

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS • APRIL 2004

Liahona



Liahona



ON THE COVER
Christ and Mary at the Tomb, by Joseph Brickey.



THE FRIEND COVER
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Family Home Evening Ideas



**"The Good Samaritans
in Coutts,"** p. 23: Read
together this story by Alan P.

Kingston, who is a member of
another faith. Ask family members
to suggest ways they can be good
Samaritans to others at work, at
school, or in your neighborhood.

"The Keys of the Kingdom," p. 41:
Ask your family why it is important
for the Church to have the proper
authority to act in God's name. After
discussing some of these reasons,
read together President Wilford
Woodruff's account of the Prophet
Joseph Smith giving the priesthood
keys to the Twelve Apostles.

"What Was I Missing?" p. 8: Ask
family members if they have ever
tried to make themselves perfect.
Were they successful? Read this story
together, emphasizing the verse in
the book of Ether that so impressed
the author. Talk about the grace of
Jesus Christ and how it helps you
overcome sin and weakness.

"The Miracle of the Priesthood,"
p. 26: It has been 175 years since John
the Baptist appeared to Joseph Smith
and Oliver Cowdery and restored the
Aaronic Priesthood. Discuss with your
family the importance of this restora-
tion and the blessings each family
member enjoys on a regular basis
because the Aaronic Priesthood is
again on earth.

"Crossroads," p. F2: Read with
your family the account of Alice's
encounter with the Cheshire

Cat and his answer to her. Ask your
children where they want to go in life.
Does it matter which path they take?
Talk about some of the milestones and
dangers they may find along that path.

"Aren't You a Mormon?" p. F8: Ask
your children if they have ever done
something they were later ashamed of
because they wanted to impress their
friends. Talk about their feelings and
what they did or can do to repent.
Explain that most people will respect
them more if they are true to their
beliefs than if they merely follow the
crowd.

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To Receive a Crown of Glory

BY PRESIDENT JAMES E. FAUST
Second Counselor in the First Presidency

Life presents each of us with challenges that eat at us like thorns, briars, slivers, or a crown of thorns. Our Savior suffered as He wore a crown of thorns. And yet there is also exquisite beauty and fragrance to be found in life—and a crown of glory.

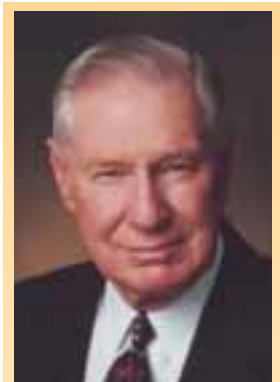
I wish that I better understood all of the divine purposes in having to contend with so many painful irritants in this life. Lehi explained one reason: that we will appreciate and savor the goodness and loveliness of the world.¹ Adam was told that the ground is cursed with thorns and thistles for our sake.²

Likewise, mortality is

“cursed” with the thorns of worldly temptation and the slivers of sin so that we can be tested and prove ourselves. This is necessary for our eternal progression. The Apostle Paul explained, “Lest I should be exalted above measure . . . , there was given to me a thorn in the flesh.”³

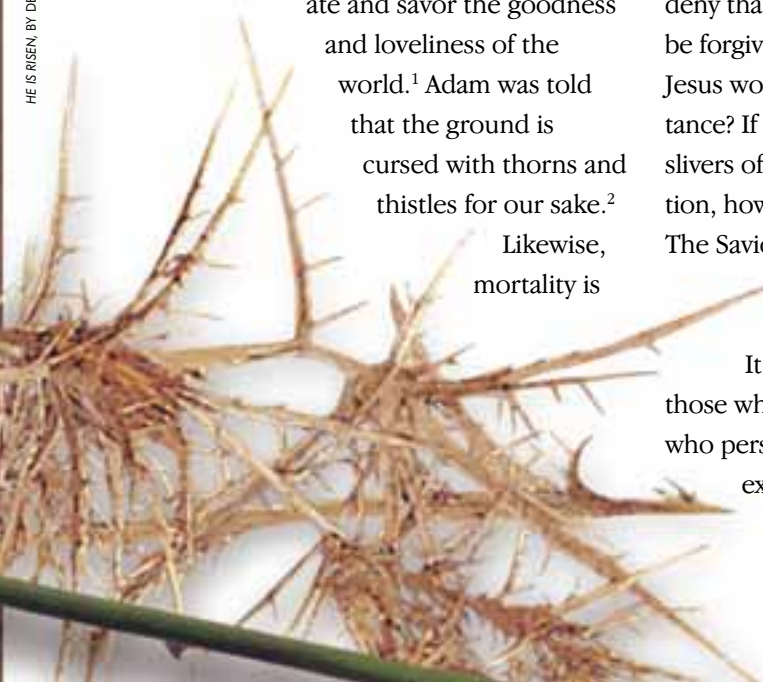
The denial of our own sins, of our own selfishness, of our own weakness is like a crown of thorns that keeps us from moving up one more step in personal growth. If we deny that we are sinners, how can we ever be forgiven? How can the Atonement of Jesus work in our lives if there is no repentance? If we do not promptly remove the slivers of sin and the thorns of carnal temptation, how can the Lord ever heal our souls? The Savior said, “Repent of your sins, and be converted, that I may heal you.”⁴

It is most difficult for us to pray for those who hate us, who spitefully use us, who persecute us. By failing to take this vital extra step, however, we fail to remove some of the festering briars in our



How can the Atonement of Jesus work in our lives if there is no repentance? If we do not promptly remove the slivers of sin and the thorns of carnal temptation, how can the Lord ever heal our souls?

HE IS RISEN, BY DEL PARSON; PHOTOGRAPH OF THORNS BY RICHARD CLEAVE



own souls. Extending forgiveness, love, and understanding for perceived shortcomings and weaknesses in our wives, husbands, children, and associates makes it much easier to say, "God be merciful to me a sinner."⁵

No matter how carefully we walk through life's paths, we pick up some thorns, briars, and slivers. When I was a young boy and school was out for the summer, we went to the farm and off came our shoes. For the first week or two, when our feet were tender, the smoothest pebble or stick would be painful. But as the weeks came and went, the soles of our feet toughened so that they could withstand almost anything in the path except thistles, of which there seemed to be more than any other weed. And so it is with life: as we grow and mature and keep close to Him who was crowned with thorns, our souls seem to get stronger in withstanding the challenges, our resolve hardens, our wills become firmer, and our self-discipline increases to protect us from the evils of this world. These evils are so omnipresent, however, that we must always walk in the paths that are the most free of the thistles of earthly temptation.

As children we used to delight in waving thistledown stalks to watch the seeds float on the wind. Only later did we realize the effect that this had on our own and neighboring gardens. Many of us delight in flirting with temptation, only later to learn how we and others have sown the seeds of our own unhappiness and how we can also affect our neighbor's happiness.

The Defense of Conscience

There is a defense mechanism to discern between good and evil. It is called conscience. It is our spirit's natural response to the pain of sin, just like pain in our flesh is our body's natural response to a wound—even a

small sliver. Conscience strengthens through use. Paul told the Hebrews, "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."⁶ A sensitive conscience is a sign of a healthy spirit.

How are the thorns and slivers of life removed? The power to remove the thorns in our lives and in the lives of others begins with ourselves.

Moroni writes that when we deny ourselves of ungodliness, then the grace of Christ is sufficient for us.⁷

Too often we seek bandages to cover the guilt rather than removal of the thorn causing the pain. How much we resist the momentary pain of removing a sliver even though it will relieve the longer-lasting pain of a festering sore! Everyone knows that if thorns and briars and slivers are not removed from the flesh, they will cause sores that fester and will not heal.

A few years ago one of the members of our family had a remarkable dog named Ben. On a beautiful fall day, some of us were

walking in the fields. Ben was going back and forth in front of us, sniffing the ground, tail wagging, obviously enjoying himself. After a while, Ben came limping up to his master and, with a pained look in his eye, held up his front paw. Between two of Ben's toes was a thorn. The thorn was carefully removed, and Ben ran off, no longer limping nor bothered by the pain. I was amazed that Ben instinctively seemed to know that the thorn needed to come out to relieve the pain and to know where to go to have it removed. Like Ben, we also seem to instinctively look for relief from the thorns of sin that inflict us. In contrast, however, we do not always seek our Master for relief, and many do not yet know who their Master is.



As children we used to delight in waving thistledown stalks to watch the seeds float on the wind. Only later did we realize the effect that this had. Many of us delight in flirting with temptation, only later to learn how we and others have sown the seeds of unhappiness.

Our Savior's Gift

The scourging of Jesus took place partly with thorns:

"Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers.

"And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe.

"And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!

"And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head."⁸

Perhaps this cruel act was a perverse attempt to mimic the placing of an emperor's laurel upon His head. He accepted the pain of the crown of thorns as part of the great gift He had promised to make. How poignant this was, considering that thorns signified God's displeasure as He cursed the ground for Adam's sake. But by wearing the crown, Jesus transformed thorns into a symbol of His glory. As Emily Dickinson so aptly described it:

*One crown that no one
seeks
And yet the highest head
Its isolation coveted
Its stigma deified.*⁹

Our Savior knows "according to the flesh" every dimension of our suffering. There is no infirmity He is not familiar with. In

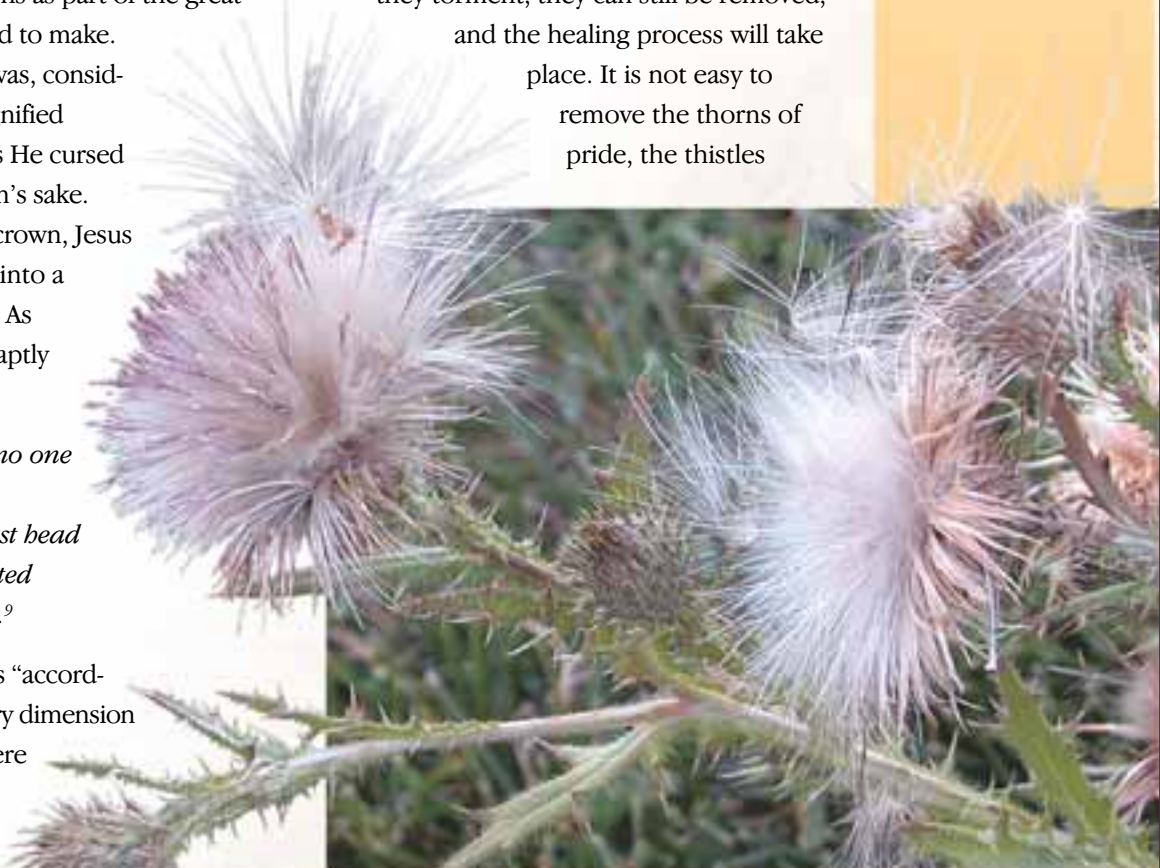
His agony He became acquainted with all of the thorns, slivers, and thistles that might afflict us:

"And he shall go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; and this that the word might be fulfilled which saith he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people.

"And he will take upon him death, that he may loose the bands of death which bind his people; and he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities."¹⁰

All irritants of the flesh and the soul should be removed before they fester. However, though they ulcerate and though they torment, they can still be removed, and the healing process will take place. It is not easy to remove the thorns of pride, the thistles

It is not easy to remove the thorns of pride, the thistles of selfishness, the slivers of ego, and the briars of appetite. But when the infection is healed, the soreness will leave. This process is known as repentance. Repentance and forgiveness are among the greatest fruits of the Atonement.





I would challenge all to put the thorns, slivers, and thistles we encounter in life in proper perspective. We should deal with them but then concentrate on the flowers of life, not on the thorns.



By removing the slivers of sin and the thorns of worldly temptation in our lives and by denying ourselves and taking up our own cross to follow the Savior, we can change a crown of thorns to a crown of glory.

of selfishness, the slivers of ego, and the briars of appetite. But when the infection is healed, the soreness will leave. This process is known as repentance. Repentance and forgiveness are among the greatest fruits of the Atonement.

In Roselandia, Brazil, outside the great city of São Paulo, there are many acres of beautiful roses. When one stands on a small hill above the rose fields, the aroma is delightful and the beauty is exhilarating. The thorns on the bushes are there, but they in no way lessen the enjoyment of the sight and the smell. I would challenge all to put the thorns, slivers, and thistles we encounter in

life in proper perspective. We should deal with them but then concentrate on the flowers of life, not on the thorns. We should savor the smell and beauty of the flower of the rose and the cactus. To savor the sweet aroma of the blossoms, we need to live

righteous and disciplined lives in which the study of the scriptures, prayer, right priorities, and right attitudes are integrated into our lives. For members of this Church, that focus sharpens inside of our temples. We will all surely encounter some of the thorns, but they are only incidental to the sweet fragrances and exquisite beauty of the blooms. Did not the Savior say: “Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather

grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?”¹¹

Following Him

British writer Thomas Carlyle stated, “Every noble crown is, and on Earth will forever be, a crown of thorns.”¹² The ancient Latin phrase *sic transit gloria mundi* means “thus passes away the glory of this world.” Earthly rewards can be a sore temptation. In contrast, those who are faithful and are committed to service are promised that they will be “crowned with honor, and glory, and immortality, and eternal life.”¹³ Thus, neither honors nor trials can defeat those who are faithful. Paul spoke of an incorruptible

crown,¹⁴ and James spoke of the faithful receiving a “crown of life.”¹⁵

I believe that earthly crowns such as power, the love of money, the preoccupation with material things, and the honors of men are crowns of thorns because they are based upon obtaining and receiving rather than giving. So selfishness can make what we think is a noble crown into a crown of thorns beyond our power to endure.

The call of Jesus Christ to each of us is “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”¹⁶ Is it not time that we begin denying ourselves, as the Savior counseled, and surrender and master ourselves rather than indulge ourselves in a do-my-own-thing, selfish little world? The question is not so much what we can do, but what God can do through us. Paul said, “If a man therefore purge himself . . . , he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work.”¹⁷

Taking up one’s cross and following the Savior is always a commitment to service. While going to school, I was very poor. I worked long hours in a canning factory catching steaming-hot cans for U.S. 25¢ an hour. I learned that selfishness has more to do with how we feel about what we have than how much we have. A poor man can be selfish and a rich man generous, but a person obsessed only with getting will have a hard time finding God. I have come to know that with any privilege comes responsibility—usually the responsibility to serve, to give, and to bless. God can take away any privilege if it is not used under His omnipotent will. Meeting that challenge to give, to serve, to bless in faithfulness and devotion is the only way to enjoy the crown of glory spoken of by the original Apostles. It is the only way true meaning comes to life. We will be able to receive earthly honors or scorn with equal serenity.

I conclude with the words of Ezekiel: “And thou, son of man, . . . though briars and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid.”¹⁸ In our constantly changing world, may we continually cling to those

things that do not change: to prayer, to faith, to saving covenants, to love of families, and to brotherhood. By removing the slivers of sin and the thorns of worldly temptation in our lives and by denying ourselves and taking up our own cross to follow the Savior, we can change a crown of thorns to a crown of glory. I testify, as one of His humble servants called to be His special witness, that He lives. I witness from the depths of my soul that we are engaged in His holy work, through which, if we are faithful, we can be crowned with honor, glory, and eternal life. ■

NOTES

1. See 2 Nephi 2:8–13.
2. See Genesis 3:17–18.
3. 2 Corinthians 12:7.
4. 3 Nephi 9:13.
5. Luke 18:13.
6. Hebrews 5:14.
7. See Moroni 10:32.
8. Matthew 27:27–30.
9. “One crown that no one seeks,”
The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson, ed. Thomas H. Johnson (1960), 703–4.
10. Alma 7:11–12.
11. Matthew 7:16.
12. *Past and Present* (1912), 173.
13. D&C 75:5.
14. See 1 Corinthians 9:25.
15. James 1:12.
16. Matthew 16:24.
17. 2 Timothy 2:21.
18. Ezekiel 2:6.

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS


After prayerful preparation, share this message using a method that encourages the participation of those you teach.

A few examples follow:

1. Read the story of Ben the dog. Ask family members to silently assess their own lives to determine whether they are carrying any thorns they need to ask the Master to remove.
2. Read the fourth paragraph. Ask family members to consider whether there are those to whom they need to extend forgiveness before asking for mercy.
3. Read the next-to-last paragraph. Ask family members to list some ways in which they have already committed to serve in the kingdom of God. How are they fulfilling those commitments?
4. Read the last paragraph. Ask family members how we can change a crown of thorns into a crown of glory. How did the Savior change His crown of thorns into a crown of glory?

WHAT WAS I Missing?

BY ROSALYN COLLINGS EVES



I threw myself on top of the dingy green bedspread and stared at the ceiling. My throat felt tight from fighting back tears. I couldn't understand what was wrong with me. It had been a beautiful spring day. My companion and I were teaching several wonderful people in Kecskemét, Hungary. I was serving the Lord and should be joyful. So why had this oppressive sense of failure overcome me?

I knew many missionaries who struggled with occasional feelings of inadequacy; lately those feelings had seemed to become my permanent state of mind. But wasn't I doing things right—praying regularly, reading the scriptures, working hard, obeying mission rules? Still, I felt so imperfect. It seemed as if my faults were preventing the Lord from reaching the people who needed to hear the gospel.

My companion was on her bed, reading a letter from home. I wanted to talk to her, but she was new in the country and struggling to adjust to mission life and to learn

Hungarian. She didn't need to hear about my problems.

I opened my scriptures and began reading in Ether 12:27: "And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me . . ."

I stopped. This scripture was one of my favorites. I had read it many times and had even prayed about it in the Missionary Training Center, asking the Lord to grant me humility and help me be strong. I knew that the Lord often teaches us humility through our weaknesses. Hadn't Alma said as much to the poor people who had been cast out of the synagogues (see Alma 32:6–16)? I knew that if I could learn humility, the Lord would make me strong. But I did not feel strong, and my weaknesses were becoming more evident with every passing day. So what was I missing?

I decided to read the verse again. This time it was different. It was as if I had missed something in my previous



readings. “My grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me.” As I read that line again, the Spirit overwhelmed me. “The grace of Christ is sufficient!” With insight from the Spirit, I felt things begin to fall into place.

Turning to the end of the Book of Mormon, I read Moroni’s beautiful invitation: “Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ” (Moroni 10:32).

The Spirit was trying to teach me. My problem was not that I had done something wrong but that I had failed to do something right. In my pride, I was trying to make myself perfect, rather than humbling myself before Jesus Christ and asking for His help in overcoming my weaknesses. Of course I was failing! None of us can do it alone—we can become perfected only *in* Christ, with *His* help. We must do

our part, of course. But unless we truly come unto Christ, we cannot be saved, nor can the power of the Atonement take effect in our lives. But if we come unto Christ, then His grace is sufficient for us—not too little, but enough.

Things did not change overnight, but peace began to find its way into my heart. Although I still struggled occasionally, what I had learned about the Atonement helped me keep an eternal perspective and reminded me that it was not necessary to endure everything alone.

I will always be grateful for the opportunity to serve a mission. And I am particularly thankful for that quiet night in Kecskemét, Hungary, when I learned about the power of the Atonement to heal and make whole. ■

Rosalyn Collings Eves is a member of the State College University Ward, Altoona Pennsylvania Stake.

ILLUSTRATED BY SAM LAWLOR

The Precious Promise

BY ELDER NEAL A. MAXWELL
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

When so many mortals are falling and being dragged down, it is hard to imagine an exhortation and promise more relevant than Helaman's statement: "Remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation; . . . whereon if men build they cannot fall" (Helaman 5:12). The Great Deliverer, Jesus Christ, can deliver on this precious promise as well as on all His other reassurances.

Building on His firm foundation requires us to emulate Christ's character. There is no joy nor is there any security in giving Him mere lip service. Emulating Him is the key, and our emerging character is the refined structure of our souls. After all the circumstantial scaffolding comes down, character is what is left.

The Process of Character Building

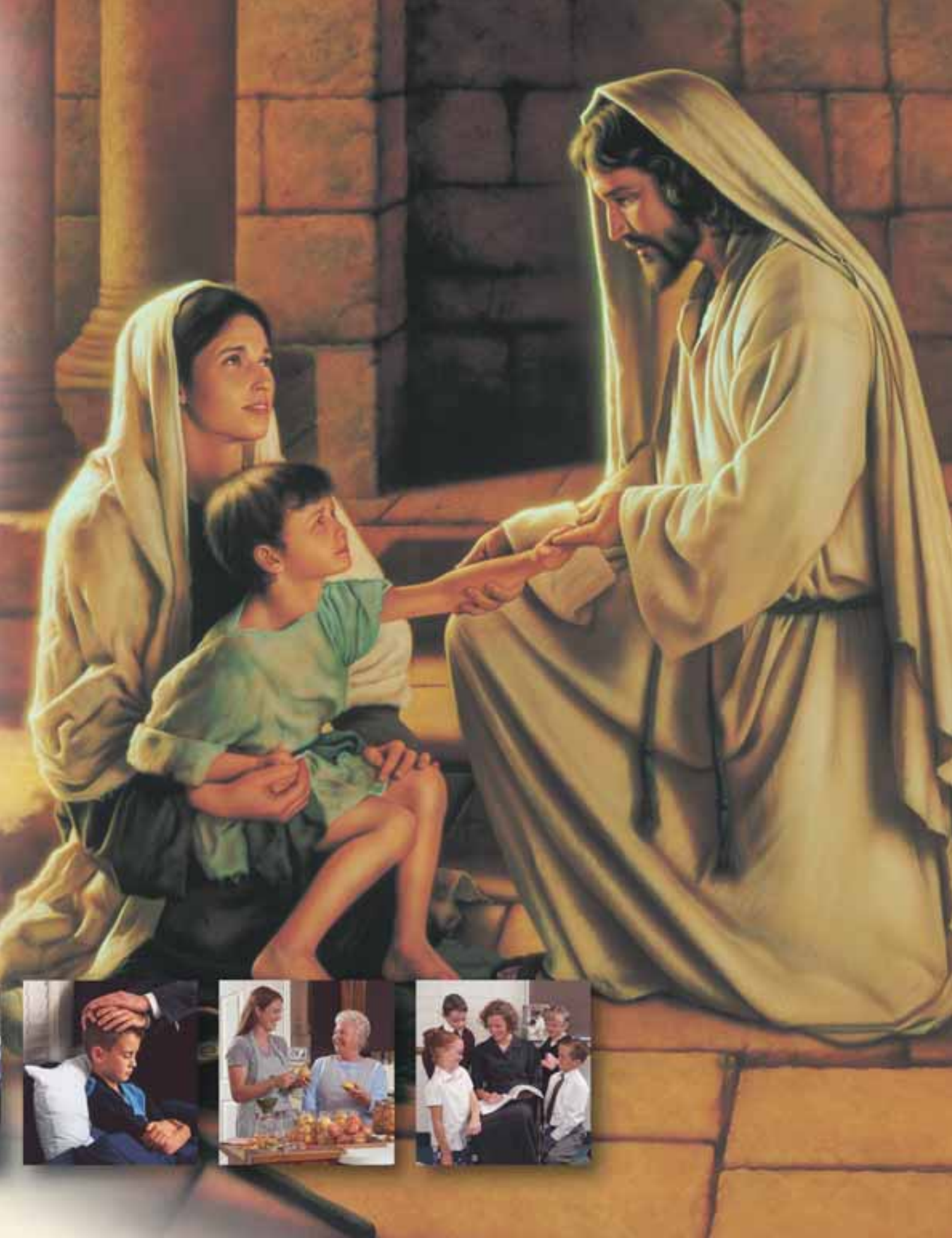
The traits of character to be focused on in the precious process of character building are all interactive; development of one hastens the development of another. You are likely to be doing much better than you realize. Paul

notes one spiritual sequence when he says, "Tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope" (Romans 5:3–4), and hope brings more of the love of God. If you and I will meekly submit to "our light affliction," whatever it is, this will lead later to a far greater "weight of glory" (2 Corinthians 4:17).

So it is that while the "intelligence we attain unto in this life . . . will rise with us in the resurrection" (D&C 130:18), the gospel definition of intelligence isn't one's scholastic IQ. Instead, intelligence signifies the totality of the soul and reflects "the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4). If we are diligent, we can develop faith, patience, godliness, kindness, and charity in greater abundance in our lives. These qualities, in turn, will make us fruitful "in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:8).



Building on Christ's firm foundation requires us to emulate His character.



He was and is
Lord of the
universe,
who under the
direction of the
Father created
“worlds without
number.” Yet He was
willingly known as
Jesus of Nazareth,
the carpenter’s son.
He always knew who
He was!

The development of Christlike character clearly qualifies as truly being “about [our] Father’s business” (Luke 2:49). The wonderful thing about this process is that amid the seeming mundaneness of daily life we can be about our Father’s business day by day, achieving imperishable things to be taken with us through the veil of death and to rise with us in the Resurrection.

Jacob wrote of “looking beyond the mark” by failing to see Christ as the center of it all, and he added ominously that people so

blinded and diverted “must needs fall” (Jacob 4:14).
Ignoring the Savior

includes failing to build Christlike character in order to be more rocklike ourselves.

Of course, conversion to the gospel and the Church can happen all at once in a burst of recognition and through the testifying of the Holy Spirit. However, the subsequent mentoring in order to further develop, for instance, a quality like patience takes time. Yes, patience does not come “right now”! Do not expect the world to understand or help in the precious process of character building that I’m attempting to describe.

Mercifully, the whisperings of the Spirit nudge us along the path in an almost private process. Through it all we will need to be strong enough for ourselves but also strong enough to help others, because there will be immigrants arriving from Babylon—there will even be some defectors from the “great and spacious building” (1 Nephi 8:26)—and they need to encounter people like you.

Examples of Christ’s Character

A few examples of the character of Christ will illustrate what we are to emulate, even for the already conscientious. Because we view Christ as the Light of the World, it is by His light that we should see everything else. Disciples are the real realists, whatever irreligionists may say or think.

Unlike God and Jesus, who are omniscient, you and I are often perplexed. We can be unsettled by the unexpected or made uneasy by the unknown. We surely need all of this added perspective! Furthermore, whereas Jesus paid the full price in order to ransom us, you and I may still hesitate over paying the full costs of discipleship, including developing the key attributes of a disciple.



Likewise, though Christ successfully resisted all temptations, we still dally, and we may take some temptations under advisement. No wonder the eloquence of His example is so powerful, for the scriptures say He “gave no heed” to temptation (see D&C 20:22).

We also tend to shrug off the persistent reminders of our sins of omission, as if our avoidance of the super sins of transgression and commission were enough. It is my opinion that in the realm of the sins of omission we can make more major, though quiet, progress than in any other place. That is particularly true of a conscientious people.

Love

Like His Father, Jesus exemplifies love perfectly. He so loved the Father and us that He meekly and submissively let His will be completely swallowed up in the will of the Father in order to accomplish the Atonement, including blessing billions and billions of us with the unmerited, universal resurrection. What He did is staggering to contemplate. No wonder He can help us along. He knows the way.

So profound and comprehensive is Christ’s love that even during His infinite suffering, He still noticed and nurtured finite sufferers who endured so much less anguish than He had to bear. For instance, He noticed and restored an assailant’s severed ear in the Garden of Gethsemane. On the cross, He directed John to take care of His mother, Mary. He comforted a thief on a nearby cross.

In contrast, when you and I let ourselves get stuck in the ooze of our own self-pity, we fail to notice the needs of others. With a little more effort, we can become a little more noticing and a little more nurturing. Let us reflect on our circles of love. Are they increasing in size, or are they static? What is the quality of our caring for those within those circles? Do we avoid lazy stereotyping? It’s so easy to deal with people as functions and stereotypes instead of as individuals. Are we lovingly patient with others who are also striving

to develop? Or do we, judgmentally and impatiently, constantly pull up the daisies to see how their roots are doing?

President Brigham Young (1801–77) declared of love, so fundamental to everything else: “There is one virtue [or] attribute, . . . which, if cherished and practiced by the Saints, would prove salvation to thousands upon thousands. I allude to charity, or love, from which proceed forgiveness, long suffering, kindness, and patience.”¹ All other virtues are derivatives and reflections of love!



Can we partake of our tiny bitter cups without becoming bitter? What a wonderful way for us to witness, especially to those we love the most!

Patience and Long-Suffering

Jesus likewise exemplifies perfect patience and long-suffering. Think of the implications of the Lord’s course, which, He tells us, “is one eternal round” (D&C 3:2). Routine and repetition may bother us, may bore us. But God and His Son, Jesus, are never bored with Their “one eternal round” because of Their perfect love. God is patient with us in process of time. He also helps by trying our patience and our faith (see 2 Thessalonians 1:4; James 1:3).

If left untried, those qualities, which are portable and eternal, would remain underdeveloped. There’s something about the isometrics that are involved when we’re putting off the natural man or the natural woman while striving to become the man or the woman of Christ. These isometrics are a blessing in disguise, though I grant you sometimes the blessing *is* well disguised.

As striving disciples, therefore, are we willing to be so mentored? Tutoringly, the Lord has said, “Ye cannot bear all things now; . . . I will lead you along” (D&C 78:18). He knows our bearing capacities. Though we ourselves may feel pushed to the breaking point, ere long, thanks to Him, these once-daunting challenges become receding milestones.

Even outstanding and courageous Jeremiah was once discouraged. Being mocked and persecuted, he briefly considered refraining from speaking out anymore. But then he said God’s word was “as a burning fire shut up in my

bones, . . . and I could not stay” (Jeremiah 20:9). Jeremiah reached a breaking point, but he did not break!

Meekness and Humility

Jesus also exemplifies meekness and humility. Though ever supernal in His achievements, Christ always, always gave the glory to the Father whether in the first, second, or now in the third estate. He was and is Lord of the universe, who under the direction of the Father created “worlds without number” (Moses 1:33). Yet He was willingly known as Jesus of Nazareth, the carpenter’s son. He always knew who He was! He meekly partook of history’s most bitter cup without becoming bitter.

Can we, in turn, partake of our tiny bitter cups without becoming bitter? What a wonderful way for us to witness, especially to those we love the most! Can we overcome our drives for status and preeminence or our mundane desires merely to be one up on other people?

In the ebb and flow of life, can we meekly respond as did the preparer of the Way, John the Baptist? Unselfishly he said, “[Jesus] must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30).

How about meekness in our marriages? Is the pronoun *me* yielding ever more often to the pronoun *we*? The vertical pronoun *I* is best used in such situations as “I love you,” “I care for you,” “I hear you.” Otherwise, *I* can be drenched in ego: “I demand,” “I want,” “I need.”

Seemingly small, positive adjustments can make large differences in process of time. In our families, in the Church, and in other relationships, will we stop letting yesterday hold tomorrow hostage? Will we reclassify others, knowing that forgetting is part of forgiving?

A Difficult Process

So we see that building character is the most difficult form of construction. It requires faith and patience, using

divinely given blueprints. There are also the overruns resulting from overcharged emotions. It’s not easy to be meekly resilient after experiencing failures. It’s not easy to retrofit by repentance, especially when our pride suggests that we are doing pretty well.

Likewise, it is ever tempting to try to use cheap, mortal substitutes instead of building Christlike character. The substitutes—such as cleverness instead of goodness and smoothness instead of substance—do not survive when the winds and the rains pound on crumbling foundations. Furthermore, when we follow shortcuts, there is that awful subsidence, or sinking. Hence we can fall! All serious discipleship, therefore, requires our serious remodeling.

Christ is characterized as the Rock for so many reasons. We will find no fissures in His foundation. He never disappoints us. He never falters. His love never fails. He never fails to bring to pass His purposes.

Brothers and sisters, you can follow Peter’s counsel: Cast all your cares upon Christ, “for he careth for you” (1 Peter 5:7). Don’t be reluctant to do that. You may need to do it again and again. Christ told His disciples to catch a particular fish with a particular coin in its mouth in order to pay taxes, or tribute (see Matthew 17:27). Upon finding the fish, the disciples so did! Such incredible awareness about a single fish and a single coin should console us regarding the Master’s full awareness of the details in the lives of each of us.

So “we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ.” Why? So that those we love the most “may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins” (2 Nephi 25:26).

Seize the Defining Moments

A word now about our own families. Some of us are older; some are in mid-passage; others have yet to begin. Some of us are parents, and some, grandparents.



With a little more effort, we can become a little more noticing and a little more nurturing. Let us reflect on our circles of love. Are they increasing in size, or are they static?

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He had to bear.

Grandparents have empty nests. Such emptyings are part of the plan, of course. Yet, since our flocks have left their nests, we find ourselves remembering and savoring precious days now irrevocably past. We listen in vain but with eager ears for children's voices we once thought too shrill, too constant—even irritating. Yet that cacophony of children, which we once called noise, was actually sweet sound, a sound we yearn to hear again if we but could.

For the rest of you now amid the cacophony, seize the defining moments. Make more Mary-like choices and show less Martha-like anxiety. What are calories anyway, compared to special conversations? Of course, meals need to be served and consumed, but the mentoring memories will not be taken from you.

His Love Is Inestimable

Whether we are old or young, married or unmarried, and with full or empty nests, the love of atoning Jesus for us is simply inestimable! Mercifully, the Lord tells us, "Mine arm is lengthened out all the day long" (2 Nephi 28:32). He waits with open arms to receive us, and on a later day, says the prophet Mormon, we can be "clasped in the arms of Jesus" (Mormon 5:11).

Whatever the remaining distance between us and Him, it is ours to travel. The beckoning stepping-stones are there. You have come thus far by faith in Him, though you have "miles to go before [you] sleep,"² and your faith will take you even farther.

Please ponder this eloquent pleading to the Father. It is by the same Jesus who volunteered in the premortal world by saying meekly and simply, "Here am I, send me" (Abraham 3:27). Here are the pleading words:

"Listen to him who is the advocate with the Father, who is pleading your cause before him—

"Saying: Father, behold the sufferings and death of him who did no sin, in whom thou wast well pleased; behold the blood of thy Son which was shed, the blood of him whom thou gavest that thyself might be glorified;

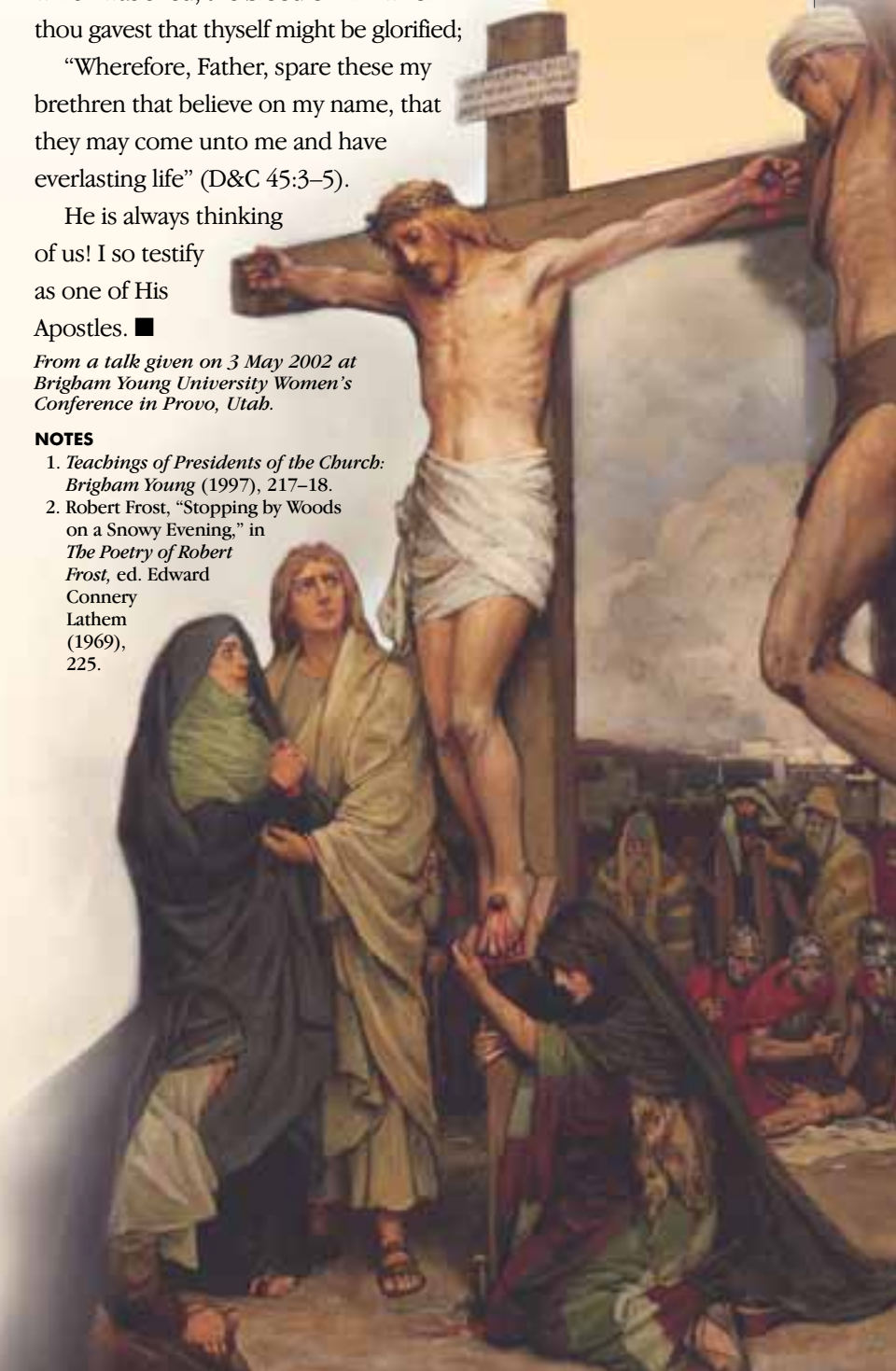
"Wherefore, Father, spare these my brethren that believe on my name, that they may come unto me and have everlasting life" (D&C 45:3–5).

He is always thinking of us! I so testify as one of His Apostles. ■

From a talk given on 3 May 2002 at Brigham Young University Women's Conference in Provo, Utah.

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* (1997), 217–18.
2. Robert Frost, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," in *The Poetry of Robert Frost*, ed. Edward Connery Lathem (1969), 225.







Spiritually Born of God

BY ELDER ALEKSANDR N. MANZHOS

Area Authority Seventy
Europe East Area

On a cold winter day several years ago, I visited one of the branches in Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine. It was fast Sunday, and we warmed ourselves in the glow of the testimonies borne in the poorly heated, rented space where we were meeting.

I especially recall the testimony of one sister whose inspired face I can still see in my mind. She was a single mother. She and her one-year-old child lived in the dormitory of the factory where she worked. Economic conditions were not good. Her wages were low and paid irregularly. Despair and then eventual hope in God brought her to the gospel.

Not long after her baptism, she was preparing food for herself and her child

Although faced with many challenges, one single mother bore inspired testimony of how baptism and faith in Jesus Christ changed her life, bringing her a certainty of a tranquil and happy future for her small family.

when a young woman who lived in the same building said: “I know things are difficult for you. Like me, you are a single mother, earning low wages, with no place of your own to live. There is little hope of a good future for yourself and your child. Like me, you have a gray, dull life. Like me, you fear for your child and the uncertainty of tomorrow. But why are you always smiling and your eyes always shining? Why does joy light up your face?”

The questions made this sister stop and think about the changes that had occurred since her baptism. As she gained faith in Jesus Christ, the fear that had corroded her life had disappeared. The path back to the Father that opened before her had permitted her to have hope, which had led her to baptism and developed within her a certainty of a tranquil and happy future for her small family. By receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, she had received a firm testimony. The false values of the world gradually gave way to the higher values of the gospel, and these higher values became a firm foundation for both thought and deed. She realized that it was precisely these



Through Alma’s revelation in Mosiah 27, we learn that to inherit eternal life, we must be spiritually born of God.



I asked the visitor, “What made you leave?” He explained that he was a poor man and felt he would not fit in with the members because they appeared to be rich. “Poor people cannot look so happy and content in this joyless life,” he said. I invited him to visit again and promised that the gospel had what he was looking for.

changes that had given her a new outlook on the world. Long-awaited joy and peace had come into her life.

Becoming Spiritually Born Again

I frequently recall that simple, humble testimony, full of the Spirit and the joy of the truth. It causes me to think that having repented and entered into the waters of baptism, we sometimes forget we have started on the path established for us by our Heavenly Father’s plan and made possible by the Savior’s great sacrifice. This choice is the starting point, not only for us, but for our future generations. Thus begin the rebirth and change of our existence in this life, opening the way to eternal life.

The Lord instructed Alma that all mankind “must be born again; yea, born of God, changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming his sons and daughters; And thus they become new creatures; and unless they do this, they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God” (Mosiah 27:25–26).

Sensing the Lord’s Spirit and feeling the powerful changes in our hearts—so much so that we no longer do evil but rather strive toward the godly—permit us to understand what it means to be born again, to be spiritually born of God. The deeper our understanding of this principle, the more carefully will we heed Alma’s warning: “Unless this be the case, they must be cast

off; and this I know, because I was like to be cast off” (Mosiah 27:27).

It is important for each person to recognize the danger of falling under the influence of carnal lusts, desires, appetites, and feelings more than under the influence of the Holy Ghost, because “if he boasts in his own strength, and sets at naught the counsels of God, and follows after the dictates of his own will and carnal desires, he must fall and incur the vengeance of a just God upon him” (D&C 3:4).

Fear Not

Like so many in this world, we often ponder the meaning of our lives, our destinies, our futures, and our children’s futures. We seek answers to the questions that trouble us. How we rejoice when we learn of the Lord’s plan for us! We can be spiritually born again when we take upon us His name, are obedient to His commandments, and heed the power and influence of the Holy Ghost (see Mosiah 5:7).

Surprisingly, while pursuing the things of life, we sometimes artificially complicate the loving simplicity of His gospel.

That is why He commands us to be like children in the openness, sincerity, and simplicity of their perception of the world. The Lord tells us, “Fear not, little children, for you are mine” (D&C 50:41). The Savior calls upon us to believe in the light of the gospel that we might be children of light (see John 12:36). Mormon teaches that “if ye will lay hold upon every good thing, and condemn it not, ye certainly will be a child of Christ” (Moroni 7:19). Becoming like a child will bring rest into our lives and peace to our hearts.

A Rich Joy

At a recent sacrament meeting, a man came into the chapel and sat down near the entrance. His clothes were

untidy; his face was unshaven. He appeared somewhat uncomfortable, and I guessed this was his first visit to our branch. He seemed more interested in the furniture around him than in the meeting. This disappointed me because the talks that day were especially uplifting. When he left before the meeting was over, I followed him out. After a short greeting, I simply asked, “What made you leave?”

After a moment, he replied: “I am a very poor man, and the conditions of my life cause me a lot of suffering. I am looking for sympathy and compassion, and when I heard that good people attend your church, I decided to stop by. But I can see that your church is for the rich, and I probably will not find what I am looking for among those people.”

I was very surprised by his answer. The people in our branch are far from rich, and some of them have struggled with need and poverty for a long time. “What made you think that?” I asked him.

At first, his answer discouraged me. “They are so neatly dressed; they are quiet, and their children smile all of the

time. Poor people cannot look so happy and content in this joyless life.” Then I invited him to visit us again and promised that if he would investigate the restored gospel, he would find what he was looking for.

Subsequently, as I reflected on our branch, I realized that the man was right. We truly are not poor people because we do not feel that we are. And although need sometimes knocks at our door, we are at peace. We truly are rich because of our faith in Jesus Christ, our knowledge, our families, and our Church. The Lord has blessed us with the eternal riches of a spiritual rebirth and the promise of a future with Him: “Mine eyes are upon you, and the heavens and the earth are in mine hands, and the riches of eternity are mine to give” (D&C 67:2). ■



The Lord instructed Alma that all mankind “must be born again; yea, born of God, changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming his sons and daughters.”

Christamae's Courage

By Christine Zimpel

Christamae, my oldest daughter, suffers from muscular dystrophy. And although for several years she was able to get about without a walker or wheelchair, she moved awkwardly and fell easily.

When she was eight years old, she had a part in the children's sacrament meeting presentation. Christamae loves to get attention, and she was very excited about saying her part. I had helped her with her talk, and I remember feeling very strongly that what she was saying would be profoundly important. She was speaking about what Jesus Christ's sacrifice meant for her. "Because He loved me so much and was so very brave," she practiced, "I can be forgiven when I repent. And someday when I am resurrected, I will have a strong, healthy body."

On the day of the program I watched anxiously as she stood to go to the pulpit, her face wreathed in smiles and her eyes twinkling. Then on her way to the stand, Christamae fell face first to the floor. I knew she would be unable to stand without help, but a loving Primary teacher

quickly came to her aid. As she lifted my daughter to her own shoulder and comforted her, I was grateful there were loving arms around Christamae. I

nearly went to get her, but the Spirit reminded me of the importance of the message she had to give. I also knew that she would be disappointed in herself if she did not stand and say her part.

As her tear-filled eyes met mine across the chapel, I saw that she was



deeply embarrassed but she seemed unhurt. At that moment, in a very small way, I felt I could relate to our Heavenly Father's suffering while His Son performed His mission of sacrifice. While I choked back my own tears, I mouthed to her to go on and give her talk; everything would be OK.

I could barely believe her courage as she stood at the microphone and delivered her talk in a clear voice. Nearly every eye filled with tears as she spoke of her gratitude to the Savior for the strong body she would someday have. I learned through this experience that some missions cannot be accomplished in healthy bodies.

The message she gave that day just wouldn't have had the same impact if it had been given by someone else.

This lesson was an especially important one for me, since Christamae has a sister with the same condition and I too suffer from a mild form of muscular dystrophy. On that special day Christamae's courage taught us about the ultimate miracle of Jesus Christ's Atonement and Resurrection. ■

Christine Zimpel is a member of the Ceres Second Ward, Turlock California Stake.

On her way to the stand, Christamae fell face first to the floor. A loving Primary teacher quickly came to her aid.

I Had Never Felt Such Joy

By Daniel S. Hidalgo

Some time ago I went into a flower shop and started talking to the owner about the plants he was selling, and we exchanged ideas about the different ways of growing them. After that, each time I worked in that area, I would go into this shop and talk to the owner about his work and mine, until little by little I began to talk to him about the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I started by talking about God and sharing what I felt about Him. Diego, the owner of the flower business, told me he didn't believe in Jesus Christ; he just believed in an entity who had the power to create all things. This surprised me, and I told him I wanted to give him something that was very important to me—the Book of Mormon. I also told him I wanted to introduce him to the missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Diego agreed. I set up the appointment, and later the missionaries went to his business. After he had received three discussions, he invited the missionaries to his home.

At this time my work area changed, but one day I happened to run into the missionaries who were teaching Diego. I asked about him and tried to find out what kind of progress he was making. They told me he was going to

be baptized, but they didn't know when. A week later I learned that Diego's family had been baptized, except for his daughter Carla. I was happy to hear about their decision. My contact had borne fruit.

Two weeks later at a stake meeting, I heard about a convert named Diego Páez who had recently been baptized and who was very enthusiastic about the Church. Later the mission president told me they were going to confirm him on Sunday.

The following Sunday I went to Diego's ward and saw him sitting with his family on one of the pews. I sat down next to him, and he smiled and said, "Thank you, Daniel."

When Diego sat in the chair where the elders quorum president would confirm him a member of the Church, I was invited to join the circle. I did so, and when the elders quorum president said the words "Receive the Holy Ghost," I too could feel the influence of the Spirit. My heart beat hard, and peace completely overwhelmed me.

I had never felt such joy. When Diego stood up, I embraced him. Tears sprang from my eyes. I felt strengthened, as described in Doctrine and Covenants 50:22: "Wherefore, he that preacheth and



he that receiveth, understand one another, and both are edified and rejoice together.”

As for Diego’s daughter Carla, she was baptized the following week by her father. The Páez family has continued to progress. Milagros, who was three years old at the time of the baptisms, kneels down and says prayers with her parents, asking Heavenly Father to bless her family. Diego and his wife, Gabriela, work to share the gospel with others.

There must be a lot of Páez families all over the world—just waiting for someone to bring the light of truth to their lives. What a joy it is to share what we feel for the gospel of Jesus Christ and to be able to help others feel the way we do. ■

Daniel S. Hidalgo is a member of the Trapiche Ward, Godoy Cruz Argentina Stake.

Not Enough Bread

By Evelyn B. Caesar

I can still remember the storm that first Sunday of September 1989. I was living in the Cadiz Ward of the Cadiz Philippines Stake. The skies filled with great, black clouds, and rain poured down.

Sacrament meeting started punctually at 9:00 A.M. I looked around the chapel and saw that most of the benches were empty. In fact, only five people were in attendance. It was hard for the members to get to church in the rain, especially those who lived far away.

A few more people filtered in while we were singing the opening

The members began to flood in. The two brethren at the sacrament table knew that no matter how they broke the bread, there wasn’t going to be enough.

hymn. More continued to arrive while the names of new ward members were being read.

When we began to sing the sacrament hymn, I looked around again. I was surprised to see an unusually large congregation of about 100 people. I looked at the two brethren breaking the bread for the sacrament. Something was troubling them—I could tell by the looks on their faces. The hymn ended, and one man knelt

to offer the blessing on the bread.

To my surprise, after the prayer the men at the sacrament table did not proceed immediately. Their heads remained bowed for a moment. Then they started handing the trays to the Aaronic Priesthood holders. The young men also had sober looks on their faces as they accepted the trays. I didn't know what was wrong, but I closed my eyes and said a silent prayer too.

After the sacrament had been passed, the bishop gave the members time to bear their testimonies. The first person to come to the pulpit was one of the men who had blessed the sacrament. He spoke of the great love God has for all His children. I felt my bosom burn within me as I listened. I was filled with joy and gratitude for my testimony that God lives and that He does love us.

This speaker was followed by his companion at the sacrament table. In an emotional voice, he told us that we had witnessed a miracle that day. He explained that the bishop had brought only two small rolls of bread for the sacrament. Since the rains were heavy, he probably expected the congregation to be smaller than normal.

Then the members began to flood in. The two men knew that no matter how they broke the bread, there wasn't going to be enough. So after the sacrament prayer, they said another prayer and told the Lord there were only about 40 pieces of

bread to serve 100 people or more. They asked for divine intervention.

Then the bread was passed to the people. The two brethren watched carefully as every person desiring to do so partook of the sacrament. There was enough for all.

As we learned what had happened, the congregation was silent for a few moments. The Spirit could be felt so strongly that nobody wanted to break that silence. Tears filled our eyes.

The silence was finally broken by the voice of our bishop, who stood to tell us how blessed we were to have the priesthood of God. With God, he said, nothing is impossible. Heavenly Father moves in mysterious ways to bestow blessings on His children. If we pray in faith, He hears our prayers and answers them. ■

Evelyn B. Caesar is a member of the Lopez Jaena Branch, Sagay Philippines District.

The Good Samaritans in Coutts

By Alan P. Kingston

My wife and I are retired senior citizens from Portsmouth, England. We've been married for 48 years and are Anglican Christians. Before a memorable trip to Canada, we had the impression that members of The Church of Jesus Christ of

Latter-day Saints were a bit pushy, overly religious, and determined to convert everyone not of their faith. However, a snowstorm in Canada began changing our impressions.

We were in a group of mainly older British tourists traveling through Banff, Canada; Yellowstone National Park; and the Rocky Mountains. Unfortunately, the weather was not very kind to our group. After staying in Lethbridge, Canada, we awoke to find it had snowed in the night. Later that morning as we traveled toward the U.S. border, the rain turned to snow, and at the border we discovered the road was closed on the American side. There was nothing we could do but turn back. Five miles (8 km) down the road we encountered a jackknifed truck and trailer blocking the highway. We were unable to go forward and unable to go backward.

Stranded in our bus, we settled down to guessing games, a sing-along, and general fun, confident that help would arrive and that we would be safe in the bus until then. More than five hours later, help finally did arrive.

A Royal Canadian Police Mountie on a snowmobile found us, and a fire truck managed to carve a track in the snow, allowing the bus to turn around. Weary and hungry, we made our way to the nearest community and found ourselves pulling up to the church that several of the firefighters attended—The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints meeting-house in Coutts, Alberta, Canada.

The Anglican church we attend is 150 years old, with a small communal hall and limited facilities, so the thought of a church congregation taking in 40 strangers stranded in the snow didn't seem feasible. But within an hour of our arrival, the women and young people of the ward had served up a full meal of jacket potatoes and chili.

We were particularly impressed when we discovered that our rescuers had pressing problems of their own. A young mum had had the power cut off to her home, but she left her younger children with a kind friend

and came with her older children to help us. A counselor to the bishop gave us a tour of the building and took time to ensure that we were cared for before going to work that evening.

Before we went to bed, the youth of the Coutts Ward treated us to an impromptu performance of a play they had been rehearsing. And finally the central heating was turned up, and we were made comfortable for the night.

The next morning the roads had improved sufficiently for us to continue our journey. After the ward members prepared breakfast, we set out again on our enjoyable trip. But

we remained overwhelmed by the hospitality shown by the Latter-day Saints. They willingly opened up their church and provided food, bedding, and, above all, friendship to stranded strangers.

Although we had believed Latter-day Saints to be somewhat pushy, we saw instead kind, caring people who demonstrate their beliefs in their day-to-day lives. Back in England, we keep our holiday fresh in our minds, and we thank God for our Latter-day Saint friends and Samaritans. ■

Alan P. Kingston lives in Portsmouth, England.



A Royal Canadian Police Mountie found us, a fire truck carved a track in the snow, and we made our way to the nearest community.

Feeling the Love of the Lord through Repentance

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.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “We weave into the fabric of our lives the pattern that we will present as our finished product. Our mortal lives are woven each day as we add our deeds into something intricately beautiful, following the Master Designer’s plan. When we make wrong choices, we must . . . retrace our steps through repentance and remove errant threads we have woven into our character and replace them with the finer threads that our Maker intended for us to use” (“The Time to Prepare,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 16).

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985): “Repentance can never come until one has bared his soul and admitted his actions without excuses or rationalizations. . . . Those persons who choose to meet the issue and transform their lives may find repentance the harder road at first, but they will find it the infinitely more desirable path as they taste of its fruits. . . . Millions of Saints have found peace along this path and lived beautiful and

satisfying and abundant lives with the gospel of repentance as their guide to personal improvement and to harmony with God” (“The Gospel of Repentance,” *Tambuli*, Mar. 1983, 3–6; *Ensign*, Oct. 1982, 4–5).

Sydney S. Reynolds, first counselor in the Primary general presidency: “We must repent of anything we are doing which would alienate us from the Spirit of the Lord, and we must show our love for God by keeping his commandments and loving his children, that the Lord might forgive our sins and make us spotless by his grace. . . . We have a Savior, who paid the price for any sin, mistake, or imperfection we may have for which we are willing to repent” (“Be Ye Therefore Perfect,” in *The Rock of Our Redeemer: Talks from the 2002 BYU Women’s Conference* [2003], 153–55).

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “I testify that Jesus Christ paid the price and will satisfy the demands of justice for all who are obedient to His teachings. Thus, full forgiveness is granted, and the distressing effects of sin need no longer persist in one’s life. Indeed, they cannot persist if one truly understands the meaning of Christ’s Atonement. . . .

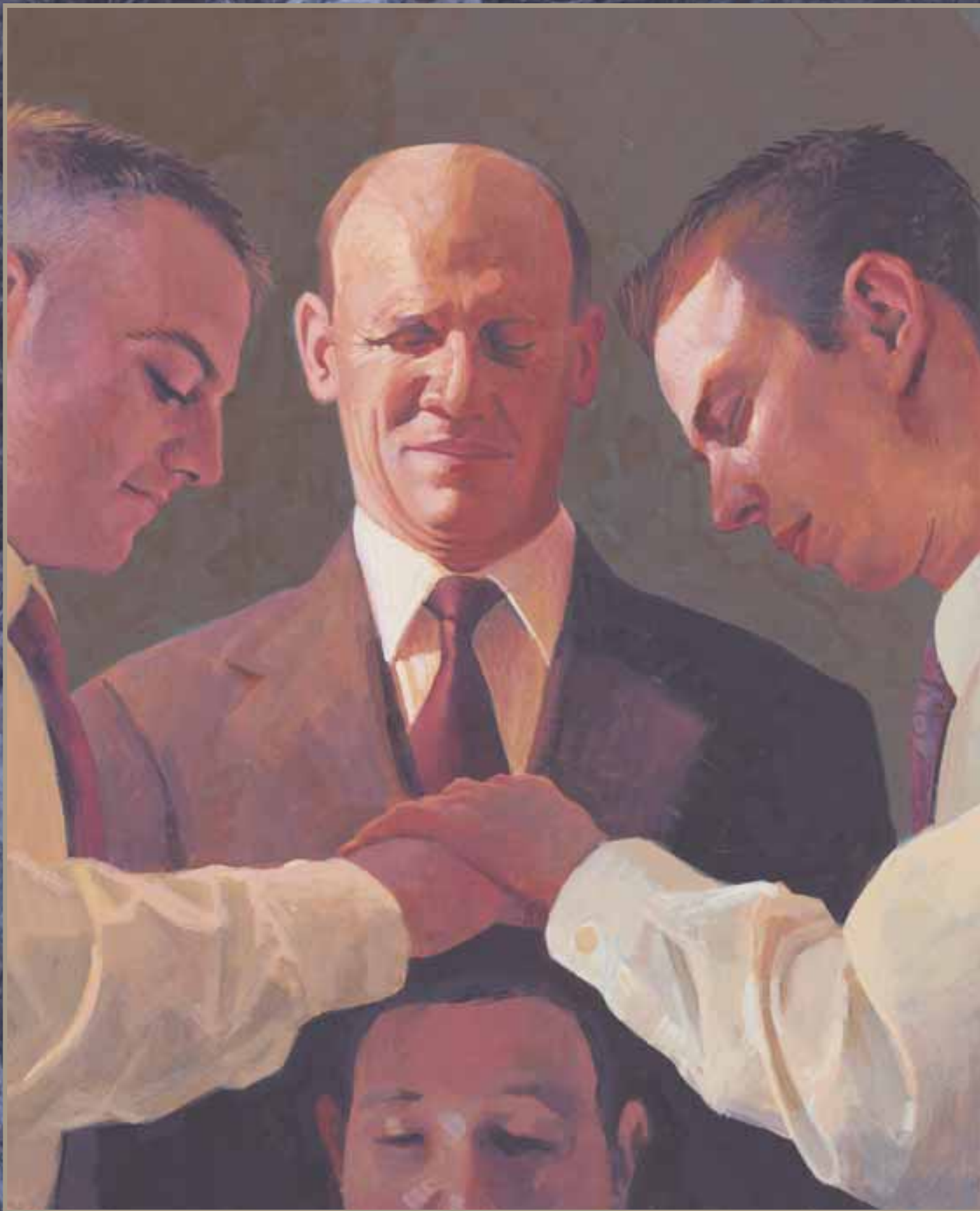


“When memory of past mistakes encroaches upon your mind, turn your thoughts to the Redeemer and to the miracle of forgiveness with the renewal that comes through Him. Your depression and suffering will be replaced by peace, joy, and gratitude for His love” (“The Path to Peace and Joy,” *Liabona*, Jan. 2001, 33; *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 26).

Moroni 8:26: “The remission of sins bringeth meekness, and lowliness of heart; and because of meekness and lowliness of heart cometh the visitation of the Holy Ghost, which Comforter filleth with hope and perfect love, which love endureth by diligence unto prayer, until the end shall come, when all the saints shall dwell with God.”

• *What are the blessings of repentance?*

• *How does repentance help you feel the love of the Savior and gratitude for His Atonement?* ■



The Miracle of the Priesthood

The Aaronic Priesthood was restored 175 years ago. To help commemorate the occasion, the Church Magazines asked the Presiding Bishopric to share some thoughts about the Aaronic Priesthood and how it blesses the lives of youth and all Church members.

What are some of your thoughts and feelings about the spread of the Aaronic Priesthood across the world since it was restored on 15 May 1829?

Bishop H. David Burton, Presiding Bishop:

I would have enjoyed being present when the priesthood was restored. It would have been exciting to be across the Susquehanna River, sitting by a bush, watching John the Baptist ordain the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. (See D&C 13.)

As exciting as that would have been, I have come to understand that what has happened



The Presiding Bishopric:
Bishop H. David Burton (center)
and his counselors,
Bishop Richard C. Edgley (left) and
Bishop Keith B. McMullin.

since then has been a miracle itself. First, adult brethren received the priesthood to organize the Church. Then over time, the priesthood was extended to youth. Now every worthy young man has the opportunity to hold the Aaronic Priesthood.

The real blessing of the priesthood, particularly the Aaronic Priesthood, is the preparation so many young men have received to serve missions, to go to the temple, and to provide for families. It's exciting to see what 175 years have produced.

What are some of the most significant accomplishments of the Aaronic Priesthood in this dispensation?

Bishop Keith B. McMullin, Second

Counselor: The normal work of the Aaronic Priesthood is most significant, because it is inspiring and meaningful in the lives of Church members. The Aaronic Priesthood holds "the key of the ministering of angels and the preparatory gospel; Which gospel is the gospel of repentance and of baptism" (D&C 84:26–27).

Bishop Edgley remembers sitting around a campfire while his assistant deacons quorum adviser testified of the power of the priesthood.

The Aaronic Priesthood administers temporal affairs. That includes baptism, the sacrament, and caring for people who are in distress. Young priesthood holders do baptisms for the dead so those people can enjoy the blessings of the gospel. They pass the sacrament to offer every member an opportunity to commune with the Holy Spirit in the sacred covenants of the gospel. They greet members when they come to church, and they go home teaching with their Melchizedek Priesthood companions.

Do Aaronic Priesthood functions differ in different areas of the world?

Bishop Burton: It doesn't matter if you're a deacon, teacher, or priest in the Salt Lake Valley or in the Philippines. You have the same authority and the same basic responsibilities.

Bishop McMullin: The power is the same wherever it is. Even if there is only one youth Aaronic Priesthood bearer in an entire ward or branch, that Aaronic Priesthood bearer can do his duty.

Why are priesthood holders asked to collect fast offerings, pass the sacrament, and perform other duties?

Bishop Richard C. Edgley, First Counselor: The Lord has asked young men to do these duties. The priesthood represents an enormous trust from Him.

Bishop McMullin: When an Aaronic Priesthood bearer's hand is extended with a sacrament tray, he isn't just passing the sacrament. He is introducing into the lives of members the emblems of the holy Atonement and lifting the members heavenward. When he has his hand out with a fast-offering envelope in it, he is collecting the fast offering with an invitation extended by

the Savior Himself to come unto Him and help others by giving.

The priesthood is everlasting; it will forever bless Heavenly Father's children and lift them in ways only the priesthood can.

Why is the Aaronic Priesthood called "the lesser priesthood"? What does it mean that it is part of the preparatory gospel? (See D&C 84:26; 107:14, 20.)

Bishop Burton: What if the Aaronic Priesthood didn't exist, and we progressed through our youthful years and at age 19 all of a sudden we received the Melchizedek Priesthood and were called on a mission? How would missionaries feel? What preparation would they have?

The preparatory gospel takes on a different meaning when you think what it would be like if youth didn't have the privilege of participating in the Aaronic Priesthood. I believe our missionaries are more qualified because of their experience in the Aaronic Priesthood.

Bishop Edgley: It is a tremendous thing to think about the thousands of full-time missionaries who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood and were prepared with the preparatory priesthood. The Aaronic Priesthood is the beginning of the most holy calling in the priesthood—the Melchizedek Priesthood.

When I was baptized into the Church, I wasn't baptized by my father; I was baptized by a priest. When I was a priest, I had the blessing to baptize my sister. And one of the great experiences I had as a father was when my son, who was a priest, ordained his brother to be a teacher.

I believe it is important for our young Aaronic Priesthood bearers to understand the spiritual powers that accompany this priesthood. I also feel that when it is appropriate it

is desirable to have priests of the Aaronic Priesthood participate in ordinances when they are authorized to do so.

Bishop McMullin: The Aaronic Priesthood functions under the direction of the Melchizedek Priesthood. It prepares not only the bearer but also the people of the Church for the exalting blessings that come through the higher priesthood. Among the requirements for salvation are faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, and baptism. Everyone has to receive the sacrament. Everyone needs those ordinances, which prepare us for other opportunities.

Why are Aaronic Priesthood holders organized in quorums?

Bishop Burton: When one becomes a deacon, he not only receives the priesthood but also becomes a member of a quorum. What power there is in a quorum!

I have many pleasant memories of my Aaronic Priesthood years. That was a glorious time. When I was a priest, my bishop always insisted that all members of the priests quorum participate in ordinations of new priests in the ward. That was probably the first time I really realized what a quorum was all about. I really felt the Spirit when I realized we were participating in a sacred ordinance.

Bishop Edgley: An experience I had with my Aaronic Priesthood quorum was on a Scout outing. We were sitting around a fire with my wonderful Scoutmaster, who was also the assistant deacons quorum adviser. A couple of guys who were not active in the Church were looking at some pornographic material.

The Scoutmaster stopped as he was talking to the Scouts and asked if he could have the magazine. He closed it and then told us how hurt he was, how troubled he was. Then he testified of the power of the priesthood when we honor it. He handed the magazine back, and that young man threw it in the fire.

That Scoutmaster taught us by the power of the Spirit about the priesthood. Of all the lessons I've had in quorums and chapels, I am still impressed by that experience.

What advice do you have for Aaronic Priesthood holders?

Bishop McMullin: Read section 20 of the Doctrine and Covenants about the duties of deacons, teachers, and priests. And then ask yourself, "How does this apply to me?"

Bishop Edgley: The Lord gives a remarkable promise to those who hold the priesthood. It is called the oath and covenant of the priesthood and is explained in section 84 of the Doctrine and Covenants:

"For whoso is faithful unto the obtaining these two priesthoods of which I have spoken, and the magnifying their calling, are sanctified by the Spirit. . . .

"They become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God.

"And also all 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.

"And this is according to the oath and covenant which belongeth to the priesthood.

"Therefore, all those who receive the priesthood, receive this oath and covenant of my Father, which he cannot break, neither can it be moved" (vv. 33–40).

The priesthood means more than being a deacon, teacher, or priest. It is God's power delegated to man. Through faithfulness, one can obtain the fulness of that power. ■



Priesthood Restored

Here are a few examples of the priesthood's worldwide influence—shared through testimonies of those who hold it.

When John the Baptist appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery on the bank of the Susquehanna River on 15 May 1829, he conferred upon them the Aaronic Priesthood. A short time later, Peter, James, and John—three of Jesus Christ's New Testament Apostles—also appeared and conferred upon Joseph and Oliver the Melchizedek Priesthood.

For the next 175 years, the priesthood—the power and authority to act in God's name—has been conferred in an orderly way upon worthy young and adult men throughout the earth, giving them authority to perform sacred gospel ordinances that bless the lives of men, women, and children everywhere.

The Aaronic Priesthood

The Aaronic Priesthood is named after Aaron, the brother of Moses. This priesthood functions



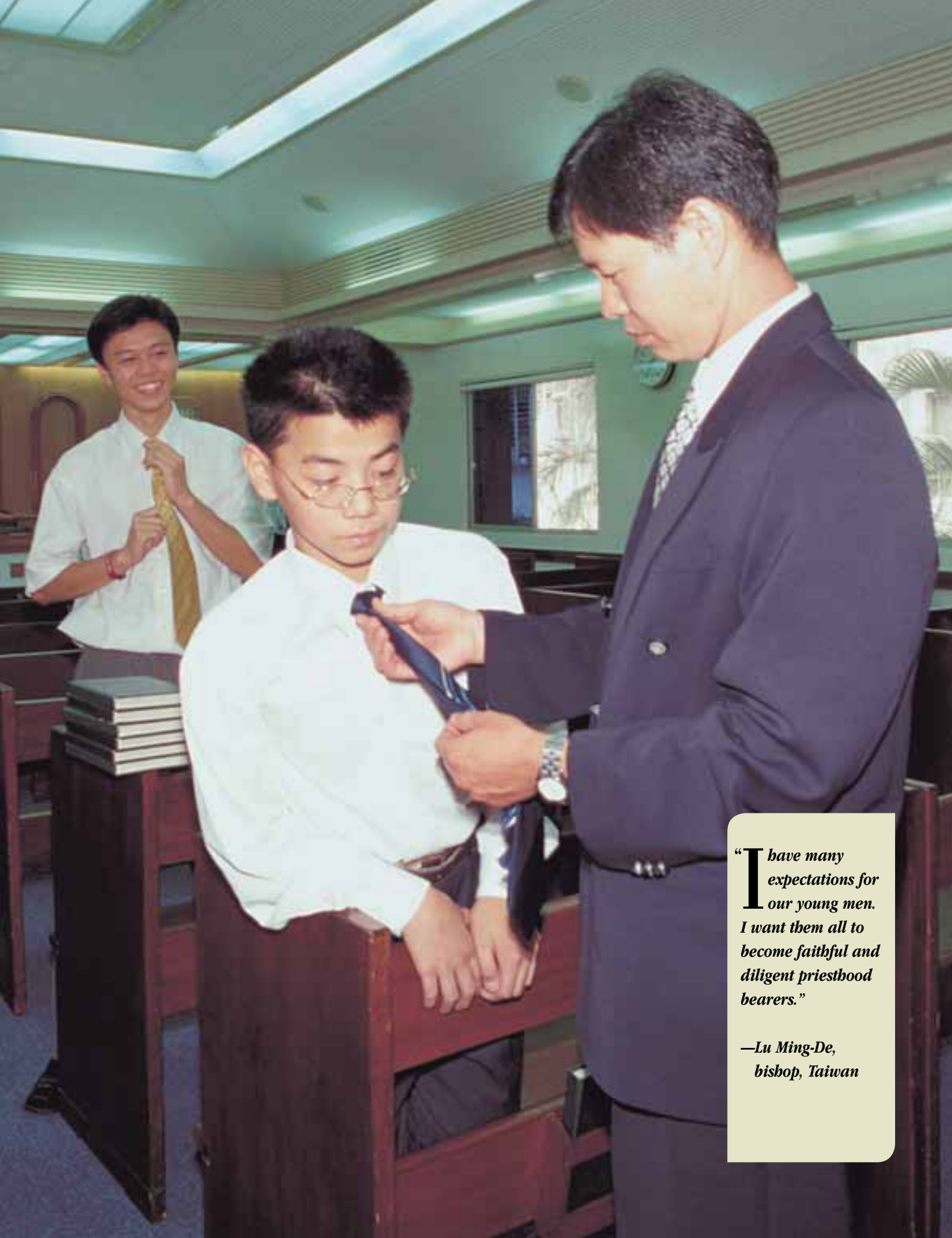
John the Baptist conferred the Aaronic Priesthood upon the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery 175 years ago, on 15 May 1829.

under the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood. Those who hold it have authority to administer certain gospel ordinances that help people prepare to receive the Holy Ghost and to return to live with Heavenly Father. The principal duty of all Aaronic Priesthood holders is to “invite all to come unto Christ” (D&C 20:59). The Aaronic Priesthood helps those who hold it qualify for the Melchizedek Priesthood. The four offices in the Aaronic Priesthood are deacon, teacher, priest, and bishop.

Deacon. *A worthy young man may be ordained a deacon at age 12. He may then fulfill such priesthood duties as passing the sacrament, collecting fast offerings, acting as an usher, serving as a messenger for the bishop or branch president, and helping maintain Church property.*

“When I pass the sacrament I think about Jesus Christ sacrificing Himself for us. He remembers me, and I remember Him,” says Cornelius Williams, 13, of the Abura Ward, Cape Coast Ghana Stake.

It is an awe-inspiring responsibility to represent the Savior in giving the sacred



I have many expectations for our young men. I want them all to become faithful and diligent priesthood bearers.”

—Lu Ming-De,
bishop, Taiwan

emblems of the sacrament to members of the congregation. Such thoughts inspire reverence. “The bread represents the body of Jesus Christ, and the water represents His blood,” says Benjamin Opoku Gyewu, 12, also of the Abura Ward. “When it is my turn to pass the sacrament,” says Jacob Abow Acquah, 12, of the Cape Coast Second Ward, “I think about Jesus giving the sacrament to His Apostles.”

As deacons share these emblems of the Savior’s sacrifice, the ordinance can take on personal meaning. Jorge Benjamín Cervantes Gutiérrez, 13, of the Libertad Ward, Guadalajara Mexico Reforma Stake, says, “Partaking of the sacrament means we can renew our covenants and repent of our sins.” He also sees that holding the priesthood is a blessing to his family. “My mother is grateful to have sons who hold the priesthood because she wants to have the blessings of the priesthood in our home. It is very important to her,” says Jorge.



**Luka Pečnik, teacher,
Slovenia**

Many who hold the Aaronic Priesthood realize it is a preparation for a lifetime of service. Gerardo Emmanuel Bagnati, 12, of the Floresta Ward, Buenos Aires Argentina Liniers Stake, says: “I always looked forward to receiving the priesthood. I loved asking my father and grandfather about it and listening to their experiences. When my ordination day finally arrived, I woke up early and thanked the Lord for His confidence in me and promised Him I would never willingly disappoint Him. When my father put his hands on my head and ordained me a deacon, I felt I had ceased to be a child and had become an adult. I’ll never forget it.”

Teacher. *At age 14, a worthy young man may be ordained a teacher. While he may continue to fulfill the duties of a deacon, he also fulfills such additional responsibilities as preparing the sacrament, serving as a home teacher, caring for members of the ward or branch, and helping them live the gospel (see D&C 20:53–59).*

Luka Pečnik, 15, of the Celje Branch, Ljubljana Slovenia District, is “very happy to help with the sacrament.” Eager to learn more about his priesthood responsibilities, Luka says he does not want to miss any Sunday meetings. And he sees a connection between honoring the priesthood and keeping the commandments. “I try to live a worthy life so the Lord will be pleased with me,” he says.

Joshua Adduru, 15, teachers quorum president in the Bagbag Ward, Quezon City Philippines Stake, arrives at church “earlier than most members in our ward to see that the sacrament is ready before the meeting starts. It feels good to know that the Lord trusts me to assist Him in His work.” To explain why this assignment is so meaningful, Joshua quotes a scripture: “The Lord said



**Alexandr Masenkov (right), priest,
Russia**

that His ‘suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit’ (D&C 19:18). No other person could do what Jesus Christ did for us. When we partake of the sacra-

ment worthily, we become closer to Him.”

The opportunity to go home teaching “is another way of blessing others,” says Joshua. “Every month we share the First Presidency Message with the families assigned to us. The messages help them cope with trials they face every day. Our visits help us become close to them. We ask how they are, what concerns they have, and what problems we can help with or relay to our bishop. We help them feel loved and welcomed. If there are youth in the family, I invite them to come to Mutual and other activities.”

Priest. *A worthy young man may be ordained a priest at age 16. While he may continue fulfilling the duties of a deacon and teacher, he also fulfills such additional*



duties as baptizing; blessing the sacrament; and ordaining other priests, teachers, and deacons (see D&C 20:46–51).

Alexandr Masenkov, 17, of the Nevsky Branch, St. Petersburg Russia District, was nervous the first time he blessed the sacrament. “I prepared for it all week,” he remembers. “As I blessed the sacrament that first time, the Spirit touched my heart. Once my father and I were assigned to take the sacrament to a man who was blind and paralyzed. It was the first time I had blessed the sacrament outside of the meetinghouse. I felt I had a responsibility to be a servant and a witness of Jesus Christ and to do what He would do if He were there.”

Joel Bader, 16, of the Pratteln Ward, Bern Switzerland Stake, says he feels the Spirit “when I’ve prepared myself spiritually. When I really think during the week about who I truly am and what I should do, it’s easier to

keep the commandments and to make sure I use clean language and am a good example.” And he appreciates the opportunity to be a member of a priesthood quorum. “When you’re together in a quorum, you can learn a lot about getting along with others and how to plan and run meetings. The most important part about the priesthood is serving others—and receiving blessings through the priesthood.” Joel was baptized by his older brother, who was a priest at the time. And when Joel was ordained a priest, he asked a friend who was already a priest to help ordain him.

David Wichtermann, 17, a member of the Schwamendingen Ward, Zürich Switzerland Stake, knows what it’s like to be on the receiving end of priesthood service. “I was sick and in a lot of pain,” he says. “When my father gave me a blessing, the pain went away immediately. I look forward to the time when

When my ordination day finally arrived, I thanked the Lord for His confidence in me and promised Him I would never willingly disappoint Him.”

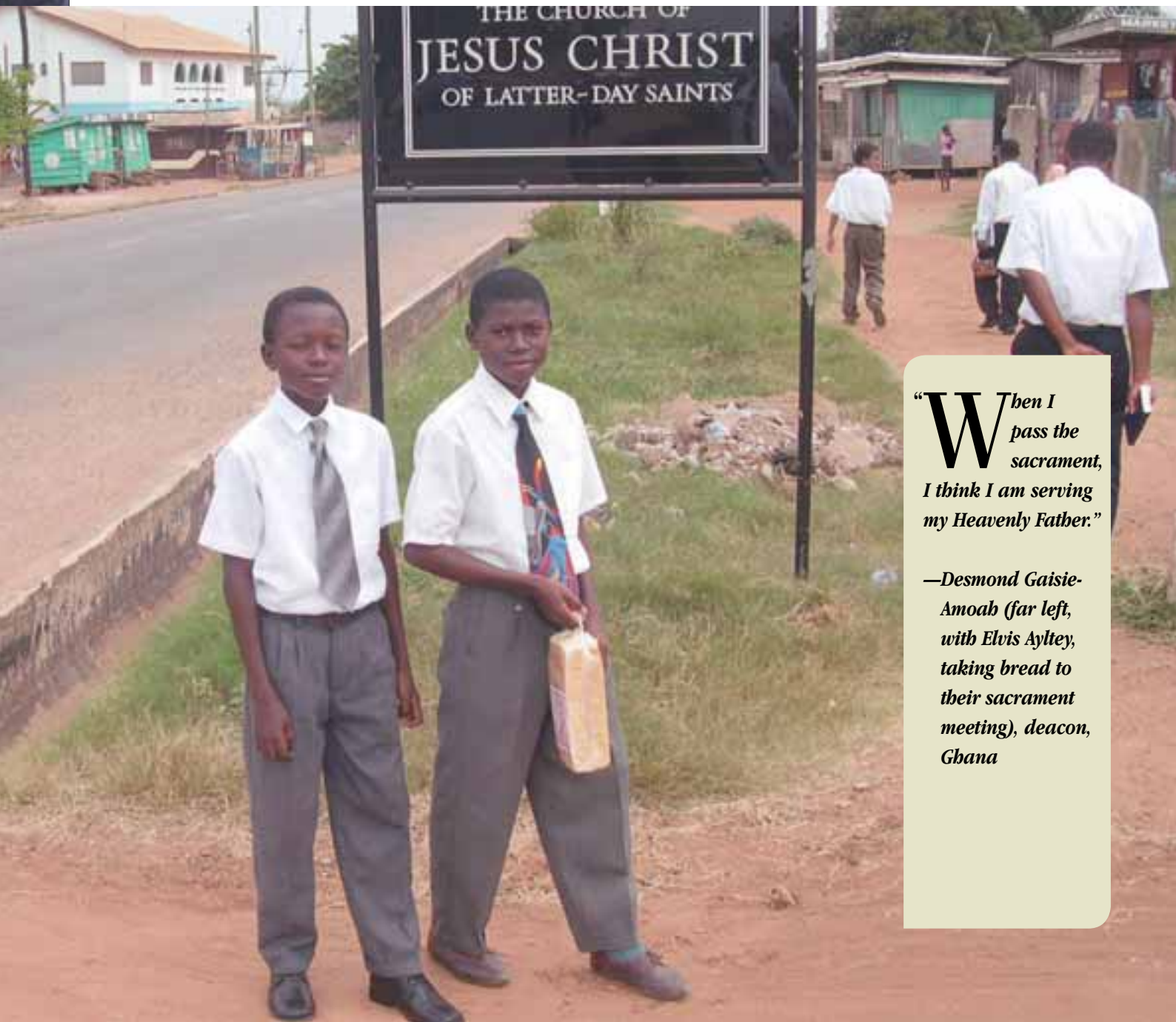
—Gerardo Emmanuel Bagnati (far right, with Norberto Hornos, ward Young Men president, center), deacon, Argentina

I can also use the priesthood to give blessings.” In the meantime David loves serving with the priesthood authority he already has. “I was able to help ordain my younger brother a deacon,” he says. “To participate in giving someone else the priesthood is a nice feeling.”

Bishop. *In each ward, a high priest is ordained and set apart as bishop—an office of the Aaronic Priesthood. The bishop presides over the Aaronic Priesthood in his ward*

and serves as president of the priests quorum. He also gives leadership in caring for the poor and overseeing other temporal matters. As the presiding high priest, he has the authority to preside over the entire ward, serving as a judge in Israel and interviewing members for temple recommends, priesthood ordinations, and other purposes.

Lu Ming-De, 38, is bishop of the Neihu Ward, Taipei Taiwan East Stake. “I must be a humble servant,” he says,



“When I pass the sacrament, I think I am serving my Heavenly Father.”

—Desmond Gaisie-Amoab (far left, with Elvis Ayltey, taking bread to their sacrament meeting), deacon, Ghana

“so I can serve others as the Savior did. The priesthood must be used for blessing others, rather than for ruling unrighteously. It is for glorifying God, not the individual.”

As president of the Aaronic Priesthood in his ward, Bishop Lu has “many expectations for our young men. I want them all to become faithful and diligent priesthood bearers. This process takes time and requires much patience and love. I think there are some essential steps for young men as they grow in the priesthood: attending seminary, serving missions, and getting married in the temple.”

Much of a bishop’s work consists of counseling ward members. “An interview is an opportunity for members to experience God’s love and receive counsel,” says Bishop Lu. “It is an opportunity to remind members about doctrines and teachings that can help resolve problems and heal them spiritually.”

As bishop of the Alberto González Ward, Santiago Chile Conchalí Stake, Luis Alberto Rodríguez Alarcón, 43, strives to increase sacrament meeting attendance and “help each ward member prepare to return to the presence of our Father in Heaven.” One of his main responsibilities is his calling as president of the Aaronic Priesthood. “My goal is to strengthen the young men and help them prepare to serve full-time missions,” he says. On Sundays, he meets with the priests quorum. “I try to make sure that before any young man leaves the priests quorum, he has had a calling. We give all the young men opportunities to serve so they can grow.”

Bishop Rodríguez says success with the young men and young women has come because “I am not only their bishop but also their friend. I meet with them, talk with them, teach them, and love them. Whether it’s in the classroom, in my office, or at an activity, we

talk together and I encourage them to express themselves. My great concern is to be with them as much as I can. I had the same kind of leadership from my bishop in Concepción, Chile,” he recalls. “Bishop Pascual Saavedra always gave me support, and I try to do the same for each of my youth.”

The Melchizedek Priesthood

The higher priesthood was originally known as “the Holy Priesthood, after the Order of the Son of God. But out of respect or reverence to the name of the Supreme Being, to avoid the too frequent repetition of his name,” it is referred to as the Melchizedek Priesthood, after “a great high priest” who lived in the days of Abraham (see D&C 107:2–4). Melchizedek Priesthood holders may fulfill Aaronic Priesthood duties. The offices of the Melchizedek Priesthood are elder, high priest, patriarch, seventy, and Apostle.

Elder. *Elders are called to teach, baptize, and watch over the Church. They have authority to bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, conduct meetings, administer to the sick, and give little children a name and a blessing.*

When Makoto Ishizaka, 26, of the Senzokuike Ward, Yokohama Japan Stake, turned 18, he received the Melchizedek Priesthood and was ordained an elder by his father. Although Makoto was still a high school student, there was an urgent need for him to serve his family as a Melchizedek Priesthood holder. His 14-year-old brother, Isamu, had a malignant brain tumor.

As Isamu awoke from surgery, his first words were “Can I have a blessing?” For more than a year, Makoto joined his father in giving frequent priesthood blessings to Isamu. “Before giving blessings, I prayed and



Peter, James, and John—three of Jesus Christ’s New Testament Apostles—conferred the Melchizedek Priesthood upon the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery.

pondered in the small hospital room,” says Makoto. “When I give blessings, I feel Heavenly Father is using me as an instrument.”

While in the hospital, Isamu studied seminary lessons, did not murmur, and expressed gratitude for his blessings. When his condition suddenly became worse, Makoto prayed in desperation: “Why is this happening?” Then he felt the voice of the Lord. “It pierced my very soul. Through the Spirit, I knew Isamu was needed in heaven. My anger and uneasiness vanished and were changed to peace and hope. Forty-eight hours later, Isamu passed away. He was 16.” Makoto dedicated Isamu’s grave and received temple ordinances in his brother’s behalf. He later served a full-time mission. “The priesthood blesses both those who perform and those who receive ordinances—and it can purify both,” he says.

Simione Sema, 29, an elder in the Suva Third Ward, Suva Fiji Stake, is stake clerk and ward Young Men president. “When I was ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood,” he says, “it was new to me, and at times my wife had to remind me that I could bless the sick and perform other priesthood work.” After Simione, his wife, and son were sealed in the Nuku’alofa Tonga Temple, their daughter was born, and he gave her a name and a blessing. “It was an astonishing experience,” he says. “I was fulfilling the role of patriarch of my family! It is wonderful to bless my family and others through the priesthood and to know I can access a heavenly power that works through obedience and through the mighty name of Jesus Christ.”

High Priest. *High priests have the right and responsibility to preside. Brethren are ordained high priests when they are called to a stake presidency, high council, or bishopric or when otherwise determined by the stake president.*



Gérald Jean Caussé (center), high priest, with his counselors in the Paris France Stake presidency and other members.

Wolfgang Pilz, 50, a high priest in the Darmstadt Ward, is president of the Mannheim Germany Stake. “My life has been blessed by the power of the priesthood many times,” he says, “such as when my father, grandfather, bishop, stake president, or an Apostle of the Lord has laid his hands upon my head to confer priesthood authority or to set me apart for a Church assignment. They have spoken in the name of the Lord and invoked His blessings on me.” In return, President Pilz has been able to “call down the blessings of heaven on my loved ones. It has become natural for my children to ask me for a blessing when facing challenges.”

Presiding over a stake “often weighs heavy,” he says, “especially when I think of the hundreds of thousands of people in our stake area who have not yet become sufficiently familiar with the gospel. Through the priesthood and a direct connection to the heavens, I find the load bearable, unrest and nervousness melt away, and inner peace and security take over.”

Some of the greatest experiences of President Pilz’s calling have come while helping Church members through the repentance process. “Nothing brings me more peace and satisfaction than experiencing with others the miracle of divine forgiveness,” he says.

Gérald Jean Caussé, 40, of the Versailles Ward, serves as president of the Paris France Stake. He tries to pattern his leadership style after “the example given by Jesus Christ,” he says. “He who presides must be the servant. He must not just give rules or tell people how to define their lives—but rather teach them to become spiritually self-sustaining. I achieve my objective when someone acquires the ability to search and receive through the Holy Ghost the inspiration to do what is right.”

Delegation enables others to help and grow. “I appreciate those around me with whom I share responsibility,” President Caussé says. “My counselors suggest good ideas and represent the Savior in their work. I feel the same about the members of the high council, the bishops, and

It is wonderful to bless my family and others through the priesthood and to know I can access a heavenly power through the mighty name of Jesus Christ.”

—Simione Sema,
elder, Fiji





A special witness of Jesus Christ is a witness to His saving work as Creator, Resurrector, Redeemer, Savior, Judge, and Light and Life of the World.”

—Elder Dallin H. Oaks, Apostle, Philippines

all of the leaders in the stake. The stake Relief Society president knows the sisters well and sees many things I would not see myself.”

The most strengthening part of his calling is interviewing stake members. “As I try to help someone during an interview, I am often enriched, filled, comforted, and consoled equally—even in the most difficult situations,” he says.

Patriarch. *Patriarchs give patriarchal blessings to Church members. These blessings are recorded and transcribed for a lifetime of study; they give the recipient insights into his or her spiritual possibilities and opportunities, indicate the person’s lineage, and give words of counsel and blessing.*

Humberto Ardón Hernández, 77, is a member of the Victorias Ward and serves as patriarch in the Guatemala City Guatemala Las Victorias Stake. “It is a unique privilege to be an instrument in the hands of the Lord to

bless His children,” he says. “The calling of a patriarch is to bless, not to attend to administrative affairs. A patriarch should give his calling total devotion and make sure he is living worthy to have the influence of the Spirit of the Lord.” To those who have not yet received a patriarchal blessing, Brother Ardón says, “I exhort you to do whatever may be necessary to obtain this marvelous blessing.” And to those who have a patriarchal blessing, he says, “Read it often. You will find messages from a loving Father who desires to bless you.”

Jack R. Carver, 62, is a member of the Yuma Fourth Ward and serves as patriarch of the Yuma Arizona Stake. To be prepared to give blessings, says Brother Carver, “I am a lot more serious about living the gospel the best I can every day. It’s always on my mind.” Brother Carver has also found that having the Spirit during a blessing has “a lot to do with the person who comes to receive

it. They have to prepare too and come with a prayerful attitude.”

José Humberto González Garza, 69, a member of the Campestre Ward, serves as patriarch in the Monterrey México Roma Stake and has seen patriarchal blessings change lives. He remembers an older woman who was promised she would be able to serve in the temple. She thought it could not happen because of her age and the distance to a temple. But a temple was later built nearby, and she found joy in serving.

“I feel so satisfied doing my duty,” Brother González says. Because he is partially blind, he uses a cane to help him get around. He also uses a hearing aid. And at times he feels he can’t do as much as he used to. But, he says, “when my children ask me, ‘Are you giving blessings, Dad?’ I tell them, ‘No, I’m receiving blessings.’”

Seventy. *Seventies are especial witnesses of Jesus Christ. They assist in building up, regulating, and strengthening the Church wherever they are assigned throughout the world. Members of the First and Second Quorums of the Seventy are sustained as General Authorities. Members of the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Quorums are sustained as Area Authority Seventies.*

“When they are ordained, members of the Seventy . . . receive apostolic authority to bear witness that Jesus is the Christ and to go forth in all the world as the Twelve may send them,” explains Elder Earl C. Tingey of the Presidency of the Seventy.¹

Elder Tan Su Kiong, 60, an Area Authority Seventy in the Asia Area, is a Malaysian citizen of Chinese descent, and he resides in Singapore. “My calling allows me to experience the worldwide Church in action,” he says. “My assignments cover Mongolia, Cambodia, Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Malaysia, Sri Lanka,

Singapore, Thailand, Taiwan, and Hong Kong.” This assignment has greatly changed his perspective. “It is like being brought up to a ‘high mountain’ and being asked to ‘look’ (see 1 Nephi 11:1, 8). I am involved in mission visits, conferences, and stake reorganizations. These experiences all require relying on the Spirit as we help build leadership, faith, and understanding.

“As I attend meetings in these countries and hear the hymns of Zion sung, prayers offered, and testimonies borne in many languages,” he says, “and as I see missionaries teaching and testifying, I realize I am witnessing



Jack R. Carver,
patriarch, United
States of America

prophecy fulfilled: ‘It shall come to pass in that day, that every man shall hear the fulness of the gospel in his own tongue, and in his own language, through those who are ordained unto this power’ (D&C 90:11).”

Elder Tan echoes what many priesthood leaders say about the importance of the support they receive from their families: “I would not have this privilege or blessing if my wife and family were not supportive. I am so grateful for my wife’s faith and testimony and for the wonderful influence she has on our children.”

Elder Lindsay T. Dil, 52, an Area Authority Seventy in the Australia/New Zealand Area, says that “as a Seventy you quickly learn to love people you don’t even know, because the Spirit confirms they are sons and daughters of God. I travel frequently, and everywhere I go I meet



Humberto Ardón
Hernández, patriarch,
Guatemala

faithful Latter-day Saints and wonderful priesthood leaders. It is humbling to feel so inadequate but, with the Spirit, to be able to do what the Lord requires.

“Wherever I go I try to share the message that Jesus is the Christ and witness that ‘there is no other way or means whereby man can be saved’ (Alma 38:9). My testimony of the Savior’s Atonement has been deepened because of this call. I am a witness of the Savior’s divine role.”

Apostle. *Apostles are special witnesses of Jesus Christ in all the world. As members of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, they administer Church affairs worldwide. Although each Apostle receives all the keys of God’s kingdom on earth, he serves under the direction of the senior Apostle—the President of the Church—who exercises all of the keys.*

Elder Dallin H. Oaks, 71, of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, currently serves as Area President in the Philippines. “The priesthood has blessed my life,” he says, “by putting me under covenant to use its authority and to spend my personal efforts to serve the Lord and His children. These obligations have had a profound disciplining influence on the choices I have made in my life. The priesthood of God has also blessed me with the assurance that those I love most are mine for eternity if we are faithful.

“As we keep the covenants associated with the priesthood, we inevitably bless the lives of others. We do this through our service to others and through our example of service, which benefits many more than those directly served. We serve by leading, by teaching, by officiating in the ordinances of the priesthood, and just by keeping the commandments.

“The most fulfilling parts of my calling are opportunities

to see people’s lives enriched as they are blessed by the gospel of Jesus Christ and to associate with the best people in the world—people who are willingly devoting their lives to serving the Lord and cheerfully making the sacrifices that entails.”

Elder Oaks explains the role of Apostles as special witnesses of Jesus Christ: “A special witness of Jesus Christ is a witness to the priesthood or authority of the Lord and a witness to His saving work as Creator, Resurrector, Redeemer, Savior, Judge, and Light and Life of the World. This means witnessing to the truth and power of the

plan of salvation with all of its doctrines, ordinances, commandments, covenants, and blessings and witnessing to its glorious purpose, which is for each of the sons and daughters of God to attain his or her divine potential of eternal life.”

Something Wonderful and Magnificent

President Gordon B. Hinckley has said that those who have received the priesthood “have had bestowed upon [them] something wonderful and magnificent, something of the very essence of godhood. . . . It is concerned with life and death, with family and Church, with the great and transcendent nature of God Himself and His eternal work.”² ■

For more information, see Gospel Principles (1997), 85–93; see also D&C 13, 20, 84, 107.

The following assisted the Church magazines staff in preparing this article: Michael and Marged Kirkpatrick, Ghana; Nestor Curbelo, Argentina; Albin Lotrič, Slovenia; Mike Ramirez, Philippines; Vladimir Egorov, Olga Dilevskaia, and Sandra VanDyke, Russia; Shirleen Saunders, Switzerland; Emily Chien, Taiwan; Marcela Opazo Sandoval and Claudia Moncada Valdés, Chile; Okada Takuji, Japan; Sera Balenagasau, Fiji; Mark McKenzie, Germany; Jean-Marie Hauser, France; Virna Rodríguez, Guatemala; David and Linda Thornell, Hong Kong/Singapore; and Susan Watkins, Australia/New Zealand.

NOTES

1. “Area Authority Seventies: ‘To Bear Record of My Name in All the World,’” *Liabona*, Oct. 2002, 28; *Ensign*, Oct. 2002, 52.
2. “Loyalty,” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, May 2003, 58.



**Elder Lindsay T. Dil (right),
Area Authority Seventy,
Australia/New Zealand
Area**

THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM



BY PRESIDENT
WILFORD
WOODRUFF
(1807–98)

Fourth President
of the Church

*Wilford Woodruff
was born on
1 March 1807
in Connecticut
to Aphek and
Beulah Woodruff.*

Zera Pulsipher, an early Church missionary, baptized him on 31 December 1833 in an icy stream near Richland, New York. He was ordained an Apostle by Brigham Young on 26 April 1839 and became Church President on 7 April 1889. He died on 2 September 1898 in San Francisco, California. This is a portion of the remarks given by President Woodruff on 2 June 1889 at a YMMIA conference.



Before the close of this conference there is a subject upon which I wish to bear my testimony. . . . I am . . . the only one living in the flesh who was with . . . Joseph Smith, the Prophet of God, when he gave to the Twelve Apostles their charge concern-

ing the priesthood and the keys of the kingdom of God; and as I myself shall soon pass away like other men, I want to leave my testimony to these Latter-day Saint[s].

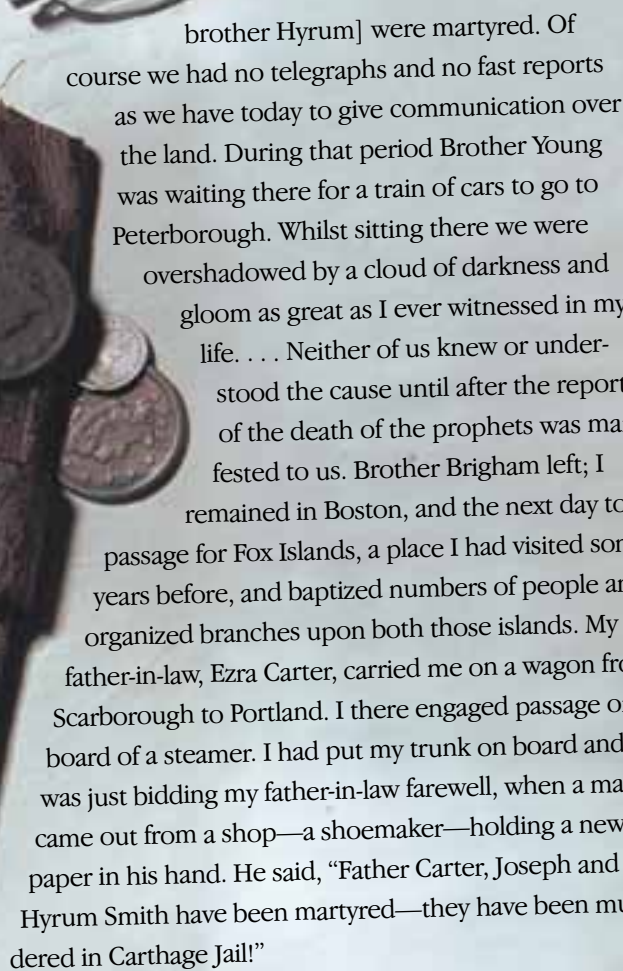
News of the Martyrdom

I was sitting with Brigham Young in the depot in the city of Boston at the time when the two prophets [Joseph Smith and his



I was just bidding my father-in-law farewell, when a man came out from a shop, holding a newspaper. He said, "Joseph and Hyrum Smith have been martyred!"

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT T. BARRETT;
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRISTINA SMITH;
ARTIFACTS COURTESY OF MUSEUM
OF CHURCH HISTORY AND ART



brother Hyrum] were martyred. Of course we had no telegraphs and no fast reports as we have today to give communication over the land. During that period Brother Young was waiting there for a train of cars to go to Peterborough. Whilst sitting there we were overshadowed by a cloud of darkness and gloom as great as I ever witnessed in my life. . . . Neither of us knew or understood the cause until after the report of the death of the prophets was manifested to us. Brother Brigham left; I remained in Boston, and the next day took passage for Fox Islands, a place I had visited some years before, and baptized numbers of people and organized branches upon both those islands. My father-in-law, Ezra Carter, carried me on a wagon from Scarborough to Portland. I there engaged passage on board of a steamer. I had put my trunk on board and was just bidding my father-in-law farewell, when a man came out from a shop—a shoemaker—holding a newspaper in his hand. He said, “Father Carter, Joseph and Hyrum Smith have been martyred—they have been murdered in Carthage Jail!”

As soon as I looked at the paper, the Spirit said to me that it was true. I had no time for consultation, the steamer’s bell was ringing, so I stepped on board and took my trunk back to land. As I drew it off, the plank was drawn in. I told Father Carter to drive me back to Scarborough. I there took the car for Boston. . . .

Next day I met Brigham Young in the streets of Boston, he having just returned, opposite to Sister Voce’s house. We reached out our hands, but neither of us was able to speak a word. We walked into Sister Voce’s house. We each took a seat and [covered] our faces. We were overwhelmed with grief and our faces were soon bathed in a flood of tears. . . . After we had done weeping we began to converse together concerning the death of the prophets. In the course of the conversation, he smote his hand upon

his thigh and said, “Thank God, the keys of the kingdom are here.” . . .

The Last Meeting

All that President Young or myself or any member of the Quorum need have done in the matter was to have referred to the last instructions at the last meeting we had with the Prophet Joseph before starting on our mission. I have alluded to that meeting many times in my life.

The Prophet Joseph, I am now satisfied, had a thorough presentiment that that was the last meeting we would hold together here in the flesh. We had had our endowments; we had had all the blessings sealed upon our heads that were ever given to the apostles or prophets on the face of the earth. On that occasion the Prophet Joseph rose up and said to us: “Brethren, I have desired to live to see this temple built. I shall never live to see it, but you will. I have sealed upon your heads all the keys of the kingdom of God. I have sealed upon you every key, power, principle that the God of heaven has revealed to me. Now, no matter where I may go or what I may do, the kingdom rests upon you.”

Now, don’t you wonder why we, as Apostles, could not have understood that the prophet of God was going to be taken away from us? But we did not understand it. The Apostles in the days of Jesus Christ could not understand what the Savior meant when He told them, “I am going away; if I do not go away the Comforter will not come!” [see John 16:7]. Neither did we understand what Joseph meant. “But,” he said, after having done this, “ye Apostles of the Lamb of God, my brethren, upon your shoulders this kingdom rests; now you have got to round up your shoulders and bear off the kingdom.” And he also made this very strange remark: “If you do not do it you will be damned.”

I am the last man living who heard that declaration. He told the truth, too; for would not any of the men who have held the keys of the kingdom of God or an apostleship in this Church have been under condemnation and would not the wrath of God have rested upon them if they had deserted these principles or denied and turned from them

and undertaken to serve themselves instead of the work of the Lord which was committed to their hands?

The Keys Are Here

When the Lord gave the keys of the kingdom of God, the keys of the Melchizedek Priesthood, of the apostleship, and sealed them upon the head of Joseph Smith, He sealed them upon his head to stay here upon the earth until the coming of the Son of Man. Well might Brigham Young say, "The keys of the kingdom of God are here." They were with him to the day of his death. They then rested upon the head of another man—President John Taylor. He held those keys to the hour of his death. They then fell by turn, or in the providence of God, upon Wilford Woodruff.

I say to the Latter-day Saints the keys of the kingdom of God are here, and they are going to stay here, too, until the coming of the Son of Man. Let all Israel understand that. They may not rest upon my head but a short time, but they will then rest on the head of another Apostle, and another after him, and so continue until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in the clouds of heaven to "reward every man according to the deeds done in the body" [see *History of the Church*, 1:245]. . . .

We Are in the Hands of the Lord

. . . I say to all Israel at this day, I say to the whole world, that the God of Israel, who organized this Church and kingdom, never ordained any President or Presidency to lead it astray. Hear it, ye Israel, no man who has ever breathed the breath of life can hold these keys of the kingdom of God and lead the people astray. . . .



Let us make up our minds to serve and honor God. Do not have any fears concerning the kingdom; the Lord will lead that aright; and if Brother Woodruff or any of the Presidency of this Church should take any course to lead you astray, the Lord will remove us out of the way. We are in the hands of the Lord, and those keys will be held and taken care of by the God of Israel until He comes whose right it is to reign. ■

Published in Millennial Star, 2 Sept. 1889, 545–49; subheads added; paragraphing altered; punctuation, capitalization, and spelling modernized.

The Prophet Joseph rose up and said to us: "I have sealed upon your heads all the keys of the kingdom of God. . . . No matter where I may go or what I may do, the kingdom rests upon you."

Questions & Answers

How can I feel peace with so many frightening things happening in the world and even in my own school?

L I A H O N A

We live in a world full of fear and frightening events. But feeling peace inside is possible even if everything around us is chaos. Jesus Christ offers each of us the same peace He promised His Apostles: “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27).

There are a lot of things we can do to help bring peace into our lives—pray, study the scriptures, listen to uplifting music, go to church and seminary or institute, attend the temple. But it really all centers on one thing: “The price of peace is righteousness,” said President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [1988], 703). Or as President Gordon B. Hinckley has said, “You will find peace and happiness if you will live the gospel” (“Words of the Living Prophet,” *Liabona*, Mar. 1997, 16; “Inspirational Thoughts,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1997, 6).

Feeling peace inside is possible even during times of adversity.

We can feel peace when we keep covenants and commandments.

Although we will be tested and bad things will happen, we can have the calm assurance that God is watching over us.

Peace comes through the Holy Ghost, so we must try to be worthy of His companionship.

Repentance can free us from sin and guilt and restore peace to our souls.

That doesn’t mean we have to be perfect to have peace. But we have to be trying our best to choose the right and to get up every time we fall down.

Why does having the Lord’s peace in our hearts depend upon our righteousness? One reason is that we cannot do wrong and feel right. Another reason is that the peace Jesus offers us comes through the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, and we must be living worthy of the Spirit’s companionship. If we have sinned, guilt will keep us from feeling the Lord’s peace. But through repentance we can become free from guilt and sin and be eligible for the companionship of the Holy Ghost again.

It is important to know that Jesus Christ’s promise of peace does not guarantee a life without hardships. All of us will be tested, since that is why we are here. Bad things sometimes happen to us or to someone close to us. But we can still feel peace.

After suffering in Liberty Jail for months,



PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERT CASEY; POSED BY MODELS

the Prophet Joseph Smith received these words from God:

“My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment;

“And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high” (D&C 121:7–8).

Our trials may seem like they last longer than a small moment, but with God’s help we become stronger.

“It is my testimony that we are facing difficult times,” said President

James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency. “We must be courageously obedient. My witness is that we will be called upon to prove our spiritual stamina, for the days ahead will be filled with affliction and difficulty. But with the assuring comfort of a personal relationship with God, we will be given a calming courage” (“That We Might Know Thee, the Only True God, and Jesus Christ,” *Liabona*, Feb. 1999, 5–6; *Ensign*, Jan. 1999, 5).

READERS



Modern revelation states, “Learn that he who doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world,

and eternal life in the world to come” (D&C 59:23). We can find peace by living the gospel as taught by our Savior and our modern prophets.

Israel O. Velasco, 17, General Santos Fourth Ward, General Santos Philippines Stake

There have been conflicts in every period of history. But if we obey the commandments and principles of the gospel, the promises of the Lord will be fulfilled, and our souls will be filled with peace. We will be able to withstand difficult times without losing faith if we are diligent and endure to the end.

Carlos Freire, 16, Bolivar Ward,
Guayaquil Ecuador Garcia Moreno Stake

Since one of the fruits of the Spirit is peace, one of the things that helps me feel peace is to live a clean life so I can be guided by the Holy Ghost. I love to sing, and this brings me peace. Singing hymns or listening to arrangements of hymns calms me and helps me keep the Spirit.

Óscar Luciano Mackay López, 17, Las Colinas Branch,
San Isidro Panamá Stake



I feel peace by reading the scriptures, doing good things, and constantly praying to our Heavenly Father for guidance. He can always make things easier for us, especially during these bad times.

Denise Talaboc, 13, Mati Second Branch,
Mati Philippines District

In spite of the challenges and atrocities that so often happen, something that has helped me find peace in my life is knowing that God exists, He has absolute power over everything, He is loving, and He knows each of us. If there is anything we need to fix in our lives, we must do it now so we can enjoy the complete peace the Spirit of the Lord can bring into our lives.

Raquel Iveth Hurtado, 17, Los Repartos Branch,
Leon Nicaragua District



"Learn of me, and listen to my words; walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me" (D&C 19:23). This scripture tells us how we can find peace despite



"Are these perilous times? They are.

But there is no need to fear. We can have peace in our hearts and peace in our homes. We can be an influence for good in this world, every one of us.

"May the God of heaven, the Almighty, bless us, help us, as we walk our various ways in the uncertain days that lie ahead. May we look to Him with unfailing faith."

President Gordon B. Hinckley, "The Times in Which We Live," *Liahona*, Jan. 2002, 86; *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 74.

all that goes on around us. I have applied this scripture to my own life and have found peace in my soul.

Natacha D. Lemire, 14, Laval Ward,
Montréal Québec Stake

It is not always easy to feel the peace of the Lord; after all, we are in a probationary period and are tested every day. But if we keep the commandments and live the gospel, we can have peace.

Bjoern T. Kuchel, 20, Langenhorn Ward,
Neumünster Germany Stake



It is possible to have peace and happiness even amidst so much adversity. We can withstand anything with our testimony as our shield. The knowledge that Jesus

is our Savior and God is our Father is an anchor in the storm of life. No adversity is greater than the happiness and peace that come to us when we have faith and a strong testimony.

Franciélly Aparecidapósta, 19, Guarani Branch,
Belo Horizonte Brazil Stake

Liahona and reader responses are intended for help and perspective, not as pronouncements of Church doctrine.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Youth readers: Send your answer to the question below, along with your name, age, ward and stake (or branch and district), and a photograph to:

Questions and Answers 05/04

50 East North Temple Street, Floor 24

Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA

Or e-mail: cur-liahona-imag@ldschurch.org

Please respond by 15 May 2004.

QUESTION

"Some people have told me I have an inferiority complex, but as far as I can tell, I'm just inferior. Since I'm not as smart or good-looking or talented as everybody else, what can I do to gain confidence and feel better?" ■

Did You Know?



It Happened in April

Following are a few significant events that happened in Church history during the month of April.

3 April 1836: The Savior, Moses, Elias, and Elijah appeared in the Kirtland Temple to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery (see D&C 110).



5 April 1847: The first pioneer company left Winter Quarters for the Salt Lake Valley.

28 April 1961: Elder Gordon B. Hinckley, then an Assistant

to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, offered a prayer opening the Philippines for missionary work.

24 April 1999: The Bogotá Colombia Temple was dedicated.

30 April 2000: The Cochabamba Bolivia Temple was dedicated.

29 April 2001: The Guadalajara México Temple was dedicated.

28 April 2002: The Monterrey México Temple was dedicated.

Test Your Book of Mormon Knowledge

1. Who was the father of Amaleki, one of the writers of the book of Omni?

- a. Jarom
- b. Omni
- c. Abinadom
- d. Chemish

2. When Alma was commanded to return to the city of Ammonihah, who invited him to stay at his house?

- a. Abinadi
- b. Amulek
- c. Zeezrom
- d. Nephiah

3. Who hid the plates of Nephi in the Hill Shim in about A.D. 321?

- a. Moroni
- b. Mormon
- c. Amos
- d. Ammaron



FASTING AND PRAYER

“Fasting and prayer can help develop within us courage and

confidence. It can strengthen our character and build self-restraint and discipline. Often when we fast, our righteous prayers and petitions have greater power. Testimonies grow. We mature spiritually and emotionally and sanctify our souls. Each time we fast, we gain a little more control over our worldly appetites and passions.”

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Law of the Fast,” *Liahona*, July 2001, 89; *Ensign*, May 2001, 73.

Leadership Tip

As you plan Mutual activities, remember to delegate. And as you make assignments, if you follow a few simple steps, everything will be more successful:

1. Identify the tasks that need to be accomplished.
2. Assign someone to complete each task. Keep a record of who was assigned, and suggest to the assigned people that they write themselves a reminder note and report to you by a certain date.
3. Follow up on the assignments you made. Following up might



involve a quick telephone call or visit.

4. Always recognize the efforts of those who have helped and thank them for their assistance.

Answers: 1c (see Omni 1:12); 2b (see Alma 8:19-21); 3d (see Mormon 1:1-3)

WINTER QUARTERS, BY C. C. A. CHRISTENSEN, COURTESY OF BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF ART, ALL RIGHTS RESERVED; CHRIST APPEARING TO JOSEPH SMITH AND OLIVER COWDERY IN THE KIRTLAND TEMPLE, BY ROBERT T. BARRETT



Only a Question of Time

In March 2002 I sent a letter to the address in the *Liabona*, and in July I received a response from the Ukraine Kyiv Mission. It contained literature regarding The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

I want to thank the First Presidency for the magnanimity shown in relations with other religions, notwithstanding the persecutions experienced by the Church at the time of its organization. This speaks of humanity and Christian charity. Currently in Kirovohrad we have something akin to New York in 1820—all congregations contending among themselves. But I firmly believe in the revelation given to the Prophet Joseph Smith. Unfortunately, the Church is not yet represented in

my city, but I believe it is only a question of time.

*Grigoriy Ivanovich Timchenko,
Kirovohrad, Ukraine*

Liabona Brings Couple Together

My family joined the Church when I was seven years old, and it was because of my reading and valuing the *Liabona* that I met my husband.

When I receive the monthly issue of the magazine, I take it with me everywhere so I can read it. One day I was calmly reading it on the bus to work when a young man stopped at my side and asked, “Are you a member of the Church?” I didn’t quite trust him, so I answered yes, then asked him what stake he belonged to. (I assumed if he wasn’t a member he wouldn’t know what a stake was.) He told me the name of his stake, and we talked until we got off the bus.

Some time after this, a regional choir was organized to prepare for the visit of the prophet. That was when this young man and I started to see each other more frequently. Later we were married and went to

the Guatemala City temple to be sealed. We’ve been married for almost three years. The gospel has given me the opportunity to have a very special husband, who is faithful in the Church. I am very happy to have the gospel in my life.

*Rebeca Sierra de Zelaya,
Fraternidad Ward,
Tegucigalpa Honduras Stake*

Becoming a Disciple of Jesus Christ

Since I was baptized into the Church in Japan, I have had experiences that have helped me become a disciple of Jesus Christ. I know that to live a Christlike life is not easy, but when I study the scriptures with all my heart, I feel good spiritually. The *Liabona* has helped me understand what Heavenly Father desires of me. I love to read the First Presidency Message and the experiences of members who love this gospel.

*Kawano Hitoshi,
BYU—Hawaii 11th Ward,
BYU—Hawaii
First Stake*

Call for Inspiring Temple Experiences

Have you had an experience that would inspire other members to prepare themselves for temple worship or to increase their temple attendance? If you would like to share a true story with other readers, please send it to Temple Experiences, *Liabona*, Room 2420, 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA; or e-mail to cur-liabona-imag@ldschurch.org.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN LUKE, POSED BY MODEL



the Friend





COME LISTEN TO A
PROPHET'S VOICE

Crossroads

BY PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON
First Counselor in the First Presidency

In Lewis Carroll's classic *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Alice finds herself coming to a crossroads with two paths before her, each stretching onward but in opposite directions. She is confronted by the Cheshire Cat, of whom she asks, "Which path shall I take?"

The cat answers: "That depends where you want to go. If you do not know where you want to go, it doesn't really matter which path you take!"¹

Unlike Alice, each of you knows where you want to go. It *does* matter which way you go, for the path you follow in this life leads to the path you will follow in the next.

Our Heavenly Father has given to each of us the power to think and reason and decide. Each of us has the responsibility to choose. You may ask, "Are decisions really that important?" I say to you, decisions determine destiny. You can't make eternal

decisions without eternal consequences.

May I provide a simple formula by which you can measure the choices which confront you. It's easy to remember: "You can't be right by doing wrong; you can't be wrong by doing right."

Courage is required to think right, choose right, and do right, for such a course will rarely, if ever, be the easiest to follow. Eternal life in the kingdom of our Father is your goal, and self-discipline will surely be required if you are to achieve it.

You are precious in the sight of your Heavenly Father. He hears your prayers. He extends to you His peace and His love. Stay close to Him and to His Son, and you will not walk alone. ●

From an April 2002 general Young Women meeting address.

NOTE

1. Adapted from Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1992), 76.



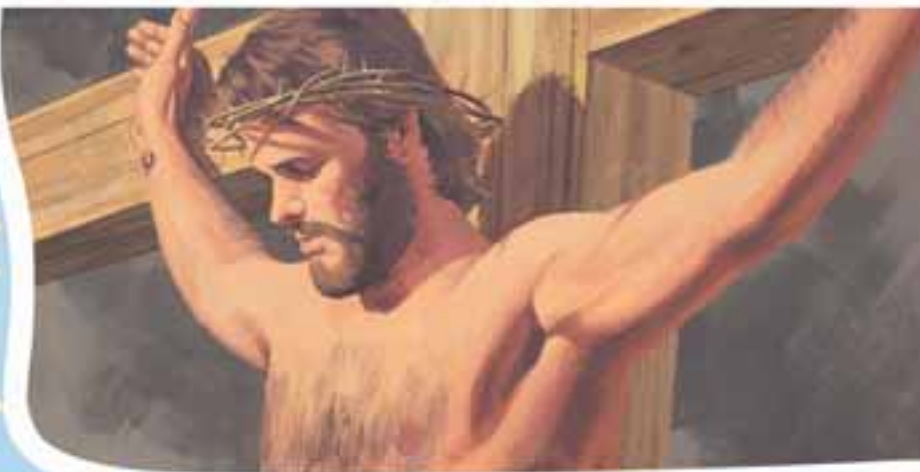
The decisions we make in this life lead to our destiny in the next life. President Monson reminds us to make righteous choices.

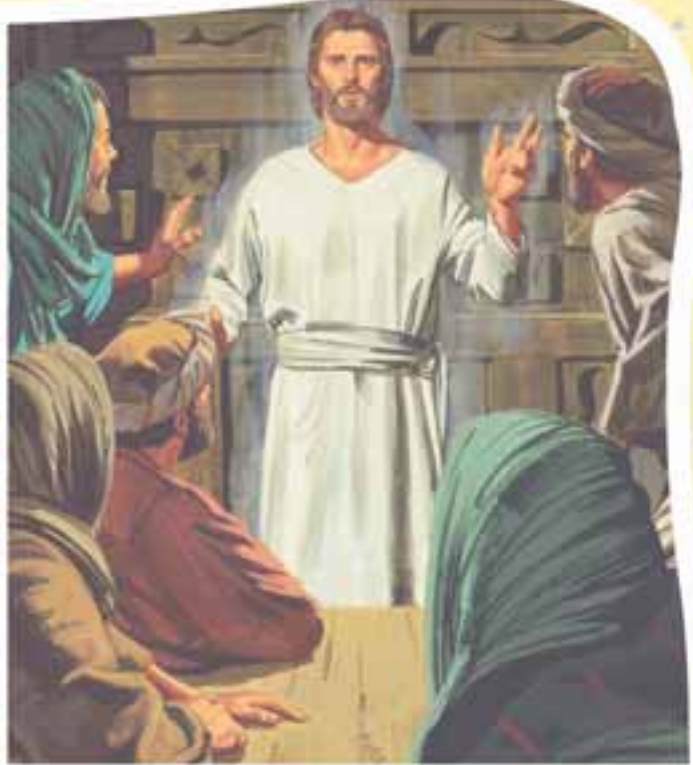
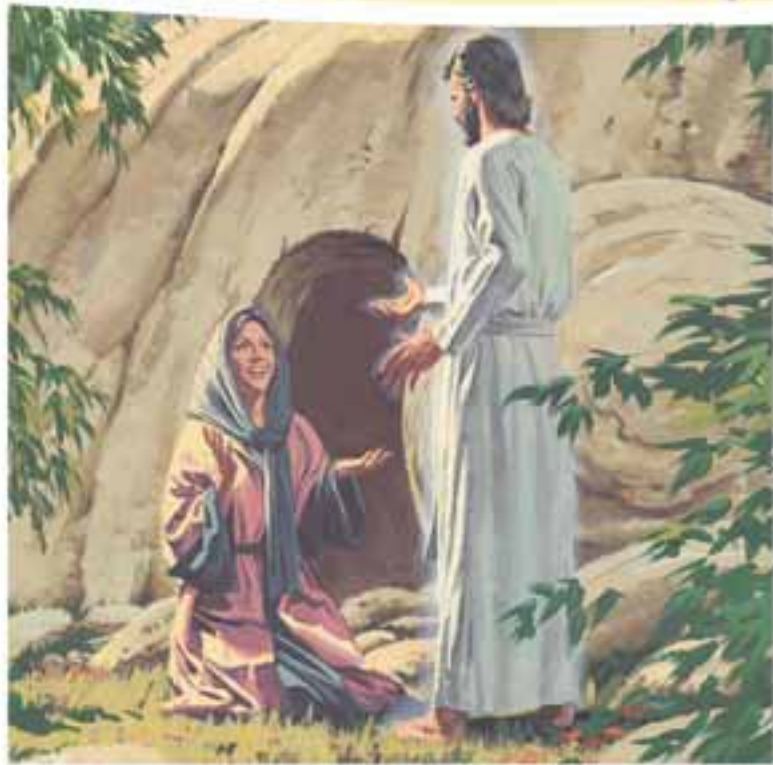
FOR LITTLE FRIENDS

The Easter Story

*"I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer"
(Isaiah 49:26).*

A story for you to tell
ILLUSTRATED BY PAUL MANN





If I Choose to Obey, I'll Be Happy All Day!

BY SHEILA E. WILSON

“Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liahona*, Oct. 1998, 24).



After a family home evening lesson on obedience, four-year-old Brandon was anxious to try harder to obey his mom and dad. He and his mom decided that a reminder might help him. Brandon would repeat, “If I choose to obey, I’ll be happy all day!”

One day Brandon wanted to play at his friend’s house. He raced across the yard when suddenly the words “If I choose to obey, I’ll be happy all day!” came to his mind. Remembering that he should ask his mom first, Brandon headed back to his house.

When he turned eight, Brandon was baptized and received the gift of the Holy Ghost. He read in his scriptures that the Holy Ghost would show him all things he should do (see 2 Nephi 32:5). Brandon knew the Holy Ghost would remind him to follow Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ set the perfect example for us. The scriptures teach us that “blessed is every one that . . . walketh in [the Lord’s] ways. . . . Happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee” (Psalm 128:1–2). When we follow Jesus Christ, we will be happy not only all day but throughout all eternity!

Beatitude Book

In the Sermon on the Mount (see Matthew 5; 3 Nephi 12) Jesus taught us how to live so we can be happy. Some of these teachings are known as the Beatitudes. *Beatitude* means “happiness” or “blessing.” To make a Beatitude Book, glue page F7 on a sheet of paper. Cut on the solid lines. Glue the second strip to the tab on the first strip. Fold back and forth on the dotted lines.

Sharing Time Ideas

1. Prepare and hide wordstrips with the following words: *The, Holy Ghost, Will, Help, Me, To, Follow, Jesus Christ*. Get the children’s attention by whispering, “Listen to my voice, and I will help you find some wordstrips.” Whisper directions and help a child to find each wordstrip. Then whisper directions to help the children put them in order. Recite the sentence together. Remind the children that the Holy Ghost also speaks softly and helps us follow Jesus Christ. Show the children a picture of the First Presidency, and read the first two paragraphs on page 1 of the Faith in God guidebook. Show a picture of the Savior, and read about baptismal covenants on pages 2 and 3. Have the children discover and write the three promises we make when we are baptized: to keep His commandments, take His name upon us, and always remember Him. If we keep our baptismal covenants, the Holy Ghost will always be with us. Invite adults or children to share experiences of how listening to the Holy Ghost has helped them. Ask the children to think of the Savior’s love as they sing a song or hymn.

2. Play the game *Leader Says*. Have the children listen closely to your commands and follow only when you say, “leader says,” first (for example, “leader says walk in place”; “stop walking”—children should continue to walk because you didn’t say, “leader says,” first). Tell the children they were great followers, and explain that there is someone else they should listen closely to and follow. Read together John 13:15. Post the Savior’s picture. Around His picture, list songs or hymns that tell how we can follow Him. Encourage older and younger children to work together as you divide them into groups. Give each group a scripture reference (for example, Ephesians 4:32; 1 John 4:11; Mosiah 1:6–7; D&C 21:1, 4–5). Have them (1) Read the scripture out loud and explain the principle we should follow; (2) Choose a song or hymn that matches Jesus Christ’s teaching and lead the Primary in singing it; (3) Act out ways we can follow Jesus Christ’s teaching and let others guess what they are doing; (4) Explain how we will be happy by keeping this commandment. ●



Sermon on the Mount

The Teachings
of Jesus



I will follow my
Savior's example.

*"Blessed are the poor in
spirit who come unto me, for
theirs is the kingdom of heaven"*
(3 Nephi 12:3; see also Matthew 5:3).



I will trust the Lord.
The Holy Ghost will bring
me comfort and peace.

*"Blessed are they that mourn: for they
shall be comforted"* (Matthew 5:4).



I will obey Heavenly Father's
commandments.

*"Blessed are the meek: for they shall
inherit the earth"* (Matthew 5:5).



I will study the
scriptures daily.

*"Blessed are all they who do hunger
and thirst after righteousness, for they
shall be filled with the Holy Ghost"*
(3 Nephi 12:6; see also Matthew 5:6).

Glue



I will forgive others.

*"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall
obtain mercy"* (Matthew 5:7).



I will keep my baptismal
covenants.

*"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they
shall see God"* (Matthew 5:8).



I will be kind and not show
anger to others.

*"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they
shall be called the children of God"*
(Matthew 5:9).



I will bear my testimony
in word and deed.

*"Blessed are they which are persecuted
for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the
kingdom of heaven"* (Matthew 5:10).



I will be happy when
I follow the teachings
of Jesus Christ.

*Jesus gave the same teachings to both
the Jews (see Matthew 5-7) and the
Nephites (see 3 Nephi 12-14).*

“Aren’t You a Mormon?”

“Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12).

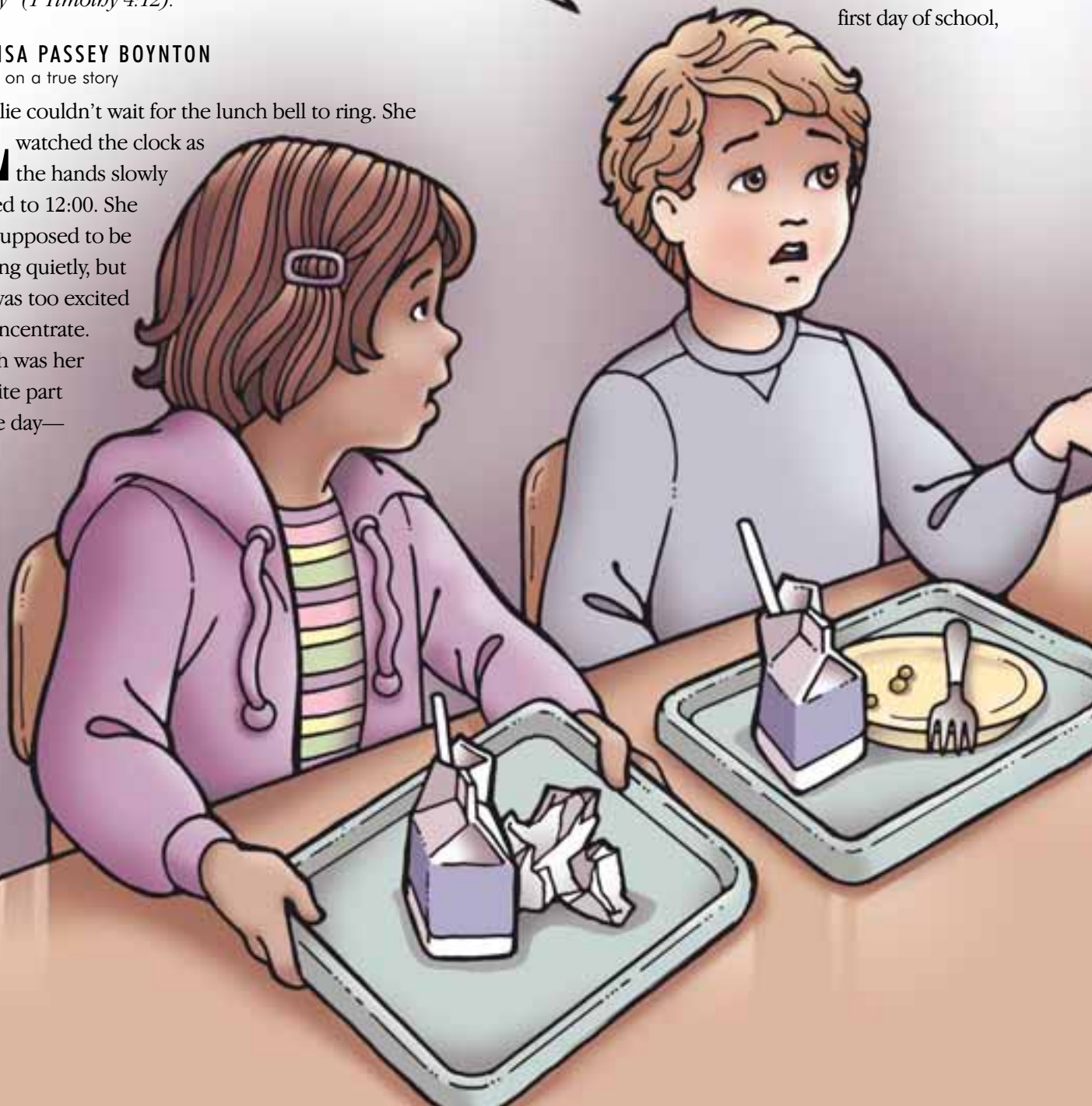
BY LISA PASSEY BOYNTON

Based on a true story

Lillie couldn't wait for the lunch bell to ring. She watched the clock as the hands slowly moved to 12:00. She was supposed to be reading quietly, but she was too excited to concentrate. Lunch was her favorite part of the day—

a time to be with her new friends, talking, laughing, and making plans for after school.

Lillie had moved a few months ago, and at first she had felt alone and afraid. The first week in Primary, she met one other girl in her class, but she lived far across town and went to another school. Luckily, on Lillie's first day of school,



she was placed in the same sixth-grade class as Teresa. Teresa was very friendly, and now Lillie was part of a fun group. It was hard being the new girl in school, but Teresa and her friends made Lillie feel welcome.

Finally the bell clanged, and Lillie grabbed her sack lunch from inside her desk. Teresa called, "Wait for me by the door. I have to grab my backpack."

Lillie saw Jackie coming from a classroom down the hall and waved. "Hey, Lillie," Jackie called over the noisy chatter. "Are you ready for lunch?"



"I am now," she said as Teresa came up beside her and linked arms with her. Together they followed Jackie to the lunchroom and found a table where everyone could sit. Lillie sat between Jackie and a boy named Brad and quickly unwrapped her lunch. Brad asked if she had seen the game on TV the night before. Jackie discussed her birthday party coming up the next month. Lillie ate her lunch happily.

After lunch most of the others scattered, but Lillie and her friends pushed back their chairs and continued talking. Brad told funny jokes that made everyone laugh. Jackie described something funny her little sister had done. Lillie wished she had something witty and wonderful to say too, but nothing came to her mind.

Lunch was almost over. The cafeteria workers began cleaning the tables. Teresa imitated a popular movie star, and everyone laughed. Lillie took a deep breath and decided to do something she had never done before. She took the Lord's name in vain, giggled, then said, "That was so funny, Teresa!"

Suddenly, the lunchroom fell silent. Lillie felt her face grow red with embarrassment as everyone looked at her. Brad shook his head slowly. "Lillie," he asked softly, "aren't you a Mormon?"

"Yeah," Jackie said, "I thought Mormons didn't swear."

Lillie felt sick. She couldn't say anything. The bell rang, and everyone shuffled back to class. Teresa walked beside Lillie, but she didn't say a word.

All afternoon Lillie wondered why she had said such a thing. She knew it was wrong. She had never said it before. Her teacher asked her several questions about the day's lesson, but she shook her head and said she didn't know. She couldn't wait for school to end so she could go home and hide under her bed.

After school Lillie told Teresa she had to hurry home. She ran

from the building, tears in her eyes and a big lump in her throat. When her mother asked about her day, she was too ashamed to answer and hurried to her room.

How had it happened? She had been eager to impress the others, but she had hurt her spirit instead. She knew she had to ask for forgiveness. If her actions had disappointed her new friends, how much more must they have disappointed Heavenly Father.

That night Lillie couldn't eat her dinner, and it was hard to look at her parents. Finally her father gently asked what was troubling her. The story spilled out, mixed with bitter tears. "Dad, I am so sorry. I feel terrible," Lillie cried.

Her father put his arm around her shoulders. "That's an important part of repentance, Lillie. You truly have to be sorry for what you do—or say."

Lillie wiped her eyes. "Oh, I am, Dad. I'll never swear again. Never!"

Her father nodded. "Good. Now go tell Heavenly Father what you just told me, and I'm sure you'll feel better soon."

As Lillie knelt beside her bed and prayed, she felt her heart would break. She thought of other mistakes she had made and wondered how Heavenly Father and Jesus could continue to love and forgive her. But as she whispered, "I am so sorry," she felt the peaceful warmth of the Holy Ghost. Finishing her prayer, she was filled with the strength to do one more thing she needed to do.

Lillie shakily dialed Teresa's phone number. She could barely speak, but she managed to say she was sorry for what she had said at lunch. Then she called Jackie and Brad.

"Do I have to go to school today?" she asked her mother the next morning. She didn't want to face her friends. What must they think of her?

Her mother hugged her. "Yes. If you don't, it will be harder tomorrow."

Teresa found Lillie before school and gave her a quick hug. "I can't believe you called everyone and said you were sorry. I never could have done that!"

Jackie called from the doorway of her classroom. "Lillie! I have to talk to you about my birthday party, OK? See you at lunch."

Lillie gave a small sigh of relief and slid into her chair. She never wanted to feel the hurt of a wrong choice again. Even if her friends hadn't known she was a

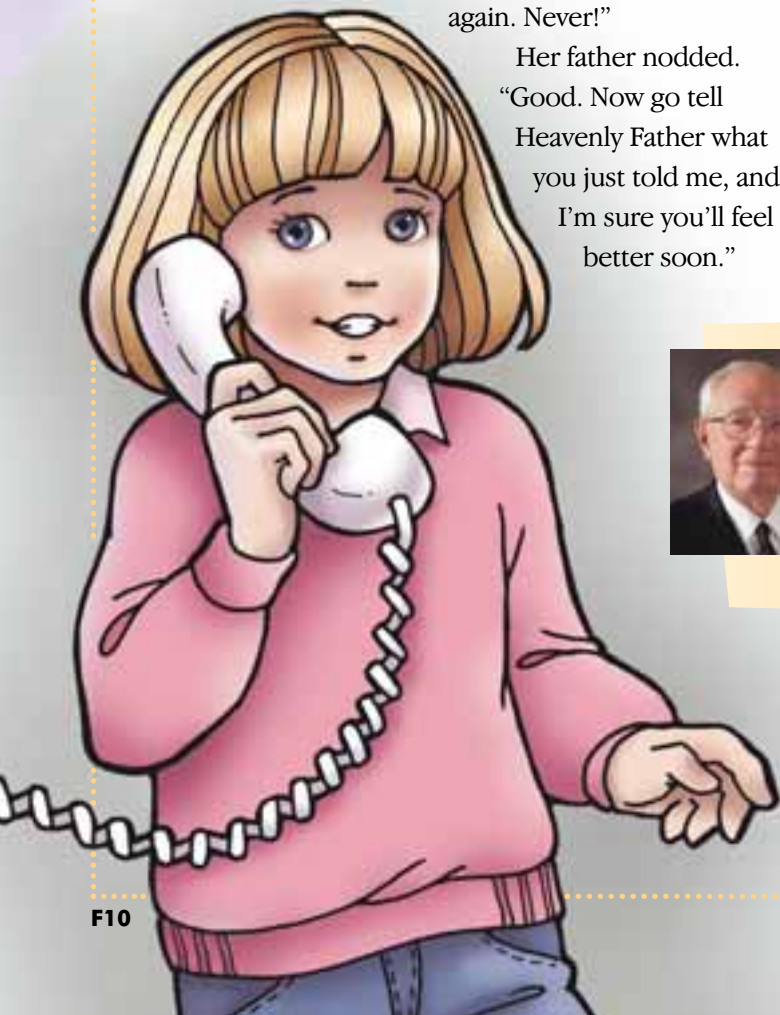


"We cannot indulge in swearing. We cannot be guilty of profanity; we cannot indulge in impure thoughts, words, and acts and have the Spirit of the Lord with us."

President Gordon B. Hinckley, "Converts and Young Men," *Ensign*, May 1997, 49.

member of the Church, she would have felt the sting all the same. She was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and from now on she intended to act like it. ●

Lisa Passey Boynton is a member of the Val Verda Ninth Ward, Bountiful Utah Val Verda Stake.



The Family



Happily ♩ = 88-108 (Conduct two beats to a measure.)

G C

When the fam - 'ly gets to - geth - er, af - ter eve - ning work is

Am D7

done, Then we learn to know each oth - er, pop - ping

G (D dim) D7 G

corn and hav - ing fun. Then our fa - ther tells a

C (E7) Am

sto - ry, moth - er leads us in a song, And it

(A7) D (A7) D7 G

seems that noth - ing in this world could pos - si - bly go wrong.

Words: Mabel Jones Gabbott, b. 1910. © 1969 IRI

Music: Richard Clinger, b. 1946. © 1969 IRI

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PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE BUNDERSON, POSED BY MODELS



FROM THE LIFE OF PRESIDENT HEBER J. GRANT

Best Penmanship

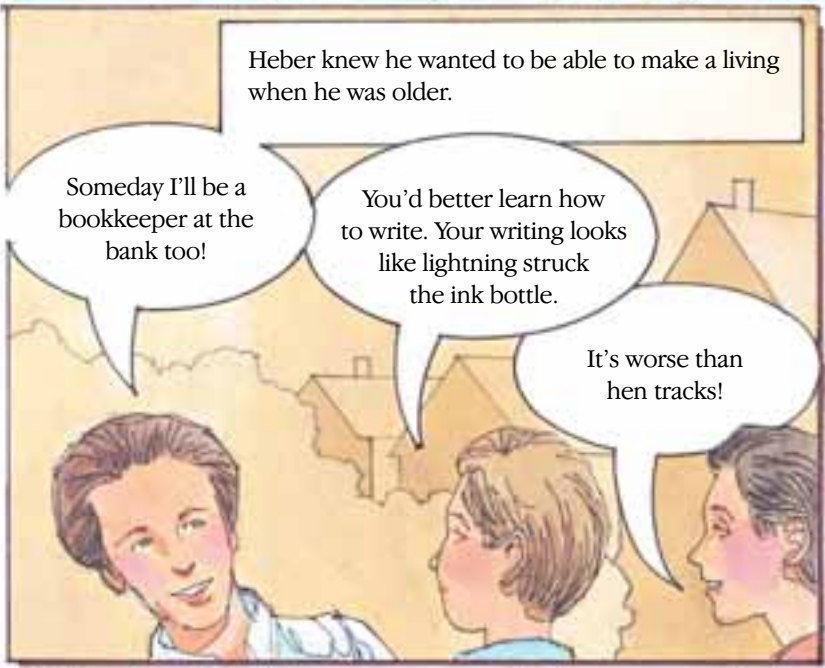


That man makes a lot of money.

How much?

As much as you would earn polishing 120 pairs of boots every single day.

One day Heber J. Grant was playing marbles with some friends when a bookkeeper from the bank walked by.



Heber knew he wanted to be able to make a living when he was older.

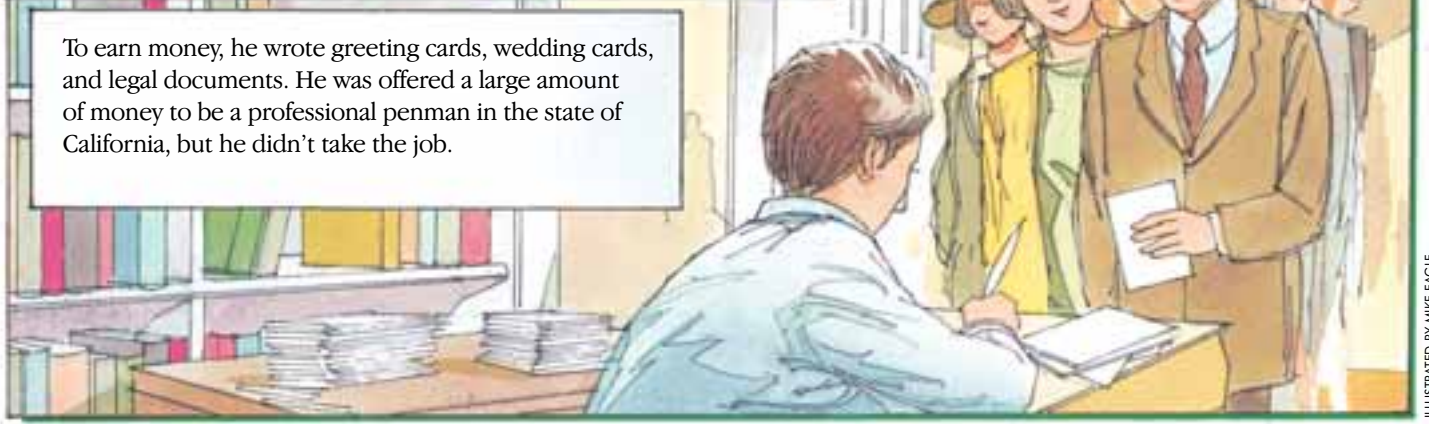
Someday I'll be a bookkeeper at the bank too!

You'd better learn how to write. Your writing looks like lightning struck the ink bottle.

It's worse than hen tracks!

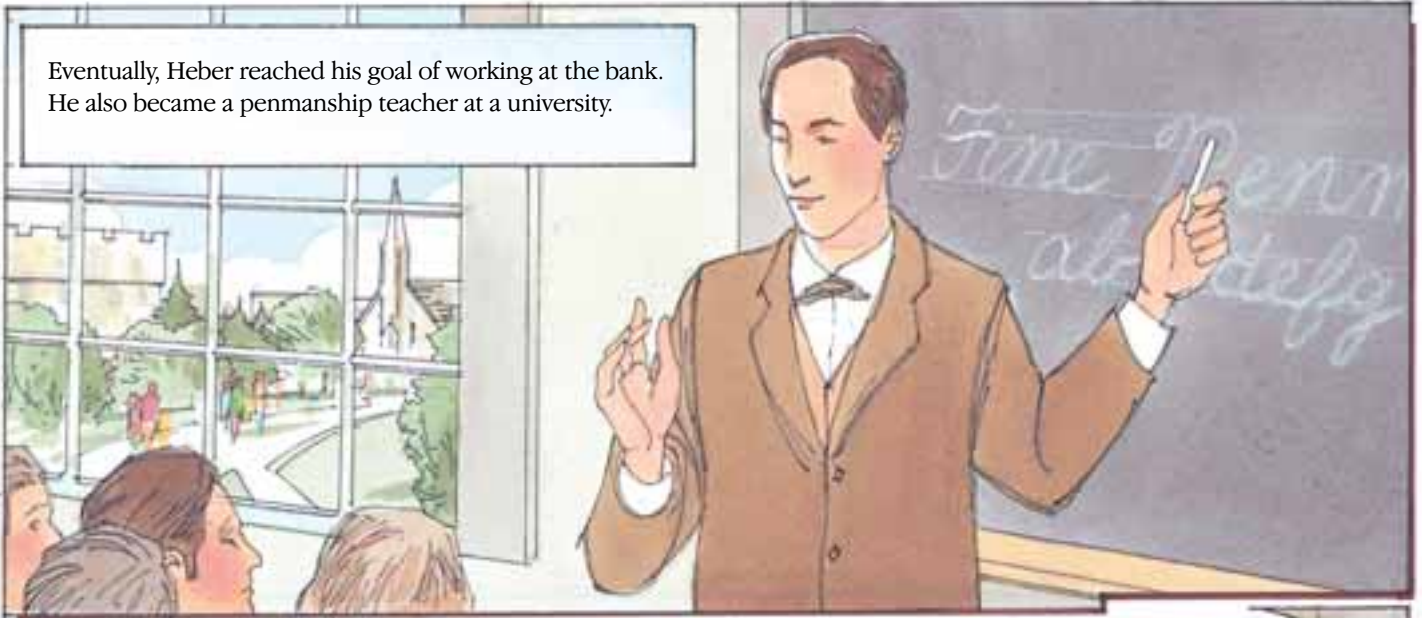


Heber worked on his handwriting until it was beautiful.



To earn money, he wrote greeting cards, wedding cards, and legal documents. He was offered a large amount of money to be a professional penman in the state of California, but he didn't take the job.

Eventually, Heber reached his goal of working at the bank. He also became a penmanship teacher at a university.



Once during the fair, a penmanship contest was held. Heber spoke to the man in charge.

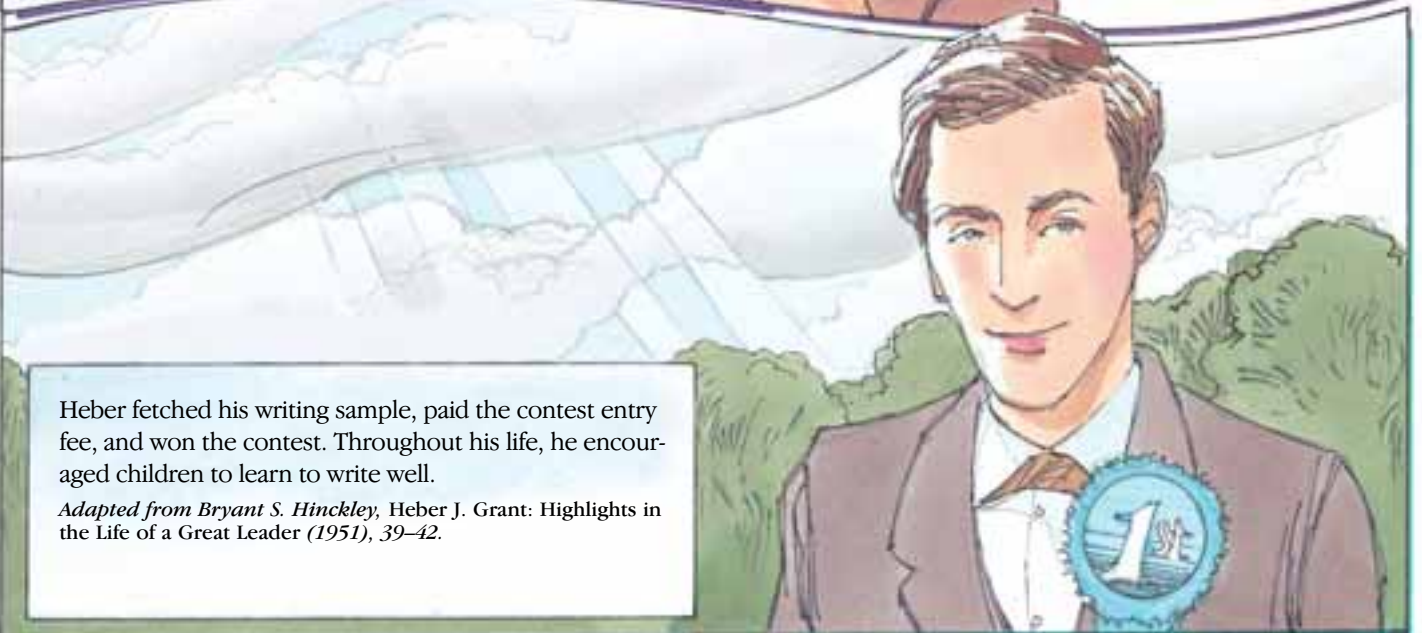
I don't know if I believe that. Show me.

I wrote better samples than any of these before I was 17 years old.



Heber fetched his writing sample, paid the contest entry fee, and won the contest. Throughout his life, he encouraged children to learn to write well.

Adapted from Bryant S. Hinckley, Heber J. Grant: Highlights in the Life of a Great Leader (1951), 39-42.



Feleti Vimahi of Pangai, Tonga

BY ANNAKA VIMAHI

A young boy, Feleti Vimahi, is sitting on the grass, holding a coconut. He is wearing a red and black long-sleeved shirt and blue shorts. The background shows palm trees and a clear sky.

On a small and beautiful South Pacific island surrounded by reefs lives 10-year-old Feleti Vimahi. Baptized in the Pacific Ocean, Feleti lives in Pangai, a village in the Kingdom of Tonga. Feleti's village is part of Lifuka Island—an island so small that from his house Feleti can see the water on both sides of the island.

Feleti's family lives right next

to his cousins Loti and Salesi, and Feleti plays with them every day. He also plays with his younger sisters, Lupe 'Aho'aukai, age 8, and Mele Siloni, age 4, and his brother, Tevita Tu'ipulotu, age 1. They like to play tag, hide and seek, and rugby.

Feleti is very creative, and he can make toys and things to do out of just about anything. Once he made a kite from scraps of paper he found. He is always singing, dancing, and drumming on things around the house. Feleti is a very good swimmer, and he especially loves to go swimming in the ocean with his dad.

Feleti likes to have fun, but he is a hard worker too. He sometimes goes to the plantation with his dad and big cousins. They dig up 'u^{fi} (yams) and pick enough coconuts on the weekend to last them through the next week. For New Year's Day they dig a lot of 'u^{fi} for a big feast that their family prepares each year for their neighbors and family members. Feleti's family and friends feast on roast pig, 'u^{fi}, fish, and bread.



Salesi (Feleti’s cousin), Salesi (Feleti’s uncle), and Feleti swim in the ocean.

The Vimahis attend the Pangai Ward in the Ha’apai Tonga Stake. They used to have to travel through two villages to get to church because their old building burned down. Feleti didn’t mind the distance they had to go. In fact, he says, “I am happy with church because I like to go to Primary.”

“I love to ride my bike and go to school,” Feleti says. To attend school, Feleti and his sisters walk to GPS Pangai Hihifo Primary School, which is close to their home. Feleti is in class six, and he goes to school from February to November. December and January are summer break in Tonga.

Feleti’s native language is Tongan—a language with only 16 letters—and he is also learning to speak English. English is Feleti’s favorite subject, and he does well in both English and math. Feleti’s dad teaches math and science at a school Elder John H. Groberg of the Seventy started when he served as a missionary in Tonga. His dad says that Feleti works hard and does well in school.

Feleti’s favorite food is sausage, and he eats a lot of it too. One night he pleaded with his dad for so long to go buy sausage that his dad went in the middle of the night and got some for him. Feleti cooked it all by himself. He offered some to his dad, but his dad just wanted to sleep because it was so late.

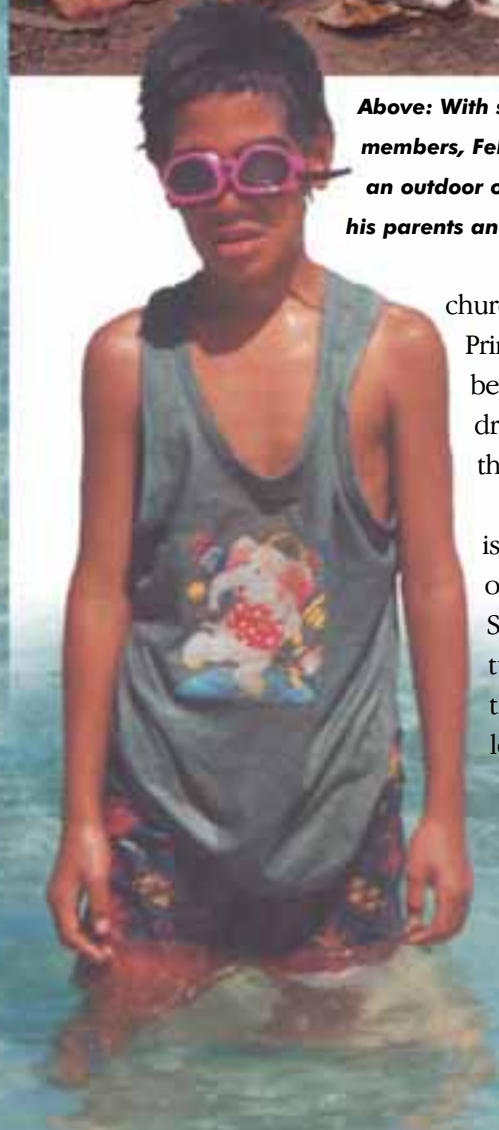
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Siloni, Lupe, and Feleti play at the beach during low tide.



Above: With some of his extended family members, Feleti helps cook in an 'umu—an outdoor oven. Below right: Feleti with his parents and sisters.



church because I like to go to Primary.” Now their chapel has been rebuilt, and about 25 children attend Primary. Five of them are in Feleti’s class.

Feleti is happy that he is a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He studies the scriptures at home, and he sometimes sings scripture verses loudly as he walks through

the house. When asked during one family home evening to share a scripture that he likes, he read 1 Nephi 1:1.

Also during a family home evening, Feleti thanked his dad and his cousin for putting up metal over the windows to protect them during a hurricane. At least once a year in Pangai, there are very strong winds. When this happens, the family prays together to be protected. In one hurricane, Feleti’s family’s fences were blown down and some banana trees were ruined, but no one in the family was harmed.

Like Nephi (see 1 Nephi 1:1), Feleti has been taught by good parents—his mom, Matelita, and his dad, Pulotu. “He helps and cares for his brother and sisters,” says his dad. And Feleti thinks that everyone should get along. “I don’t like to argue with my sisters,” he says.

Feleti’s creativity, his sensitivity to others, and his love of the gospel will continue to help him as he lives and shares the gospel on his beautiful South Pacific island. ●

Annaka Vimabi is a member of the Orem Eighth (Tongan) Ward, Salt Lake Utah South (Tongan) Stake.





COURTESY OF MUSEUM OF CHURCH HISTORY AND ART, SIXTH INTERNATIONAL ART COMPETITION

Bless Them in His Name, by Walter Rane

Babies are given a priesthood blessing for the special purpose of having their name conferred upon them. Then the Melchizedek Priesthood holder giving the blessing bestows promises as directed by the spiritual impressions he receives.



Jesus saith unto her, *Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master” (John 20:15–16).*
See President James E. Faust, “To Receive a Crown of Glory,” p. 2.