

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS • OCTOBER 2006

Ensign

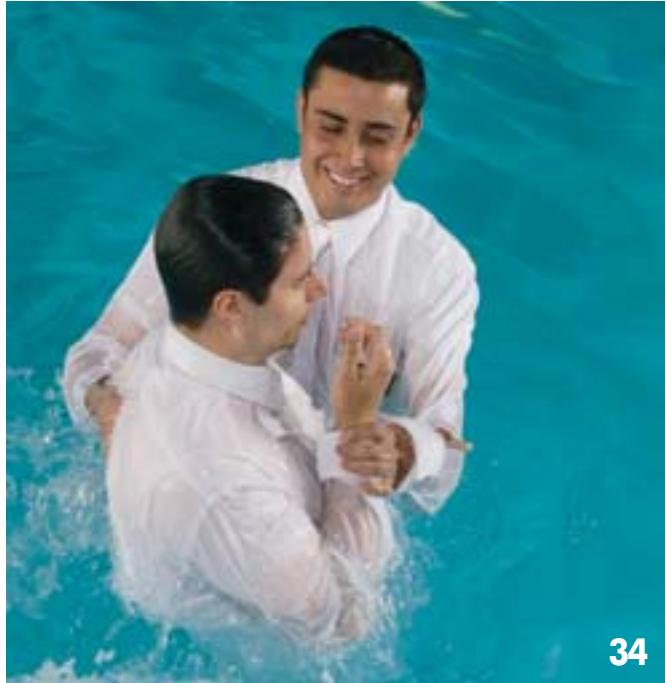


SPECIAL ISSUE:
Welcome to the
Church of Jesus Christ

A Prophet's Counsel to
New Members, p. 2

What I Wish Every
Member Knew, p. 10

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WELCOME TO THIS ISSUE OF THE ENSIGN

If You Are a Recent Convert . . .

This magazine was prepared for you. It contains inspired and loving counsel from apostles and prophets. You will also find advice from ordinary members who have lived what you are experiencing as a new member. We hope this issue will be helpful to you now and in the future as you refer to it for information and inspiration.

You have received a spiritual witness that the Church is true, but you may find that you still have much to learn and some lifestyle changes to make. This issue can help you put those challenges into perspective and meet them successfully. You can do it because God truly is your Father and will help you succeed.

If You Are a Longtime Member . . .

It may seem strange to receive an issue addressed to new members. But by making you more aware of the challenges faced by new members, this issue can help you put your Church experience and gospel knowledge to use as a friend and mentor to new members.

If there's someone you could bless by sharing this magazine or just an article or two, we encourage you to do so. Additional copies of this magazine may be obtained through your local distribution center and in the United States and Canada at www.ldscatalog.com. Check first with your ward or branch leaders; they may have already ordered extra copies and might have plans to share this magazine with that person.

If You Are a Missionary . . .

The articles in this magazine can strengthen recent converts and help them know what to expect as a new member. Please coordinate with ward or branch leaders as you share this issue with new members and with those who are soon to be baptized and confirmed.

—The editors

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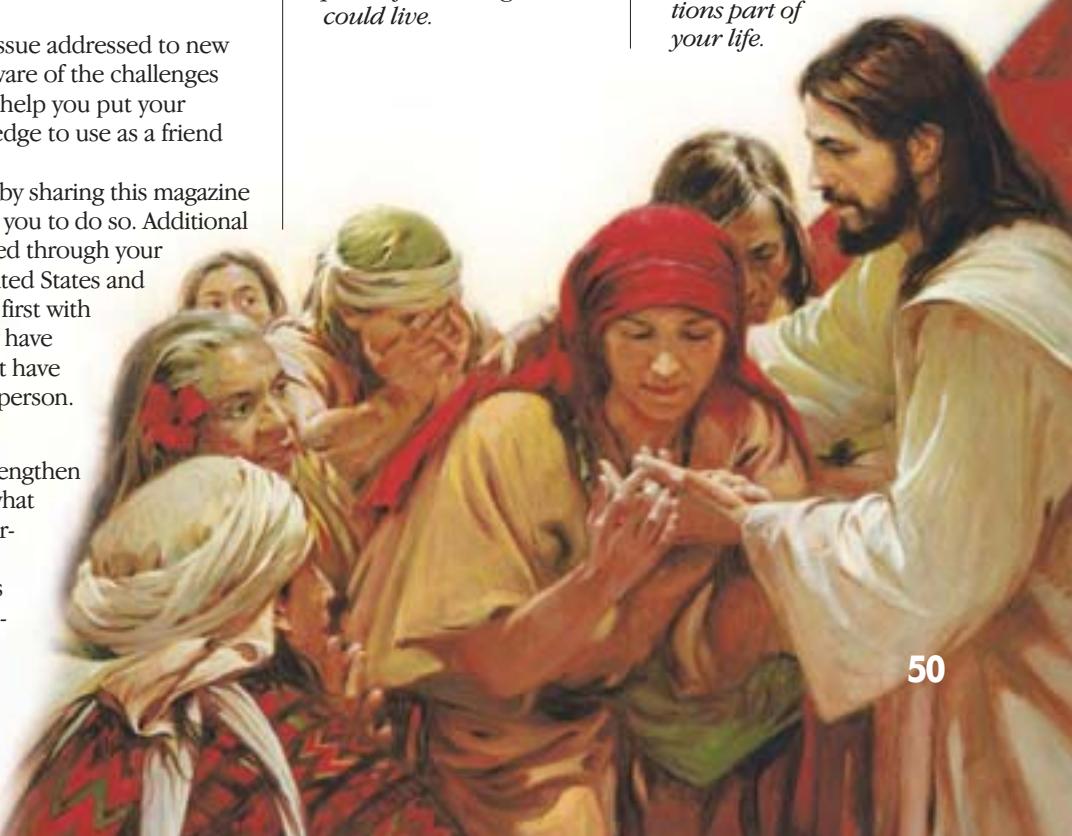
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Ensign

AN OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

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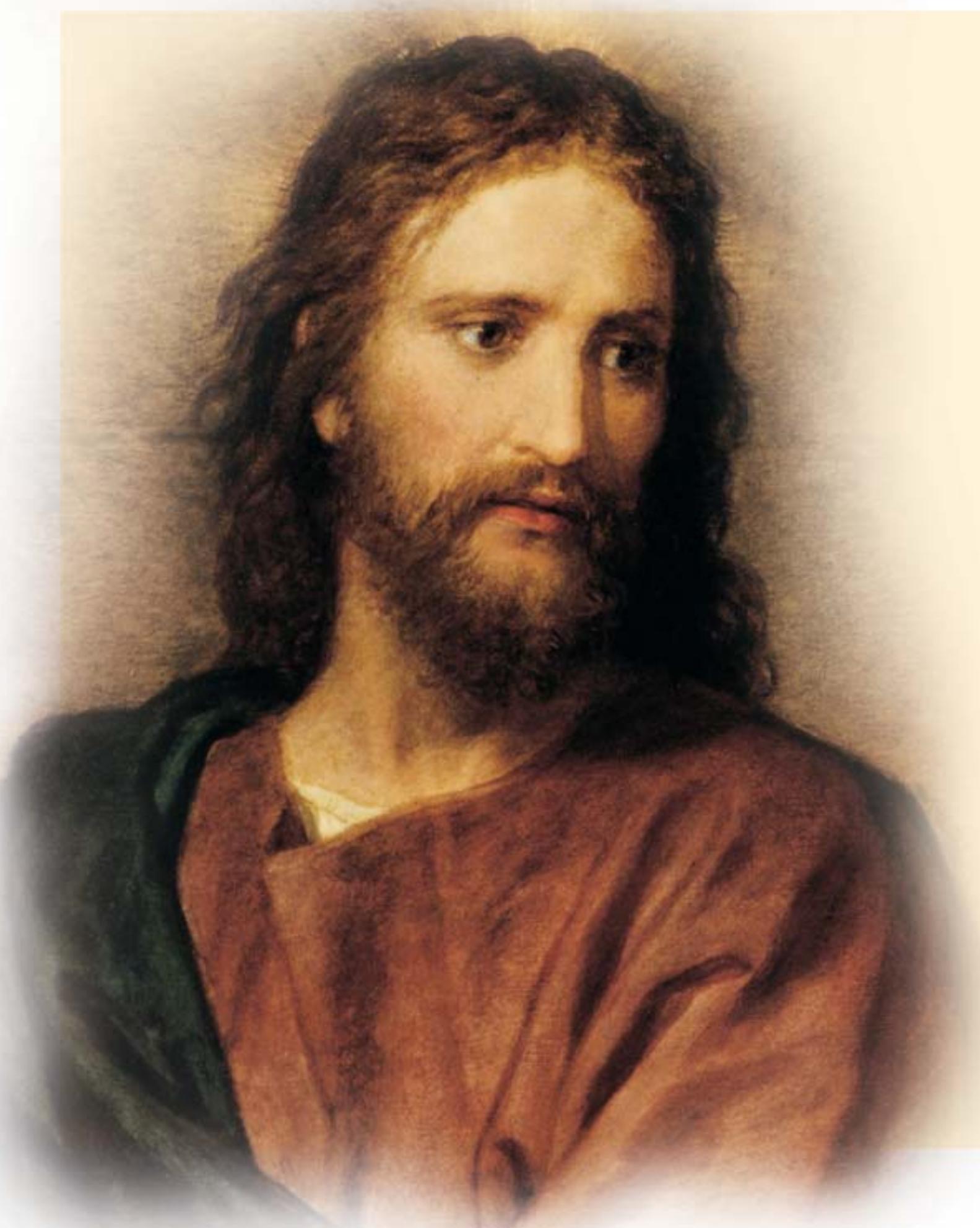
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LEARNING AND SHARING

Do you have a story or experience that could help other members of the Church? We'd like to hear from you. Send manuscripts you'd like to share to the address at right. If you want your manuscript returned, please send a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Allow several weeks for review.



A Perfect Brightness of Hope

TO NEW MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH

BY PRESIDENT GORDON B. HINCKLEY

We congratulate you on your recent baptism and welcome you most warmly. What a wonderful step you have taken in joining the Church! We stand ready to assist you in any way that we can.

At this critical time you may feel like the woman who wrote this letter:

"My journey into the Church was unique and quite challenging. This past year has been the hardest year that I have ever lived in my life. It has also been the most rewarding. As a new member, I continue to be challenged every day."

She continues: "When we as investigators become members of the Church, we are surprised to discover that we have entered into a completely foreign world, a world that has its own traditions, culture, and language. We discover that there is no one person or no one place of reference that we can turn to for guidance in our trip into this new world."¹

What you are going through as a new member should be exhilarating. Your faith in the Savior is strong. Your excitement to learn more and more about the restored gospel is sincere.

But it is also easy to feel overwhelmed by new words, new meetings, new teachings, and new challenges. Even new people may be something to deal with. You may wonder if you can ever measure up to the standard of being a true Latter-day Saint. I have a simple message for you: Of course you can! Don't give up!

On the Path

Remember what Nephi said:

"Ye have entered in by the gate; ye have done according to the commandments of the Father and the Son; and ye have received the Holy Ghost, which witnesses of the Father and the Son. . . .

"And now, . . . after ye have gotten into this strait and narrow path, I would ask if all is done? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; for ye have not come thus far save it were by the word of Christ with unshaken faith in him, relying wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save.

"Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure



This is God's holy work. This is His Church and kingdom. I leave this testimony and my invitation to continue to be part of this great latter-day miracle that is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.



We need you. We will do our best to comfort you, to make you feel welcome and accepted. We love you, and we know the Lord loves you. Come and work with us side by side as we grow and learn together.

to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life" (2 Nephi 31:18–20).

Joining the Church is a serious thing. Each convert takes upon himself or herself the name of Christ with an implied promise to keep His commandments. But coming into the Church can be a perilous experience. Unless there are warm and strong hands to greet you, unless we reach out to you with love and concern, you may begin to wonder about the step you have taken. Unless there are friendly hands and welcome hearts to greet you and lead you along the way, you may drop by the side. We have the challenge of helping you to strengthen your testimony of the truth of this work. We cannot have you walking in the front door and out the back! Every one of you is precious. Every one of you is a son or daughter of God.

I have said before, and I repeat it, that each of you as a convert needs three things:



1. A friend in the Church to whom you can constantly turn, who will walk beside you, who will answer your questions, who will understand your problems. You also have home teachers, visiting teachers, and other members who will help you on your marvelous journey of faith.

2. An assignment. Activity is the genius of this Church. It is the process by which we grow. Faith and love for the Lord are like the muscles of my arm. If I use them, they grow stronger. If I put them in a sling, they become weaker. Each of you deserves a responsibility.

In handling that responsibility you may make some mistakes. So what? We all make mistakes. The important thing is the growth that will come of activity. Your leaders can help you find ways to be involved. Be willing to accept new challenges, and trust that the Lord will help you be equal to them. If you get discouraged, ask for help. But don't give up. As you keep trying you will find that your abilities increase.

3. To be constantly "nourished by the good word of God" (Moroni 6:4). You will be affiliated with a priesthood quorum or the Relief Society, the Young Women, the Young Men, the Sunday School, or the Primary. Come to sacrament meeting to partake of the sacrament, to renew the covenants you made at the time of your baptism. Read from the scriptures every day. Pray every morning and every evening, that you may stay close to the Lord.

You know and we

know that there are many good people in other churches. There is much of good in them. Your family and your prior religious traditions may have taught you many good things and established many good habits. As the Apostle



Paul said, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21). Bring the good things with you, keep them, and use them in the Lord's service.

Rejoicing Together

We rejoice with you in the gospel of Jesus Christ. There are many blessings in store for you. We know at times it can be terribly lonely. It can be disappointing. It can be frightening. We of this Church are far more different from the world than we are prone to think we are. But the gospel is nothing to be ashamed of. It is something to be proud of. "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord," wrote Paul to Timothy (2 Timothy 1:8).

To those of you who are new, I plead with you to continue with us. We need you. We will put our arms around you and be friends with you. We will do our best to comfort you, to make you feel welcome and accepted. We love you, and we know the Lord loves you. Forgive our faults and weaknesses. Come and work with us side by side as we grow and learn together.

This is God's holy work. This is His Church and kingdom. The vision that occurred in the Sacred Grove was just as Joseph said it was. There is in my heart a true understanding of the importance of what happened there. The Book of

Mormon is true. It testifies of the Lord Jesus Christ. His priesthood has been restored and is among us. The keys of that priesthood, which have come from heavenly beings, are exercised for our eternal blessing. Such is our testimony—yours and mine—a testimony which we must live up to and which we must share with others. I leave this testimony, my blessing, and my love with each of you and my invitation to continue to be part of this great latter-day miracle that is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. ■

NOTE

1. "Find the Lambs, Feed the Sheep," *Liabona*, July 1999, 122; *Ensign*, May 1999, 104.

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

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

1. Bring three objects that represent the three things mentioned in the article that every new convert needs. For instance, you could bring a gift from a friend, a Church handbook, and scriptures.
 - If you are teaching new converts, discuss how these things will help them rejoice in their membership in the Church. Also help them see what contribution they can make as new members.
 - If you are teaching longtime members, discuss why a friend, a responsibility, and nurturing by the word of God are so important to new members. Invite them to help meet the needs of new members of their ward or branch.
2. Have family members imagine they have just entered a foreign country where they do not know the language, traditions, or culture. Ask them how they feel. What are the first things they want or miss? Compare this to what a new member might experience. Read the last section of President Hinckley's message, and testify of the blessings of becoming "part of this great latter-day miracle."

Latter-day Saints from around the world share their testimonies of the gospel of Jesus Christ.



Rejoicing in the Gospel

Exercising the Priesthood

"My mum fell seriously ill one morning, and I was home alone with her. Her condition got worse. My dear mother was suffering. Her tears and screams were too much for me to bear.

"Our neighbors came rushing into our house. They suggested that I should take her to the hospital, but none of them could help me. My stake president and bishop were not at home. I was completely confused.

"Deep within me I pondered in my heart what to do. I asked my Heavenly Father to deliver me out of this situation. Just then my mum called me and asked, 'Have you been ordained to the higher priesthood?'

"I answered, 'Yes.'

"'Then bless me,' she said.

"I was very surprised, because when the missionaries taught her about the priesthood, she didn't believe it was true. Now I was the only one around commissioned of Jesus Christ to act on behalf of God. I examined myself and found myself worthy to perform such a great task. I excused myself for a while and offered a short prayer to my Heavenly Father to heal my mother.

"After my prayer I felt something within me. Immediately I knew that it was the power of God.



Amos Kwame Tofah

I returned and gently helped my mother sit up. I laid my hands on her head and blessed her. Soon after the ordinance she fell asleep. She slept about eight hours. I never heard any screams or moans from her again.

"How great was my joy when my mum woke up. I inquired of her condition. She replied, 'I am very well, my son. I thought the priesthood was not real, but when I was suffering and prayed for help, I suddenly realized that the priesthood was true. So I asked for a blessing, and I was able to sleep.' —Amos Kwame Tofah, Ghana



Sunil Massey family

Changing Attitudes

"Following the Savior makes me happy. It has changed my attitude and my family's attitude toward other people. We're more polite and courteous to everyone. We're more outgoing and friendly."—*Sunil Massey, India*

Helping Raise Seven Children

"Six years ago my wife, Sachiko, died from cancer. Others worried that our family of seven children might fall apart without a mother, but that is the way the world thinks. We knew there is great strength in the gospel, so we continued to have family home evening and family prayer and scripture study. These have been very helpful in strengthening our family bonds.

"Because we had the gospel in our home, our children knew where their mother was.



Masahiro Yonamine family

The gospel blessed their lives, and they felt that they needed to share those blessings with others. The children have gone on missions, one after another."—*Masahiro Yonamine, Japan*

Risking a Career

"While interviewing for my present position as a senior vice president of a large international company, I told my direct manager of my religious beliefs about drinking. I said that I would not be able to accept the job if abstaining from drinking would be problematic in fulfilling my responsibilities.

"At the time, social drinking was very important in the corporate culture and considered good stress therapy. It was commonly understood that social drinking was a part of a successful career. My manager, though disappointed that I would not be able to join him in many executive social circles, offered me the position, with respect for my beliefs.



Darlla Lauer

Coming unto Christ

"The biggest change in my life since joining the Church is how I act toward people. I'm not cynical anymore. I'm kinder, more loving. I share. I don't feel any evil feelings toward anyone. It's just so simple. Live life and enjoy it because you've got Christ in your life.

"I rejoice in the gospel because it's healing to my soul. And I know Christ lives today."—*Darlla Lauer, Utah*

"Since I joined the company, the corporate culture has changed so that abstaining from drinking is rarely a problem anymore. My firm

testimony is that I will be ahead in my life, including my career, when I follow the values of Jesus Christ."—*Yong-In S. Shin, South Korea*



Jeffrey and Analili Burrows family

Finding Answers to Life's Questions

"We rejoice in the gospel because it gives answers to life's questions. After we went through the pain of two miscarriages, holding our little daughter has almost been more than the heart could take without bursting. The priesthood has given us hope to see the fruits after the trial of our faith.

"The Church offers the keys to success in a young family like ours through the material we are given on how to raise righteous children. Where else could we find that type of guidance? The gospel has given us an eternal perspective of life and death, of sickness and health, and of love everlasting."—*Jeffrey and Analili Burrows, Guatemala*



Garry and María Guanilo family

Being Together Forever

"One day two missionaries got into my taxi," says Garry Guanilo of Peru. "They asked me if I knew that families could be eternal. That question really had an impact on me. And they spoke to me about the Prophet Joseph Smith. I went home and told my wife, María, about it. We invited the missionaries to our home. During the first lesson, they sang 'Families Can Be Together Forever' " (*Hymns*, no. 300).

María adds, "Since our baptism, we are progressing in many ways. It's like a staircase—we keep climbing higher and higher, and less important things are dropping out of our lives."

Garry continues, "I want to marry my wife for eternity in the temple and to have our daughters sealed to us. We had no idea this world existed!"—*Garry and María Guanilo, Peru*

Finding Courage in a Hymn

"I received a crucial testimony in February 1945, when I was 13. We found ourselves between the battlefronts in World War II and came into a life-threatening predicament with four other families. About 15 soldiers aimed their rifles at us, intending to kill us. In this dangerous situation my mother placed herself between the weapons and us five children. She said, 'Children, hold each other's hands.' Then she sang the hymn 'Abide with Me' (*Hymns*, no. 166)!

"Today, after 60 years, I still hear this hymn in my spirit. At that moment I prayed to my Heavenly Father and made a covenant with Him that if He would preserve my life, I would keep His commandments and laws. This promise has given me the strength to turn from worldly things and align my life with the gospel of Jesus Christ."—*Erich Stank, Germany*



Erich Stank



Franklin M. Konduah

Learning the Doctrine

"I love learning the doctrines of the gospel. I enjoy singing the hymns because hymns teach doctrine. I want to serve a mission, and I am a home teacher. I go with my father, and with the Lord's help we have helped activate two families."

—*Franklin M. Konduah, Ghana*

What I Wish Every and Every Longtime



Remember, the most significant sign of your progress on this journey is not so much your location on the path at the moment, but rather the direction in which you are moving.

BY ELDER JEFFREY R. HOLLAND

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

When men, women, and children are baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, they begin a wonder-filled journey marked (figuratively speaking) by majestic mountains, lush valleys, and beautiful vistas as far as the eye can see. It is at times a demanding journey but an absolutely essential one to make nevertheless, for this is the journey back to our Father in Heaven. Fortunately, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself has promised to lead us on our way:

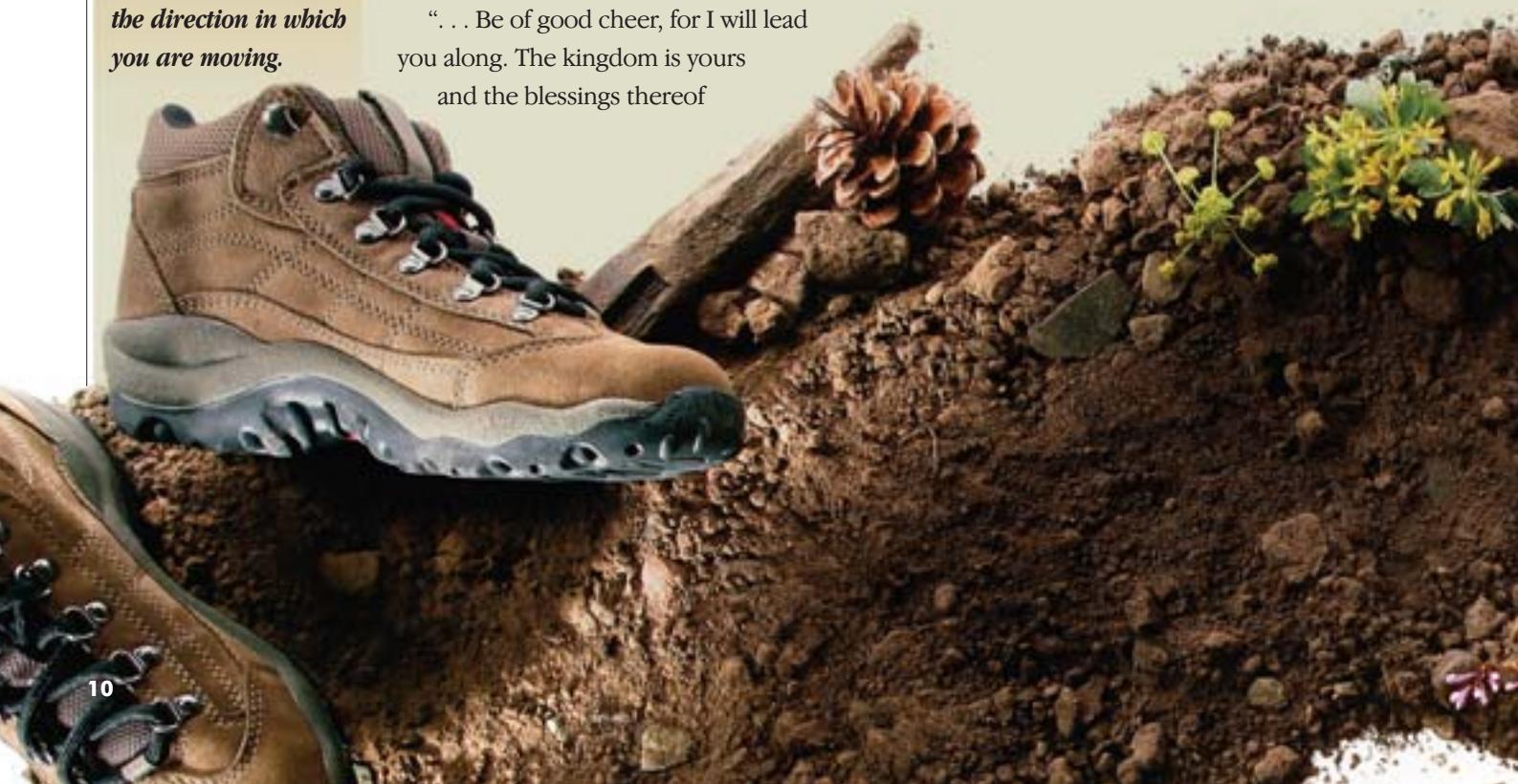
“Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye are little children, and ye have not as yet understood how great blessings the Father hath in his own hands and prepared for you;

“... Be of good cheer, for I will lead you along. The kingdom is yours and the blessings thereof

are yours, and the riches of eternity are yours.”¹

As members of the Church, we are all on this journey. Our age and experience will always be varied, as will our languages, cultures, and degrees of gospel understanding. But whatever your circumstances, we welcome you. As the Apostle Paul said, “Ye are ... [now] fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God,”² and that means we are in this together.

There are some things I wish you and every member knew, things that will provide spiritual strength for the road ahead. It is important to remember that we need to succeed—not just finish the course,³ but



New Member Knew— Member Remembered

"finish [our] course with joy."⁴ *For a celestial reward, it is absolutely essential that we remain faithful to the end.* There is nothing in the Church that is directed toward the celestial or terrestrial kingdoms. For us it is a celestial goal every step of the way. We cannot flag or fail or halt halfway. Christ Himself pronounced:

"Whoso repenteth and is baptized in my name . . . if he endureth to the end, behold, him will I hold guiltless before my Father at that day when I shall stand to judge the world.

" . . . Nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who

have washed their garments in my blood, because of their faith, and the repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end."⁵

The Way of the Covenant

This way we each have chosen, the way along which our Savior assists us, is the way of the covenant. Beginning with our baptism, we make covenants as we follow this path to eternal life, and we stay on the path by keeping them. His light is one of the rewards of keeping covenants.

"I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life,"⁶ Jesus assured.

In His light we live spiritually and become more able day by day



The Master's life was marked by loving service and devotion to others, and so too will be the lives of His disciples.

to discern that light and receive more of it. Furthermore, we receive the gift of the Holy Ghost at the time of our confirmation, the first of many gifts reserved for members of the true Church. The promptings of the Holy Ghost will always be sufficient for our needs if we keep to the covenant path. Our path is uphill most days, but the help we receive for the climb is literally divine. We have three members of the Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—helping us because of the covenants we have made.

To remind us of those covenants, we partake of the sacrament each week. In the prayer offered on the bread, we “witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that [we] are willing to take upon [us] the name of thy Son, and always remember him and keep his commandments which he has given

[us]; that [we] may always have his Spirit to be with [us].”⁷

The Sanctity of Service

One of the covenants we make at baptism is to serve. Loving service and devotion to the needs of others was perhaps the chief characteristic of the Savior’s mortal life. It will always be a mark of the Master’s disciples. At the Waters of Mormon, that small band of believers clapped for joy when they were invited to covenant through baptism that they would bear each other’s burdens and comfort those who needed comfort.⁸

In our day the Savior Himself has counseled: “All those who humble themselves before God, and desire to be baptized, and come forth with broken hearts and contrite spirits, and . . . are willing to take upon them



the name of Jesus Christ, *having a determination to serve him to the end, and truly manifest by their works* that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins, shall be received by baptism into his church.”⁹

Service is our duty—but it is more than duty; it is Christlike opportunity. He bore our burdens, and in bearing one another’s burdens, we truly become more like Him. Service in the Church can be a burden of sorts, but it is a “light”¹⁰ burden—all because we are in shoulder-to-shoulder association with the Savior of the world.

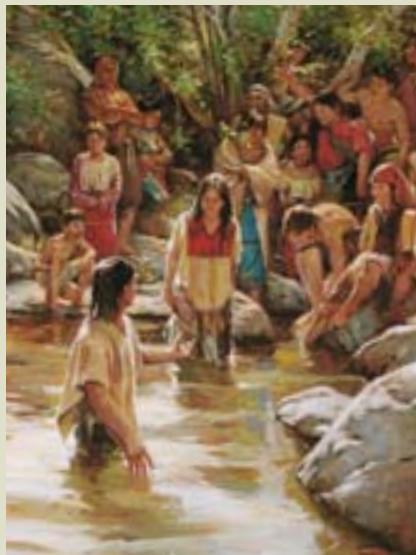
The Holy Temple

If our covenant path has an earthly symbol of an eternal destination, it is the house of the Lord, the holy temple. There we make covenants that can bind us together with God and loved ones everlastingly. Outside of the temple we speak only sparingly of those covenants, but within its walls the Holy Ghost can testify of them to the pure in heart in a manner that is unrestrained. The blessing of receiving that sweet, affirming guidance of the Spirit as you go to the house of the Lord again and again is a blessing I long for all adult members to embrace.

From where you stand today as a new member, going to the temple might seem a distant goal, too difficult to reach, but truly it is not. We need not cover the distance to the temple in one great leap. Every act of faith, every step toward repentance, every quiet victory in keeping the commandments moves us closer to the temple monthly, weekly, daily, hourly. “Be not weary in well-doing,” the Lord has said, for “out of small things proceedeth that which is great.”¹¹

Actually, the path to the temple will be easier than it might appear at first because you will find happiness as you move along it and you will also find help for the journey. Those of us who know the blessings of the temple will gladly—excitedly!—walk with you as you prepare to have your own experience there.

Members of your ward or branch may make the first move, reaching out to support you the way someone



reached out to support them. But don’t let them be the only ones to make a move. Reach out yourself to make friends among the other members. Remember—you too have covenanted to serve, and you too can bring blessings into other lives, even in the very earliest hours of your membership in the Church.

Even better than having earthly help, you can have the generous assistance of heaven. Surely there is nothing that God or His angels are more eager to do than assist each of us to make and keep sacred covenants. In section 76 of the Doctrine and Covenants, we are told:

“I, the Lord, am merciful and gracious unto those who fear me, and delight to honor those who serve me in righteousness and in truth unto the end. . . .

“And their wisdom shall be great, and their understanding reach to heaven; and before them the wisdom of the wise shall perish, and the understanding of the prudent shall come to naught.

“For by my Spirit will I enlighten them, and by my power will I make known unto them the secrets of my will—yea, even those things which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor yet entered into the heart of man.”¹²

This promise is to you as much as to anyone in the Church. It is not only to those with an extensive pioneer heritage. This promise is to every faithful and obedient member, wherever you may live or however new to the fold you may feel.

Leaving the Past Behind

Now that you have entered into this path lighted by our Redeemer and are being assisted by angels, avoid backward glances toward the darkness and remorse of the past.¹³ True repentance allows you to walk away from that darkness. One of the most encouraging scriptures I know says, “Ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope.”¹⁴ So press forward. Leave the past in the past. President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985),

twelfth President of the Church, taught: “The Savior urged us to put our hand to the plow without looking back. In that spirit we are being asked to have humility and a deep and abiding faith in the Lord and to move forward—trusting in him, refusing to be diverted from our course, either by the ways of the world or the *praise* of the world.”¹⁵ Or, we might add, by past experiences in the world.

But don’t be surprised if the pull of the past is great. It may involve old friends and old habits—strong habits that may have been deeply entrenched in your behavior, such as addictions to tobacco, alcohol, drugs, pornography, gambling, sexual transgression, or dishonesty, to name just a few. These things separated you from the influence of the Holy Ghost then, and they would be even more damaging if you were to return to them now. *But the power of your covenants is greater than the power of temptation.*

Don’t let the fear of past transgressions weaken your resolve to repent and abandon them. Remember! God has promised to save you “from the hand of him that hated [you], and [redeem you] from the hand of the enemy.”¹⁶

You may feel entirely inadequate to overcome addictions or problems of the past by yourself, but you need not handle those problems alone. God has given to every member a priesthood leader with keys, or authority, to assist in the process of repenting and finding new strength. Seek that help. Go to those priesthood leaders—usually a bishop or branch president for matters of repentance and spiritual struggle—and they will put you on the road to healing, a healing that ultimately comes from the Savior. In matters not involving confession, others can help—a friend, a loved one, a home or visiting teacher, a competent professional, or a solid member—all depending on the issue. Again I stress that we are on this journey together, and “whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.”¹⁷



As you exert all your spiritual strength to overcome weakness, as you righteously seek the help of our Savior and your priesthood leaders, the Holy Ghost can help you feel again the spiritual certainty you had when you were baptized. He can fill your heart once more with the knowledge that the course you have chosen is the course our Father in Heaven desires for you in time and eternity.

Do you wonder if the Holy Ghost will really speak to you? Be reassured He already has—many times. We may be a little inexperienced at recognizing that guidance, but every member of the Church has the gift of the Holy Ghost and has had many promptings and help as a result of that gift—even if we didn’t consciously seek it. God is our Father, and parents do everything possible in righteousness to help children—including (sometimes especially) wayward children. These helps from heaven through the

Holy Ghost will usually come as feelings more than as external sensory experience.

President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, described it this way: “The Holy Ghost communicates with the spirit through the mind more than through the physical senses. This guidance comes as thoughts, as feelings, through impressions and promptings. It is not always easy to describe inspiration. The scriptures teach us that

we may ‘feel’ the words of spiritual communication more than hear them, and see with spiritual rather than with mortal eyes.”¹⁸

Everyday Victories

On this upward and sometimes hazardous journey, each of us meets our share of daily challenges. If we are not careful, as we



The temple is an earthly symbol of our celestial goal, and every daily act of faith and obedience moves us closer to its blessings.

peer through the narrow lens of self-interest, we may feel that life is bringing us *more* than our fair share of trials—that somehow others seem to be getting off more lightly.

But the tests of life are tailored for our own best interests, and all will face the burdens best suited to their own mortal experience. In the end we will realize that God is merciful as well as just and that all the rules are fair. We can be reassured that our challenges will be the ones *we* needed, and conquering them will bring blessings we could have received in no other way.

If we constantly focus only on the stones in our mortal path, we will almost surely miss the beautiful flower or cool stream provided by the loving Father who outlined our journey. Each day can bring more joy than sorrow when our mortal and spiritual eyes are open to God's goodness. Joy in the gospel is not something that begins only in the next life. It is our privilege now, this very day. We must never allow our burdens to obscure our blessings. There will *always* be more blessings than burdens—even if some days it doesn't seem so. Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."¹⁹ Enjoy those blessings right now. They are yours and always will be.

Let me summarize only a few of those blessings. There are untold others.

Knowledge of the truth. In a world that wonders and speculates and drifts, we can be certain who our Father is, who we are, and what our destiny is if we follow the path that has been marked for us. We can enjoy the highest of all higher education—the learning that comes, in both spiritual and temporal affairs, when our spirits and our minds respond to the light that streams from heaven to the faithful.

Peace in daily living. We can walk our path day to day with comfort, hope, and direction despite the challenges and obstacles we meet along the way. We can have these blessings because of our source of strength—He who “descended below”²⁰ all things and triumphed over all trials. When we center our faith in Him, we draw on His strength and our reward is, among other things, “peace in this world.”²¹

Strength in virtue and confidence in integrity. The world may wonder what the standard of moral behavior is, chasing here and there the driftwood of political correctness or the frivolous fashions of the day, but we have a sure rock²² on

which to build and to which we cling, an absolute anchor to the certainty of our moral judgment. “Let virtue garnish [our] thoughts unceasingly,” we are taught, and the Holy Ghost will be our constant companion. When our minds are so focused and our lives so directed, “then shall [our] confidence wax strong in the presence of God.”²³

The fellowship of good people. Surely one of the greatest strengths and joys of membership in the Church is the fellowship of good men and women, new friends with whom we have so much in common. The Church is a community—a community of believers, a community of those striving to be faithful, a community of Saints. Association with people hoping for the same things we hope for brings strength for the journey and delight along the way. “A friend loveth at all times,”²⁴ says the writer of Proverbs, and many of our dearest friends will inevitably be members of the Church.

Walk with us. Stay with us. We need your company and your unique strength. We welcome you to a fellowship based on covenants, with “a determination that is fixed,



immovable, and unchangeable.” We pledge to be your friend, your brother or sister “through the grace of God in the bonds of love, to walk in all the commandments of God blameless, in thanksgiving, forever and ever.”²⁵

Welcome to the Church. Welcome to the blessings. Welcome to the

celestial journey. Take courage and take hope. You have help from heaven and on earth. As the Lord told the missionaries (including the missionaries who taught you), so He promised us all: “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.”²⁶

And remember, the most significant sign of your progress on this journey is not so much your location on the path at the moment, but rather the direction in which you are moving. When you come to the end of your time in mortality, you will not yet have completed the process of perfection—none of us will have done so—but if you have loved and served, sacrificed and stayed faithful to the end, you will hear those glorious words, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: . . . enter thou into the joy of thy lord.”²⁷ Your journey then will continue in unspeakable glory in the company of loved ones who have gone before you and the very angels of heaven themselves. Welcome to “the way, the truth, and the life.”²⁸ ■

NOTES

1. D&C 78:17–18.
2. Ephesians 2:19.
3. See 2 Timothy 4:7.
4. Acts 20:24.
5. 3 Nephi 27:16, 19.
6. John 8:12.
7. D&C 20:77.
8. See Mosiah 18:8–11.
9. D&C 20:37; emphasis added.
10. Matthew 11:30; see also vv. 28–29.
11. D&C 64:33.
12. D&C 76:5, 9–10.
13. See Luke 9:62.
14. 2 Nephi 31:20; emphasis added.
15. “Let Us Not Weary in Well Doing,” *Ensign*, May 1980, 81.
16. Psalm 106:10.
17. 1 Corinthians 12:26.
18. “Revelation in a Changing World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 14; see also 1 Nephi 17:45.
19. John 10:10.
20. D&C 122:8.
21. D&C 59:23.
22. See Helaman 5:12; 3 Nephi 11:39–40.
23. D&C 121:45; see also v. 46.
24. Proverbs 17:17.
25. D&C 88:133.
26. D&C 84:88.
27. Matthew 25:21, 23.
28. John 14:6.

Loving Families, Different Faiths

Gospel principles—particularly respect, love, and prayer—have blessed my own part-member family.

BY ELDER WALTER F. GONZÁLEZ
Of the Seventy

Many Latter-day Saints, particularly new members, face the important task of learning how to relate positively with family members of other faiths.

Even the Savior had family members who did not share His beliefs. In the Bible we read, “For neither did his brethren believe in him” (John 7:5).

It is not uncommon for family members to have mistaken ideas about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Loving and clear communication can do much to ease any tension that may arise in these situations. I joined the Church when I was a teenager. Shortly after my baptism, I learned that my Catholic grandmother believed I would no longer consider myself her grandson due to my newfound faith. What a relief it was when I was able to clear up this misunderstanding!

We can strengthen our relationships with each other by demonstrating that the

teachings of the gospel are intended to strengthen *all* families, regardless of individual beliefs. Many of these teachings are expressed in “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” which states, “Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities.”¹

Any family that lives by these principles will gather the fruits thereof. I have seen how these principles—particularly respect, love, and prayer—have blessed my own part-member family.



Our family members are more likely to be tolerant and accepting if we show respect for their differing beliefs.

Respect

After the initial strain and misunderstandings that stemmed from my conversion to the Church, my family members and I learned to apply tolerance and respect in our relationships with each other. For example, once I became a Latter-day Saint, I participated in different Sunday activities. Instead of playing soccer, I attended church.

When my family members realized why I changed my Sunday activities, they showed understanding and respect. In the

same way, I was respectful of their traditions. For instance, I did not criticize my parents for not having family prayer. Mutual respect has been very important in our family.

The Book of Mormon emphasizes the principles of tolerance and respect. In Alma 1:21 we read, "Now there was a strict law among the people of the church, that there should not any man, belonging to the church, arise and persecute those that did not belong to the church, and that there should be no persecution among themselves."

Alma taught the following principle in the great city of Zarahemla. He asked, "Is there one among you that doth make a mock of his brother, or that heapeth upon him persecutions?" (Alma 5:30). Then he stated that a person who does so needs to repent: "Wo unto such an one, for he is not prepared, and the time is at hand that he must repent or he cannot be saved!" (Alma 5:31).





We can show love to our family members by focusing on the good in their lives and respecting their beliefs while not compromising our own.

Respect for our family members' differing religious beliefs is essential.

Love

The principle of love also contributes tremendously to good rapport with our family members. As the Book of Mormon teaches: "Charity never faileth. Wherefore, cleave unto charity, which is the greatest of all" (Moroni 7:46).

We can show Christlike charity for our family members by focusing on the good in their lives. I feel deep gratitude and love for my parents, who are not members of the Church. They taught me righteous principles by example and precept, enabling me to recognize the truth of the missionaries' message. Realizing that fact has helped me love my parents even more deeply. ■

We can bless the lives of our family members by lovingly sharing with them those principles that could be added to the good they already have. If they do not agree with some teachings, we must respect their beliefs while not compromising our own. In cases of disagreement, let us avoid contending with family members, remembering

that "a soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger" (Proverbs 15:1). Anger will only damage our relationships, while love and kindness can help soften hearts. (See 3 Nephi 11:29.)

Prayer

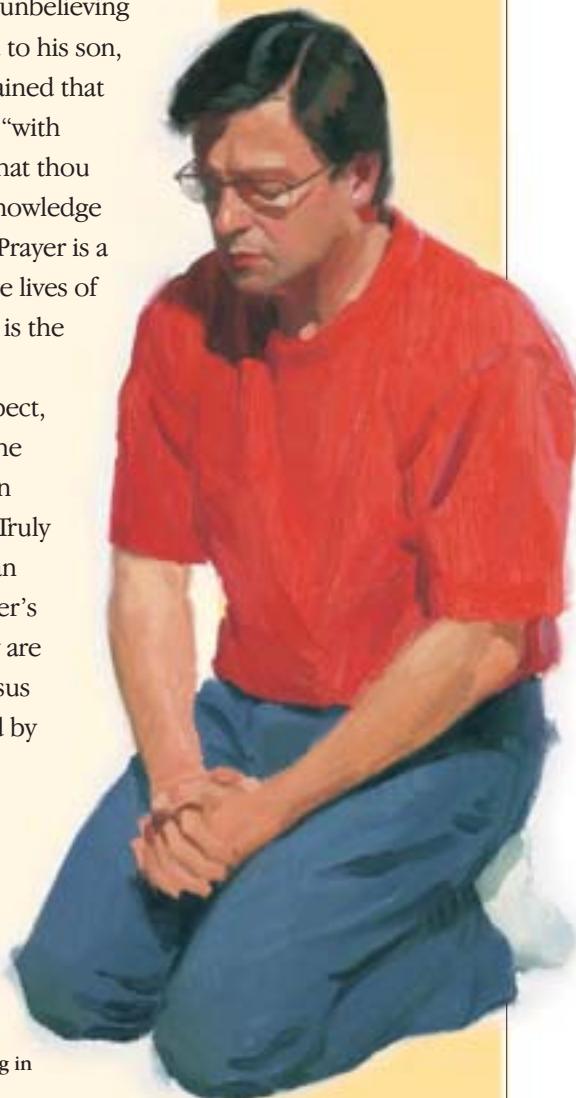
Sometimes all we can do is pray for our beloved family members—just as they may pray for us. We will always desire that those we love will become members of the Church. We can empathize with the feelings of Alma the Elder, who prayed for his unbelieving son. When an angel appeared to his son, the heavenly messenger explained that his father had prayed for him "with much faith concerning thee that thou mightest be brought to the knowledge of the truth" (Mosiah 27:14). Prayer is a mighty instrument to bless the lives of our families. In some cases, it is the only thing we can do.

The principles of love, respect, and prayer are only a few of the many gospel principles we can apply to benefit our families. Truly the teachings of the gospel can bless all of our Heavenly Father's children, whether or not they are members of the Church of Jesus Christ, for all are deeply loved by Him. ■

NOTE

1. *Liahona*, Oct. 2004, 49; *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102. Written by the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, this prophetic proclamation to the Church and the world spells out the doctrine of the family. It was first read to the public by President Gordon B. Hinckley in the general Relief Society meeting in September 1995.

Prayer is a mighty instrument that can bless the lives of our family members.



The Breath of Life



*Jenny, shown above during the summer of 2004,
is enjoying a life free from cystic fibrosis.*

BY MARILYN FAULKNER

Hope for Jenny depended on the generosity and support of her ward family.

Twenty-four-year-old Jennifer Sabin Sattley looks and acts like a typical young lady. A faithful Latter-day Saint and full of enthusiasm, she recently graduated from college with a degree in interior design. On May 26, 2006, she married Patrick Sattley in the San Diego California Temple. Yet Jenny is anything but typical. She is, in fact, the recipient of a double-lung transplant from living donors, and her story is a chronicle of courage, faith, and Christlike love.

Jenny is the fourth of five children born to Gary and Valerie Sabin of Poway, California. They were high school acquaintances, but it was after each had completed a full-time mission that their life paths merged and they were married. A daughter, Kimberly, was born, and then a son, Justin. When Justin was a few months old, Gary and Valerie became concerned about some unusual symptoms he exhibited. To their dismay, Justin was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis.

A Frightening Challenge

Cystic fibrosis is a genetic disease affecting approximately 30,000 children and adults in the United States. Because of the damage to the lungs and other organs, most sufferers do not reach the age of 30.

Though devastated by Justin's diagnosis, the Sabins devoted themselves to learning all they could. Gary eventually served as president of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation and has been responsible for raising millions of dollars toward research. Valerie learned to administer the endless round of treatments that take from two to four hours each day. The Sabins had three more children: Spencer, Jennifer, and Bryan. Spencer was spared the disease, but both Jennifer and Bryan (now 16 years old with a milder form of the disease) were diagnosed with cystic fibrosis.

The Sabins lived in constant expectation of a cure that would save their children. A lung transplant offered a chance to extend life, but Justin's already weakened body succumbed before he was able to undergo the operation. On April 22, 1998, Justin died at home at the age of 19. A bright, spiritual, positive young man with a sense of humor, Justin was serving a mission at the San Diego California Temple when he died. He was deeply mourned by family and friends.

Just one year later, Jenny caught a cold that developed into a dangerous bacterial infection. With deepening dread, the Sabins watched as Jennifer's health began to decline, following the same pattern as her older brother.

There was one bright ray of hope on the horizon for Jenny, a new procedure called a partial lobe transplant, wherein two living donors each offer part of a lung. Lungs are made up of a total of five lobes, three on the right side and two under the heart. Doctors found that one lobe from a larger, healthy individual can be substituted for the damaged lung of a cystic fibrosis sufferer. Dr. Vaughn Starnes, who pioneered this surgery at Stanford Medical Center in northern California, agreed to try the procedure on Jenny if appropriate donors could be found.

Time Was the Enemy

As Jennifer's condition grew more critical, she gasped and coughed continually. On oxygen 24 hours a day, she was literally starving for air. The Sabin family underwent testing to determine who could donate a lobe to Jenny, but no family members had the needed qualifications. Quietly, word went out to family and friends that donors were needed. Within days more than 30 friends and acquaintances, mostly members of the Poway California Stake where the Sabins have lived for 20 years, volunteered to be tested. At the hospital the donor coordinators were shocked at the response.

"They had never seen anything like it," Valerie remembers. "There were so many volunteers and the procedure was so difficult."

Donor Jim Davies, a member of Jenny's ward, was on the way home from church when his wife, Becky, mentioned that Jenny needed a transplant. Jim recalls, "She told me that the donor had to have O-positive blood and big, healthy lungs. I raised my hand and said, 'That sounds like me.'"

Becky felt strongly that their family should step forward to help. "I didn't worry about it for a minute," says Becky, although she knew that Jim, an ophthalmic surgeon, would face weeks of missed work and possible long-term repercussions. Jim called the Sabsins that day and volunteered, but they had three donors already.

"I went ahead and took the required tests and faxed a copy of them to Gary, just in case," said Jim.

Donor Graham Bullick, Jenny's bishop, had just returned from a trip when he heard of Jenny's worsening condition. He went to his wife, Debbie, and told her he wanted to volunteer.

"I thought long and hard about it," says Debbie. "I had so many questions and concerns, but every time I prayed about it I felt an overwhelming sense of peace."

Even though the Sabsins had other volunteers, Bishop Bullick felt strongly that he would be one of the final donors and began to prepare. Then, with just a few days until the scheduled surgery, all three of the previously designated donors were found to have obstructions or asthmatic conditions that made them ineligible to donate.

"Yet here were Jim and Graham, ready and waiting," recalls Jenny's mother, "and we were able to go ahead."

Priesthood Blessings

The night before Jennifer left for the hospital, the Sabsins invited the Davies and the Bullick families over to give Jennifer a blessing. "I hadn't seen Jennifer for some

BELONGING TO A WARD FAMILY



"When we were baptized, we moved from the world into the kingdom of God. . . We all belong to a community of Saints, we all need each other, and we are all working toward the same goal. . . The opportunities we all have for caring and fellowshipping in the ward are boundless if we are willing to give of ourselves in love and service."

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Belonging to a Ward Family," *Ensign*, Mar. 1996, 15-16.

time," recalls Debbie Bullick, "and I was unprepared for how ill she had become. She came into the room, barely able to walk, pulling her IV and oxygen cart with her. She was just a little skeleton of a girl."

Gary Sabin, assisted by Jim and Graham, gave Jennifer a blessing, and then each of the donors received a blessing. "I don't know how you really describe the feeling of the powers of heaven that we felt in that room," Debbie contin-

ues. "To see those men bless Jenny and then bless each other. It was a picture that will forever stay in my mind."

On Sunday the members of the Poway stake fasted and were invited to close the fast at a special prayer meeting that evening. "A very sweet unity, a sense of common purpose and reliance on divine power, seemed to fill each heart," recalls stake president David Clark. "There was a deep yearning for Jennifer's well-being and a profound feeling that the Lord's hand was in the events that were unfolding."

On Monday, November 29, 1999, a weak but excited Jennifer went into surgery. Gary recalls, "She told me not to be sad, because she would either wake up with new lungs or wake up in a better place. Then she said, 'Either way I'll be great.'"

Bishop Bullick donated one lobe from his left lung, and Brother Davies, one lobe from his right lung. Meanwhile, the doctors removed both of Jenny's lungs, which turned out to be so damaged and scarred that they had been functioning at less than 9 percent of their capacity. Dr. Starnes later expressed disbelief that she was still alive. The team of surgeons then inserted the two new healthy lobes into Jenny's chest.

A Happy Reunion

After several days of recovery, donors Jim and Graham were released from the hospital and went directly to visit Jenny. Graham Bullick recalls with a smile, "There is one



moment in my life that will stay just crystal clear, and that is the moment that we walked into the hospital room to see Jenny after the surgery."

Jim Davies agrees: "Looking through the glass at Jennifer, smiling and sitting up in a chair—well, it was an unbelievable feeling."

"I wasn't prepared for how we would feel," Becky Davies adds. "The Spirit was so powerful."

"We all just wept," Debbie Bullick says, "for we knew we were standing on holy ground."

In an e-mail to family and friends, Jenny's brother Spencer wrote: "The nurses brought up Jennifer's latest X-ray of her lungs on a computer monitor and the donors got pictures, each of them pointing to their lobe on the screen. They were able to see how great their lobes fit Jennifer and how healthy they are. Of course, it was emotional."

The Breath of Life

For nearly a week Jennifer's system struggled to accept the foreign tissue that had been grafted into her body. There were many ups and downs, but finally the time came when doctors removed the breathing tube, allowing her to breathe on her own for the first time.

Later, Jennifer recorded the experience in her journal: "Mom and Dad came in the room, and Mom asked me how it felt. I took a deep breath, something I hadn't been able to do in a long, long time, and began weeping. I was crying, not so much because of what it felt like

Top: *Becky and Jim Davies, Jennifer Sabin, and Graham and Debbie Bullick are happy to be a part of their "ward family" in Poway, California. Bottom: Jenny recovering from her surgery of November 29, 1999.*

right then, but because of the complete realization of what that feeling meant. It meant that cystic fibrosis was forever gone from my new lungs and that I was going to live. I simply felt relieved, grateful and incredibly, incredibly overcome with joy. As I began to cry, so did

everyone else—my family and the entire medical staff."

The Gift of Life

Today, nearly seven years later, Jennifer is full of health and vitality.

Both Jim Davies and Graham Bullick feel that they gained more than they gave. Jim says, "I've heard it said before that only a life lived for others is a life worth living, and I really believe that is true."

Bishop Bullick agrees, "If you need or desire a tremendous purpose for your life, an opportunity to feel like you've really contributed to life, take it, because there is really no way to describe the feeling that you have."

Jennifer recently spoke at a fundraiser for cystic fibrosis and paid tribute to these two members of her ward family: "My donors saved my life; they embody the true definition of heroes. Every joy I experience in this life, every new discovery, every smile, every hope for the future, simply every moment, I owe to them. I am forever indebted, forever grateful, forever humbled, forever in awe, and forever inspired by their amazing sacrifice." ■

Where Do I Go from Here?

Becoming a Latter-day Saint can be a big change. But there are many people and resources available to help you. Here are some answers to questions new members often ask.

BY RICHARD M. ROMNEY AND VICTOR D. CAVE
Church Magazines

Am I the only one who may feel alone in this experience?

You may be the only recent convert in your ward or branch, but worldwide, more than 200,000 people join the Church each year. Members of your ward or branch rejoice with you in your conversion. During lessons and meetings, you will hear some of them share feelings about their conversion. You can also read about such experiences in the *Ensign*.

Will I be able to do all that's expected of me? There is much to do in the Church, and it can seem overwhelming, especially if you come from a religious background that involved attending meetings less frequently. But the Lord wants us to achieve our potential, so He has provided many opportunities to live a Christlike life. Participate faithfully, and you'll be amazed to see how much you accomplish over time.

How do I prepare to attend the temple? One of the most important goals you can set as a new member is to receive your endowment and be sealed to your family in the temple. Simply put, the endowment involves making

sacred promises to Heavenly Father and receiving blessings from Him. Being sealed means receiving the blessing, through priesthood authority and personal worthiness, to be together as a family throughout eternity.

The temple is sacred, so we need to be worthy to enter it and prepared to receive what we learn there. Your bishop or branch president may ask you to attend a temple preparation class. To prepare to attend the temple, you need to continue to pay tithing, support Church leaders, repent of sins or wrongdoings, attend church regularly, keep the Word of Wisdom and law of chastity, and strengthen your testimony.

Soon after their baptism and confirmation, Church members 12 and older can receive, after an interview with their bishop or branch president, a limited-use recommend to participate in baptisms and confirmations for the dead. One year after baptism, adults can seek additional blessings and covenants in the temple. Arrange interviews with your





One of your most important goals should be to be sealed to your family in the temple.

bishop or branch president and your stake or mission president. If you are worthy and prepared, they will sign a recommend for you to enter the temple.

What is family history? It's a record of your ancestry and of your own life. Members of the Church are asked to keep and research family records, including genealogy, journals, and personal histories. Such records are helpful in providing the blessings of the temple to those who have died. Family history will also help you and your children appreciate the eternal nature of family relationships and help you record your spiritual experiences. For example, take a moment to remember your baptism and confirmation. Then write down

your thoughts and feelings. As you write of such events, you and your children will come to treasure your own spiritual record.

Family history specialists in your ward or branch are eager to help you. You may also wish to visit the Church's family history Web site, www.familysearch.org.

Where can I find friends in the Church?

You are already surrounded by friends. When you join the Church, you join a great circle of fellowship and love. Your bishop or branch president, his counselors, and other leaders and members are eager for you to find joy in the gospel. Two men who hold the priesthood will serve as your home teachers. At least once a month, they will visit you and

Your Bishop, Your Friend

Be sure to get to know your bishop or branch president. He is the presiding priesthood leader of the ward or branch and has particular responsibility for the youth. He conducts interviews with members and can help you know how to prepare for the temple or for a patriarchal blessing. He will also help you find ways to serve, and he or another leader can provide you with gospel study materials.

General Conference

Every April and October, the Church holds general conference: two days of meetings during which general Church leaders speak. The conference is broadcast on some TV and radio stations, via satellite to local meetinghouses around the world, and on the Internet at www.lds.org. Talks are published in the May and November *Ensign*.

Traveling?

To find meeting times and addresses of Church meetinghouses around the world, use the Meetinghouse Locator under “Other Resources” at www.lds.org. Your bishop or branch president, area office, country Web site, or even the phone book may also have some of this information.

Moving?

One of the privileges of belonging to the Church is having a membership record that follows you when you move. Along with your name and date of birth, it contains a list of important dates and events in your Church life, such as your baptism and confirmation. Please give your ward or branch clerk your new address so your record can be sent to your new ward or branch.



You will make many friends with members of your ward or branch.

share a gospel message. If you are a woman, two women will also be your visiting teachers. Over time you will make friends with many Latter-day Saints.

Remember, the best way to have a friend is to be one, so don’t be afraid to reach out in kindness.

How can I get involved? Church members are given responsibilities so they can learn and grow through service and use their time and talents to bless others. You might be asked to speak or pray, read a verse of scripture, join the choir, or accept a specific assignment known as a calling. Don’t be afraid. Training is available, and other members and leaders will help you. You may make some mistakes; we all do. But do your best, and trust the Lord to help you. It is His work; He will bless you.

What about helping others? In the Church you will regularly have opportunities to serve those in need. While some service will come

by way of Church-sponsored service projects and assignments, you can also do much good by following the example of the Savior: visit the sick, cheer up the sad, lighten what burdens you can. Ask yourself, “What would the Savior do?” Then do your best to do it.

Is there time to have fun? Most wards and branches hold social activities, which add a lot of enjoyment to membership in the Church. If you’re shy or uncertain about what to do, just show up. Get to know those around you. Ask if you can set up chairs or help clean up. In the Church we all pitch in to work—and play—side by side.

How will I continue to learn the gospel? One of the best ways is to prayerfully read the scriptures each day. Of course, attend Sunday meetings to learn more about the scriptures and teachings of latter-day prophets. There are also weekday study programs: seminary (for teens) and institute of religion (for young

adults). Ask other members; they can help you know what is available.

What is a patriarchal blessing? It is a blessing of counsel and wisdom to guide your life, given under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost by a man ordained to the office of patriarch in the Melchizedek Priesthood. Your bishop or branch president can help you know how to prepare to receive it.

Besides tithing, what donations am I expected to make? Once a month (usually the first Sunday), members fast for two meals and donate a fast offering—the money they would have spent on those meals—to help care for the poor.

The Church is also involved in a variety of humanitarian, temple, and missionary efforts



worldwide. You can donate to these efforts if you are able. Use the same donation envelopes you use to pay your tithing and fast offerings.

How can I share the gospel with others?

Let your example be a light to them, and share your excitement about joining the Church. Invite them to meet with the full-time missionaries. Share a copy of the Book of Mormon. Share your testimony as you feel prompted by the Spirit, but be gentle and kind, not confrontational. Members and missionaries will be happy to include you in their efforts and to guide you as you share the gospel.

How can I stay close to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ and continue to feel the influence of the Holy Ghost? One of the best ways is to partake worthily of the sacrament each week. The sacrament prayers will remind you of the promises you made to Heavenly Father when you were baptized and confirmed—that you are willing to take upon yourself the name of Jesus Christ, always remember Him, and keep His commandments. By doing those things, you are promised that you may always have His Spirit with you. You will also be blessed by keeping the Sabbath day holy.

Also invite the Spirit to be with you by praying often, reading the scriptures, and keeping God's commandments.

What else do I need to know? Most of all, remember that the gospel of Jesus Christ is true. Heavenly Father is merciful and kind, and He is pleased with your decision to become a member of the Church. Be of good cheer, and remember that with God all things are possible. ■

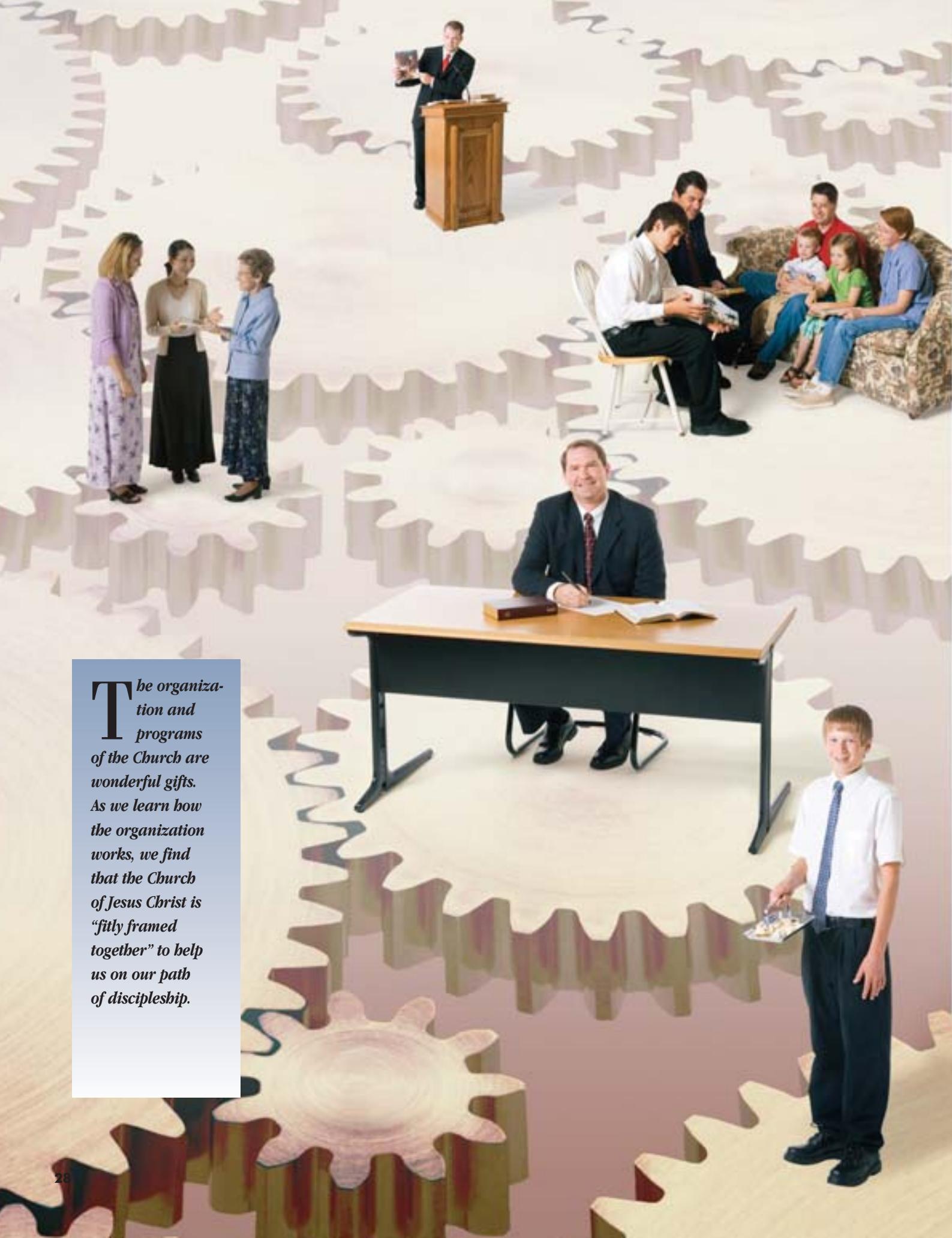
Need Church Materials?

Visit a distribution center if there is one in your area. Distribution centers provide pamphlets, manuals, magazines, posters,

videos, and other Church materials at low cost or for free. In the United States and Canada, you can also order items at www.ldscatalog.com. Church magazines are available for all ages: the *Friend* for children, the *New Era* for teens, and the *Ensign* for adults. You can subscribe to them at a distribution center, at www.ldscatalog.com, or by phone in the United States and Canada (1-800-537-5971).

Need Definitions of Church Words?

There are many resources: Ask other members. Read Church materials such as *Gospel Principles* (item no. 31110) and *True to the Faith* (item no. 36863) that include lists of words. Also, check the glossaries at www.mormon.org and on page 33 of this issue.



The organization and programs of the Church are wonderful gifts. As we learn how the organization works, we find that the Church of Jesus Christ is "fitly framed together" to help us on our path of discipleship.

Learning How the Church Works and Finding Your Place in It

BY JAN PINBOROUGH

Church Magazines

The first time Lori Solomon attended a Latter-day Saint ward, she noticed something significant.

Not only were the people she met there extremely friendly and kind, but they also had their own copies of the scriptures. During the meetings, they were reading from, talking about, and trying to apply the scriptures to their lives. This impressed Lori because she had never been able to understand the Torah when it was read in Hebrew in her Reform Jewish congregation.

When Lori went to church the second time, a powerful feeling propelled her to the microphone in fast and testimony meeting. Standing before a roomful of

strangers, she tried to put into words the feeling that was already growing into a conviction. "I'm home," she said. Lori was baptized in Chicago, Illinois, in 2001.

The Apostle Paul compared the experience of conversion to finding our spiritual home: "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far

off are made nigh. . . . Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:13, 19).

But, as Lori soon discovered, knowing the Church is true is not the same as understanding how the Church works. Like most new members, Lori found herself unfamiliar with the procedures, protocol, and specialized vocabulary that long-term members take for granted. For example, she didn't know that Church members don't make comments in sacrament meeting. And the first time she heard someone refer to "home, family, and personal enrichment meeting," she thought she needed to bring her family with her. It takes time to learn these and other unwritten "rules."

For each of us, conversion is at least a two-part process. One part is the very individual process of learning and accepting restored truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ and becoming spiritually changed or converted by our new faith. It is a lifelong process that includes repenting, making and keeping covenants with the Lord, and striving to do His will. Because all of us need support in these central endeavors, we also engage in a second process—fellowshipping with other Latter-day Saints. This includes becoming part of a new community, attending meetings, taking part in activities, serving, and being served. And each aspect of the Church organization can give us vital aid in our spiritual conversion.

Serving in an "Active" Church

Having grown up as a practicing Catholic in Maryland, Jean Gardner always thought of bishops as full-time

A PLACE FOR EVERY MEMBER



Within the Church, every member belongs to a group where he or she can serve and be served.

Men—Beginning at age 12, every male member of the Church who is ordained to the priesthood belongs to

an *Aaronic* or *Melchizedek Priesthood* quorum. (See D&C 20: 107.)

- In the Aaronic Priesthood, under the direction of the bishop or branch president, *deacons* gather fast offerings and pass the sacrament, *teachers* prepare the sacrament and visit members as home teachers, and *priests* offer the sacrament prayers, perform baptisms, and ordain other priests, teachers, and deacons. Teachers can be assigned the duties of deacons, and priests can be assigned the duties of deacons and teachers.

- In the Melchizedek Priesthood, *elders* (who are at least 18 years old) can carry out the responsibilities of deacons, teachers, and priests. In addition, they can confer the gift of the Holy Ghost

and bless the sick. *High priests* have these and additional responsibilities to serve as members of bishoprics, high councils, and stake presidencies.

Young men between the ages of 12 and 17 also belong to the *Young Men* organization, where they take part in gospel learning and wholesome activities.

Women—Every young woman in the Church between the ages of 12 and 17 belongs to the *Young Women* organization. In this organization young women learn gospel principles, participate in wholesome activities, and practice service and leadership skills. Each adult woman age 18 and older belongs to the *Relief Society*, which enables women to grow spiritually and serve those in need.

Children—Between the ages of 3 and 11, children belong to the *Primary* organization, where they learn gospel principles and enjoy activities with other children. Children ages 18 months through 2 years may be enrolled in a nursery class.

professional clergy-men. So when she

moved to Utah, she was naturally surprised to learn that

her neighbor across the street was not only a truck driver but also the bishop of a local Latter-day Saint ward. Baptized in 2005, Sister Gardner now appreciates belonging to a church with a lay ministry (people who serve part-time and without pay).

Serving in Church callings has been the key to learning to understand the organization of the Church for Madhu Menon. Born in India and coming from a Hindu background, Brother Menon joined the Church in 1984. “As I respond to callings and become actively involved in helping others, I receive help from my leaders to understand the organization of the Church and the responsibilities of the offices in which I serve. Whether it is as a home teacher or on a welfare assignment, with each calling or opportunity to serve, I have learned something more about the organization of the Church,” says Brother Menon. Today he serves on a stake high council, where his understanding of the Church continues to deepen and expand.

Reaching Out to Others

Joining a church where members teach and speak and pray publicly can be intimidating to those for whom church membership was once a more passive experience. Today Aileen Figuerres serves on the Relief Society general board, where she teaches Relief Society leaders throughout the Church. She joined the Church in Hawaii at age 21, and she still remembers how worried she was the first time she was asked to pray in a meeting and teach a lesson as part of a teacher improvement class. In the Buddhist church she grew up attending, she recalls, "The minister did everything, and we sat and listened." Having come from a non-Christian background, she also found the scriptures difficult to understand at first. She confided her feelings to a friend, and the friend offered to study the scriptures with her. Friends also taught her how to pray.

Sister Figuerres now emphasizes how important it is for new members to reach out to make connections with other Church members. She says it's important to be brave enough to let others know what you need so they can help.

In retrospect, Sister Figuerres also realizes that as a new member she need not have been so concerned about the "form" as opposed to the "substance" of her service. To keep new challenges from feeling burdensome and overwhelming,

Sister Figuerres recommends that new members try to approach challenges with a sense of joy in the learning process. "Because I had sufficient experiences of feeling the Spirit and God's love, I could proceed in my own conversion process in spite of feelings of inadequacy and fear," she recalls.

Learning "Line upon Line"

Like all new members, Jana Riess has found learning about the Church to be a "line upon line" experience (see Isaiah 28:10). She was preparing to become a Presbyterian minister in 1991 when she began listening to the missionary lessons. To express her appreciation, one Sunday she invited the sister missionaries to join her for lunch at a restaurant. They kindly explained that they would prefer not to eat out on the Sabbath. Fifteen years and many Church callings later, Sister Riess still sees her own conversion as ongoing. "Discipleship is a lifelong process that doesn't end when someone rises from the waters of baptism," she says. "I'm still 'converting.' "

Looking back, Sister Riess counts among her greatest blessings as a new Church member those who reached out to her and took an interest in her spiritual development. Today she prizes the blessing of being able to help other

CHURCH GOVERNMENT: "BUILT ON THE FOUNDATION OF APOSTLES AND PROPHETS"

Jesus Christ is the head of the Church. He extends His governing authority through priesthood quorums, each with specific responsibilities. The men in the following positions hold the Melchizedek Priesthood and are called General Authorities (except for members of the Third through the Eighth Quorums of the Seventy, who are called Area Seventies).

The First Presidency is a quorum consisting of the President of the Church and his counselors, who preside over the whole Church.

The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles directs ecclesiastical work of the Church throughout the

world, overseeing missionary work and the administration of Church programs. The Apostles are "special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world" (D&C 107:23).

The Quorums of the Seventy work under the direction of the Twelve to help build up the Church throughout the world. The Church today has eight Quorums of the Seventy. (See Numbers 11:16; Luke 10:1.)

The Presiding Bishopric serves as the presidency of the Aaronic Priesthood and oversees temporal matters such as building construction, tithing collection, and welfare services.

converts along the path of discipleship by talking to them about their concerns, praying for and with them, and passing along helpful materials to read. She knows that the transition is often more painful and costly than many people realize. So, while her current official Church calling is Primary chorister, she also considers it a personal calling to reach out to other converts and help them become more committed disciples of Christ through the Church's teachings and programs.

How Much They Add

President Gordon B. Hinckley has said to those who are learning about the Church, "Bring with you all that you have of good and truth which you have received from whatever source, and come and let us see if we may add to it."¹ While the restored gospel adds to new converts' understanding, new converts add to the strength of the restored Church.

"I like helping converts realize just how much they add to the Church's richness and beauty with their different experiences, backgrounds, and talents," says Sister Riess. "New members contribute to the overall spiritual vitality of the Church through the freshness and strength of their testimonies, which are often born out of great heartache. The reality is that we are all converts. Even those who have been taught the gospel all their lives come to a



OTHER IMPORTANT TERMS TO KNOW

Here are a few key terms relating to Church organization (see also page 33).

Ward: A local congregation made up of Church members living in a certain geographical area.

Branch: Like a ward, but with fewer members and a smaller range of programs.

Bishopric or branch presidency: A bishop or branch president and his two counselors, who preside over ward or branch members and programs.

Stake: An administrative unit containing several wards.

District: An administrative unit containing several branches.

Stake or district presidency: A stake or district president and his two counselors, who preside over stake or district members and programs.

Stake center: The building that houses the stake presidency offices and one or more wards.

Stake high council: A group of 12 men who help the stake presidency oversee the Lord's work in their stake.

moment when they must decide to make it their own."

After his own conversion, the Apostle Paul used a metaphor that describes equally well the life of each Church member and the organization of the Church itself: "[Ye] are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord" (Ephesians 2:20–21). The organization and programs of the Church are wonderful gifts. Through them, all of us—new and longtime members alike—can enjoy the fellowship of shared faith as we strive to build sustaining testimonies of the gospel of Jesus Christ and progress along the path of discipleship. ■

NOTE

1. "The Marvelous Foundation of Our Faith," *Liabona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 81.

HELPFUL WORDS TO KNOW

**Many terms are defined in articles throughout this issue. But you may find
the list below helpful as a quick reference for unfamiliar words.**

Aaronic Priesthood (see also Priesthood):

This priesthood is held by worthy young men ages 12 to 18 and new adult male members of the Church. The offices, or positions, in the Aaronic Priesthood are bishop, priest, teacher, and deacon. This priesthood administers the preparatory gospel, “the gospel of repentance and of baptism, and the remission of sins” (D&C 84:27).

Baptism for the dead: In temples a living person is baptized on behalf of someone who has died. This ordinance offers the opportunity to accept the blessings of baptism to deceased persons who did not receive the teachings of Jesus Christ in mortal life.

Brother/Sister: Because we are all children of our Heavenly Father, the title *Brother* or *Sister* followed by a person’s last name is a common way for members to refer to one another.

Calling: An assignment or position of service in the Church. Each calling has specifically defined duties that a member fulfills until he or she is released, often to fulfill a new assignment.

Covenant: A sacred promise, or agreement, made between a person or a group of people and God.

Deacon: An office of responsibility in the Aaronic Priesthood generally held by young men ages 12 to 13.

General Authorities: Melchizedek Priesthood leaders who administer the affairs of the entire Church. They include the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, the Presidency of the Seventy, the First and Second Quorums of the Seventy, and the Presiding Bishopric.

Latter-day Saint: Shortened title or name used to refer to members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Laying on of hands: The act of priesthood holders placing their hands on a person’s

head to give that person a Church ordination or blessing.

Melchizedek Priesthood (see also Priesthood):

Under the direction of local priesthood leaders, worthy adult male members (18 and older) may receive this priesthood. Those who have this priesthood lead the Church and administer such ordinances as naming and blessing children, conferring the Holy Ghost, and giving other priesthood blessings. Elders, high priests, patriarchs, Seventies, and Apostles hold this priesthood.

Mission/mission president: A geographically defined area where full-time missionaries work. The leader of a mission is called a mission president.

Mutual: A weeknight meeting or activity for youth ages 12 to 17.

Ordain: To give priesthood authority to a worthy male member of the Church by the laying on of hands.

Ordinance: A sacred rite, or ceremony, by which members make covenants (promises) with God, such as baptism, the sacrament, and temple ordinances.

Priest: An office of responsibility in the Aaronic Priesthood generally held by young men ages 16 to 18 and new adult male members of the Church.

Priesthood: The authority and power that God has granted to act in His name. All worthy male members age 12 and older may be given priesthood authority.

Priesthood blessing: A prayer for healing, comfort, or counsel given by a Melchizedek Priesthood holder, who lays his hands on the head of the person receiving the blessing.

Primary: The Church organization for children ages 3 to 11.

Quorum: An organized group of young men or men who hold the same office of priesthood authority, such as deacons, elders, or members of the Seventy.

Release: To relieve members of their duties in a Church assignment or position with appreciation for the service they have given.

Relief Society: The Church organization for women age 18 and older.

Set apart: To give a Church member the responsibilities and blessings associated with a Church calling by the laying on of hands of a properly authorized Melchizedek Priesthood holder.

Sister: See Brother/Sister.

Sustain: To give support to those serving in Church callings or to give one’s approval for an action being taken by the Church. This is usually signified by raising one’s right hand when asked to do so by a Church leader in a meeting.

Teacher: (1) An office of responsibility in the Aaronic Priesthood generally held by young men ages 14 to 15; (2) a person who teaches a Church class or quorum.

Temple: A Church building dedicated for the performance of sacred ordinances, such as baptisms for the dead, the endowment, and the sealing of families.

Testimony: An assurance or conviction of faith revealed by the Holy Ghost that God the Father and Jesus Christ live and that Their teachings and the Restoration of the gospel are true. When a person bears testimony, he or she is making a brief, heartfelt statement of this conviction to others.

Tithing: The donation of 10 percent of a person’s income to the Church.

STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?

You can find more information about these and other terms in Guide to the Scriptures and in *True to the Faith* (item no. 36863), which are available in the Gospel Library at www.lds.org.

New Members, New Traditions



When we join ourselves to the kingdom of God on the earth, we leave behind our former traditions that are not in harmony with the gospel, and we take upon us new traditions.

BY ELDER F. MELVIN HAMMOND

Of the Seventy

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has no limit to its capacity. It is a living, growing entity. The Lord welcomes every soul who wishes to repent, pass through the door of baptism and confirmation, and enter His kingdom. Said He, “All those who humble themselves before God, and desire to be baptized, and come forth with broken hearts and contrite spirits, and witness before the church that they have truly repented of all their sins, and are willing to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end, and truly manifest by their works that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins, shall be received by baptism into his church” (D&C 20:37).

Having met these requirements, we who are baptized become the children of God by spiritual rebirth: “If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” (Romans

8:17). We become part of the most remarkable family on earth, and “the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children

of God” (Romans 8:16). Peter described this family as “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people” (1 Peter 2:9). It makes no difference if we are poor or rich, learned or illiterate, old or young, sick or well—all are invited to repent, be baptized and confirmed, and become part of this unique family.

When we become members of this new family, we should remember that “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). There are no social strata in this Church. No one is any better than anyone else, for God is “no respecter of persons” (D&C 1:35).

What this family can be is described beautifully by Mormon following the visit of the Savior to the American continent: “There was no contention in the land, because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people.

“And there were no envyings, nor strifes, no tumults, nor whoredoms, nor lyings, nor murders, nor any manner of lasciviousness; and surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God.





"There were no robbers, nor murderer, neither were there Lamanites, nor any manner of -ites; but they were in one, the children of Christ, and heirs to the kingdom of God" (4 Nephi 1:15–17).

When we join ourselves to the kingdom of God on the earth, we leave behind our former traditions that are not in harmony with the gospel, and we take upon us a new culture with new traditions. Our loyalty is to Jesus Christ and His prophets. We leave behind those old things that pollute the body, the mind, and the spirit, and we cling to a better way of life. Some of the wonderful traditions that we adopt as new members are the following:

1. We sing the hymns. Too many of us are hesitant to sing the Church hymns, thinking that our voices are not good enough or that it takes too much effort. Remember that "the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me," saith the Lord (D&C 25:12). To the young and the old alike, open your mouths and sing out! It will help you feel more a part of the Church family, and it will bring the Spirit into your life.

2. We attend all our meetings. On Sunday we attend our meetings, including sacrament meeting, and during the week we attend any other meetings to which we are invited. We attend to learn more about the Savior, to renew the covenants we made with Him at our baptism by partaking of the sacrament, and to discuss and learn the important truths of the gospel. We are also given an opportunity to mingle socially with our brothers and sisters in this new family and to cultivate eternal friendships.

3. We fast and pay fast offerings. The law of the fast is God's way to teach us charity, the pure love of Christ, by providing for the poor and the needy among us. It is intended that every member who is physically able go without food or drink for two meals once a month on fast Sunday and then contribute the cost of those two meals to the Church to assist our brothers and sisters in need. There are few things that humble us more and help us to draw nearer to the Lord than fasting with prayer.



4. We pay tithing. Tithing is one-tenth of our increase. This money is returned to the Lord because of His goodness to us. The money is used to further the work of the Lord by building chapels and temples, sending missionaries to preach the gospel, printing Church materials, and doing a host of other meaningful activities. Every member old and young should pay his or her tithing.

We often say, "Tithing is not a principle of money, but of faith." The Lord said, "Prove me now herewith, . . . if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Malachi 3:10). We cannot afford to withhold our tithes from Him who gives us everything.

5. We have family and individual prayer. The Savior commanded us to pray always. Prayer allows us to communicate personally with our Heavenly Father in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ. Each prayer is heard and answered in God's own way and time, and even if the answer is not what we wanted or expected, it always blesses us. We ought to take the opportunity to offer a prayer of thanksgiving over every meal and to pray morning and night as families and individuals. Through prayer we come to know our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. And to know Them is to have eternal life (see John 17:3).

6. We have family home evening on Monday night. Monday night is to be kept free from other activities to allow us to be together as a family. It is a wonderful time to study the scriptures, have fun and exciting activities, make future plans for the family, and thus progress together spiritually.

Adjust home evening to the size and needs of your family. If you are single, ask your bishop or branch president about home evening groups. Even if you have no spouse or children, you can still be blessed by having family home evening and adapting it to your own situation.

7. We have a calling in the Church. Every member should have an assignment or responsibility to serve his or her brothers and sisters in the Church. President J. Reuben Clark Jr. (1871–1961), First Counselor in the First Presidency,

said, "In the service of the Lord, it is not where you serve but how" that is important.¹ We do not aspire to callings nor should we ever turn down a call to serve, even if we do not feel adequate for the position. When we serve each other, we serve God and grow in our love for our fellowmen and our Heavenly Father.

President Gordon B. Hinckley has said many times that every new member in the Church ought to have a friend, a responsibility, and nurturing by the good word of God.² Serving one another is one of the greatest traditions we enjoy in the Church.

8. We prepare ourselves to go to the temple. Only those who are faithful may enter the temple, the house of the Lord. In the temple we participate in ordinances and make covenants for ourselves and for our ancestors. No unclean thing can enter the presence of God. To enter the temple, a recommend is required, which is signed by the bishop and the stake president (or by the branch and mission president). The temple prepares us for the most sublime privilege of all, to enter the celestial kingdom, where God and Christ dwell. "Families can be together forever," but only through temple covenants and ordinances.³

9. We study the scriptures daily. We have been counseled to study the scriptures every day. The Prophet Joseph Smith said that "the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book" (Book of Mormon introduction). Certainly we should study the scriptures and, especially, read from the Book of Mormon every day.

10. We live the Word of Wisdom. God has instructed His children that by following His law of health, they can be strong in body and in spirit. We are counseled to abstain from alcohol and tobacco in any form. We are told that tea and coffee are harmful to our bodies. Drugs are addictive. They destroy the senses and cripple the body. Regular exercise, when done wisely, can strengthen us and prolong our lives. The promise to those who obey this commandment is that they "shall

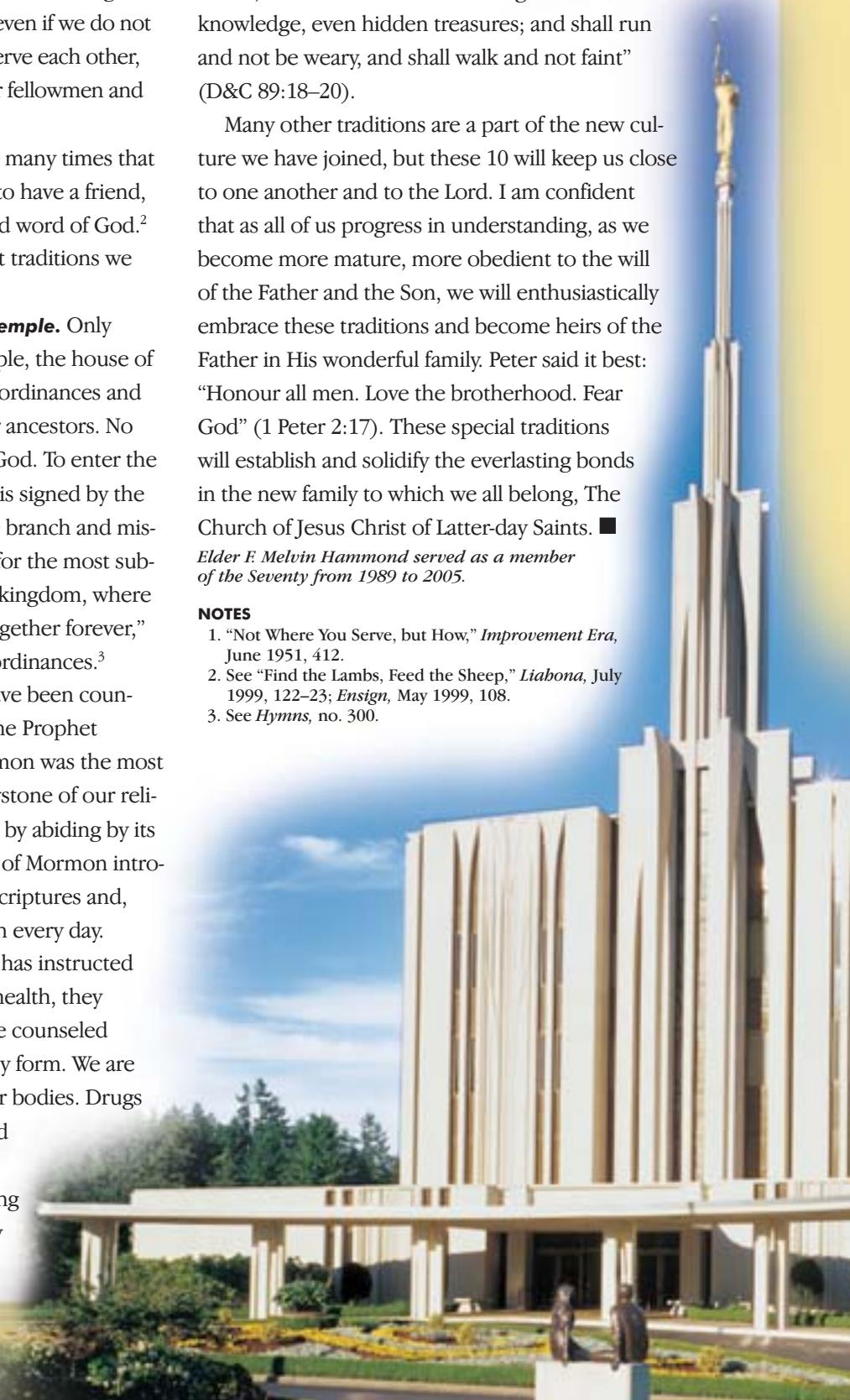
receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones; and shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures; and shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint" (D&C 89:18–20).

Many other traditions are a part of the new culture we have joined, but these 10 will keep us close to one another and to the Lord. I am confident that as all of us progress in understanding, as we become more mature, more obedient to the will of the Father and the Son, we will enthusiastically embrace these traditions and become heirs of the Father in His wonderful family. Peter said it best: "Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God" (1 Peter 2:17). These special traditions will establish and solidify the everlasting bonds in the new family to which we all belong, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. ■

Elder F. Melvin Hammond served as a member of the Seventy from 1989 to 2005.

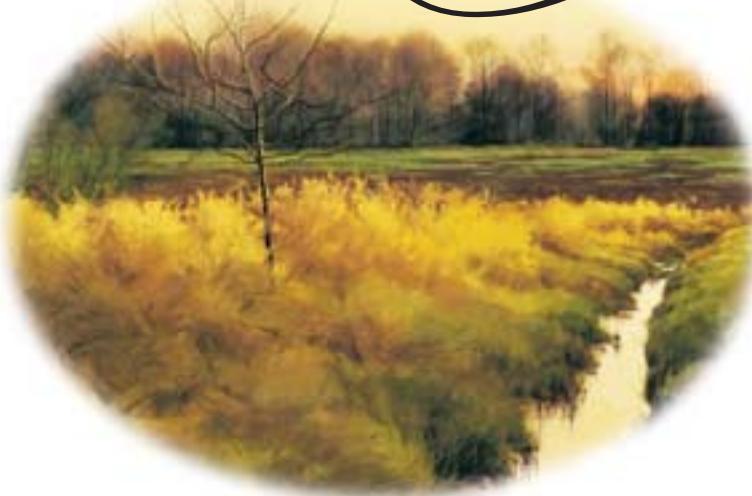
NOTES

1. "Not Where You Serve, but How," *Improvement Era*, June 1951, 412.
2. See "Find the Lambs, Feed the Sheep," *Liabona*, July 1999, 122–23; *Ensign*, May 1999, 108.
3. See *Hymns*, no. 300.



Restoring THE KINGDOM OF GOD

THE LORD RESTORED
THROUGH THE PROPHET
JOSEPH SMITH ALL
THAT WAS NECESSARY
TO ESTABLISH HIS
KINGDOM ON EARTH.



The Sacred Grove,
by Al Rounds

From the days of Adam, all the prophets looked forward to the dispensation of the fulness of times, that time when the Lord would “gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth,” which are necessary for His Second Coming and millennial reign (see Ephesians 1:10).

Now is the day that they anticipated. The Restoration of the gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith marked the beginning of the dispensation of the fulness of times.

President Gordon B. Hinckley has told us: “Be thankful to the Almighty for His wonderful blessings upon you. You have . . . the marvelous blessings of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, which has come to earth in this the dispensation of the fulness of times, this great final dispensation when the God of Heaven has reintroduced all of the great truths, blessings, and authority of all past dispensations” (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* [1997], 157).

Following are some of the most important events of the Restoration.

The First Vision SPRING 1820

Sacred Grove, Manchester Township, Ontario County, New York

When God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ appeared to young Joseph Smith, the true nature of the Godhead was revealed anew. “I at length came to the determination to ‘ask of God.’ . . . I retired to the woods to make the attempt. It was on the morning of a beautiful, clear day. . . . I kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God. . . .

I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me. . . . I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!”
(Joseph Smith—History 1:13–17).



The First Vision, by Gary Kapp



The Angel Moroni Taught Young Joseph Smith

SEPTEMBER 21, 1823, THROUGH SEPTEMBER 1827

Manchester Township,
Ontario County, New York

Through the visits of the angel Moroni, Joseph Smith learned where to find the gold plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated, a book tied to fulfillment of the ancient prophecies in Joel 2:28–32 and Malachi 4:1, 5–6.

"After I had retired to my bed for the night, I betook myself to prayer and supplication to Almighty God for forgiveness of all my sins and follies, and also for a manifestation to me, . . . for I had full confidence in obtaining a divine manifestation, as I previously had one."

"While I was thus in the act of calling upon God, I discovered a light appearing in my room, which continued to increase until the room was lighter than at noonday,



Moroni Delivers the Gold Plates to Joseph Smith, by Gary Kapp

Right: Joseph Smith Translates the Gold Plates While Oliver Cowdery Acts as Scribe, by Del Parson

when immediately a personage appeared at my bedside, standing in the air. . . .

"He called me by name, and said unto me that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God to me, and that his name was Moroni; that God had a work for me to do" (Joseph Smith—History 1:29–30, 33).

The Angel Moroni Appears to Joseph Smith, by Tom Lovell

Translation and Publication of the Book of Mormon 1827–30

Harmony, Pennsylvania;
Palmyra, New York

The Book of Mormon stands as a second witness that Jesus is the Christ and is a reminder that God's covenant people still walk the earth.

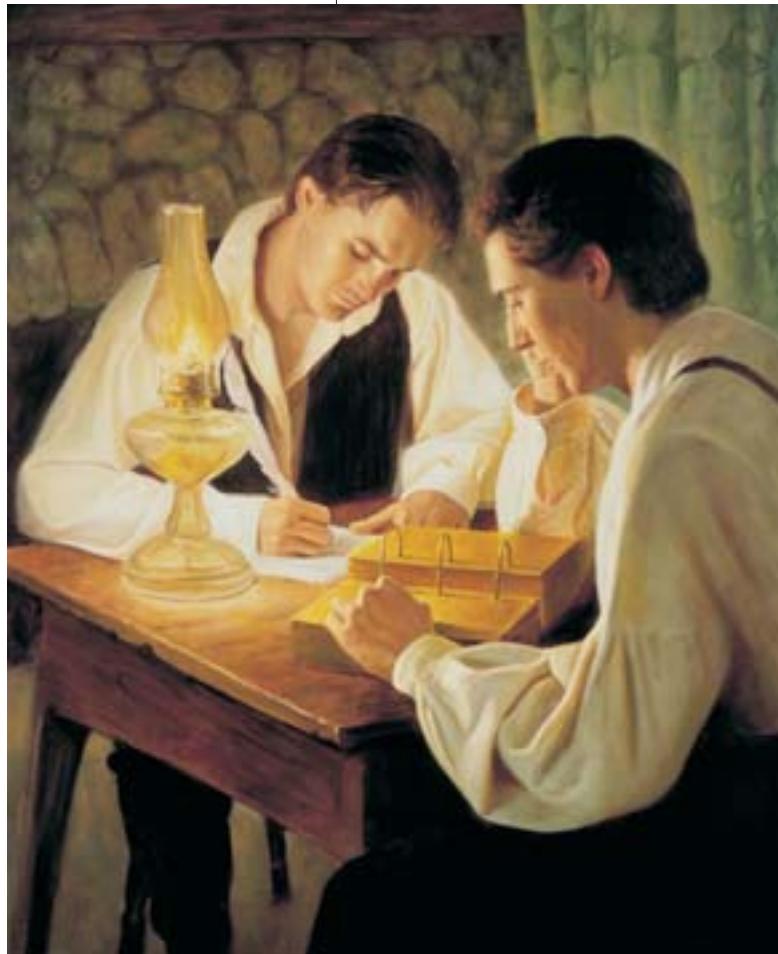
As the Prophet Joseph Smith translated the gold plates, Oliver Cowdery served as scribe. Of this experience, Oliver wrote: *"These were days never to be forgotten—to sit under the sound of a voice dictated by the inspiration of heaven, awakened the utmost gratitude of this bosom! Day*

after day I continued, uninterrupted, to write from his mouth, as he translated with the Urim and Thummim . . . the history or record called 'The Book of Mormon'" (Joseph Smith—History 1:71, endnote).

"God ministered unto [Joseph Smith] by an holy angel . . . and gave him power from on high, by the means which were before prepared, to translate the Book of Mormon. . . .

"Proving to the world that the holy scriptures are true, and that God does inspire men and call them to his holy work in this age and generation, as well as in generations of old;

"Thereby showing that he is the same God yesterday, today, and forever. Amen" (D&C 20:6, 8, 11–12).



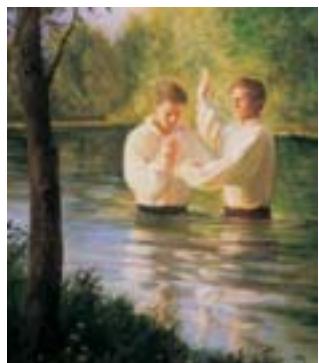
Restoration of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods

MAY AND JUNE 1829

Banks of the Susquehanna River,
near Harmony, Pennsylvania

The priesthood, or power
to act in God's name, had
been lost from the earth during
the great Apostasy, but it was
once again made available to
chosen servants. (See D&C 20
and 107 for the duties of offices
of the priesthood.)

Aaronic Priesthood. "Upon
you my fellow servants, in the
name of Messiah I confer the
Priesthood of Aaron, which
holds the keys of the ministering
of angels, and of the



The Restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood, by Kenneth Riley
Top: Joseph Smith Baptizing Oliver Cowdery, by Del Parson



*gospel of repentance, and
of baptism by immersion
for the remission of sins;
and this shall never be taken
again from the earth, until
the sons of Levi do offer again
an offering unto the Lord in
righteousness" (D&C 13).*

Melchizedek Priesthood.
"And again, what do we hear?

*... The voice of Peter, James,
and John in the wilderness
between Harmony, Susque-
hanna county, and Colesville,
Broome county, on the
Susquehanna river, declaring
themselves as possessing the
keys of the kingdom, and of
the dispensation of the fulness
of times!" (D&C 128:20).*

The Restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood, by Del Parson



Organization of the Church

APRIL 6, 1830
Fayette, New York

Through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord revealed the same organization that He established on earth during His mortal ministry to assist God's children in obtaining salvation. Preceding the Prophet's record of this revelation, he wrote in April 1830: "We obtained of him [Jesus Christ] the following, by the spirit of prophecy and revelation; which not only gave us much information, but also pointed out to us the precise day upon which, according to his will and commandment, we should proceed to organize his Church once more here upon the earth" (D&C 20, preface). The presiding officers of the Church were addressed by name, and the full name of the Church was revealed in Doctrine and Covenants 115:1–5.

The Organization of the Church in the Peter Whitmer Cabin, by John Falter

Below: Samuel Smith, the First Missionary of This Dispensation, by William Whitaker



Gathering of Our Father's Children

SPRING 1830

Missionary work began in Fayette, New York, and continues today throughout the world.

With the Church once again restored to the earth, the gathering of Heavenly Father's scattered children could move forward according to His covenant with ancient prophets (see Ezekiel 28:25).

"This church have I established and called forth out of the wilderness. And even so will I gather mine elect from the four quarters of the earth, even as many as will believe in me, and hearken unto my voice" (D&C 33:5–6).

"Listen to the voice of Jesus Christ, your Redeemer, the Great I Am, whose arm of mercy hath atoned for your sins; Who will gather his people even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, even as many as will hearken to my voice and humble themselves before me, and call upon me in mighty prayer" (D&C 29:1–2).

Inspired Translation of the Bible

1830–33

Kirtland, Ohio,
and Harmony, Pennsylvania

The Book of Mormon revealed that many plain and precious truths had been taken from the Bible (see 1 Nephi 13). The inspired translation of the Bible that Joseph Smith was commanded to undertake restored many of these truths.

On March 7, 1831, the Prophet was instructed by the Lord to begin the translation of the New Testament: "And now, behold, I say unto you, it shall not be given unto you to know any further . . . , until the New Testament be translated, and in it all these things shall be made known; Wherefore I give unto you that ye may now translate it, that ye may be prepared for the things to come" (D&C 45:60–61).

Organization of the Presiding Priesthood Quorums of the Church

1833–35

Kirtland, Ohio

The First Presidency was initially organized in March 1832. “*Of the Melchizedek Priesthood, three Presiding High Priests, chosen by the body, appointed and ordained to that office, and upheld by the confidence, faith, and prayer of the church, form a quorum of the Presidency of the Church*” (D&C 107:22; see also D&C 81).

The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles was organized in February 1835. “*The twelve traveling councilors are called to be the Twelve Apostles, or special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world—thus differing from other officers in the church in the duties of their calling. And they form a quorum, equal in authority and power to the three presidents previously mentioned*” (D&C 107:23–24).

The Quorum of the Seventy was organized in February 1835. “*The Seventy are also called to preach the gospel, and to be especial witnesses unto the Gentiles and in all the world—thus differing from other officers in the church in the duties of their calling. And they form a quorum, equal in authority to that of the Twelve special witnesses or Apostles just named*” (D&C 107:25–26).

Joseph Smith Instructs the Twelve Apostles in the Kirtland Temple, by John Falter

Publication of the Doctrine and Covenants

FALL 1835

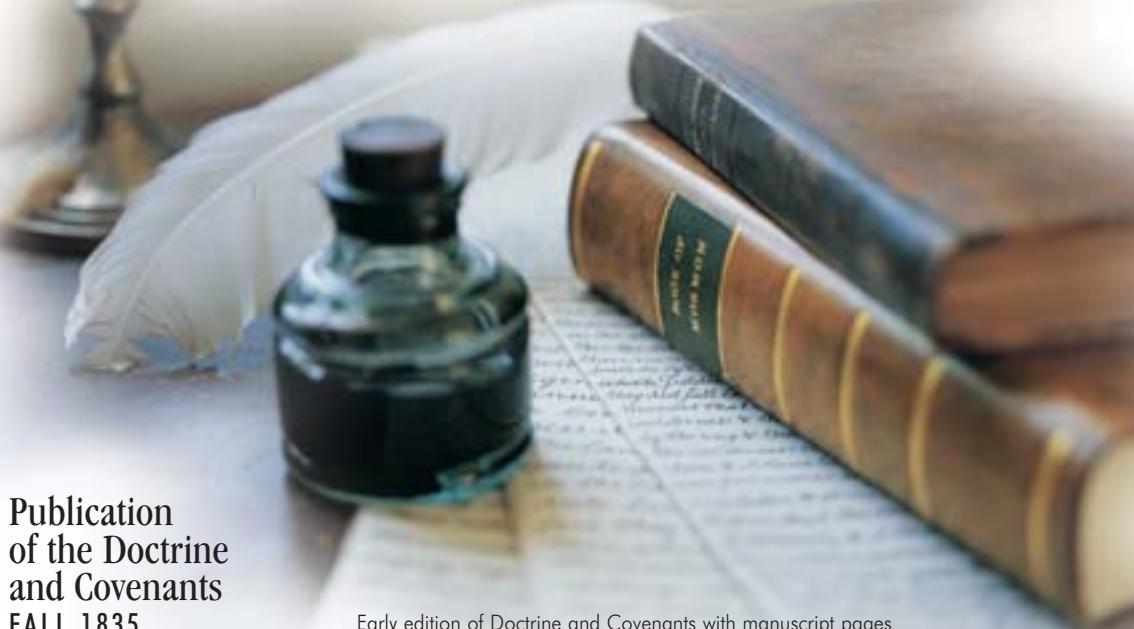
Kirtland, Ohio

In the latter-day revelations I found in the Doctrine and Covenants, which were chiefly revealed through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord restored important doctrines and covenants by which latter-

day Israel could accomplish God’s work in preparation for the Second Coming.

On April 6, 1830, at the organization of the Church in the Peter Whitmer home in Fayette, New York, the

Prophet and others unanimously voted to organize all of the revelations given thus far. The Prophet received the following revelation at that time: “*Wherefore, meaning the church, thou shalt give heed unto all his words and commandments which he shall give unto you as he receiveth them, walking in all holiness before me; For his word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth, in all patience and faith*” (D&C 21:4–5; see also the preface to D&C 1 and D&C 67).





Elijah Appearing to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple, by Gary Smith

Left: Jesus Christ Appearing to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple, by Del Parson

Restoration of Priesthood Keys MARCH AND APRIL 1836

Kirtland Temple,
Kirtland, Ohio

Ancient prophets appeared on April 3, 1836, to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery to deliver important priesthood keys that opened the door to gather Israel and bind families together forever.

"The veil was taken from our minds, and the eyes of our understanding were opened.

"We saw the Lord standing upon the breastwork of the pulpit, before us: . . .

"After this vision closed, the heavens were again opened unto us; and Moses appeared before us, and committed unto us the keys of the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth, and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north.

"After this, Elias appeared, and committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham, saying that in us and our seed all generations after us should be blessed.

"After this vision had closed, another great and glorious vision burst upon us; for Elijah the prophet . . . stood before us, and said:

"Behold, the time has fully come, which was spoken of by the mouth of Malachi—testifying that he [Elijah] should be

sent, before the great and dreadful day of the Lord come—

"To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse—

"Therefore, the keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands" (D&C 110:1–2, 11–16).

Revelation of Temple Ordinances

1840–43

Nauvoo, Illinois

"And now, my dearly beloved brethren and sisters, let me assure you that these are principles in relation to the dead and the living that can not be lightly passed over, as pertaining to our salvation. For [our ancestors'] salvation is necessary and essential to our salvation, as Paul says concerning the fathers—that they without us cannot be made perfect—neither can we without our dead be made perfect" (D&C 128:15). ■



Joseph Smith before the Nauvoo Temple, by Dale Kilbourn



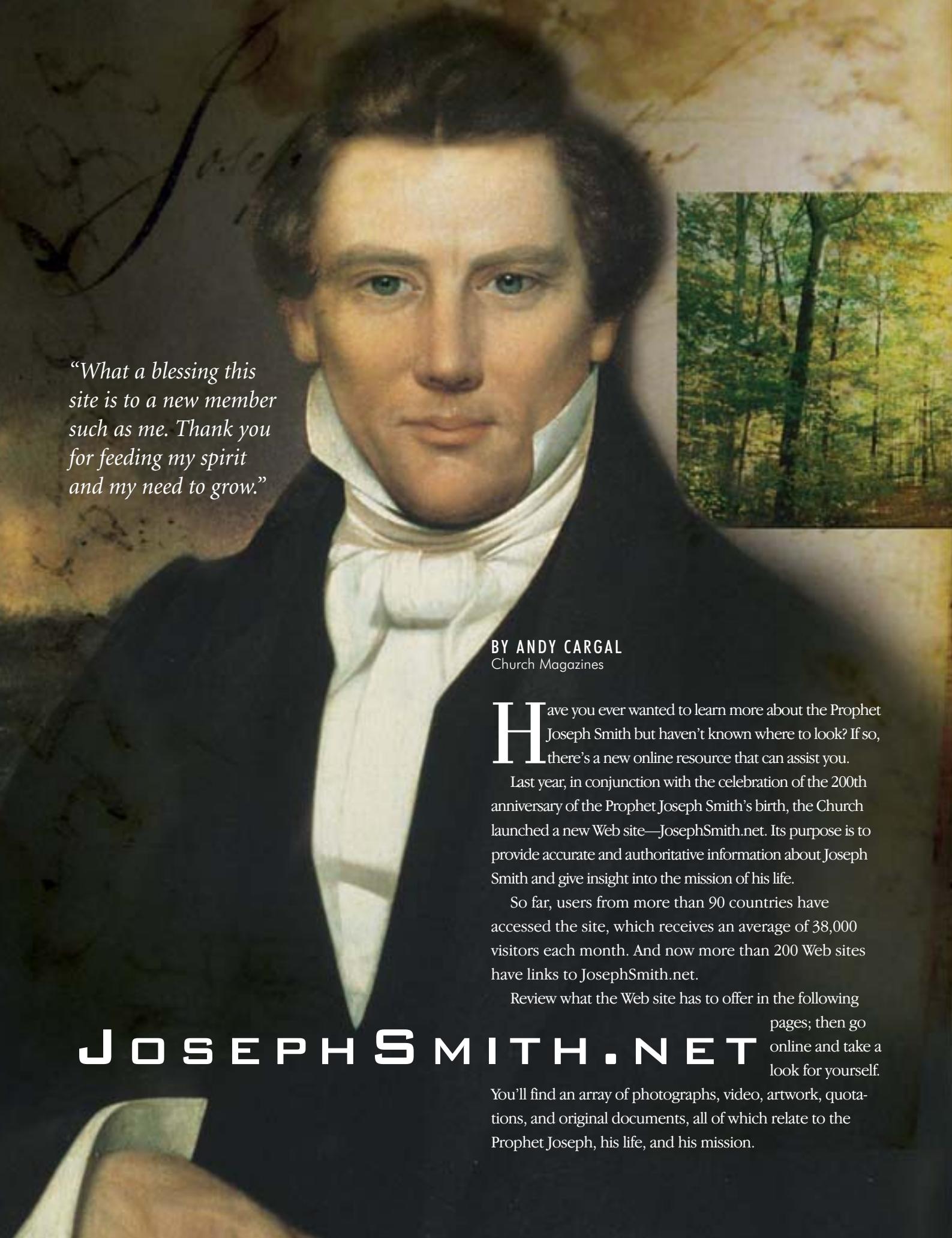
Genealogy, by Theodore Gorka
Left: Joseph Smith at the Nauvoo Temple during Its Construction, by Gary Smith



Nauvoo Temple sunstone,
photograph by Matthew Reier



The Nauvoo Illinois Temple
at Evening, photograph
by Scott Winterton

A portrait painting of Joseph Smith, the founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He is shown from the chest up, wearing a dark blue coat over a white high-collared shirt. His hair is dark and powdered. The background is a soft-focus landscape with trees and foliage.

"What a blessing this site is to a new member such as me. Thank you for feeding my spirit and my need to grow."

BY ANDY CARGAL
Church Magazines

H ave you ever wanted to learn more about the Prophet Joseph Smith but haven't known where to look? If so, there's a new online resource that can assist you.

Last year, in conjunction with the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Prophet Joseph Smith's birth, the Church launched a new Web site—JosephSmith.net. Its purpose is to provide accurate and authoritative information about Joseph Smith and give insight into the mission of his life.

So far, users from more than 90 countries have accessed the site, which receives an average of 38,000 visitors each month. And now more than 200 Web sites have links to JosephSmith.net.

Review what the Web site has to offer in the following pages; then go online and take a look for yourself.

You'll find an array of photographs, video, artwork, quotations, and original documents, all of which relate to the Prophet Joseph, his life, and his mission.

JOSEPHSMITH.NET

The Web site contains five main categories of information. Each of these and their subgroups are highlighted in the following pages, such as the one to the right, to provide a general overview of the Web site's content.

Resource Center

- Basic Facts
- Quotes
- Witnesses
- Questions
- Readings
- Documents
- Photographs
- Artwork
- Maps
- Virtual Reality
- Daily Events
- Glossary
- Joseph Smith Links

Martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum

Gary Smith, 1998
"We pronounce the martyrdom of Joseph Smith the Prophet, and Hyrum Smith the Patriarch. They were shot in Carthage jail, on the 27th of June, 1844, about five o'clock p.m." (D&C 138:1).



Joseph Smith Letter to Emma Smith from Liberty Jail

Joseph Smith counseled Emma about caring for their family and to petition government about persecution of Saints in Missouri.

Liberty Jail Clay Co Mo 1839 March 21st Affectionate Wife
I have sent an Epistle to the church directed to you because I wanted you to have the first reading of it and then I want Father and Mother to have a copy of it.

This letter from Joseph Smith to his wife Emma is one of many historical documents the Web site features. Each document also has options to zoom, save, and print. To find documents: On the home page, click "Resource Center," then "Documents," then the set of documents you want to view.



This painting depicting the Martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith at Carthage Jail is among a variety of artwork that can be viewed in the Web site's resource center. To find artwork: On the home page, click "Resource Center," then "Artwork," then the topic you want to view.

Life of the Prophet

- Foreordained of God
- A Christian Heritage
- Called of God
- Joseph and Emma
- Prophet, Seer, and Revelator
- Trials and Persecutions
- Teacher of God's Truth
- Missionary Labors
- Leading with Love
- Prisoner for Jesus Christ
- Character of Joseph Smith
- Temple Builder
- Friend of Man
- Martyr for God

Read about Joseph Smith's life, including his teachings and emphasis on temple building. To find temples: On the home page, click "Life of the Prophet," then "Temple Builder."

Mission of the Prophet

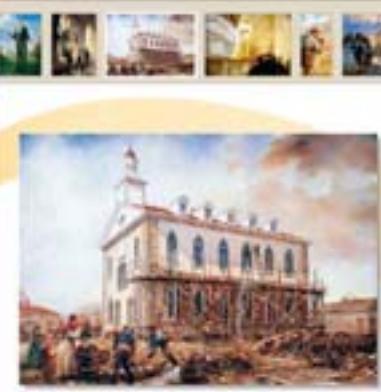
- A Marvelous Work and a Wonder
- The First Vision
- The Book of Mormon
- The Church of Jesus Christ Restored
- Building the Kingdom of God
- The House of the Lord
- The Prophet's Legacy

Many of the subgroups have a "Multimedia" section, which features artwork and video. The filmstrip to the right is a depiction of the First Vision from the movie The Restoration. To find multimedia: On the home page, click "Mission of the Prophet," "Life of the Prophet," or "Historic Sites," then the subgroup you want to view, then "Multimedia." Videos are indicated by a filmstrip icon in the bottom right corner of a picture.

We Need the Temple More Than Anything Else

[Introduction](#) [Quotes](#) [Witnesses](#) [Multimedia](#) [Questions](#) [Readings](#)

Temple Builder



Building the Kirtland Temple
Watercolor, 2003

"But how are they to become saints on Mount Zion? By building their temples." (History of the Church, 8:184.)

Navigation icons: back, forward, search, etc.



This Is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!

The First Vision

[Introduction](#) [Quotes](#) [Witnesses](#) [Multimedia](#) [Questions](#) [Readings](#)



Navigation icons: back, forward, search, etc.



Experience Church history without actually leaving your home as you explore the Web site's virtual reality feature. Visit places such as the Sacred Grove, the Hill Cumorah, and Carthage Jail (as shown at left). To find virtual reality: On the home page, click "Resource Center," then "Virtual Reality," then the place you want to view.

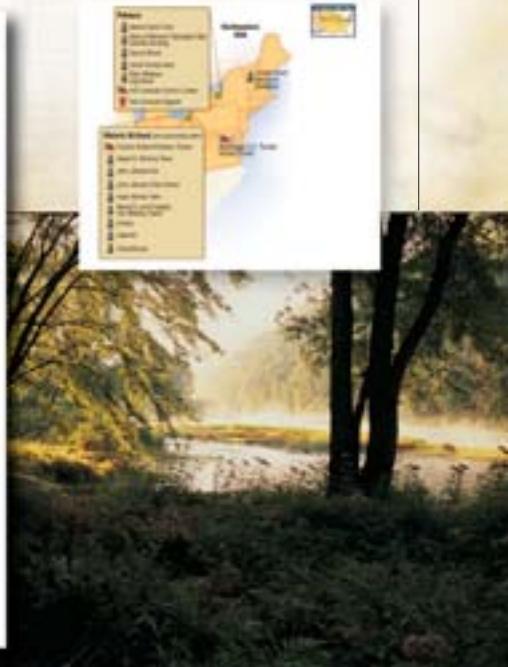
"I am a less-active member, I'm sorry to say. But this Web site has given me new hope to return to my first love of the gospel. Thank you."

Historic Sites

- New York
- Pennsylvania
- Ohio
- Missouri
- Illinois

Explore early Church history locations such as the Kirtland Temple and surrounding areas in Ohio. View photographs, read quotations, and learn about key events in each area. To find historic sites: On the home page, click "Historic Sites," then a state, then the locations within that state you want to view.

The screenshot shows a web page titled "Kirtland Temple, Kirtland". At the top, there's a navigation bar with links: Introduction, Quotes, Witnesses, Multimedia, Key Events, Readings. Below the title is a horizontal row of nine thumbnail images showing various views of the temple and its surroundings. The main content area features a large image of the Kirtland Temple and surrounding country, with a caption: "Kirtland Temple and Surrounding Country" and a quote from George Edward Anderson: "Frederick G. Williams described the design of the Kirtland Temple as 'the First Presidency's heart upon our hands, called on the Lord, and the Building associated with many dreams.' After we had taken a good look at the exterior, the building seemed to come right over us," and they crossed the Jordan River. (Quoted in Truman G. Angell, Autobiography, 1881, 14–15; Church Archives, see also D&C 95:18).



"It is 4:00 a.m., and having a troubled heart, I could not sleep. I found this site for the first time and found peace. I needed a reminder of what the Prophet Joseph went through and that my trials are not so bad. Thank you for a beautiful Web site."



Witnesses of the Prophet

- First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles
- Latter-day Prophets
- Reminiscences

Read testimonies from latter-day prophets regarding the mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith. To find testimonies: On the home page, click "Witnesses of the Prophet," then "Latter-day Prophets," then the picture of the prophet whose testimony you want to read.

Latter-day Prophets

Brigham Young 2nd President of the Church, 1847–1877

"I am a witness that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. . . . He was a man of God and had the revelations of Jesus Christ, and the words of Jesus Christ to the people. He did build and establish the kingdom of God on earth, and through him the Lord Almighty again restored the priesthood to the children of men. . . . I am a witness of this, and all who will hear the voice of the servants of God, pay attention to what they say and obey the commandments given to the people, shall receive a testimony and know that we tell them the truth, that Joseph is a prophet of God, and did actually finish the work which the Lord gave him to do, sealed his testimony with his blood, and has gone to dwell in the world of spirits."

(Deseret News, Feb. 21, 1888, 402)



Read a brief biography of Brigham Young.

Learn more about the life of Brigham Young.

Read what Brigham Young has said about Joseph Smith.



Plain & Precious

TRUTHS RESTORED

BY CLYDE J. WILLIAMS

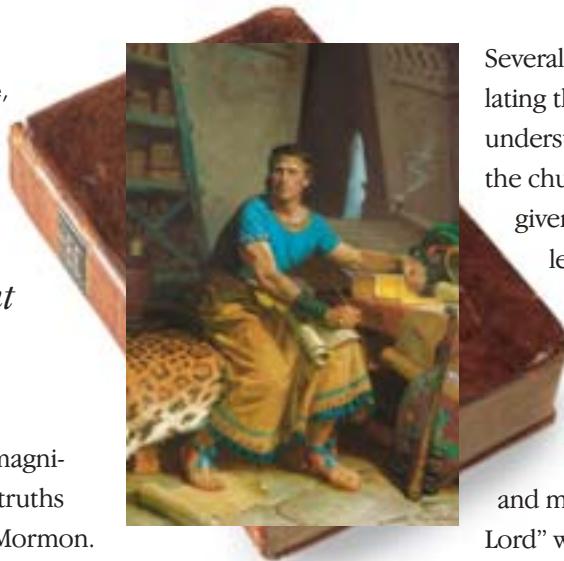
Associate Professor of Ancient Scripture,
Brigham Young University

A careful examination of the Book of Mormon reveals many significant doctrines not found in the Bible.

It is easy to underestimate the magnitude of the plain and precious truths restored through the Book of Mormon. Remember, what we find in the book came before the Nauvoo period, before the Kirtland period, even before the Church was organized in New York. The doctrines and information we discover in this book came through Joseph Smith in early 1829.

In November of 1843 the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote the following to a new member of the Church: “The fact is, that by the power of God I translated the Book of Mormon from hieroglyphics, the knowledge of which was lost to the world, in which wonderful event I stood alone, an unlearned youth, to combat the worldly wisdom and multiplied ignorance of eighteen centuries, with a new revelation, which (if they would receive the everlasting Gospel,) would open the eyes of [the world], and make ‘plain the old paths,’ wherein if a man walk in all the ordinances of God blameless, he shall inherit eternal life.”¹

In the spring of 1820 Joseph had learned from his First Vision that the churches of his day were teaching false creeds and doctrines (see Joseph Smith History 1:18–19).



The Lord prepared the Book of Mormon to “make known the plain and precious things” which had “been taken away” from the Bible.

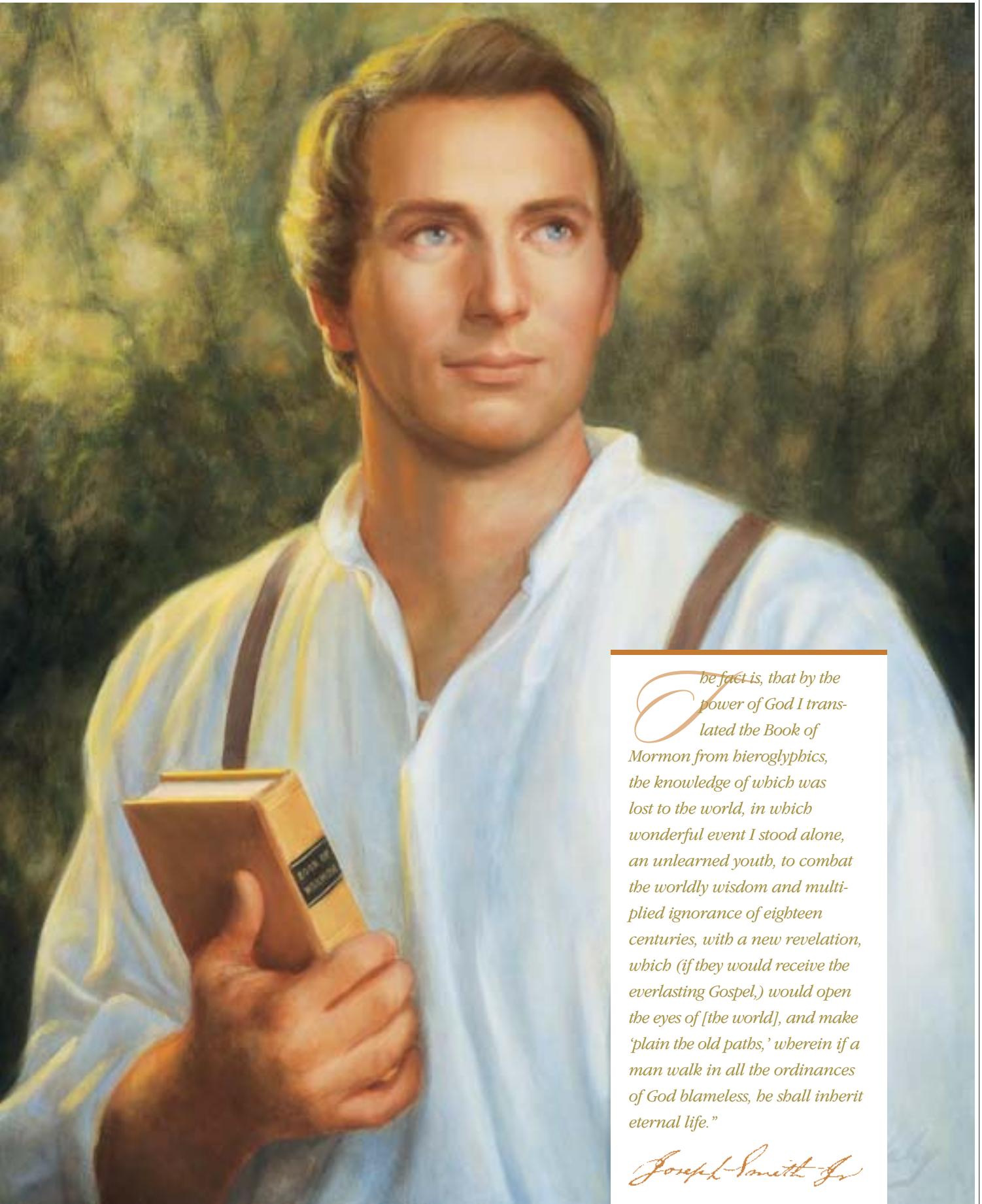
Several years later, while Joseph was translating the Book of Mormon, he came to understand clearly why the doctrines of the churches were corrupt. From a vision given to the prophet Nephi, Joseph learned that when the ancient biblical prophets and apostles had written their books, they came forth “in purity” (1 Nephi 13:25). Sadly, as their writings went forth, parts of the gospel that were “plain and most precious” and “covenants of the Lord” were “taken away” (1 Nephi 13:26). Nephi saw that these changes and omissions would cause “an exceedingly great many [to] stumble” (1 Nephi 13:29). Satan would gain “great power” through all of this (see 1 Nephi 13:34).

But the Lord prepared the Book of Mormon to “make known the plain and precious things which have been taken away” (1 Nephi 13:40). Moreover, the prophet Mormon, in his final words, reaffirmed that the Book of Mormon was “written for the intent that ye may believe” the Bible (Mormon 7:9).

A careful examination of the Book of Mormon reveals many significant insights not found in the Bible. These precious truths include new insights about biblical people and events, prophecies, visions, and doctrinal principles.

Doctrines Restored

Premortal Existence. Humanity struggles to understand the purpose of life and questions the role of a God in this world. The Book of Mormon records, however, that the



The fact is, that by the power of God I translated the Book of Mormon from hieroglyphics, the knowledge of which was lost to the world, in which wonderful event I stood alone, an unlearned youth, to combat the worldly wisdom and multiplied ignorance of eighteen centuries, with a new revelation, which (if they would receive the everlasting Gospel,) would open the eyes of [the world], and make 'plain the old paths,' wherein if a man walk in all the ordinances of God blameless, he shall inherit eternal life."

Joseph Smith Jr.

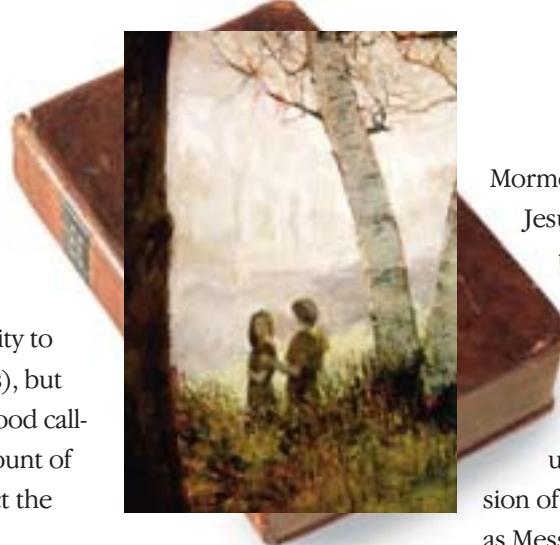
“plan of redemption” was laid out in premortal life (see Alma 12:25), that all of the spirit children of God were on the “same standing” there (meaning they had equal opportunity to progress through righteous choices), but some were foreordained to priesthood callings in this premortal state “on account of their faith, while others would reject the Spirit of God” (see Alma 13:2–5).

Adam’s Fall and Human Suffering. Many in the Christian world consider the Fall of Adam to be an accident or tragedy. Drawing from his reading of the brass plates, however, Lehi taught that the Fall was purposeful and necessary (see 2 Nephi 2:22–25).

Why is there so much suffering in the world and why are humans so flawed? The Book of Mormon teaches us why we have natural weaknesses and how they are designed to turn us to Christ (see Ether 12:27). Agency and opposition are essential to the eternal growth and development of humankind (see 2 Nephi 2:11–16). Thus, this life is a “state of probation” (2 Nephi 2:21) in which our days are prolonged so that we can be “free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil” (2 Nephi 2:27).

Agency. The principle of man’s right to act according to his own will or desires is a major theme throughout the Book of Mormon.² Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles affirmed that the Book of Mormon “provides some of our most important doctrinal insights on the significance of free agency in the gospel plan.”³ Alma taught that the necessity of agency and its effects ultimately require that there be an Atonement (see Alma 42:9–15). To assist mankind in the use of moral agency, Mormon explained, the “Spirit of Christ [or light of Christ] is given to every man, that he may know good from evil” (Moroni 7:16–19). The purpose and function of the light of Christ are made clear in the Nephite record beyond anything in the biblical text.

The Atonement. Concerning the new light the Book of



Many in the Christian world consider the Fall of Adam to be an accident or tragedy. Lehi taught that the Fall was purposeful and necessary.

Mormon shed on the atoning mission of Jesus Christ, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles declared: “Surely the most plain and precious of all truths lost from the Bible, particularly the Old Testament, are the clear and unequivocal declarations of the mission of Jesus Christ, his foreordained role as Messiah and Savior of the world, and the covenantal elements of his gospel, which have been taught from Adam down through each succeeding dispensation. Thus the Book of Mormon’s highest purpose is to restore to the universal family of God that crucial knowledge of Christ’s role in the salvation of every man, woman, and child who now lives, has ever lived, or will yet live upon the earth.”⁴

In addition to ancient prophecies of Christ’s mortal ministry, the Book of Mormon gives clear examples of the “doctrine of Christ” being taught before the meridian of time (see 2 Nephi 31:1–21). Nephi declared, “we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children . . . may look forward unto that life which is in Christ” (2 Nephi 25:26–27). Jacob taught that “none of the prophets have written, nor prophesied, save they have spoken concerning this Christ” (Jacob 7:11). Nowhere in scripture are the breadth and depth and scope of the Atonement so clearly explained as in the Book of Mormon. Various forms of the word *atonement* appear no less than 35 times in the Book of Mormon, while it is found only once in the King James New Testament (see Romans 5:11) and not at all in the Revised Standard Version.

In Alma 7:11–13 we learn that the Savior took upon Him not only our sins but also our pains, sicknesses, and infirmities that He might “according to the flesh know how to succor [or come to the aid of] his people.” The doctrine of Christ’s redemptive power over little children, while absent from the Bible, was taught with unmatched clarity in Mormon’s epistle to his son Moroni (see Moroni 8:4–20).

**Nowhere in scripture are the breadth
and depth and scope of the Atonement
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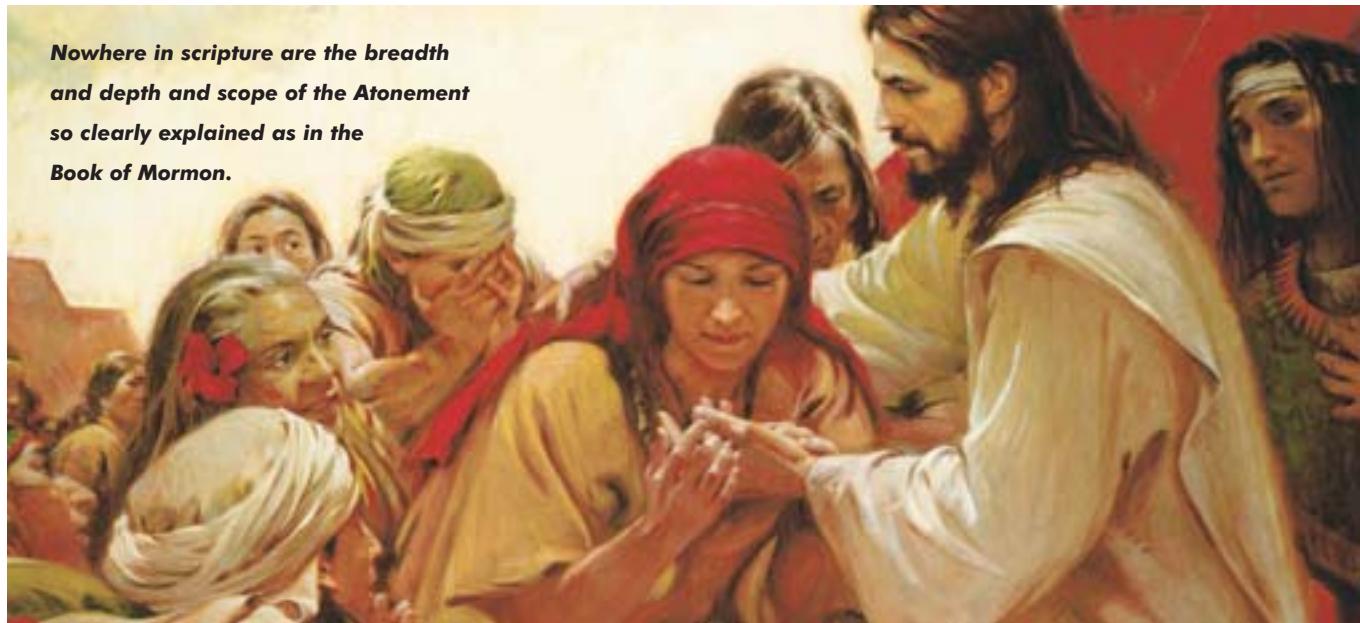


ILLUSTRATION BY WALTER RANE; COURTESY OF THE MUSEUM OF CHURCH HISTORY AND ART

Elder B. H. Roberts of the Seventy (1857–1933) explained how the unconditional nature of the Atonement in regard to Adam’s transgression and its conditional nature regarding men’s personal sins is a doctrine “peculiar to ‘Mormonism’ . . . and is derived almost wholly from the teachings of the Book of Mormon. In that distinction the beauty and glory of the Atonement, the balanced claims of justice and mercy shine forth as no where else, even in holy writ,—much less in the uninspired writings of men.

It may be regarded as the ‘Mormon’ contribution to views of the Atonement of Christ, for it is to be found no where else except in Mormon literature.⁶ The perfect relationship between the atoning grace of Christ and the obedient efforts of mankind is powerfully stated by Nephi: “We know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do” (2 Nephi 25:23). Furthermore, we are invited to “come unto Christ, and be perfected in him.” When we deny ourselves “of all ungodliness,” then and only “then is his grace sufficient” for us (Moroni 10:32).

First Principles and Ordinances. The Old Testament does not clearly teach the principles of faith, repentance, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, and their interrelationship, but Book of Mormon prophets Nephi, Jacob, Alma, and his son Alma all taught the

importance of these principles prior to the coming of Christ.⁶

Church Organization. The Book of Mormon became to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery a handbook of instructions for organizing the Church. Much of the procedural information in Doctrine and Covenants section 20 came directly from the Book of Mormon. Moroni recorded the

specific manner of bestowing the Holy Ghost and the necessity of authority to do so (see Moroni 2:2). He also taught the proper way to ordain someone to a priesthood office (see Moroni 3:1–3) and

recorded the specific prayers to be used in administering the sacrament (see Moroni 4, 5). Moroni also explained in detail the requirements for one receiving baptism, the purpose for keeping membership records, and the need for the Saints to meet regularly (see Moroni 6:1–6).



**The Book of Mormon became
to Joseph Smith and Oliver
Cowdery a handbook of
instructions for organizing
the Church.**

Revelation. The Book of Mormon demonstrates and teaches the importance of personal revelation for all.⁷ From beginning to end it is the classic example that the heavens are still open and that God does indeed speak to men on earth. The Book of Mormon also reveals the role and ministry of angels in detail not found in the Bible (see Moroni 7:29–32).

Satan’s Identity and Methods. The knowledge of Satan and his influence is virtually absent from the Old Testament.

One scholar wrote, “Nowhere in the [Old Testament] does Satan appear as a distinctive demonic figure, opposed to God and responsible for all evil.”⁸ Another acknowledged, “Admittedly we have not yet the fully developed doctrine” concerning Satan.⁹ Lehi learned from the brass plates, however, that Satan was originally an angel of God who fell from heaven by seeking “that which was evil before God” (2 Nephi 2:17). From the Book of Mormon we learn various ways he seeks to gain power over individuals, such as teaching men not to pray, stirring “them up to anger against that which is good,” lulling “them away into carnal security,” and revealing his secret plans to lead them down to destruction (see 2 Nephi 32:8; 28:20–21; Helaman 6:26).¹⁰ Fortunately, the Book of Mormon also reveals that when people are righteous, Satan has no power (see 1 Nephi 22:26).¹¹

Beyond Joseph Smith’s Intelligence

We have just scratched the surface. The number of plain and precious truths restored is voluminous. After an intense study of all the doctrines the Book of Mormon reveals which are not found in the Bible, Elder B. H. Roberts concluded: “Beyond controversy neither the native intelligence nor learning of Joseph Smith can possibly be regarded as equal to such a performance as bringing forth the knowledge which the Book of Mormon imparts upon these profound subjects; nor can the intelligence or learning of those who assisted him in translating the book be regarded as sufficient for such a task. Nor was the intelligence and learning of any one to whom the origin of the book has ever been ascribed equal to such an achievement. Indeed the book sounds depths on these subjects not only beyond the intelligence and learning of this small group of men referred to, but beyond the intelligence and learning of the age itself in which it came forth.”¹²

The more carefully one studies the doctrines and teachings of the Book of Mormon, the more powerful



the evidence becomes that Joseph Smith was not reflecting the learning of his time or his own personal study. He was the instrument God used to reveal many lost truths and once again “make plain the old paths” that, if followed, will lead one to exaltation and eternal life. ■

NOTES

- History of the Church*, 6:74.
- Examples of this principle are manifold; for instance, see Mosiah 2:21; Alma 29:4–5; 41:3, 5; 42:27; Helaman 3:28–29; 7:5; 12:3–6; 14:30–31.
- “Free Agency and Freedom,” in *The Book of Mormon: Second Nephi, The Doctrinal Structure*, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr. (1989), 1.
- Christ and the New Covenant: The Messianic Message of the Book of Mormon* (1997), 6–7.
- The Seventy’s Course in Theology, Fourth Year: The Atonement* (1911), 113–14.
- See 2 Nephi 9:23; 31:4–11; Mosiah 18:8–10; 25:17–18, 22; Alma 5:62; Alma 9:27.
- See, for example, 1 Nephi 4:6; 15:8–11; Alma 58:10–11; Moroni 10:4–5.
- Theodor H. Gaster, in *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, ed. George A. Buttrick (1962), 4:224.
- L. L. Morris, in *New Bible Dictionary*, 2nd ed., ed. J. D. Douglas (1982), 1074.
- See also 2 Nephi 9:28; 15:20; Helaman 16:22; 3 Nephi 6:15–16; 11:29.
- See also 1 Nephi 15:23–24; 2 Nephi 1:13, 23; Alma 13:28; and Helaman 3:29–30.
- New Witnesses for God*, 3 vols. (1909), 3:230.



HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

Most *Ensign* articles can be used for family home evening discussions, personal reflection, or teaching the gospel in a variety of settings.

1. Make a copy for each family member of a simple recipe for a treat that everyone enjoys. Then make a second copy of the recipe with key ingredients and cooking processes missing. Discuss the differences in the recipes and the problems that arise when essential information is missing. Compare this to what the author shows happened to the scriptures when plain and precious truths were removed.
2. Compare Matthew 18:11 in the New Testament with Matthew 18:11 in footnote 11c. Discuss or contemplate the additional truth and understanding that can come to the scriptures through revelation to a prophet.

Receive the Blessings of the Priesthood



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

Blessings of Belonging to Relief Society

Society: Relief Society helps sisters learn the importance of sustaining, supporting, and working in harmony with priesthood holders. Relief Society also helps sisters prepare to receive the ordinances of the gospel and enter into the covenants of the temple.

How Can New and Longtime Members Receive the Blessings of the Priesthood?

D&C 84:35–38: “They who receive this priesthood receive me, saith the Lord; for he that receiveth my servants receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth my Father; and he that receiveth my Father receiveth my

Father’s kingdom; therefore all that my Father hath shall be given unto him.”

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“Once in the kingdom of God, as a newly baptized member, we honor the restored priesthood. Honoring the priesthood and being obedient in living the commandments are important elements in the conversion process. Adult male members receive the Aaronic Priesthood soon after baptism. After a period of time, if worthy, they should receive the Melchizedek Priesthood, and each individual in the family shares the blessings of the priesthood in the home. Women are welcomed and enjoy the blessings of sisterhood in the Relief Society. . . .

“We faithfully progress for at least one year after baptism and prepare ourselves to enter the temple of the Lord. In the holy temple we receive our sacred endowments, which teach us how we must live to return into the presence of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. Then we are sealed for time and all eternity” (“When Thou Art Converted, Strengthen Thy Brethren,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 80).

How Do Sisters of Relief Society and Brethren of the Priesthood Support One Another?

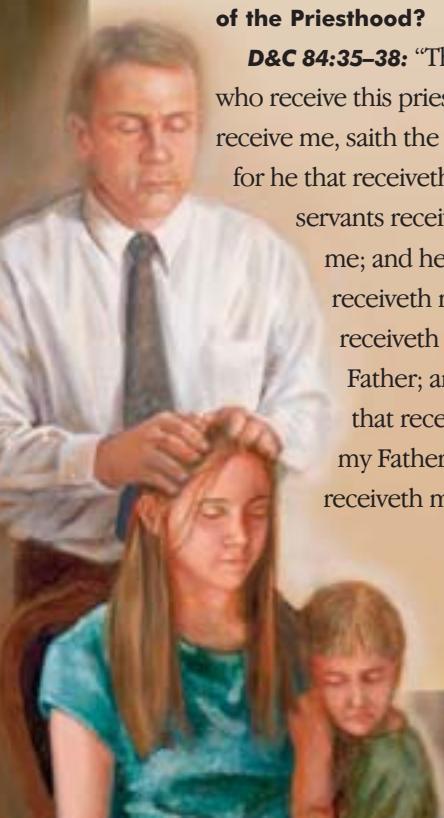
Philippians 1:27: “Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley:

“Women in the Church are associates with their brethren in carrying forward this mighty work of the Lord. . . . They stand in an associate role to the priesthood, all striving together to build the kingdom of God in the earth. We honor and respect you for your capacity. We expect leadership, and strength, and impressive results from your management of the organizations for which you are responsible. We uphold and sustain you as daughters of God, working in a great partnership to assist him in bringing to pass the immortality and the eternal life of all of the sons and daughters of God” (“If Thou Art Faithful,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1984, 89).

Kathleen H. Hughes, first counselor in the Relief Society general presidency:

“Relief Society was established by God, through a prophet, by the power of priesthood authority; its existence is a necessary part of the organization of the Church. Men and women stand together in priesthood and Relief Society as we strive to bring families to Christ. As women, we should never think that our role in the Church is a lesser role than that played by men. Just as we as righteous women honor the priesthood, we need to hold sacred our calling as women as well. . . . [Relief Society] grew out of our divine calling and our desire to serve, to love, and to care for each other. Just as the ordinances and direction of the priesthood are necessary in the Lord’s work, so is the service that we do” (“In Covenant with Him,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 108). ■



Meeting the Challenges

BY LARRY HILLER
Church Magazines

When I first met Judy 30 years ago, I had no idea she had been a member of the Church for only 4 years. She had an important responsibility in the Church, and I had no reason to believe she had not been a member all her life.

Three years ago Laura gave a lovely opening prayer in our stake conference. After the prayer we were informed that Laura had been baptized just a few months earlier. "Wow!" I thought. "She has made remarkable progress."

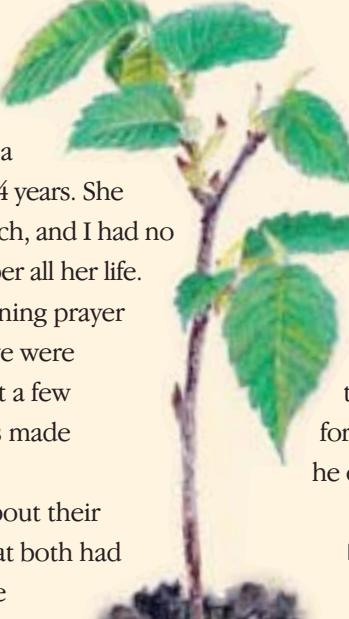
Only when I talked to Judy and Laura about their experiences as new converts did I learn that both had found their new Church membership to be more challenging than expected. It's something they have in common with many—if not most—new converts.

It's Challenging

Judy says, "You don't just change *where* you go to church. You change your *life*. After my baptism I found myself asking, 'Can I really do this?'"

Laura agrees: "I had no idea it would be that hard."

It's important to recognize that you are not alone in feeling challenged or even overwhelmed. Knowing that your experience is shared by many, you can be patient with yourself. You can reach out for help—to your bishop



or branch president or to home teachers or other members—without feeling embarrassed or ashamed. And most important of all, you can have real hope that, yes, you *can* do this with the Lord's help. He did not guide you into His Church only to abandon you. "The Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them" (1 Nephi 3:7).

Ignorance Is Not Bliss

Conversion is a process, not just a single event. A new testimony is like a tender seedling, filled with promise but needing time and careful nurture.

If ignorance is not bliss, it's not a sin either. You may feel overwhelmed because there are new words and terms to learn. (Tithing settlement?) There is a whole organization that is unique to the Church. (Stake high council?) Reading and navigating the scriptures may be a new experience. (Where is the book of Omni?) There are responsibilities, or callings, in the Church that you didn't know existed, and all of a sudden you are asked to accept one of them. (Just what does a Young Women secretary do anyway?)

Don't worry. The Lord does not condemn you for what you don't know. But He's the only one who can read your mind. Others can't, so don't be afraid to ask questions. As you reach

Weathering the storms of life makes the tree stronger. The reward for faithful nurture and endurance is fruitful maturity and a bountiful harvest that is “sweet above all that is sweet” (see Alma 32:42).

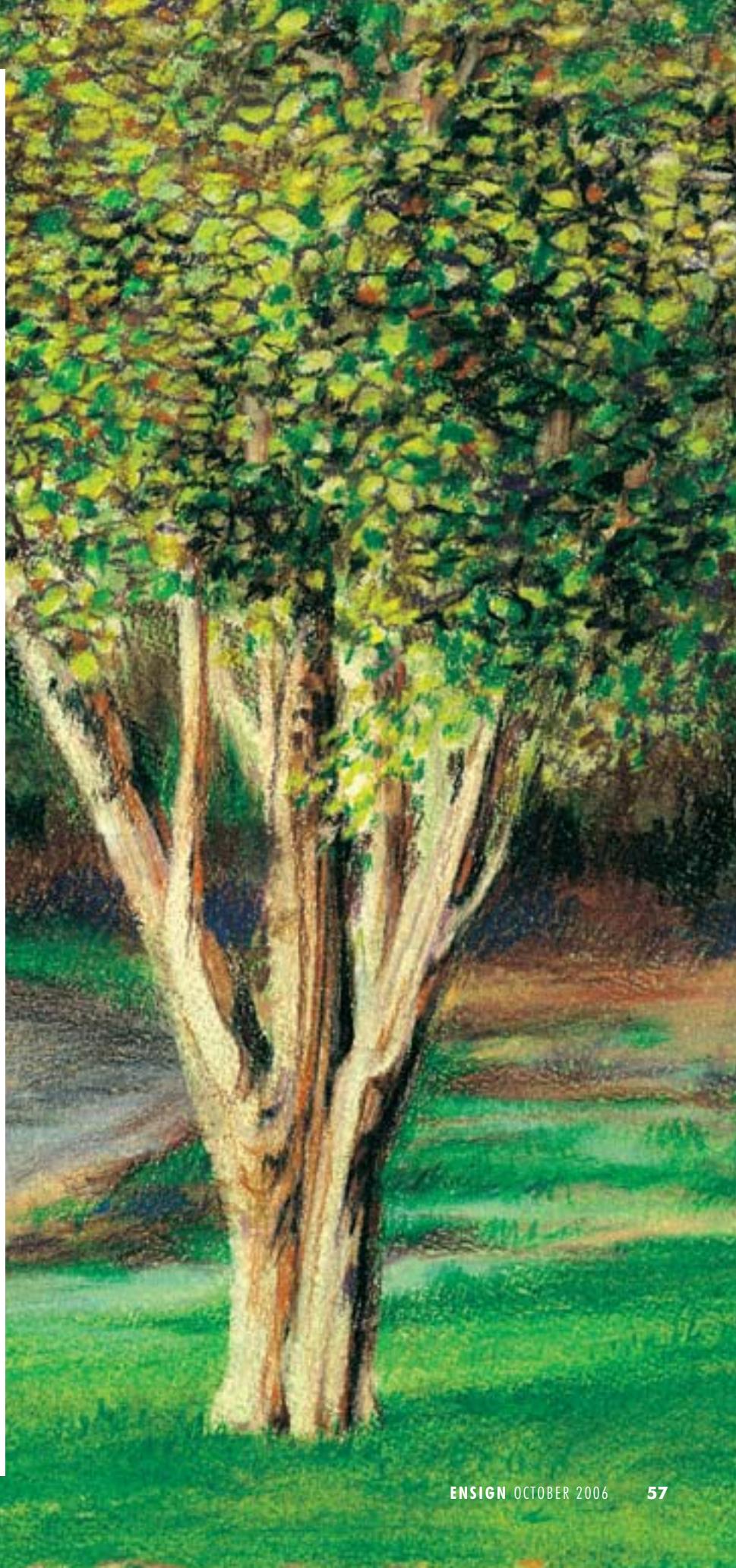
out and begin to make friends in the Church, find a mentor—a member friend who can answer questions and explain things. If you have trouble finding a mentor, ask your bishop or branch president to help you find one. If you have a calling, ask to have your duties explained to you. Request a copy of any handbooks or other helps that may be available.

Then, as Judy counsels, “just build knowledge line upon line. Start with the basics.” And remember that you already have the foundation for the rest of your gospel learning: you know the Church is true.

Dealing with Disappointment

Sometimes you will disappoint yourself. Baptism and confirmation made you clean, not perfect. It’s the same for the other members of the Church. We all make mistakes, and we all have to repent and renew our baptismal covenants by taking the sacrament. (For more about those covenants, see Elder Jeffrey R. Holland’s article on page 10.) And as we continue to repent and strive to do better, the Holy Ghost helps us become more pure. We begin to lose our desire to sin (see Mosiah 5:2). The power of the Atonement begins to change our very nature.

Laura says, “It has now become easier to be a member. Heavenly Father has given



me a greater desire to do what is right. Things are coming more easily and naturally.”

As for those occasions when other Church members show their less-than-perfect side, Laura says she’s not bothered by the imperfections of others. “I work hard at not being judgmental,” she says. “I try to accept others for who they are. We’re all doing the best we can.”

An Easy Yoke, a Light Burden

The Savior has given this invitation to all:

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

“For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28–30).

A yoke is a device that allows two animals to fairly and comfortably share a burden that one alone would find difficult or impossible. It is still used in many parts of the world today where animals plow fields or pull wagons.

Speaking of the Savior’s yoke, President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95), fourteenth President of the Church, said: “His yoke requires a great and earnest effort, but for those who truly are converted, the yoke is easy and the burden becomes light. . . .

“Obviously, the personal burdens of life vary from person to person, but every one of us has them. . . . To one and all, Christ said, in effect: As long as we all must bear some burden and shoulder some yoke, why not let it be mine? My promise to you is that my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”¹

Conversion is a process, not just a single event. Our Heavenly Father is patient, kind, and gracious. He gives gifts of the Spirit not only “to those who love [Him] and keep *all* [His] commandments” but also to “him that *seeketh* so to do” (D&C 46:9; emphasis added). Live what you know, and more knowledge and strength will come. Let the Lord make of you what you could never make of yourself. He promises,

“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” (Ether 12:27). ■

NOTE

1. “Come unto Me,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, 17.

WHEN IN DOUBT . . .

Doubts are natural. They can spring up from within, or they can come from others. Regardless of the source, there are some tried-and-true ways to deal successfully with doubt.

1. Remember the spiritual experiences you’ve already had. For example, Oliver Cowdery was Joseph Smith’s scribe during much of the translation of the Book of Mormon. He had already received a witness of the truthfulness of the Prophet Joseph’s testimony regarding the golden plates. But apparently he wanted additional reassurance from the Lord. Speaking through the Prophet, the Lord counseled Oliver:

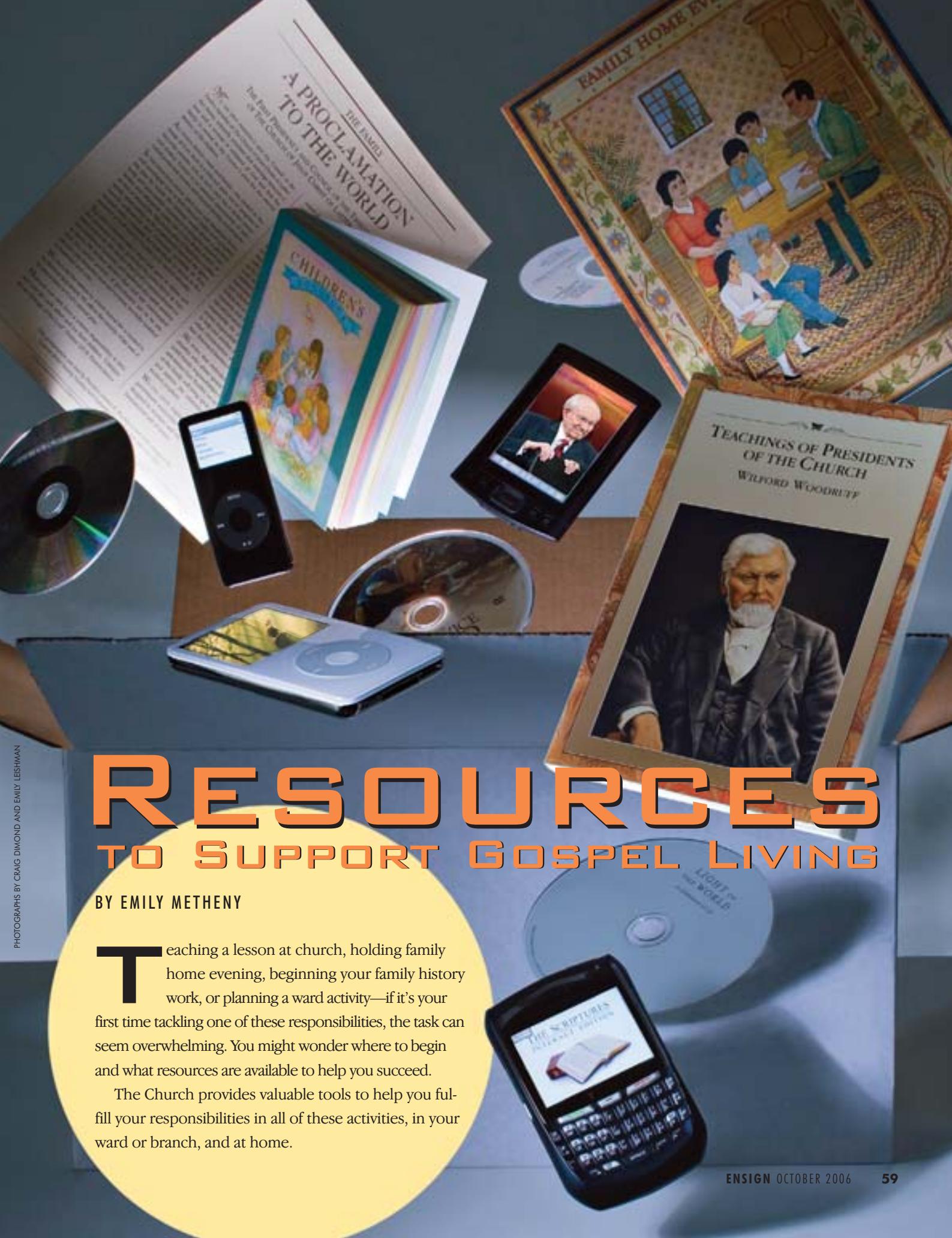
“If you desire a further witness, cast your mind upon [remember] the night that you cried unto me in your heart, that you might know concerning the truth of these things.

“Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter? What greater witness can you have than from God?” (D&C 6:22–23).

The Lord expects us to remember the witness we have already received from the Spirit.

2. Be patient. When you come across things that you don’t understand, be patient. Hold fast to what you already know (in other words, remember). As Laura says, “I cling to what I already know and don’t let questions bother me. I keep asking in prayer, knowing the Lord will answer when I’m ready for it.”

3. Feed your faith; starve your doubts. As you continue to pray, search the scriptures, and keep the commandments, you will receive additional strength to your testimony. Alma compares this process to nurturing a seed as it sprouts and grows into a tree that provides sweet, precious fruit (see Alma 32:28–43). Nurturing doubts produces the opposite effect, and testimony withers.



RESOURCES TO SUPPORT GOSPEL LIVING

BY EMILY METHENY

Teaching a lesson at church, holding family home evening, beginning your family history work, or planning a ward activity—if it's your first time tackling one of these responsibilities, the task can seem overwhelming. You might wonder where to begin and what resources are available to help you succeed.

The Church provides valuable tools to help you fulfill your responsibilities in all of these activities, in your ward or branch, and at home.

Church Web Sites

Many resources for your family and your ward or branch can be found on the Church's Web sites.

- LDS.org is the official Web site of the Church. The site includes links to descriptions of basic beliefs, the scriptures online, and the gospel library (Church publications including curriculum materials, talks, and broadcasts). You will also find links to home and family, stake and ward Web sites, serving in the Church, temples, news, family history, Church history, and more.
- Mormon.org is a Web site for anyone who wants to learn more about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Here, your friends and family members of other faiths will find basic information about the Church's beliefs and members, as well as times and locations of worship services worldwide.
- FamilySearch.org is the Church's Web site for family history work. It offers step-by-step research guides, family history forms and charts, and the world's largest genealogical index.
- ProvidentLiving.org is a Web site focusing on temporal and spiritual welfare. Here you will find information about social, emotional, and physical health, as well as education and employment opportunities.
- LDSCES.org is your source for information about the Church Educational System (CES) and, specifically, about the seminary and institute programs. Students and instructors, as well as priesthood leaders and parents, will find study helps, manuals, schedules, and meeting locations. You can also learn about the Perpetual Education Fund, Church-sponsored colleges and universities, and CES firesides.
- BeSmart.com is a site designed especially for the youth of the Church, with a focus on preparation for gaining an



education. Youth can learn about Church-sponsored conferences, colleges and universities, and even find admission applications. They can also sign up to receive BeSmart e-mails.

- JosephSmith.net is a new Web site that provides information on the life and mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith.
- LDSCatalog.com is the Web site for the online distribution center. Here you can purchase scriptures, lesson manuals, magazine subscriptions, gospel art, hymnbooks, Church CDs and DVDs, supplies for missionary work, materials for members with disabilities, and much more. Temple clothing can also be ordered here.

All materials can be ordered online or by calling 1-800-537-5971 in the United States and Canada.

As Church materials are referred to in this article, the distribution center item number is indicated in parentheses next to the publication's title to assist you when placing orders.

Gospel Literature

Your gospel knowledge and understanding will increase as you study the scriptures, talks, and other gospel literature.

Scriptures. The standard works of the Church may be purchased from the distribution center. They are the Bible (King James Version), the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price.

Scriptures online. If you prefer, you can read or listen to the scriptures online at Scriptures.LDS.org and also use the online Topical Guide to the scriptures. You can also download the scriptures as an MP3 file and listen to them on your MP3 player. Downloads are available from LDS.org/audio.

General conference and devotional addresses. You can access recordings of recent addresses and devotionals by clicking on "Gospel Library" on LDS.org. Among these are broadcast events and items from audio and video archives that include the scriptures, general conferences, devotionals, and firesides.



Church publications for handhelds.

You can download the scriptures, conference talks, Church magazine articles, and other materials to your personal digital assistant (PDA) or pocket PC system. Check LDS.org/handheld for information.

Church manuals for adults. *Gospel Principles* (31110) and *Teachings of Presidents of the Church* are used in Sunday School and Priesthood/Relief Society lessons. They can be read online, received from your ward or branch, or ordered from the distribution center.

Youth materials. The Church has published several important manuals and guidebooks for youth. Parents may also benefit from becoming familiar with these materials. The following are available online, through your ward or branch, or from the distribution center: *Faith in God* for boys (36812) and for girls (36813); *For the Strength of Youth* for young men and young women (36550); *True to the Faith* for young men and young women (36863), *Personal Progress* for young women (36035); and *Aaronic Priesthood: Fulfilling Our Duty to God* for deacons (36412), teachers (36413), and priests (36414).

Proclamations and declarations. *The Family: A Proclamation to the World* (36502) and *The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles* (36299) are available free from the distribution center online.

Temples booklet. With beautiful temple photography and a variety of articles about the history and significance of temples, the booklet *Temples of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (35863) is an excellent resource for teaching your family about temples and for preparing to receive your own temple ordinances.

Church Magazines

The Church magazines can be an important resource for inspiration and gospel knowledge and for supplemental use in family home evening and Church lessons. Subscriptions to

the *Ensign* (for English-speaking adults), the *New Era* (for English-speaking youth), the *Friend* (for English-speaking children), and the *Liahona* (available in over 50 languages for all ages) can be ordered from any

Church distribution center, through LDSCatalog.com, or by calling 1-800-537-5971 in the United States and Canada. Material from the Church magazines can also be accessed online at LDS.org by clicking on "Gospel Library."

Family Home Evening Helps

These resources can help you plan enjoyable and effective family home evenings.

Online family home evening tips. From the LDS.org homepage, click on "Home and Family." You'll find a list of quick tips and helpful ideas for family home evening—even



1-800-537-5971

a planner to create your family home evening program. Suggested lesson plans are offered on a variety of gospel topics such as appreciating music, forgiving others, and reading the scriptures. Each lesson suggests articles to read when preparing, discussion questions to ask while teaching, and pictures and video clips to supplement the lesson. The Web site also outlines several fun family activities meant to build communication, creativity, and knowledge.

Family Home Evening Resource Book (31106). This guidebook includes sample home evening lessons, activity ideas, teaching helps, and other suggestions to make your family home evening successful. Each lesson and activity in the book is designed to help you build family unity and teach gospel principles. You can tailor the suggestions in this book to meet your own family's needs. The book can also be found online by clicking on "Home and Family" on LDS.org.

Pictures and visual aids. Visual aids will add interest to your family home evening lessons. The Gospel Art Picture Kit (34730) contains 160 8 1/2-by-11-inch pictures depicting scripture stories and events. A written account of the scriptural event appears on the back of each picture. The kit can be purchased from the distribution center, or the pictures can be printed free from LDS.org/hf by clicking on "Gospel Art Picture Kit." Other useful visual aids are the Articles of Faith poster (65014), *New Era* posters (35543), and scripture charts and maps (66001).

Hymns and Children's Songbook. Opening and closing your family home evening with a song will help to invite the Spirit into your home and will help you and your family members learn the hymns of the Church. *Hymns* (31243) is the standard hymnal we use in sacrament meetings, and the *Children's Songbook* (35395) contains the songs children sing in Primary.



Church Music

You can enjoy Church music at home, at work, and on the go with CDs, cassettes, MP3s, LDS-related radio, and hymnbooks.

Interactive Church music player. This online music player is located at LDS.org/churchmusic and allows you to view, listen to, transpose, and print the Church hymns and children's songs.

MP3s. Browse a list of downloadable hymns and children's songs at LDS.org/churchmusic. All downloads are free.

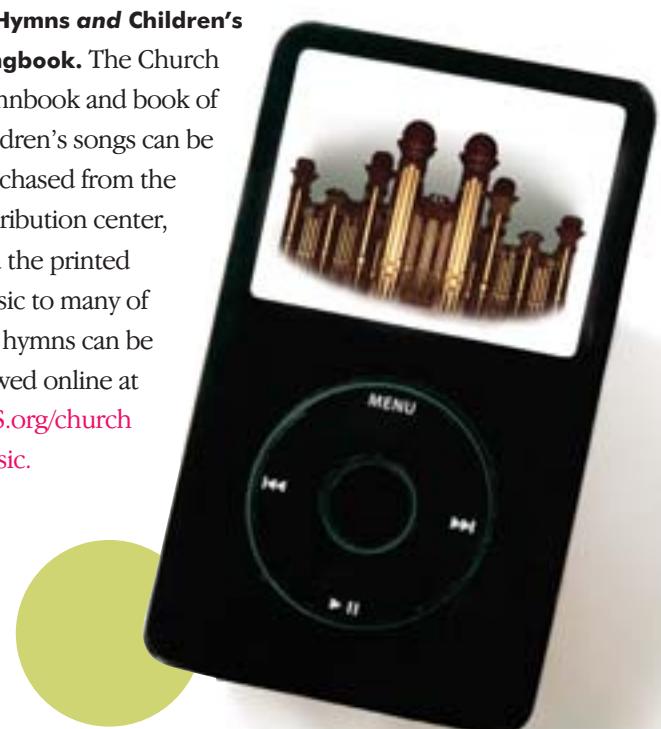
LDS-related radio online. Listen to live streaming instrumental music and LDS-related radio at LDS.org/broadcast.

Hymns on CD or cassette. Many CDs and cassettes with hymns, children's songs, and classical music, including recordings of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, are available from the distribution center.

Music training resources. At LDS.org/churchmusic, you can learn how to conduct and accompany music, learn how to teach songs to children, and find the meanings of music symbols and terms.

Hymns and Children's Songbook

Songbook. The Church hymnbook and book of children's songs can be purchased from the distribution center, and the printed music to many of the hymns can be viewed online at LDS.org/churchmusic.



Church Callings

Serving in the Church helps us grow in gospel knowledge and allows us to develop friendships in our wards and stakes. There is more than one right way to function in a Church calling, but the Church has published handbooks and manuals in order to provide guidance and helpful direction.

For more information and understanding about your calling, go to LDS.org and click on “[Serving in the Church](#).”

Teaching, No Greater Call (36123) provides helpful guidelines for teachers in all Church organizations. It includes a section on teaching those with disabilities. It can be read online or purchased from the distribution center.

Seminary and Institute

Seminary and institute classes are gospel study classes for the youth and young adults in the Church. Seminary provides weekday religious instruction for members of the Church in the 14- to 18-year-old range. Four one-year courses are offered, teaching the Old Testament, New Testament, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants and Church History. Seminary classes are held in Church-owned buildings close to local schools, in meetinghouses, or in members' homes.

Institutes of religion provide weekday and evening religious instruction for LDS college students and young single adults ages 18 through 30. Each stake also offers an institute class open to all adults. A variety of classes are available to teach students about the Old Testament, New Testament, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price, Church history, family history, courtship and marriage, doctrines of the gospel, and teachings of the living prophets. Many institute programs also provide a place where students can study and socialize.

For more information about seminary and institute, look online at LDSCES.org.



Ward and Stake Calendars

Many wards and stakes have a Web site that includes a calendar of activities, classes, and other events you won't want to miss. Some wards also list the schedule of the weekly lessons for Sunday School, Melchizedek Priesthood, and Relief Society.

You can access your online ward and stake calendars from LDS.org. Click on “[Stake and Ward Web Sites](#).” You will need your membership number and confirmation date (available from your ward clerk) to enter the Web sites the first time.

Church History Sites

Planning a vacation? Consider taking a trip to visit some of the significant historical sites of the Church. Look online at LDS.org/churchhistory to learn about Church history sites across the United States, including Palmyra, New York; Kirtland, Ohio; Nauvoo, Illinois; Jackson County, Missouri; Council Bluffs, Iowa; Winter Quarters, Nebraska; and Salt Lake City, Utah. A Church history trip could be one of the most meaningful and memorable trips you will take. As you learn about the faith and the struggles of early Church members, you will more greatly appreciate the strength of the Church today.

Ward Meetinghouse Library

Each ward meetinghouse has its own library with materials that can be checked out by members. Books, videos and DVDs, gospel art, and other resources are on hand to enrich members' lives and gospel study. ■



Faith under the Overpass

By Greg Carlson

I grew up in a small community outside of Seattle, Washington. It was relatively close to a big city but just rural enough that opportunities to earn money for

a mission were extremely limited. There were, however, a large number of gentlemen farmers in the area, so my brother and I decided to haul alfalfa hay from the big farms in the eastern part of the state, over the Cascade Mountains, to the small farms in our community. We fixed up an old truck that had fallen into disrepair and prepared it for hauling up to 20,000 pounds (9,000 kg) of

hay. We made a number of successful trips with our dad along to make sure we had things figured out before he left the operation to us.

My brother and I left very early one morning for our first solo trip. We made it over the mountains but had some difficulties loading the hay. Eventually we headed back over the mountains with a full load.

The return trip was uneventful

until we noticed that it was starting to sprinkle just a bit. We immediately found an overpass on the freeway and parked underneath it just as the sprinkles turned into rain. We had not yet been able to purchase a tarp to cover the hay, and no animals can eat the alfalfa hay if it gets wet because it starts to rot and mold

quickly. We knew that if we lost this load of hay, our business venture would probably fail.

We sat under the overpass for quite a while, waiting for the rain to stop. Eventually, we realized that the Lord would help us if we prayed. My brother

offered a prayer, and we waited. The rain did not let up. We decided that perhaps I, the elder brother, should offer a prayer. It started to rain harder. We sat there for what seemed an eternity. We knew that once we left the protective cover of the overpass, the next possible shelter was an hour away and home was another hour past that.

Finally, one of us remembered the admonition that faith precedes the miracle, and we realized that we needed to exercise

our faith. We put our trust in the Lord and left the cover of the overpass. To this day I remember every drop of rain that I saw land on the hood of the truck as we inched out from under the overpass. It was a severe trial of our faith, but by the time the cab of the truck was out in the open, the rain had stopped. The next two hours were filled with much prayer and thanksgiving.

We made it home with our load in good shape, and as we were pulling the truck into the barn, the heavens released their pent-up downpour. Our business survived, and both of us were able to successfully fund our missionary service.

Not all of my prayers have been answered this way, but I am very thankful for the lesson in faith my brother and I learned sitting under the freeway overpass in the rain. ■

Because of the large amount that had been withdrawn from my monthly salary, I had only enough money to cover our expenses for one week.

Groceries or Tithing?

By Charlotte Arnold

I was in my first year of employment with a cosmetics company. At the time I was divorced and lived alone with my two children. In December the company sent each salesperson large boxes containing the Christmas merchandise we were to sell during the holiday season. That meant, however, that a large amount had been withdrawn from my salary. When I calculated all my monthly



expenses and tithing, I had enough for three people to live on—but only for one week. And this money had to cover groceries for the entire month and gas for the car, which I needed for my work.

When our home teacher came, I told him about our situation. I told him I would not be able to pay my tithing because if I did, I wouldn't be able to feed my family. My faithful home teacher counseled me to pay tithing. He recommended that I do it faithfully, and the Lord would surely bless me. My home teacher had always been distinguished by faithfulness and reliability. I jokingly told him, "If I cannot buy groceries, I will come to you." But I trusted him and did not want to disappoint him by not following his advice. So I paid a full tithing.

When I presented the Christmas merchandise early in the month, I was able to sell many of my goods. By the end of the month I had sold all of the Christmas items and all of the goods I had had in stock for several months. Had I had more products on hand, I would likely have been able to sell them too.

My home teacher's promise was completely fulfilled. The Lord really did open the windows of heaven. We had more money than we needed that month. Later I inquired of my colleagues how their Christmas business had gone. They were not satisfied. At that time, a recession had

caused a strong decline in sales in the cosmetics industry.

How grateful I am to that home teacher for giving me this good counsel. I have had a strong testimony of

tithing ever since. When I visit teach sisters who feel they have too little money to pay tithing, I share my testimony about how much we will be blessed if we do so. ■

The Right Place for Me

By Francisco Javier Lara Hernández

I have heard the account many times of the arrival of the pioneers in the Salt Lake Valley under the direction of Brigham Young. Although I live in Mexico, my own story is similar. I had been praying to find the true Church and the purpose of my life. A friend of mine, Sandro, introduced me to the missionaries, and soon I was listening to their message. One day while they were teaching me about the Restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ in the latter days, I was suddenly filled with a great joy. I knew I had arrived, or as President Young said: "This is the right place. Drive on."

But just like the pioneers, I had to adapt to the place where I had arrived. It was a world unknown to me—wonderful, but unknown. The way people dressed, the way they talked, the way they acted were all new to me. I didn't always understand the meanings of the phrases commonly used in the Church. For example, when talking to people who had been members for longer

than I had, they might talk about someone whom they described as a "powerful member," meaning someone who was righteous and a good example to others. My idea of power was different. These things were common knowledge to the rest of them, but I had to learn them.

This period of transition from investigator to active member was not easy. Fortunately, like the pioneers, I was never alone. Sandro and other understanding members were always close by to answer my questions, simple as they were, and to guide me on the path I had undertaken. My leaders were concerned enough to see that I remained worthy and received the priesthood, and later I was able to serve as a counselor to the bishop. My teachers always took care to see that I was nourished by the good word of God. I realize now that through these good people, the Lord helped me stay strong in the Church.

I am no longer the only member of the Church in my family. And the years I have spent as a member of the Church—two of them as a missionary—have been wonderful.

Like the pioneers, I was never alone. Sandro and other understanding members were always close by to answer my questions.

Thanks to the Lord and His prophet, President Young, the pioneers were able to establish themselves in the Salt Lake Valley and become a powerful people in the mountains. Great men and women made this possible. In like manner I have received what I needed to remain strong in the Church, to progress, and to have an opportunity to return to the presence of our Heavenly Father. ■



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

In Church classes I am too nervous to raise my hand and make comments. For the same reason, I rarely bear my testimony in fast and testimony meeting. How can I learn to overcome my fear?



PHOTOGRAPH BY MARINA LIUKACH

Remember that bearing testimony is one way of reaching out to those who are looking for answers.

The first time I stood in front of the congregation to bear my testimony as a new convert, I was very nervous. But I used that nervousness to impart the joy of my conversion. Afterward, a few Church members told me they liked what I said—that they were even moved.

Ask yourself, “Why am I afraid to

share my knowledge of the truthfulness of the gospel and the joy that knowledge brings? Is it a fear of looking foolish?” Don’t think that. Those listening will understand what’s in your heart. And who knows—something you say could touch the heart of someone who needs it. Isn’t one of our objectives to perfect the Saints? Sharing our testimonies is one way of reaching out to those who are looking for answers. Inspiring one another with our responses or questions in Sunday School, priesthood meetings, and Relief Society is an important way of spreading the word.

Lisa Moore, California

As a young woman, I had similar fears. Today I can teach lessons, comment in class, bear testimony, or give talks with much more ease. Getting over this fear was like knocking over a wall one stone at a time. These are some of the things I learned:

- People were not as focused on me as I thought, or as critical of me as I expected. Many people were also feeling the same anxiety I was: that

they would seem foolish in public, even if they were outwardly confident.

- Getting interested in others got me out of worrying about myself. The advice President Gordon B. Hinckley’s father gave him while he was on his mission works here as well: “Forget yourself and go to work.”¹

- Plan to stand. When it was fast Sunday, I pondered what my testimony was. Then, if I felt inspired to stand, I had an idea of what to say. That helped me get over the fear of having nothing coherent to say in front of a large group of people.

- Practice (with prayer) makes perfect. As I kept trying, I would see gradual improvement. Avoiding the situation made the fear worse, so I made sure I attended all my Church meetings, even if I didn’t say anything. I would pray for help when I was losing my nerve, and I would get the help I needed.

Dianna Zaragoza, Texas

On one occasion when I was a little boy and had to give a talk in church, I expressed my feelings of nervousness to my teacher, Sister Suitor. I was surprised to hear her say that she always got nervous too, so she would say a little prayer in her heart just before she got up to speak or pray. She told me the Spirit always

answered her prayer and calmed her pounding heart just enough to give her confidence to do a good job.

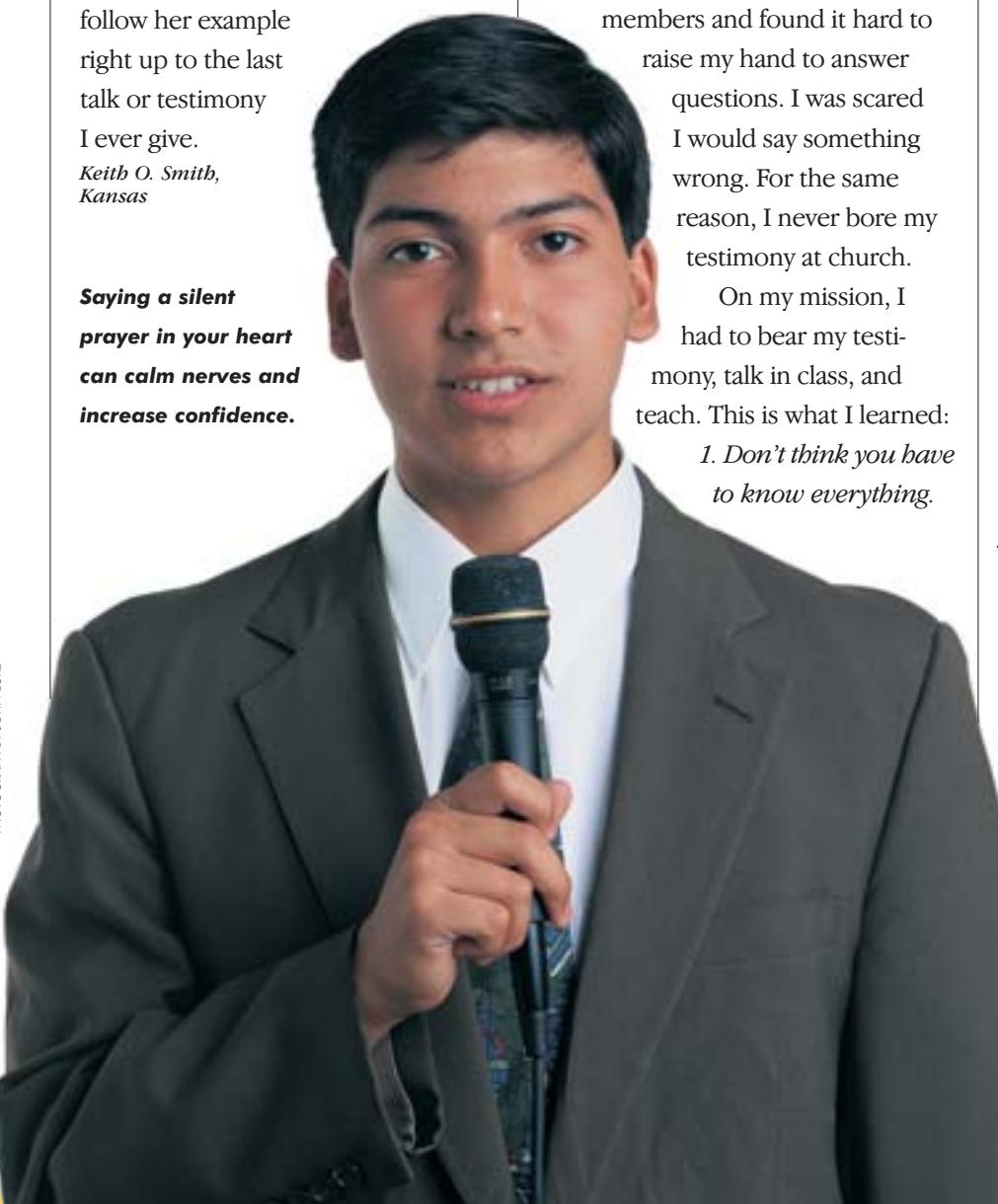
I tried this and have said a silent prayer in similar situations ever since. Even many years later, when I served as a bishop and was nervous before addressing my ward, I would remember Sister Suitor's words and say a little prayer, giving me courage to stand before the congregation.

Her faith in seeking the Comforter gave me faith. I will follow her example right up to the last talk or testimony I ever give.

*Keith O. Smith,
Kansas*

**Saying a silent
prayer in your heart
can calm nerves and
increase confidence.**

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN LUKE



Many Church callings can provide opportunities to speak in front of a group, large or small. My Church callings have never been easy for me, but have blessed me by giving me opportunities to grow and serve. Changes have come about gradually as I have continued to rely on the Lord for help and as I have done my best to overcome my fears.

Rebecca A. Bischoff, Idaho

Before serving a full-time mission, I was very shy around other Church members and found it hard to raise my hand to answer questions. I was scared I would say something wrong. For the same reason, I never bore my testimony at church.

On my mission, I had to bear my testimony, talk in class, and teach. This is what I learned:

1. Don't think you have to know everything.



PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG DIMOND

**Prayerfully studying the scriptures
reminds us why we need not fear.**

We cannot learn everything there is to know in this life. Before church I would prepare by studying the lessons that were going to be taught that day, and then I would think of a personal experience relating to the topic. I would share the experience if I felt the Spirit telling me to do so.

2. You may not know how to voice your feelings. This happens to almost everyone. You don't need to be eloquent. All it takes is a sincere statement of what you know to be true.

3. Trust the Spirit. Follow the spiritual impressions you receive to share something during Church classes and testimony meetings. These impressions are given to help you and others grow.

Derek Schultz, Oregon

Learning to prayerfully study the scriptures has helped me overcome the fear of bearing

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

my testimony. I am amazed at the many verses that tell us to “fear not” and to “be not afraid.” We are told in Isaiah 41:10, “Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee.” If we humbly and prayerfully seek the Lord’s help, He will give it to us.

I love the words in Doctrine and Covenants 68:6: “Wherefore, be of good cheer, and do not fear, for I the Lord am with you, and will stand by you; and ye shall bear record of me, even Jesus Christ.”

Now, when I feel afraid, I pray and study my scriptures because they are a constant reminder of why I need not fear.

Trudy Letbco, Texas

I know what it means to be scared. But what did I do to overcome my fears? My answer is practice. Practice bearing testimony in smaller groups, such as family home evening or while home teaching or visiting teaching. Practice will develop confidence.

Remember, just because a person is scared to speak doesn’t mean he or she is doing anything wrong. It just means he or she has room to grow, and growth takes time. As a person grows in the gospel, so will his or her ability to testify.

Philippians 4:13 states, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” As long as we have Christ on our side, He will support us and strengthen us, even in small things.

Joshua Waters, Utah



Studying lessons beforehand can help us feel prepared to share thoughts or experiences in a classroom setting.

Start by writing your thoughts and testimony in your journal. The more you write them down, the more you will have the desire to share your testimony and make comments in class. As appropriate, share these things with your friends and family members. Then, as you begin to share your testimony at church and make comments in classes, you will strengthen not only your own testimony but other people’s testimonies as well.

Katie Summers-Bartow, Texas

Bashful by nature, for many years I seldom spoke up in church. In those rare instances when I did participate

in lessons or testimony meetings, I was embarrassed by my inability to express myself clearly before a group.

I found hope in the Lord’s words to Moroni: “I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and 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” (Ether 12:27).

Truly, the Lord helps us to conquer our fears as we turn to Him in faith. I have known my Savior’s love and enabling power as I in my weakness

have relied heavily upon Him. In the process, I have been able to rise above my shy nature and, in my small way, help to build His kingdom.

Lee Ann Fairbanks, Washington

Here are some ideas to help you overcome your fear of speaking in front of a group:

1. Enroll in a speech class or group to develop skill in spontaneous public speaking.

2. If you are concerned about how you appear when you speak, practice in front of a mirror.

3. Try setting a goal to make a comment in class or bear your testimony when prompted to do so.

4. Remember that someone else is going to learn from and appreciate your comment, no matter how long you have been in the Church.

5. Remember that even sharing a comment can be bearing your testimony.

Comments in Church classes are intended to build faith, not to identify who the brightest class member is.

6. Get a priesthood blessing for inspiration on overcoming your fears.

7. Consult your patriarchal blessing for guidance.

8. Pray to love those you interact with, remembering that “perfect love casteth out fear” (1 John 4:18).

Kevin L. Pulsipher, Colorado

Recently my daughter asked

CONQUER FEAR WITH FAITH



“Fears in our lives can be conquered if we will but have faith and move forward with purpose. . . . Roadblocks to eternal progress are cast aside when resolves are made that no man needs to walk alone. It is a happy day when we come to know that with God’s help nothing is impossible for us.”

Elder Marvin J. Ashton (1915–94) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, *Ye Are My Friends* (1982), 93.

me what courage was. I told her, “Having courage means doing something you know you should do when you’re scared to do it!”

During high school, when I struggled with many fears and insecurities, I kept a small card on my nightstand that I read often. It was the scripture 2 Timothy 1:7: “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” I committed this scripture to memory, and I silently recited it when I felt nervous or scared. It reminded me of the power within me, of the love I felt from God, and that our minds are at peace and “sound” when free from fear. I knew that if God didn’t give us fear, then the adversary must. I knew that the adversary can use fear as a tool to keep us from doing things we should do. Or he tries to keep us so preoccupied with ourselves and our weaknesses that we become temporarily “paralyzed.”

Now, whenever I face one of my fears, I stop to think, “Why am I fearful?” Often it concerns something I am being prompted to do. I know that the

Holy Ghost, who prompts us in what to say, will bring us comfort and strength when we need it most.

Melissa Ward White, Maryland

NOTE

1. Quoted in Jeffrey R. Holland, “President Gordon B. Hinckley: Stalwart and Brave He Stands,” *Ensign*, June 1995, 8.

“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”
2 Timothy 1:7

Scripture Study Tools

To enhance your understanding of the scriptures, the following study helps are included in the Latter-day Saint set of standard works.

Bible Dictionary. Located in the appendix to the Bible, the dictionary follows the Topical Guide. In it you'll find explanations of names and places mentioned in the Bible. It also offers short

explanations of cultural items and key doctrines, as well as a chronology of important dates.

Topical Guide and Index. Located at the back of the Bible and triple combination (the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price), respectively, these study aids are organized by key words to help you find commonly used scriptures for a given topic.

Chapter or Section

Headings. Providing an overview of the chapter or section, headings may include

information about doctrine, historical context, or people.

Footnotes and Cross-References.

The most common type of footnote is a cross-reference to related passages of scripture. In addition, the footnotes often include acronyms:

- (GR): Greek translations
- (HEB): Hebrew translations
- (TG): Topical Guide references
- (IE): Explanations of idioms and difficult constructions
- (JST): Excerpts from Joseph Smith's translation of the Bible. Short JST entries appear in the footnotes; longer entries can be found in a section immediately after the Bible Dictionary.

Maps and Photographs. In the appendix of new sets of the standard works, scriptural sites and areas important to Church history are shown through a variety of maps and photographs. Chronological information is again included to help you better understand Church history.

As you use these study aids, you may find it helpful to mark your scriptures, although this is not necessary. If you do wish to mark them, consider highlighting verses or words that are meaningful to you and use whatever method works best for you. As you prayerfully study the scriptures, their meaning will become even more personal to you.

Note: Additional ideas for studying and marking your scriptures can be found in Teaching, No Greater Call (item no. 36123; U.S. \$2.00), pages 56–59.



“Now That I’m a Member, How Do I . . . ?”

1. How should I dress for Church services and activities?

At Sunday meetings, men generally wear suits or sport coats and ties. Women wear modest skirts or dresses (with sleeves), and children typically wear their Sunday best. Sunday dress is also worn when attending the temple. For most Church activities not held on Sunday, casual, modest attire is appropriate. To find additional information on dressing modestly, refer to the booklet *For the Strength of Youth* (item no. 36550; no charge).

2. What can I do to more easily find scripture references in Church classes?

Since classroom discussions at church are often centered on scriptural passages, you will want to bring your scriptures to church. If you’d like to memorize the order of the books in the Bible or the Book of Mormon, you may want to learn the Primary songs “The Books in the Old Testament,” “The Books in the New Testament,” and “The Books in the Book of Mormon,” on pages 114, 116, and 119, respectively, of the *Children’s Songbook*. Sections of the Doctrine and Covenants are simply identified by their section number,

FAMILY HOME EVENING HELPS



Ready for Sunday

Saturday is a special day,” we sing. “It’s the day we get ready for Sunday” (“Saturday,” *Children’s Songbook*, 196). This Primary song favorite has helped our family to better prepare for

Sabbath-day worship. Whether you are a lifelong member of the Church or have just become a member, you can enjoy a more peaceful Sunday by preparing a little in advance. Consider using the words of the song as we did to help children understand what needs to be done ahead of time. Or simply discuss in



Diana Eckersell Janson, Idaho

and the Pearl of Great Price has but a few chapters. Scriptures are available with tabs for easy reference. Until you are familiar with the books of scripture, you may want to ask your instructor to include page numbers when referencing scriptures.

3. How do I pay tithing and fast offerings?

Donation slips and envelopes are generally located just outside the bishop’s or branch president’s office at church. Simply fill out the form as indicated, slip it along with your contribution into the envelope provided, and mail or give it to a member of the bishopric or branch presidency. If you have questions regarding donation amounts or how to fill out the forms, you can ask for assistance. Your home

teachers, visiting teachers, or a member of the bishopric, for instance, would be happy to help.

4. Who can help me with questions about my calling?

Ask a leader in the Church organization to which you have been called. For instance, a Primary teacher might ask the Primary president or one of her counselors for help.

When you have questions about gospel teachings or about Church practices or procedures, you can ask your member friends. Some answers might be just a click away on www.mormon.org or www.lds.org. As a new member, you have access to many helpful resources, including caring Church members who want to see you progress in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Church Grows Rapidly

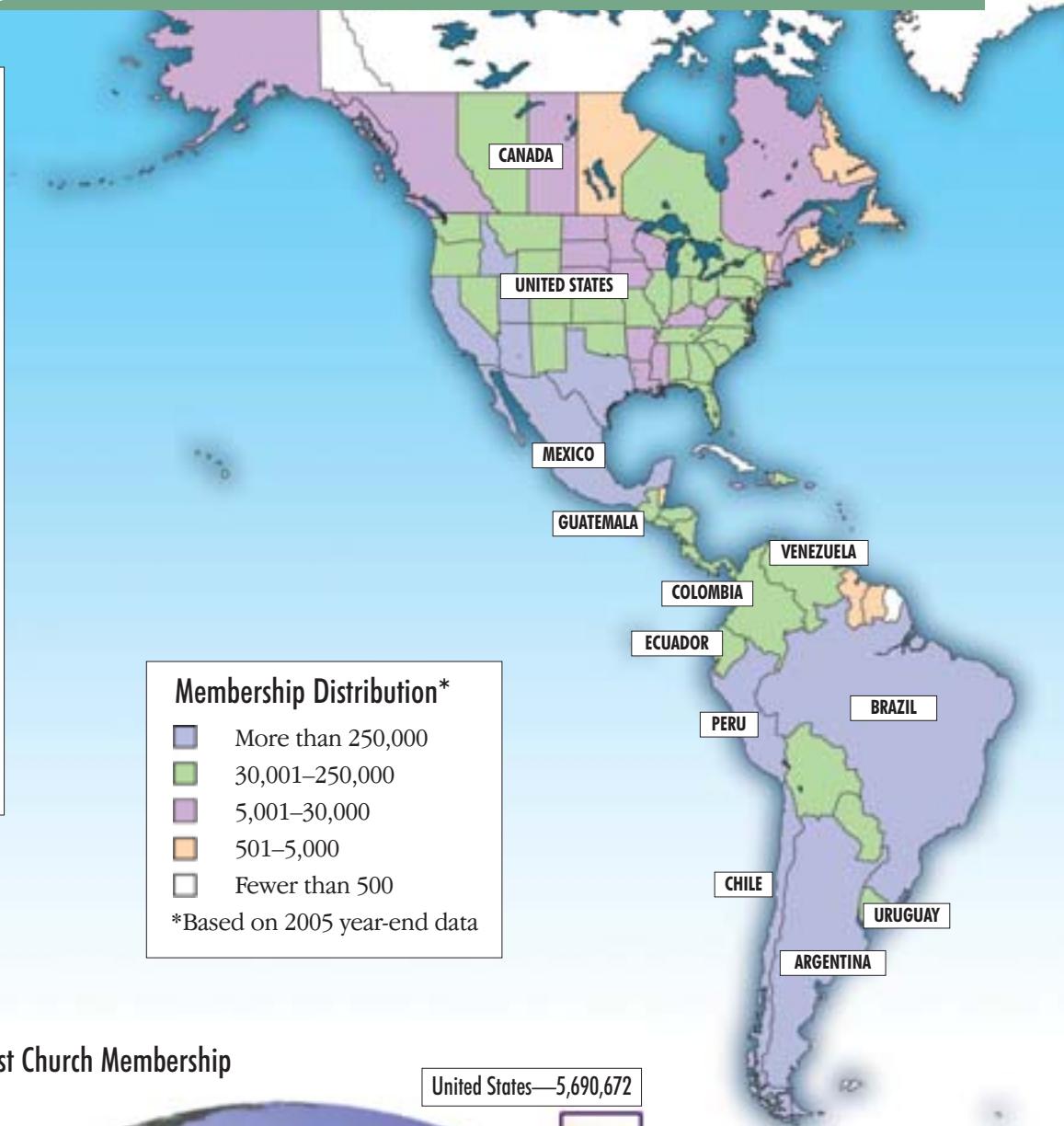
Worldwide Church membership continues to grow, having reached 12,560,869 in 2005. According to the 2005 Church statistical report, the Church has 2,701 stakes and 52,060 missionaries. There are now 123 temples in operation. In 2005 more than 240,000 converts joined the Church. Currently 341 missions are established throughout the world.

Continued on page 76

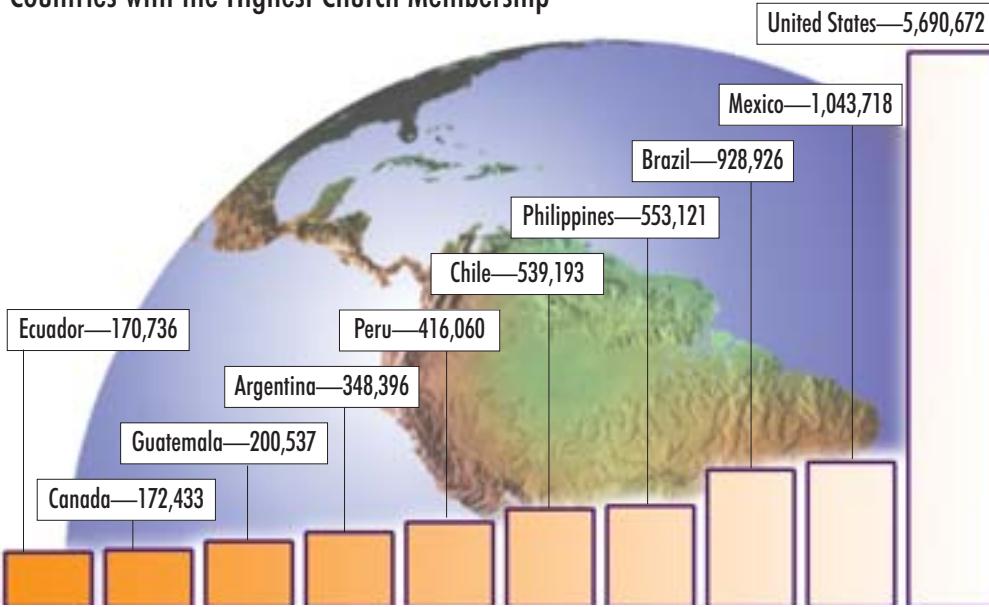
Membership Distribution*

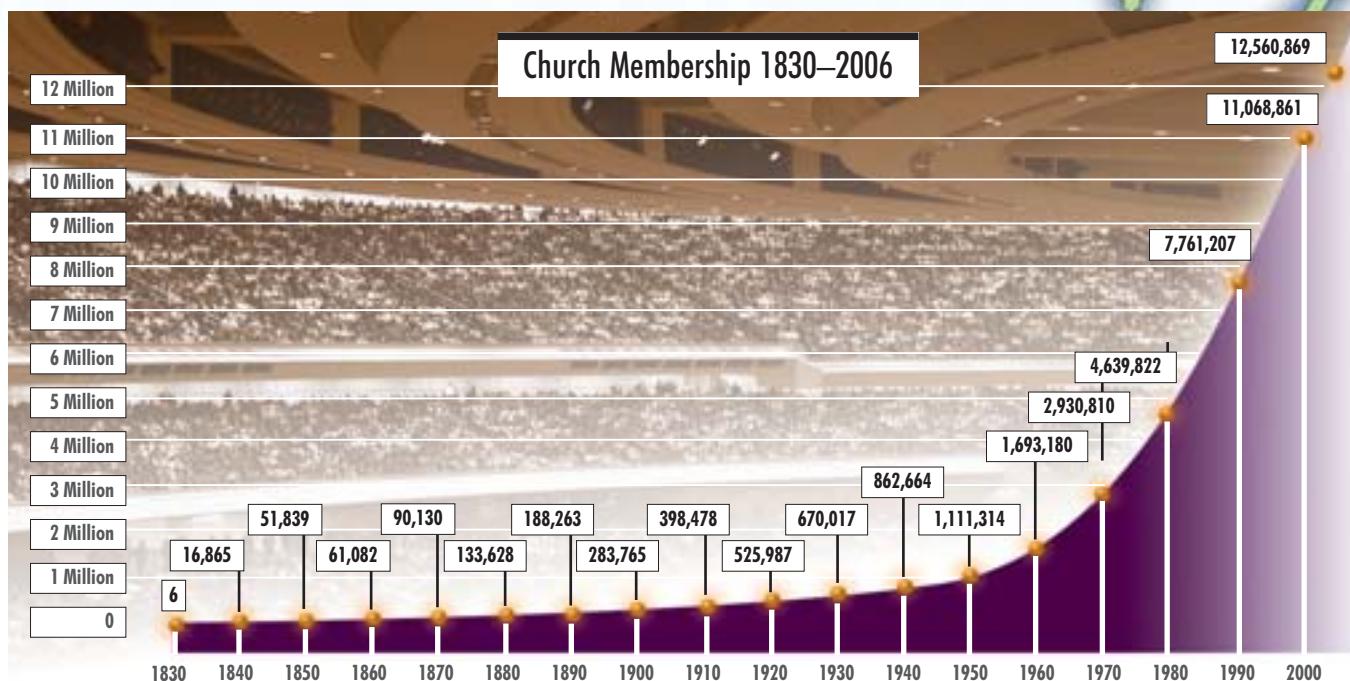
- [Dark Purple] More than 250,000
- [Light Green] 30,001–250,000
- [Medium Purple] 5,001–30,000
- [Orange] 501–5,000
- [White] Fewer than 500

*Based on 2005 year-end data



Countries with the Highest Church Membership





Although 5.5 million members reside within the United States—where the Church is ranked as the second-fastest-growing religion, according to the *2006 Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches*—more than half the Church's members (6.6 million) live outside the United States

in more than 160 countries worldwide. During the last five years, Church membership has grown 17.2 percent outside the U.S. and Canada, at almost double the growth rate within the U.S. and Canada (9.2 percent).

But it's not percentages that are important. "The

numbers don't tell the real story," stated Bruce Olsen, managing director of the Church Public Affairs Department, in an April 2005 news release. "The real measure of Latter-day Saints is the depth of their faith and how it changes people's lives." And lives are changing for the better all over the world. ■

languages. Book of Mormon selections are published in 28 additional languages. New scripture translations are requested by Area Presidencies and approved by the First Presidency. The most recent new full translation of the Book of Mormon was published in Twi (Ghana) in 2005.

A limited amount of translated material has been available on the Church Web site LDS.org in 43 languages. But this year, as an ongoing process, the Church is working to provide the full content of LDS.org in several languages: Cantonese, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish. The Church will continue to work to make additional online material, including scriptures, available in more languages on its Web site.

Church satellite system broadcasts are also available in many languages. Archives of general conference satellite broadcasts are available on the Internet in 44 languages.

The Church has 16 missionary training centers around the world where missionaries learn languages. Teachers at the Provo Utah MTC in the United States teach 49 languages.

The Church magazines are another resource for members around the world. The *Liahona* is distributed in every area of the Church. It contains material for adults, youth, and children and is available in 50 languages. (Frequency of publication varies by language.) The *Ensign* is available to

Church Works to Meet Members' Needs

With hundreds of languages spoken by Latter-day Saints, the Church is continually working to make material available to Church members living in more than 160 countries worldwide.

The Church's Translation Division has the task of translating approved scriptures, the spoken word, and other Church materials. The

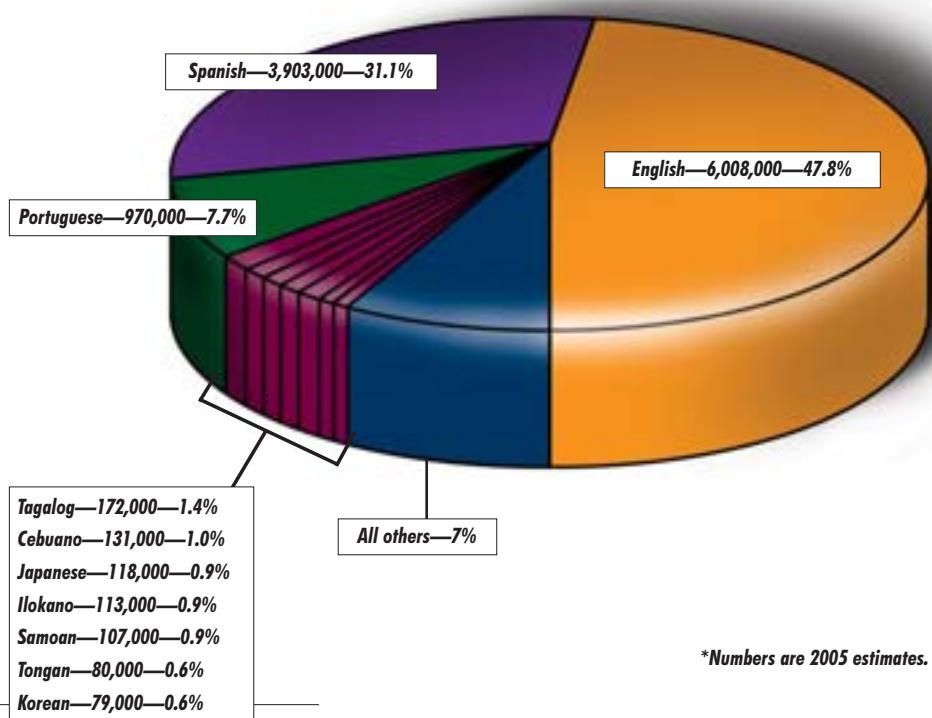
division is actively working in 105 languages. The purpose of the division is to ensure that the meaning of Church doctrines and policies is accurately preserved in translations.

The April 2006 general conference marked a milestone in the language capabilities of the Church with at least one session of conference available in 85

languages. Twenty-three languages were interpreted remotely; that is, the audio feeds were simultaneously sent to the Conference Center from the language areas, mixed with a video signal, and then broadcast back to the language areas over the satellite system.

The Church currently has full translations of the Book of Mormon printed in 77

Top 10 Languages Spoken by Church Members*



English-speaking Church members throughout the world. The purpose of the Church magazines is to help

Latter-day Saints fully understand and live the gospel of Jesus Christ and draw nearer to the Savior. ■

World Organizations Grateful for Church's Humanitarian Efforts

By Abbey Olsen, Church Magazines

Whether for immediate emergency response, such as the medical supplies provided to victims of the May 2006 earthquake in Indonesia, or for ongoing major initiatives, such as the distribution of 40,000 wheelchairs each year in 70 countries, Church Welfare and Humanitarian Services responds to human need more now than ever before.

"The Savior asks us to 'succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees' (D&C 81:5)," Bishop H. David Burton, Presiding Bishop of the Church, said in April 2006 general conference. "I have witnessed firsthand the commitment of Latter-day Saints and others not of our faith who have tender hearts and helping hands, who 'bear . . . one another's burdens' (Galatians 6:2). I have been deeply sorrowed as I have seen massive devastation and visited victims who are without hope" ("Tender Hearts and Helping Hands," *Ensign* and *Liabona*, May 2006, 8).

The Church often teams with service organizations across the world in emergency and humanitarian efforts.

"Over the years, the

Church has developed wonderful associations with government and nongovernment organizations that share many of the same values and goals," said Dennis Lifferth, managing director of Welfare Services. "The humanitarian efforts of the Church truly bless many families," he told Church magazines. "Of course, the goal of the Church is more than just helping with immediate needs. The goal is to help families help themselves and, in the process, become self-reliant. For this reason, the humanitarian efforts of the Church focus on the traditional, basic elements of self-reliance including food production, clean water and sanitation,

health, and education."

In 2006 the Church distributed wheelchairs in Vietnam, funded relief for Romanian flood victims, provided long-term aid to the Asian tsunami-hit areas, provided medical supplies to 200 Brazilian hospitals, and joined with Islamic Relief Worldwide in helping victims of the 6.3-magnitude earthquake that struck Indonesia in May, killing thousands and leaving tens of thousands injured and homeless.

"It's a tremendous relationship," said Mokhtar Shawky, a member of the board of directors of Islamic Relief Worldwide, at a press conference where eight semi-trucks of supplies were to be loaded on a 747 cargo plane and shipped to Indonesia. "We really appreciate what the Church is doing. We feel like we complement each other. . . . The end result is helping more people in more parts of the world."

The Indonesian quake was a recent example of emergencies in which these two humanitarian relief agencies combined efforts. Another was the 7.6-magnitude South

Asia earthquake that struck in 2005, killing more than 50,000, injuring thousands, and leaving millions homeless.

"I do believe that the LDS Church has helped a great deal in easing the pain and suffering of a lot of victims of natural disasters and man-made disasters," Islamic Relief executive director Ahmad El-Bendary told the Church magazines in 2005. "It has been a great help and support and strength for humanitarian causes that we have worked with the Muslim community on."

The Church also provided major disaster assistance during the 2005 hurricane season, especially following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in Louisiana and other southern states. Verdie Culpepper, donations coordinator for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), said the Church donated numerous supplies for the cleanup efforts that furnished invaluable aid for the state of Louisiana.

Similarly, Marsha Kelly, executive director for the Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Service, praised the Church's quick response to requests following the hurricanes.

"Every interaction that I've had [with the Church] has been immediate. . . . What more could someone want than to have somebody say, 'This is what I am going to do,' and it happened," she said. "And they do it with such love."

Alex Amparo, director of emergency management for the Governor's Committee on



The Church and Islamic Relief Worldwide, represented by Mokhtar Shawky, right, have teamed up on several relief projects, including sending aid by plane to Indonesia.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ABBEY OLSEN

Volunteerism in Florida, told the Church magazines that the emergency relief given by the Church and its hundreds of volunteers was tremendous during the eight hurricanes that hit Florida in an 18-month period from 2004 to 2005.

"The LDS Church's volunteer program is one of the most structured and effective operations that I've ever seen, and I've worked with a host of agencies before," he said.

In 2005 alone the Church contributed 157,000 days of labor for disaster relief, with a total of 581,821 days of labor donated to Church welfare facilities.

In the aftermath of Hurricanes Stan and Wilma, Church members overcame mudslides, washed-out bridges, and blocked roads to deliver supplies to Guatemala, El Salvador, and southern Mexico. The Saints in Mexico organized quickly and provided thousands of volunteer hours, and Church buildings became command centers to provide relief.

"In one case, the stake center became a refuge and emergency meal center, open 24 hours a day, for anyone in need," Elder Craig C. Christensen of the Seventy, Mexico South Area President, said. "A team of Relief Society sisters worked for six days straight providing food and relief for thousands of victims and volunteers."

Government officials also commended the Saints' efforts.

"[The Church's] invaluable aid has contributed in a remarkable way to help us face the emergency and

recover, in a short period of time, to our normal activities," said Fidel Herrera, governor of the state of Veracruz.

In addition to initial emergency response, the Church helps communities rebuild and provides ongoing humanitarian efforts throughout the world.

In February 2005 the American Red Cross presented the Church with the American Red Cross Circle of Humanitarians Award after the Church contributed \$3 million to the Africa measles vaccination campaign in 2004 and 2005.

Since 1985 the Church has contributed a substantial amount of material assistance to 163 countries around the world. The Church has distributed more than 51,000 tons (46,000 tonnes) of food, 7,600 tons (6,900 tonnes) of medical equipment, 68,000 tons (61,000 tonnes) of surplus clothing, and 5,700 tons (5,100 tonnes) of educational supplies.

Yet all of this help is only one aspect of the Church's welfare program. Another, more long-term effort is to help families become self-reliant and self-sustaining.

"It is our hope that by helping families become self-reliant, they will gain greater confidence not only in their own abilities but also in their fellowmen and especially in the sustaining strength of a loving Father in Heaven," Brother Lifferth said.

More information about the Church's welfare program can be found on www.providentliving.org. ■

Church Helps Provide Blessings of Employment

By Adam C. Olson, Church Magazines

When Claudio Gonzalez of Chile first lost his job, he wasn't worried about finding another that would support his wife and children. But after three months of unsuccessful searching, he became concerned.

Claudio was aware of the Church's employment resource center in Vitacura, not far from his home. The manager, Valentín Nuñez, was an old friend. But Claudio didn't want to go.

"I thought I could find a job myself," said Claudio, a member of the Nuñoa Second Ward, Santiago Chile Nuñoa Stake. "I was trying to find work through my own network of friends, but I soon realized I needed a bigger network."

Unemployment in Chile at the time was around 8 percent, and competition for jobs was stiff. After someone talked about the center

during a Church meeting, Claudio decided to give it a chance.

"When I walked in, I could tell right away it was very professional," he said. "But I could also feel the warmth. It gave me confidence."

Meeting Needs

If the day Claudio entered the LDS Employment Resource Center in Vitacura was an average day, he was one of about 25 people to visit the center looking for the free help provided. Each month the center gets about 500 people looking for work.

Brother Nuñez says everyone who comes in is first evaluated in order for the workers at the center to understand his or her needs. The Church's employment resource centers aim to serve five primary audiences: the unemployed, the underemployed, the self-employed,



Claudio Gonzalez uses a computer at an LDS Employment Resource Center to search jobs online.



Luis Zapata teaches the Career Workshop in Vitacura, Chile.

the unskilled, and students involved with the Perpetual Education Fund, a resource which helps qualifying members pay for needed education. Based on the person's needs, center staff will try to help the person get a job, some education, or self-employment help.

Career Workshop

"We encourage everyone who comes in to start with the Career Workshop," said Brother Nuñez. The Career Workshop is a combination of self-exploration, goal setting, and practical training.

"We help people understand from their own experiences what their gifts and talents are and how to package that," said Timothy Q. Sloan, director of LDS Employment Resource Services. "We help them set goals, discover local resources that could help them, and learn how to interact with those resources with

confidence."

Brother Nuñez says the Career Workshop helps participants understand the job search process and teaches them how to introduce themselves, how to "cold call" companies to find out if they have openings, how to prepare a résumé, and how to handle interviews.

"I thought I was ready for interviews and the whole job search process," said Claudio. "I had no idea there were techniques involved. I took the course. It was nice. The whole place is nice."

"We also teach them what we call 'continued success,'" said Brother Sloan. "It's about taking ownership of their lives. What do you do after you've got your job? What do you owe your employer? How do you take the next step to even better employment?"

Other Services

For those lacking the proper skills or education,

the centers' staff members can help the applicant find information on what education is needed for certain work, where the education can be obtained, and how much it will cost. Sometimes the centers can even get students placed in courses or classes at discounted costs.

The centers also offer self-employment workshops that help people start small businesses or improve their existing small businesses. And many centers in urban areas are now offering the Professional Placement Program. "More and more, people are realizing our employment resource centers are not just for people looking for entry-level positions," said Brother Sloan.

Each center is equipped with computers and Internet connections, allowing job seekers to search for job leads or review job search information.

LDS Employment
Resource Centers also work closely with the Perpetual Education Fund, explains Brother Sloan. "PEF student applicants are required to enroll in the Career Workshop, where they can explore career and school options. LDS Employment Resource Services helps PEF students find part-time jobs and identify supplemental funding such as grants, scholarships, or loans. After students graduate, LDS Employment Resource Services helps them find full-time work that will support them and their families."

Another Success

Worldwide, 286 centers currently operate in more than 50 countries. Of these centers, 71 are staffed with full-time employees; the other 215 are staffed with volunteers. Those full-time employees are expected not only to assist those who come looking for work or to start a business but also to spend time building links with local business, education, and government leaders. Thousands of jobs, educational grants, and scholarships have been identified as a result of this networking.

In 2005 the centers helped more than 222,000 people discover new avenues of education, employment, and self-employment. Claudio Gonzalez was one of them. A position opened at a company housed in the same building as the employment resource center, and Claudio applied.

"I felt very comfortable and prepared," he said. "The questions they asked were exactly what we had practiced. I felt like I was right at home."

Thanks to the center and what he learned there, Claudio is already looking ahead to a little extra education with the money he's earning now so that he can get a better job in the future.

"Now I tell everyone to go to the center," he says. "It's incredible."

For information on LDS Employment Resource Services, contact an LDS Employment Resources Center or ward or branch leaders. ■

BYU Education Week to Be Broadcast

Thousands gathered in Provo, Utah, from August 21 through 25, to listen to more than 200 presenters teach more than 1,000 classes at BYU Campus Education Week.

Now thousands more around the world will have an opportunity to participate in gospel learning through BYU Campus Education Week broadcasts over the Church satellite system. Selected presentations will be broadcast to areas in the United States, Asia, the Pacific, Mexico, Central America, South America, Europe, and South Africa.

Rebroadcasts are scheduled October 10–13 in the United States and October 13–14 and 20–21 in other areas. For a complete schedule of broadcasts visit educationweek.byu.edu.

Members can contact their stake or district for Church satellite locations and for local broadcast times.

The following are BYU Education Week presentations scheduled for broadcast in the United States. (The presentations will be broadcast from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. mountain daylight time and rebroadcast from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m.)

October 10

4:00 p.m. Brent A. Barlow, "For LDS Single Adults: Choosing a Marriage Partner"

5:00 p.m. A. Lynn Scoresby, "Family Attachments: The Practical Eternity"

6:00 p.m. Randal A. Wright, "To the Parents of Teenagers: Avoiding Five Oft-Made Mistakes"

Call for Articles

If you have had experience with the following situation, we invite you to share your suggestions for an upcoming Questions and Answers feature.

The holidays are often a difficult and lonely time for me. How can I feel more joy and peace during this season?

Please send your submission (up to 500 words) by November 16, 2006, to ensign@ldschurch.org or to *Ensign* Editorial, 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220,

USA. Clearly mark your submission "Holidays," and at the top of your submission, write your name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, and ward and stake (or branch and district).

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

October 11

4:00 p.m. Ronald E. Bartholomew, "Follow the Prophet: He Knows the Way" (Youth Presentation)

5:00 p.m. John G. Bytheway, "Righteous Warriors: Lessons from the War Chapters in the Book of Mormon" (Youth Presentation)

6:00 p.m. Clyde J. Williams, "Joseph of Egypt: Forgiveness and Dealing with Injustices"

October 12

4:00 p.m. Victor L. Ludlow, "The Dead Sea Scrolls: Twenty Questions and Answers"

5:00 p.m. Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, "A Witness to the New Testament: The 'Good News' Is Still the Good News!"

6:00 p.m. Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Truth Restored"

October 13

4:00 p.m. Dennis D. Ashton, "Learning to Cope with Adversity: When Bad Things Happen to Good People"

5:00 p.m. Jay A. Parry, "Receiving the Marvelous Grace of God: Precious Gifts for Daily Living"

6:00 p.m. Joseph F. McConkie, "The 'How' of Scripture Study" ■

Comment

Hope through Others' Experiences

Thank you for the article "My Husband's Addiction" (August 2006). As a wife with this struggle in my life,

I'm grateful for the hope I can see in others' experiences and triumphs. I have learned that I have to help with his recovery, and that has helped us grow together. Hopefully one day, it will help us overcome the addiction.

Name Withheld

Lifting Words

Thank you for giving us the devotional address by Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf in the July 2006 *Ensign*. It lifts and inspires the spirit the whole way through. Indeed, he took us through the clouds into "that endless blue sky, feeling free, safe, and home."

Thank you also for that fine artwork, which is a delight to the eye and enhances the written word most beautifully.

Jean M. Schönnberg, United Kingdom

Comfort via the Mail

A couple of days ago we found out that the pregnancy with our conjoined twins had ended in miscarriage. The day we went to the hospital, our *Ensign* came in the mail. While waiting in the hospital, we pulled it out and noticed an article titled "Bending My Will to His" (August 2006). Even though the article did not apply to us directly, it gave comfort to our souls. We appreciate the time and effort put into making the *Ensign* and the *Liahona*.

Mark and M'Linda Holmgren, Washington



Salt Lake Temple, by Mitch Johnson

"Inasmuch as my people build a house unto me in the name of the Lord, and do not suffer any unclean thing to come into it, that it be not defiled, my glory shall rest upon it; Yea, and my presence shall be there, for I will come into it, and all the pure in heart that shall come into it shall see God" (D&C 97:15–16).



"We congratulate you on your recent baptism and welcome you most warmly," writes President Gordon B. Hinckley.

"What a wonderful step you have taken in joining the Church! We stand ready to assist you in any way that we can." See "A Perfect Brightness of Hope—to New Members of the Church," p. 2.

