

MESSAGES FROM THE



DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS



*May we be grateful for the sacrifices of pioneers throughout the world, and may we willingly follow their example of faith and obedience.*

BY ELDER OCTAVIANO TENORIO

Of the Seventy

One of the things that impressed me most as I studied the scriptures when I was young was the story of the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi, who, after they had repented of their sins, buried their weapons of war.

“And this they did, it being in their view a testimony to God, and also to men, that they never would use weapons again for the shedding of man’s blood; and this they did, vouching and covenanting with God, that rather than shed the blood of their brethren they would give up their own lives” (Alma 24:18).

When the Lamanites later came to destroy them, they “prostrated themselves before them to the earth, and began to call on the name of the Lord; and thus they were in this attitude when the Lamanites began to fall upon them, and began to slay them with the sword” (Alma 24:21).

# The Blessings of Sacrifice

THE ANTI-NEPHI-LEHIS BURYING THEIR SWORDS, BY DEL PARSON



SUNFLOWERS AND BUFFALO CHIPS, BY GARY L. KAPP

**W**e would all benefit from searching and knowing the stories of the local pioneers from the part of the world in which we live.

On that day 1,005 of the people of Ammon, as they came to be known, allowed themselves to be killed. Their powerful testimony and sacrifice helped change the hearts of many of the Lamanites, who in turn were brought to repentance:

“And it came to pass that the people of God were joined that day by more than the number who had been slain; and those who had been slain were righteous people, therefore we have no reason to doubt but what they were saved” (Alma 24:26).

The people of Ammon who survived were forced to leave their lands in search of security. When I read this account, I felt I needed to investigate the law of sacrifice. From Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, I learned:

“Sacrifice is the crowning test of the gospel. Men are tried and tested in this mortal probation to see if they will put first in their lives the things of the kingdom of God. . . .

“Joseph Smith taught the law of sacrifice in these words: . . .

“*A religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary [to lead] unto life and salvation;* for, from the first

existence of man, the faith necessary unto the enjoyment of life and salvation never could be obtained without the *sacrifice of all earthly things. It was through this sacrifice, and this only, that God has ordained that men should enjoy eternal life.*”<sup>1</sup>

Many of the blessings we have received in the latter days, especially the building of temples, are the product of the sacrifice of the faithful Saints who preceded us. They passed through great afflictions, even death, to establish the kingdom of God on earth. The Lord, who recognizes the sacrifices of the faithful, has said, “Nevertheless, ye are blessed, for the testimony which ye have borne is recorded in heaven for the angels to look upon; and they rejoice over you, and your sins are forgiven you” (D&C 62:3).

### **Worth the Sacrifice**

Thankfully, few Latter-day-Saints today are called upon to make life-and-death sacrifices for the gospel. But sacrifice, nonetheless, remains central to membership in the Church. As God’s children embrace the gospel, many must sacrifice prestige, reputation, tradition, financial security, or, in some cases, family ties.

Alejandro Gallegos was 21 in 1995 when he was invited

to attend a class at an institute of religion in northern Mexico. When his father found out that his son was studying with *los mormones*, he was not happy. Nevertheless, Alejandro says, “Within my heart, a testimony of the gospel had begun to blossom.” When the missionaries invited him to be baptized a short time later, he adds, “I accepted wholeheartedly.”

As his testimony grew, so did his desire to serve a full-time mission. “But I couldn’t count on support from my parents, nor did I have the economic means to support myself on a mission,” he says.

With his bishop, he set goals to prepare spiritually and financially. Achieving those goals meant that Alejandro, a junior, had to put his university studies in electrical engineering on hold. At age 25, when most young men are starting a family, he accepted a mission call, serving honorably until his release in 2001.

“After I returned home, I was not able to resume my studies,” Alejandro says. “The public university I had been attending refused to let me continue.”

He transferred to a private university, which accepted only one year of his three years of university credits. Alejandro, who finished his degree and later married in the Mexico City Mexico Temple, says the sacrifice was worth it because he had realized his goal of serving the Lord as a full-time missionary—a blessing for which he will always be grateful.

### The Gift of Eternal Life

As I have studied sacrifice, I have noted three things that inspire God’s children to give up temporal blessings in order to obtain the greater gift of eternal life, which comes only through the atoning sacrifice of the Savior:

1. Knowledge of the plan of salvation.
2. Knowledge of the Resurrection.
3. Sacred covenants they have made in the temple.



PANAMA CITY PANAMA TEMPLE. PHOTOGRAPH BY MATTHEW REIER

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I came to understand as a young man why Abraham was willing to sacrifice his beloved Isaac, why the people of Ammon willingly sacrificed their lives, how the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum could willingly go to Carthage, and how Latter-day Saint pioneers could lose loved ones on the way to the Salt Lake Valley but still hold firm to their faith to help establish Zion.

The first leaders of every dispensation, as well as those who have been pioneer Latter-day Saints in their respective nations throughout the world, have paid a great price to establish the Church.

We would all benefit from searching and knowing the stories of the local pioneers from the part of the world in which we live. May we be grateful for their sacrifices, and may we willingly follow their example of faith and obedience to the commandments of God. ■

#### NOTE

1. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (1966), 663.



### HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

“Jesus Christ, the Master Teacher, often asked questions to encourage people to ponder and apply the principles He taught. His questions prompted thought, soul-searching, and commitment” (*Teaching, No Greater Call*, 68). Consider creating and asking several questions to help family members understand and apply the truths taught in the article. For example, you could ask: “What sacrifices have you been asked to make to live the gospel?” and “What blessings have come to you and others as a result of these sacrifices?” Encourage family members to ponder their answers before responding to them.