage children and adults in understanding and appreciating the stories of Latin American members of the Church.

This exhibit is free of charge and will run through January 6, 2013. For more information, including location and hours, visit lds.org/museum.

New Art Exhibit Invites Visitors to Seek the Savior

The Church History Museum has opened a new exhibit featuring works based on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. *Seek My Face: Recent Artwork on Scriptural Themes* features the work of 29 artists and is a touring exhibition by the Artist Guild International, L.L.C.

The exhibit will remain in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, until June 20, 2011. For more information, including location and hours, visit lds.org/museum.

Joseph Smith Movie to Reach Wider Audience Online

A new version of *Joseph Smith: The Prophet of the Restoration* is now available

online at mormonchannel.org/Joseph.

The original 2005 film focuses on the role that Joseph Smith played in restoring the Church of Jesus Christ.

The new version stays true to that purpose, using both reedited footage from the original film and new footage to create a product that is more easily shared with a wider audience, including non-members. About 40 percent of the film is new.

Mormon Channel, Church Magazines Share Similar Messages

This month, two episodes on the Mormon Channel program *Mormon Identities* will expand on content previously published in the *Ensign*.

Kenneth W. Matheson, professor in the school of social work at Brigham Young University, will speak about fidelity in marriage. Brother Matheson wrote on the same subject for the September 2009 *Ensign*. Church magazines writer Joshua Perkey will also speak this month about the role of the Church magazines in reaching a wide spectrum of members around the world.

For information about *Mormon Identities* and other programming, visit radio.lds.org. ■

In Other Church Magazines

THE NEW ERA

A Testimony of Her Own

There comes a time for every young person when they must decide for themselves if they have a testimony. For Jennie, it came during family home evening when her parents and siblings took turns sharing their testimonies. Read “A Testimony of My Own” on page 6.

On Being Shy

Do you have sons or daughters who consider themselves shy? “From Shyness to Strength” on page 30 tells about what causes shyness, the two main types of shy people, what they can do about it, and what others can do to help.

Good Examples

Elder Joseph W. Sitati tells about four young people from Africa who are all great examples of living the gospel. Read “Your Example Matters” on page 40 to see how setting a good example not only strengthens you, but it can strengthen others also.



THE FRIEND

Internet Safety

In “Crash and Tell” on pages 8–9, Connor learns what to do when he encounters inappropriate content on the Internet. An accompanying list of Internet safety tips on page 10 gives helpful guidelines all children need to know.



Summer Reading

The *Friend* summer reading program (pages 24–25) will keep children busy and happy with a whole summer full of reading and activities from the pages of the *Friend*.

COMMENTS

THANKS FOR THE HARD WORK

I just want to thank you and your staff for the changes you have been making. The pagination and column design makes the magazine flow and easy to read. The artwork is amazing and the articles are so well planned. I worked in the publishing industry for several years. I managed ad sales and almost every issue, artwork from advertisers was always last minute. So I watched our editors almost pull their hair out trying to make deadlines with late ads and overdue articles. I'm glad you don't have advertisers. On rare occasions you might experience our leaders, maybe including our beloved Prophet President Monson (a publisher), creating some interesting deadlines, but their words on print and electronic copy are so worth your late night efforts.

Again, thank you for your hard work. The *Ensign* has always been an important part of my life. Every month there are articles that have helped me to stay close to the Lord.

Larry Willes
California, USA

BUILDING ON A SURE FOUNDATION

By Joshua J. Perkey

Church Magazines

Not far from the vast expanse of the Ohio River lies a small town on the outskirts of Louisville, Kentucky, called Anchorage. Once a farming community where a riverboat captain established his last portage, it has become home to families of many diverse faiths.

It was there in church, at home, and while exploring the marvelous world beneath the woods of sycamore, oak, maple, chestnut, and willow trees that I learned one of the fundamentals of Christianity: that Jesus came as the master teacher, instructing us in the ways of goodness and integrity.

My parents were good folks, faithful in their church. They taught me how to be a good person and that there are certain things that are right, such as being kind to others, and certain things that are wrong, such as stealing. On the other hand, they also taught that what one person believes to be true is just as valid as what someone else believes to be true, even if those beliefs differ in fundamental ways. In this philosophy, as I understand it, there are no eternal principles true for everyone, just personal viewpoints that intelligent people have the right and obligation to determine are true for themselves.

Because of those underlying tenets of moral relativism, I had a difficult time believing what the Mormon missionaries taught me about the



A testimony can become unshakable.

need for the Atonement, priesthood authority, and prophets. Indeed, my journey to conversion took me six long years of constantly challenging and questioning who I was, what I believed, and whether there could, in fact, be a God who had established eternal principles of truth and error, sin and consequence.

Remarkably, I did receive a spiritual confirmation, but it did not come until I was humble

enough to accept it. First came a witness of baptism, then of the Book of Mormon, then of Joseph Smith as a true prophet. Additional witnesses followed, line upon line, regarding today's prophets and apostles.

Eventually, there came a point in my life when I didn't just believe the gospel was true—I knew it. The culmination of many little witnesses created a foundation upon which my faith was sure, a bulwark against which challenges to testimony break.

It is our divine right to seek answers from the Lord. And we must keep spiritually nourishing ourselves every day so our testimonies remain strong. But I also know that in the Lord's program, it is not productive to keep questioning principles about which we have received a witness. In fact, it may lead to apostasy.

I no longer struggle with the moral relativism of my youth. I know that when the prophet speaks, his words are from God. When circumstances arise that challenge my testimony, I trust in the witness I have already received, and then I do my best to live by it. That is the road to peace; that is the way of happiness. ■

The Church Welfare Plan

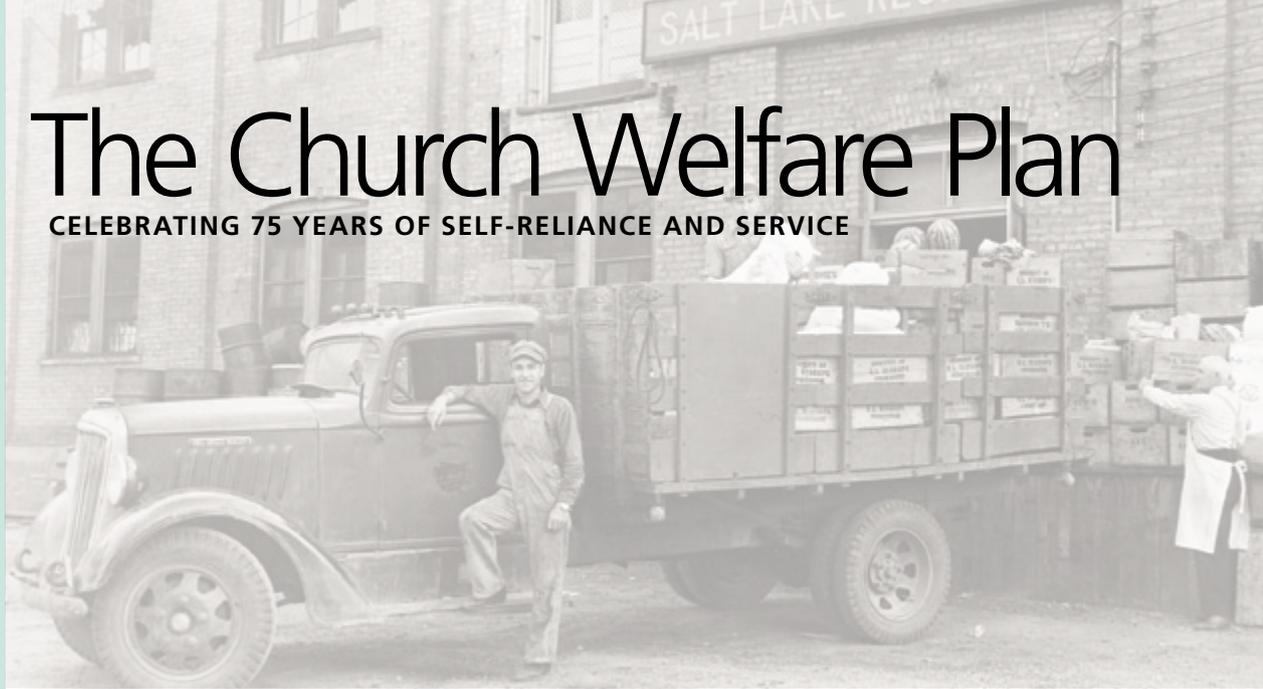
CELEBRATING 75 YEARS OF SELF-RELIANCE AND SERVICE

“Our primary purpose was to set up . . . a system under which the curse of idleness would be done away with, the evils of a dole abolished, and independence, industry, thrift and self respect be once more established amongst our people. The aim of the Church is to help the people to help themselves. Work is to be re-enthroned as the ruling principle of the lives of our Church membership.”

President Heber J. Grant (1856–1945), in Conference Report, Oct. 1936, 3; see also *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Heber J. Grant* (2002), 115.

CONTENTS

- 82** A Letter from the First Presidency
- 83** Providing in the Lord’s Way
- 84** Seventy-Five Years of Living Providently
- 85** Catching the Vision of Self-Reliance
- 92** Increasing Our Compassionate Service by Following the Savior
- 93** The Strength of Many
- 96** Making Principles of Welfare Part of Your Life



THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
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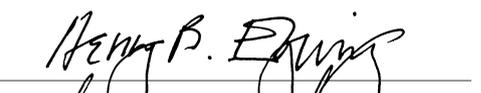
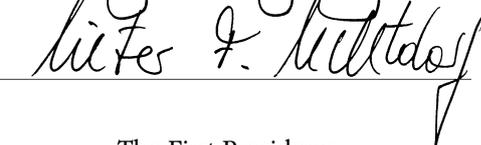
June 1, 2011

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the welfare program of the Church. The pages that follow include a brief history of the origin of the program, will acquaint you with the Church's international welfare efforts, and show welfare principles at work in the lives of Church members throughout the world.

This anniversary serves as a reminder for all of us to become more self-reliant and to help people help themselves. As you review this special section, we encourage you and your family to prayerfully consider and act upon self-reliance and other welfare principles.

Sincerely yours,

The First Presidency

Providing in the Lord's Way

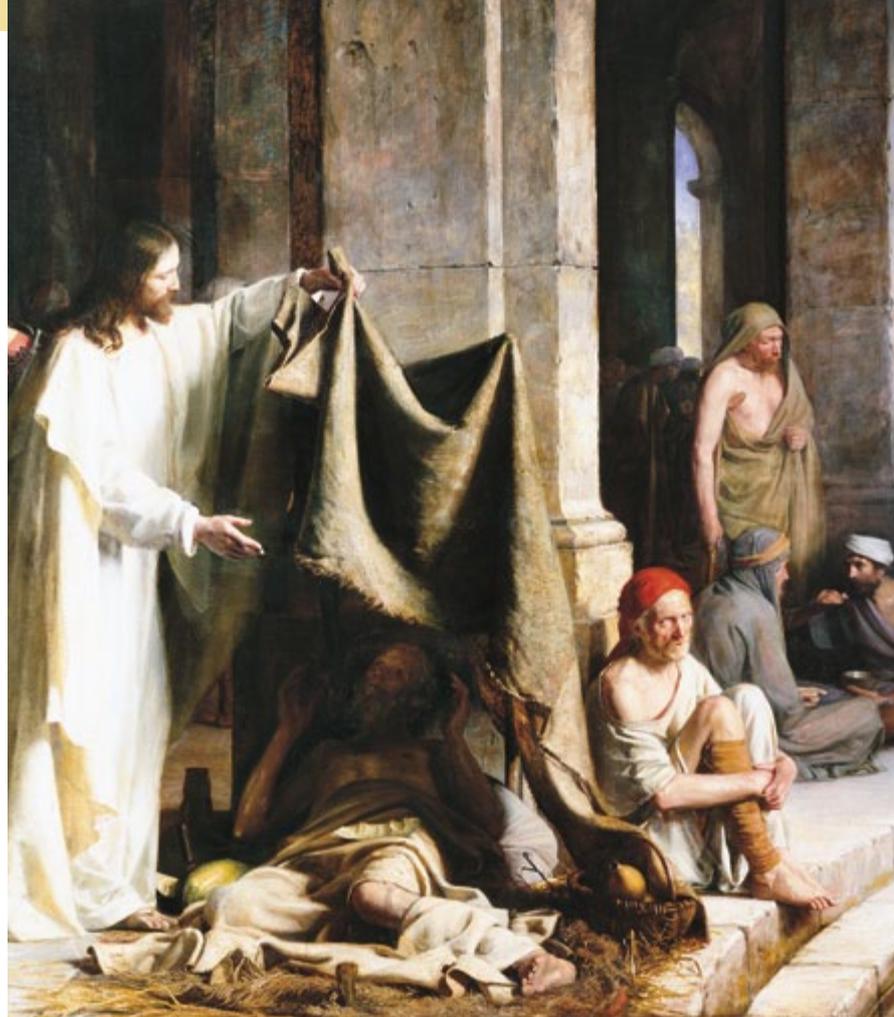
It was a time when the stock market saw huge losses. Banks and other financial institutions failed. Unemployment soared. People were losing their homes. Governments intervened with expensive programs to try to reverse downward trends. More and more people were forced to turn to public institutions for food and other necessities.

This description of the 1930s could also apply to more recent times. Then—as well as now—the Church's welfare plan has been available to “help the people to help themselves,”¹ in times of disaster, in widespread economic depressions and recessions, and in the smaller, more personal challenges families and individuals can face at any time.

Although the welfare plan we know today wasn't introduced until 1936, Saints in *every* dispensation have practiced principles of provident living because the Savior Jesus Christ is the architect of the welfare plan. President Thomas S. Monson has said: “The Lord provided the way when he declared, ‘And the storehouse shall be kept by the consecrations of the church; and widows and orphans shall be provided for, as also the poor.’ (D&C 83:6.) Then the reminder, ‘But it must needs be done in mine own way.’ (D&C 104:16).”²

To provide in the Lord's way, we must develop our own self-reliance and then seek to help others become self-reliant. “Devoted men and women help to operate this vast and inspired program,” said President Monson. “In reality, the plan would never succeed on effort alone, for this program operates through faith after the way of the Lord.”³

The 75th anniversary of the welfare plan—commemorated this year—gives Latter-day Saints the opportunity to reflect on basic principles such as



becoming self-reliant, caring for the poor and needy, and serving others. When we live these principles, we are better able to alleviate suffering, build character, and foster unity.

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Heber J. Grant* (2002), 115.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “The Way of the Lord,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1977, 7.
3. Thomas S. Monson, *Ensign*, Nov. 1977, 7.

“The real long term objective of the welfare plan is the building of character in the members of the Church, givers and receivers, rescuing all that is finest down deep inside of them, and bringing to flower and fruitage the latent richness of the spirit, which after all is the mission and purpose and reason for being of this Church.”

President J. Reuben Clark Jr. (1871–1961), First Counselor in the First Presidency, in Glen L. Rudd, *Pure Religion: The Story of Church Welfare Since 1930* (1995), 301.

Saints in every dispensation have followed the Savior's example in caring for the poor and needy.

Photographs on page 81—Top: Members unload food at the Bishops' Central Storehouse in Salt Lake City, 1937. Middle: Filipino youth plant seedlings in a garden. Bottom: Members work on a stake welfare farm in Utah, 1948.



Seventy-Five Years of Living Providently

Although the Church welfare plan was not yet formalized, the early Saints recognized the importance of living a self-reliant life, caring for the poor and needy, and serving others. The Prophet Joseph Smith stated, “A man filled with the love of God, is not content with blessing his family alone, but ranges through the whole world, anxious to bless the whole human race.”¹

Not long after the Church was established, small bishops’ storehouses and tithing offices were erected to help the needy. Joseph Smith instituted the gathering of fast offerings in Kirtland, Ohio, during the 1830s.² The principle of tithing was also introduced during this period (see D&C 119). Tithing and fast offerings were paid in the form of labor, produce, and other commodities. Bishops and branch presidents oversaw the distribution of these resources as they do today.³

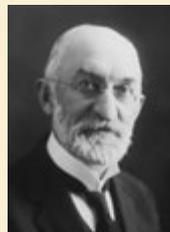
Many of the early Saints struggled to support themselves. To combat idleness, Church leaders and members united to find ways to create sustainable livelihoods. Some found work constructing Church buildings and completing public works projects. Others farmed and sold goods to provide for themselves and their families. As they labored together, the Saints were blessed with enough to meet their needs.

While the challenges of our time are different, Latter-day Saints continue to provide for themselves and care for the poor and needy by following the teachings of the Savior and the example set by previous generations.

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 330–31.
2. See Howard W. Hunter, “Fast Day,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, 72.
3. See Glen L. Rudd, *Pure Religion* (1995), 2, 4.

Information in this time line comes from the following sources, unless otherwise noted: Susan Clayton Rafter, Supporting the Rescue of All That Is Finest (2005); Glen L. Rudd, Key Moments in Church Welfare Services (2008); Glen L. Rudd, Important Events for Historical Church Welfare (1999); Glen L. Rudd, A Brief History of the Church Employment Program (1998); Glen L. Rudd, Pure Religion (1995).



1936

- April 6: President Heber J. Grant and his counselors announce the Church security plan in general conference.
- October: The Church forms the General Welfare Committee.

“When we fast, . . . we feel hunger. And for a short time, we literally put ourselves in the position of the hungry and needy. As we do so, we have greater understanding of the deprivations they might feel. When we give to the bishop an offering to relieve the suffering of others, we not only do something sublime for others, but we do something wonderful for ourselves as well.”

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Law of the Fast,” *Liahona*, July 2001, 90; *Ensign*, May 2001, 73.



The Saints in California’s Central Valley provide the labor for a Church-owned vineyard in Madera, California, USA. The vineyard produces hundreds of tons of raisins to be used by the poor throughout the world.

Catching the Vision of Self-Reliance

Many members might think of welfare as a program to help members in temporarily difficult circumstances. But the intent of the Church’s welfare plan is much more vast; it also involves promoting self-reliance as a way of life. President Thomas S. Monson has taught that self-reliance—“the ability, commitment, and effort to provide the necessities of life for self and family”¹—is an essential element of our temporal *and* spiritual well-being.²

A mere desire to become self-reliant is not enough. We must make a conscious, active effort to provide for our own needs and those of our families. Bishop H. David Burton, Presiding Bishop, reminds us that when we have done all we can to be self-reliant, “we can turn to the Lord in confidence to ask for what we might yet lack.”³ Being self-reliant allows us to bless others. Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles says, “Only when we are self-reliant can we truly emulate the Savior in serving and blessing others.”⁴

Self-reliance involves several facets of a balanced life, including (1) education, (2) health, (3) employment, (4) family home production and storage, (5) family finances, and (6) spiritual strength.



Left, top: Dutch Saints harvest and load potatoes for German Saints in 1947. Above: Food-production training in Ecuador has helped members grow more productive gardens.



1937

- The Church establishes the first Bishops’ Central Storehouse, in Salt Lake City.



1938

- Welfare Square property is purchased in Salt Lake City, and construction begins.
- April: Church security plan is renamed Church welfare plan.
- August 12: The Church opens its first Deseret Industries thrift store, in Salt Lake City.



1. Education

The Lord commands us to “seek learning, even by study and also by faith” (D&C 88:118). President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) taught: “We believe in education. This Church encourages education. There is incumbent upon every member of this Church, as a mandate from the Lord, to get all the education you can get. . . . There is incumbent upon the Latter-day Saints a dictum from the Lord Himself to educate our minds and our hands.”⁵

Gaining an education was the goal of Roberto Flete Gonzalez of the Dominican Republic, who enrolled in college shortly after returning from his mission. His father agreed to cover his living expenses so that Roberto could focus on his studies, but a short time later, Roberto’s father died, leaving the family in a dire financial situation.

Roberto quit school and began working to support himself, his mother, and his sister. He wondered how he’d ever be able to finish school.

Weeks later President Hinckley announced the Perpetual Education Fund, “a bold initiative” that would help youth in developing areas “rise out of the poverty they and generations before them have

known.”⁶ Roberto applied for and was granted a PEF loan, which allowed him to continue his studies. This opportunity not only helped with immediate finances, but it also helped Roberto have the faith to marry and form an eternal family because he knew he would be able to provide for them.

Roberto finished medical school while serving as a bishop and became the first Church member on the National Board of Dominican Medical Schools. But the best results, he says, have been at home. “There have been changes in my family as we are now further removed from the cycle of poverty,” he says. “I am grateful that my son won’t have to live the same way I did because we’ve stepped out of that cycle.”

For more information, visit the Education and Literacy section of providentliving.org and visit besmart.com, a website to help Latter-day Saint youth prepare for higher education.

“All we can learn that is true while we are in this life will rise with us in the Resurrection. And all that we can learn will enhance our capacity to serve.”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “Education for Real Life,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2002, 21.



1939

- The first storehouse and cannery at Welfare Square begin operation.

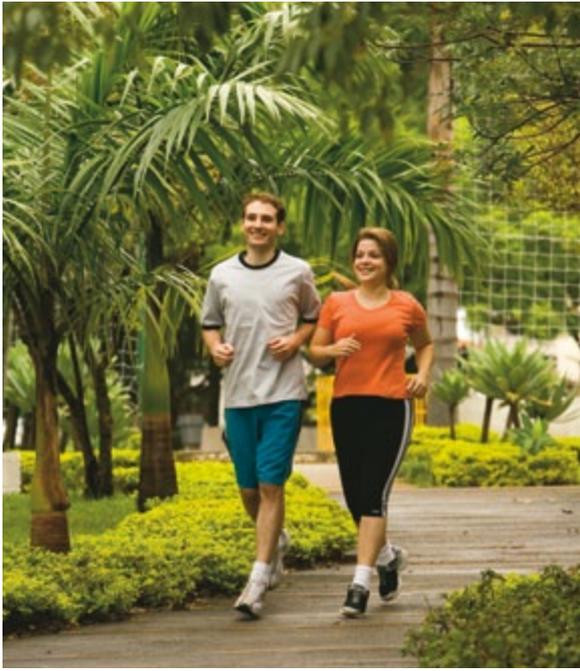


1940

- August 27: President David O. McKay dedicates the Welfare Square grain elevator. Church members donated over 70,000 hours of labor to build it.

1941

- April 20: Original Welfare Square milk-processing plant begins operation.



Far left: Latter-day Saint students pursue education to be better prepared to meet the rigors of today's competitive world. Left: Exercise and good nutrition are an important part of treating our bodies with care and respect.

2. Health

Because we are created in the image of God (see Genesis 1:27), our bodies are temples and should be treated with care and respect (see 1 Corinthians 3:16–17). The Word of Wisdom, found in Doctrine and Covenants 89, is the Lord's code of health and was revealed to Joseph Smith in 1833. It teaches that we should eat nutritious foods and avoid harmful substances. Apostles and prophets have since taught that we should shun all substances or practices that abuse our bodies or minds and that could lead to addiction.⁷

Sainimere Balenacagi of Fiji learned this lesson as a teenager when she was attending a wedding with some friends who were not members of the Church. Many people there, including Sainimere's friends, were drinking and smoking and invited her to drink. "I was taught my whole life to live the gospel standards, so I rejected the offer without hesitation," Sainimere says.

She knows that the blessings of adhering to the Word of Wisdom go beyond physical health: "I have found extra protection in the sense that I am able to make better choices because of the closeness of the Holy Spirit. I see clearly that standards do not restrict our freedom; they protect us from consequences that lead to restricted freedom."

For more information, see the Physical Health section of providentliving.org.



Sainimere Balenacagi knows both the physical and spiritual blessings of following the Word of Wisdom.

"Our physical bodies indeed are temples of God. Consequently, you and I must carefully consider what we take into our temple, what we put on our temple, what we do to our temple, and what we do with our temple."

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Ye Are the Temple of God," *Ensign*, Sept. 2001, 18.

ABOVE, FROM LEFT: PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOHN LUKE, ISRAEL ANTUNES, AND CRAIG DIMOND



1948
• March 1: The Church opens a regional employment office in Salt Lake City.



1960
• March: New Welfare Square milk-processing plant is completed.

1963
• Pasta manufacturing plant and new Welfare Square cannery begin operation.



Top: A young woman is helped at an employment resource center in Mexico. Above: Oséias Portinari says the employment resource center in São Paulo, Brazil, “gives unemployed members a better vision of life.”

3. Employment

In many wards and branches, finding employment is the most pressing need members face as they strive to become self-reliant. Priesthood quorums and Relief Society sisters can help these members. They should work closely with these individuals, identifying helpful community resources, mentors who can personally assist those in need, and available job opportunities. The power of members working together in faith to bless those in need will often lead to successful employment.

In some areas of the world, the Church has

“Our Heavenly Father asks only that we do the best we can—that we work according to our full capacity, however great or small that may be.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “Two Principles for Any Economy,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov 2009, 56.

established employment resource centers. Currently, there are more than 300 centers in 56 countries that offer services such as career workshops, networking meetings, and individual job counseling. The new Church website LDSjobs.org also provides resources for jobseekers, employers, and Church leaders.

After Oséias Portinari of Brazil was laid off at work, he spent more than two months searching for a new job. Unable to find a position, he volunteered at his local employment resource center in São Paulo. Helping others in their job searches offered Oséias an opportunity to improve his own interviewing and job search skills. He took the career workshop several times and eventually became an instructor. To his surprise, as he diligently served others, Oséias soon began to receive calls from prospective employers, which led to gainful employment.

Oséias is grateful for Church resources that give unemployed members a better vision of life. He says, “I know that as we put in effort, the Lord opens doors.”

For more information, visit LDSjobs.org, employment.lds.org, or your nearest employment resource center.

1973

- The Church creates LDS Social Services to help families.



1976

- Welfare facilities are expanded throughout the United States and Canada.
- March 29: New Welfare Square bishops’ storehouse is completed.

1978

- The Church forms the Emergency Response Committee to help millions of people around the world affected by disasters.

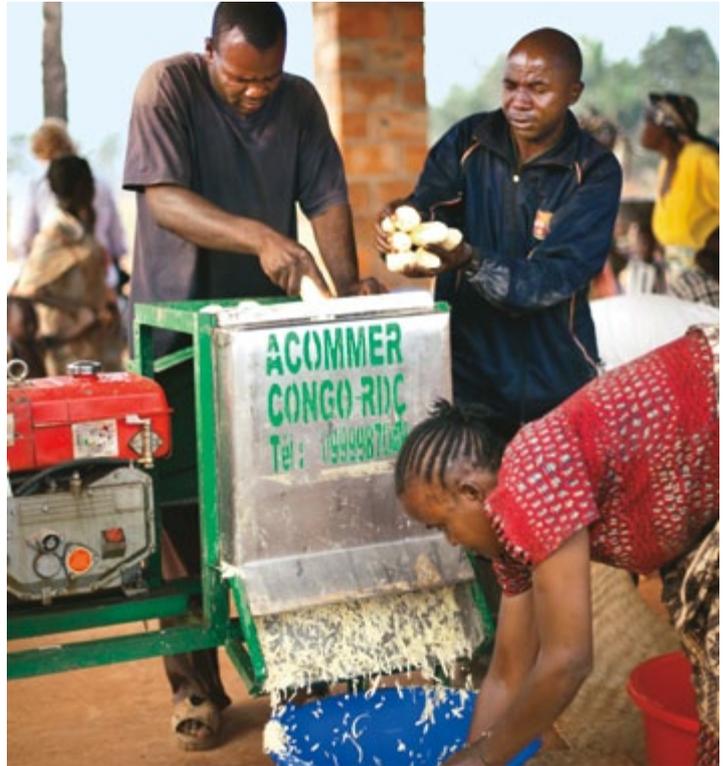
4. Family Home Production and Storage

In 2007 the Church introduced *All Is Safely Gathered In: Family Home Storage*, a pamphlet that provides a simplified approach to family home storage. The First Presidency encourages members worldwide to focus on having a basic supply of food and water and some money in savings. Members can begin by producing or purchasing a few extra items and setting aside a little money each week as their circumstances allow. Following this pattern over time, members can establish a home storage supply and a financial reserve suitable for their needs.⁸

After learning of this counsel, the Lugo family of Valencia, Venezuela, felt inspired to begin their own home storage. Each week they began setting aside a small amount of food, water, and money. Even with their limited resources, they were able to gather a modest reserve after only a few months. Later that year a workers' strike in Venezuela put many local workers' jobs in jeopardy. Brother Omar Lugo was among those who eventually lost their jobs.

It took nearly two years for Brother Lugo to find new employment. During that time, Brother Lugo and his family lived on their savings and food storage. Despite the difficult challenges of unemployment, the Lugos experienced peace and comfort because they were prepared. They faced the uncertain future with confidence, knowing they had followed the counsel to gradually build their home storage.⁹

For more information, visit the Family Home Storage section of providentliving.org or refer to the pamphlet *All Is Safely Gathered In: Family Home Storage*.



Families in the Democratic Republic of Congo work together to grow cassava as a food staple and to process the root into flour for daily use and for longer-term storage.

"This new [home storage] program is within everyone's grasp. The first step is to begin. The second is to continue. It doesn't matter how fast we get there so much as that we begin and continue according to our abilities."

Bishop H. David Burton, Presiding Bishop, in "Family Home Storage: A New Message," *Liahona*, Mar. 2009, 14; *Ensign*, Mar. 2009, 60.

TOP LEFT: PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY WELDEN C. ANDERSEN; TOP RIGHT: PHOTOGRAPHS BY HOWARD COLLETT



1980s

- First employment centers outside the United States are established, in Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay.

1981

- The Church builds a Deseret Industries thrift store at Welfare Square.



1982

- September 10: U.S. president Ronald Reagan visits welfare facilities in Ogden, Utah.



Devon and Michaela Stephens say that creating a budget helped them gain “firm control” of their finances.

5. Family Finances

Another aspect of provident living is wisely managing income and expenses. The First Presidency has counseled:

“We urge you to be modest in your expenditures; discipline yourselves in your purchases to avoid debt. . . .

“If you have paid your debts and have a financial

“All of us are responsible to provide for ourselves and our families in both temporal and spiritual ways. To provide providently, we must practice the principles of provident living: joyfully living within our means, being content with what we have, avoiding excessive debt, and diligently saving and preparing for rainy-day emergencies.”

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Becoming Provident Providers Temporally and Spiritually,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2009, 8.

reserve, even though it be small, you and your family will feel more secure and enjoy greater peace in your hearts.”¹⁰

Successful family finances begin with the payment of tithes and offerings. When members put the Lord first, they are better able to care for themselves and others.

Another part of successful financial management involves knowing your income and expenses and controlling money rather than letting it control you. When Devon and Michaela Stephens of Arizona, USA, created a budget, they had only a vague idea of how much money they spent each month. But making a budget with specific categories helped them “come out of the clouds and down to earth,” Michaela says. “It was alarming to find we had less money than we thought, but it was also intensely exhilarating to suddenly feel that we had firm control of what we had.”

For more information, visit the Family Finances section of providentliving.org or refer to the pamphlet *All Is Safely Gathered In: Family Finances*.

1983

- The Presiding Bishopric is designated to direct the welfare program.

1985

- Church Humanitarian Services program begins.



1990s

- The Church uses its Humanitarian Service Center to sort surplus clothing and other goods for shipment throughout the world in response to poverty and disasters.

1996

- The Church establishes Latter-day Saint Charities as a nongovernmental organization to facilitate humanitarian activities in select countries.¹
- Welfare Services builds its first bishops’ storehouses and home storage centers outside the United States, in Mexico.
- Renovation of Welfare Square begins.

6. Spiritual Strength

Spirituality is essential to our temporal and eternal well-being. We all experience trials. Striving to increase our spirituality will help us face these trials well and give us hope for better days.

Nirina J-Randriamiharisoa of Madagascar currently lives in France while she pursues her education. When she first arrived, she struggled with loneliness and homesickness. “I sought for solace through prayer, scripture reading, and the gentle whisperings of the Holy Spirit,” says Nirina. “These things brought me closer to Heavenly Father and the Savior, and I felt peace.”

In time Nirina made friends and participated in activities within and outside the Church and found happiness. But then some tragic news from home shook her world. “One morning I received a message telling me that my brother had died. I had no idea I could feel such sadness. In the days and weeks that followed, I struggled through moments of loneliness, anger, and despair. Doing even the most basic things became serious challenges.”

A few months later, a close friend also passed away. The added sorrow increased Nirina’s already-heavy burden. For just a moment Nirina considered not attending church, but then she remembered that the same things that had buoyed her in her earlier difficulties could bolster her now.

“As I had when I first moved to France, I sought comfort in prayer, scripture reading, and the Holy Ghost. Through this I discovered more strongly that the Spirit and the doctrine of eternal families can bring us comfort and that the Atonement of Jesus Christ has a real effect in our lives,” she says. “Whatever trials we face, there are no ‘dead ends’ with the Lord. His plan is a plan of happiness.”

For more information on self-reliance and provident living, see *Providing in the Lord’s Way: Summary of A Leader’s Guide to Welfare*, available in many languages at providentliving.org.

NOTES

1. *Providing in the Lord’s Way: Summary of A Leader’s Guide to Welfare* (booklet, 2009), 1.
2. See Thomas S. Monson, “Guiding Principles of Personal and Family Welfare,” *Tambuli*, Feb. 1987, 3; *Ensign*, Sept. 1986, 3.
3. H. David Burton, “The Blessing of Work,” *Liahona*, Dec. 2009, 37; *Ensign*, Dec. 2009, 43.
4. Robert D. Hales, “A Gospel Vision of Welfare: Faith in Action,” in *Basic Principles of Welfare and Self-Reliance* (booklet, 2009), 2.
5. *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1997), 724.
6. Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Perpetual Education Fund,” *Liahona*, July 2001, 62; *Ensign*, May 2001, 52.
7. See, for example, Russell M. Nelson, “Addiction or Freedom,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 6; M. Russell Ballard, “O That Cunning Plan of the Evil One,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 108.
8. See *All Is Safely Gathered In: Family Home Storage* (pamphlet, 2007).
9. See “Family Home Storage: A New Message,” *Liahona*, Mar. 2009, 12–13; *Ensign*, Mar. 2009, 58–59.
10. *All Is Safely Gathered In: Family Finances* (pamphlet, 2007).



Nirina J-Randriamiharisoa has found that consistent gospel living can buoy us up even through the most difficult times.

“A strong testimony gives peace, comfort, and assurance. It generates the conviction that as the teachings of the Savior are consistently obeyed, life will be beautiful, the future will be secure, and there will be capacity to overcome the challenges that cross our path. A testimony grows from understanding truth distilled from prayer and the pondering of scriptural doctrine. It is nurtured by living those truths with faith anchored in the secure confidence that the promised results will be obtained.”

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Transforming Power of Faith and Character,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 46.



1997

- LDS Social Services makes a record number of adoption placements in one year with 629—the highest number the agency achieved in the 20th century.²



1999

- March: Welfare Services begins a major employment initiative to establish up to 50 new employment resource centers throughout the world.
- LDS Social Services is renamed LDS Family Services, and programs are expanded.



Increasing Our Compassionate Service by Following the Savior

Whosoever will save his life shall lose it,” the Savior taught, “but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it” (Luke 9:24).

Of this admonition President Thomas S. Monson said: “I believe the Savior is telling us that unless we lose ourselves in service to others, there is little purpose to our own lives. Those who live only for themselves eventually shrivel up and figuratively lose their lives, while those who lose themselves in service to others grow and flourish—and in effect save their lives.”¹

It can be difficult to find the necessary time and energy to help our family, neighbors, ward or branch members, community, and even strangers. When do we help and how, especially when each of us has a finite amount of time? How do we serve when our circumstances limit our abilities?

Our Exemplar is, of course, the Savior Jesus Christ, who has invited us to follow Him (see Matthew 4:19). Although we do not share His divine calling, we can share in His ministry. Describing that ministry, the

Apostle Peter said that Jesus “went about doing good” (Acts 10:38).

Jesus healed the sick and ministered to the afflicted (see Matthew 9:20–22; Mark 8:22–25).

Perhaps we will not perform the same mighty miracles, but we can comfort and minister to the needs of those who are dying, ill, or mourning.

The Savior miraculously fed those who had no food (see Matthew 14:15–21). We can give generous fast offerings, serve in Church welfare food-production projects, and contribute to community efforts to feed the needy.

Jesus was aware of and ministered to the individual (see Luke 8:45–48). As we seek to follow His example, the Spirit will open our eyes to see the suffering, the lonely, the estranged. And we can be guided to help meet their needs.

Jesus spent time with others, even when He hadn’t planned to (see Luke 24:29) **and even when He was dealing with His own concerns**

2001

- A new career workshop is introduced at employment resource centers. Self-employment workshop materials are introduced a year later.
- September 5: Following the completion of the renovation of Welfare Square, a rededication ceremony is held.



2003

- January 25: The Provident Living website is launched, providentliving.org.
- A major proposal is approved to increase the number of bishops’ storehouses throughout the world.
- The Church begins four major humanitarian initiatives: neonatal resuscitation training, clean water, wheelchair distribution, and vision treatment.

(see Matthew 14). We are counseled to give service in a wise and orderly way and not to “run faster than [we have] strength” (Mosiah 4:27). But sometimes our greatest opportunities to serve and bless come when it is least convenient. In the Savior’s parable, the good Samaritan interrupted his journey, then and there, to minister to the stricken man’s needs (see Luke 10:30–37).

No one was beneath the Savior’s notice or too low for Him to reach out to (see Matthew 9:9–13). As the Savior did, so can we love and lift others, teaching them a better way and inviting them to join us in the abundant life the Savior offers.

Heavenly Father knows our unique abilities, circumstances, and desires, and He knows how we can use them to bless others. As we draw closer to Him and seek His direction, He will help us know whom, where, and how to serve.

Visit the Service section of **LDS.org** for ideas about serving in the Church, in your community, in missionary capacities, and in humanitarian service.

NOTE

1. Thomas S. Monson, “What Have I Done for Someone Today?” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 85.

“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world” (James 1:27).



Far left: Brother Chiroque, a Young Men president in Chulucanas, Peru, works with Alex, a member of the teachers quorum, to build crutches for an injured man in their branch.

Fast offerings, like those being collected by these deacons, are vital to helping the needy.

The Strength of Many

The Law of the Fast

The Lord established the law of the fast to bless His people and provide a way to care for those in need. He instructed the Saints “to impart of your substance unto the poor, . . . and [it] shall be laid before the bishop . . . to administer to the poor and needy” (D&C 42:31, 34). Fast offerings are a primary resource for the Lord’s storehouse. Church members are encouraged to give an offering at least equal to the value of the two meals not eaten while fasting. President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) asked members to give “much, much more—ten times more where we are in a position to do it.”¹

When we understand and live the law of the fast, our love and compassion for the less fortunate increase. Fasting, accompanied by prayer, is a form of true worship. When we obey the law of the fast,

2009

- June: A new adoption website is launched, ItsAboutLove.org.³



2010

- April: A new employment website is launched, LDSjobs.org, currently available in English, Spanish, and Portuguese.
- Food production is added to humanitarian initiatives.

NOTES

1. See “Humanitarian Activities Worldwide,” providentliving.org/content/display/0,11666,4600-1-2323-1,00.html.
2. See C. Ross Clement, “LDS Family Services” (unpublished history prepared for LDS Family Services, May 10, 2000).
3. See Kimberly Bowen, “LDS Family Services Launches New Web Site,” *Ensign*, Sept. 2009, 78.



Symbolic of the added power that comes when we unite to serve others, priesthood brethren in Louisiana, USA, help remove a fallen tree after Hurricane Katrina struck in 2005.



Projects like peach production provide a variety of nutritious foods that both sustain and brighten the lives of those who would otherwise suffer hunger.

we gain spiritual strength, temporal blessings, and a greater desire to serve others.

President Thomas S. Monson taught: “The concept of fast offerings appears as early as the time of Isaiah when, speaking of the true fast, he encouraged people to fast and ‘to deal thy bread to the hungry, and . . . bring the poor that are cast out to thy house’ [Isaiah 58:7]. The Prophet Joseph instituted the practice of collecting fast offerings for the poor in Kirtland, Ohio; and later at Nauvoo, Illinois, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles sent a general letter to the Church defining ‘the principle of fasts,’ stating: ‘Let this be an ensample to all saints, and there will never be any lack for bread: When the poor are starving, let those who have, fast one day and give what they otherwise would have eaten to the bishops

“If every member of this church observed the fast and contributed generously, the poor and the needy—not only of the Church, but many others as well—would be blessed and provided for.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), “Rise to a Larger Vision of the Work,” *Ensign*, May 1990, 97.

for the poor, and every one will abound for a long time. . . . And so long as the saints will all live to this principle with glad hearts and cheerful countenances they will always have an abundance.”²

Food Production

The production and processing of food to feed the hungry has been a cornerstone of the welfare plan since it was first introduced. What began as scattered gardens and work projects located throughout Utah became a vast network of over 1,000 farms and food-production projects run by the stakes and wards of the Church. Welfare farms operated in North America, Europe, Australia, and Polynesia. By the 1980s these farms and production facilities were consolidated, enlarged, and improved. Some smaller projects were sold.

As in the past, these farms and facilities are supported by members of the Church who provide most of the labor—all volunteer. Members contribute hundreds of thousands of days each year to produce, process, and distribute food that will be used to support the needy. Over 100 million pounds (45 million kg) of grain, beans, meat, fruit, vegetables, and other commodities are produced annually, ensuring that bishops have food available to support those in need.



As part of the ongoing effort to meet people's most basic needs, young women in Hong Kong assemble soap and other hygiene items for victims of disaster.



Projects to serve others strengthen the bonds between us and help us develop Christlike attributes. Here, young Latter-day Saints in Mexico, involved in neighborhood improvement, wash a home.

In areas of the Church where storehouses are not available or readily accessible, bishops and branch presidents use fast offerings to provide the needed commodities and services.

The Lord's Storehouse

Since the welfare program was introduced in 1936, members of the Church have labored together to relieve the suffering of those who stand in need. Economic downturns, natural disasters, unemployment, sickness and disability, or times of loss have all required that the Saints work together under the direction of the priesthood to ensure that needs are met and that individuals and families are blessed. Over the years millions of members have willingly given of their time and talents to bless others and replace, as President Monson says, "the weakness of one person standing alone [with] the strength of many serving together."³

When President Heber J. Grant spoke of the welfare system in 1936, he envisioned that "no new Church machinery" would be required but that "stake and ward organizations, the priesthood quorums, the Relief Society, and the various auxiliary organizations [would] render the maximum service [they]

could furnish in the interest of the general welfare of the Church."⁴ The Lord had already established the organization needed to bless the poor and needy—priesthood quorums were in place, Relief Societies were organized, and the priesthood of God was on the earth.

The members of the Church, with their consecrated labor, their talents and abilities, become an integral part of the Lord's storehouse. In addition to the fast offerings that are paid to the fast-offering fund of the Church, priesthood leaders can draw on the time, talents, abilities, and energies of all the members in blessing those who stand in need.

By accepting the opportunity to assist others in their hour of need, we demonstrate our love for God and His children. This is welfare in its purest light, and its faithful practice will exalt both the giver and the receiver, as envisioned by prophets in our day.

NOTES

1. Spencer W. Kimball, in Conference Report, Apr. 1974, 184.
2. Thomas S. Monson, "Be Thou an Example," *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 44.
3. Thomas S. Monson, in "Messages of Inspiration from President Monson," *Church News*, Feb. 6, 2010, 2.
4. Heber J. Grant, in James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (1965–75), 6:19; capitalization standardized.



“To all within the sound of my voice I declare that the welfare plan of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is inspired of Almighty God. Indeed, the Lord Jesus Christ is its architect. He beckons to you and to me, ‘Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him’ (Revelation 3:20).

“May we hear His voice, may we open to His presence the doorways of our hearts, and may He be our constant companion as we strive to serve His children.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “The Way of the Lord,” in *Basic Principles of Welfare and Self-Reliance* (booklet, 2009), 13.

Making Principles of Welfare Part of Your Life

Living welfare principles is about putting our faith in Jesus Christ into action—by eliminating unnecessary debt, living within our means, and establishing family home storage and financial reserves, for example. Our faith leads us to educate our minds and our hands and to work every day of our lives to be self-reliant. Having taken care of our own needs, we are better able to provide for ourselves and serve others. May we follow the counsel not only to *do* good but strive to *be* good, not just to *do* better but to *be* better.¹ Obedience to the Lord’s counsel brings temporal and spiritual blessings. It allows us to face the challenges of life armed with courage and confidence rather than fear and doubt.

President Thomas S. Monson reminds us of our duty to lift and bless others:

“My brothers and sisters, may we ask ourselves the question . . . : ‘What have I done for someone today?’ May the words of a familiar hymn penetrate our very souls and find lodgment in our hearts:

*“Have I done any good in the world today?
Have I helped anyone in need?
Have I cheered up the sad and made someone
feel glad?
If not, I have failed indeed.
Has anyone’s burden been lighter today
Because I was willing to share?
Have the sick and the weary been helped on
their way?
When they needed my help was I there?”*

“That service to which all of us have been called is the service of the Lord Jesus Christ.”² ■

NOTES

1. See Robert D. Hales, “A Gospel Vision of Welfare: Faith in Action,” in *Basic Principles of Welfare and Self-Reliance* (booklet, 2009), 1.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “What Have I Done for Someone Today?” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 87.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Interested in learning more about the topics discussed in these pages? Several pamphlets, DVDs, websites, and other resources may be useful to you. Visit 75yearsofwelfare.org for more information.



MAY NOT BE COPIED

In His Constant Care, by Greg Olsen

*“Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings,
and not one of them is forgotten before God?*

“But even the very hairs of your head are all

*numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value
than many sparrows” (Luke 12:6–7).*



In 1829 the ancient Apostles Peter, James, and John appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and conferred upon them the Melchizedek Priesthood. Through the same process of ordination, all worthy male members of the Church are able to receive and then exercise the priesthood—the authority to act in God’s name. See pages 8, 19, and 44.