

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

Liahona

A close-up photograph of a woman with brown hair tied back, wearing a white ribbed sweater. She is shown in profile, looking down with her eyes closed and hands clasped together in a prayerful gesture. The background is softly blurred, showing what appears to be a stone wall or a similar textured surface.

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Prayers, p. 16**

**Moving into Relief
Society, p. 26**

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Families, p. F10**

Liahona



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Front: Photograph by Matthew Reier, posed by model. Back: Photograph by Steve Bunderson, may not be copied.



THE FRIEND COVER

Photograph by Craig Dimond, posed by models.



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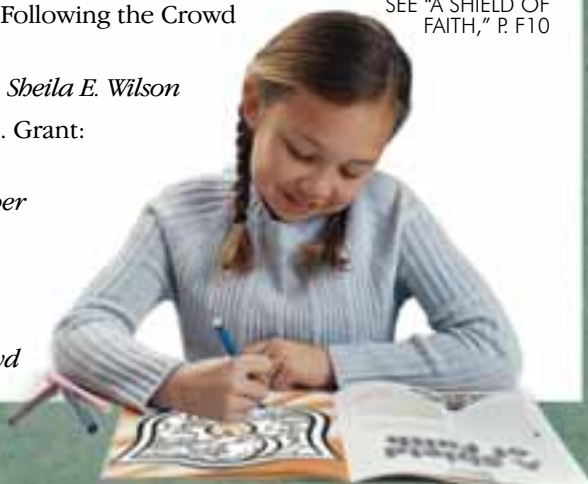
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Family Home Evening Ideas



"Worshipping at Sacrament Meeting," p. 10: Read the

sacrament prayers (see D&C 20:77, 79), and discuss the covenants we are renewing as we partake of the bread and water. Elder Russell M. Nelson suggests that during the sacrament each of us should "examine himself" and "meditate upon the sacred things of God." Ask your family what it means to examine yourself and what the sacred things of God might include.

"Drifting to Starboard," p. 38: Explain that sometimes we face spiritual storms in our lives, and sometimes when caught in these storms we "drift to starboard." Ask family members what they can do to save their ship if it starts to drift.

"My Inspired Mission Call," p. 15: Read together this story about one reason a missionary feels his call to a particular mission was inspired. If a family member has served a mission, ask him or her to relate a mission experience that strengthened his or her testimony of inspiration.

"The Heavens Rained," p. 42: Read Elder Ronald T. Halverson's account of his visit to Ha'afeva. Ask family members if they would have the faith to share the last of their food. Ask them to imagine the faith it would take to pray for good traveling weather in these circumstances. Are

there droughts in your lives? What kinds of "rain" might you pray for to alleviate those droughts?

"Following the Crowd," p. F2: Ask your children if they ever face temptations to do something wrong because everyone else is doing it. Talk about alternative actions to following the crowd, such as praying for help, talking to parents, and standing up for the right.

"David's Prayer," p. F8: Ask your children if they are ever afraid. Tell the story of President David O. McKay. Assure them that they can pray and receive comfort as young David did.

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Fathers, Mothers, Marriage

BY PRESIDENT JAMES E. FAUST

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

In recent times, society has been plagued with a cancer from which few families have escaped. I speak of the disintegration of our homes. Immediate corrective treatment is urgent. In what I have to say, I do not wish to offend anyone. I affirm my profound belief that God's greatest creation is womanhood. I also believe that there is no greater good in all the world than motherhood. The influence of a mother in the lives of her children is beyond calculation. Single parents, most of whom are mothers, perform an especially heroic service.

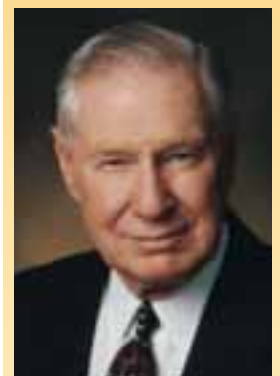
I hasten to acknowledge that there are too many husbands and fathers who are abusive to their wives and children and from whom the wives and children need protection. Yet modern sociological studies powerfully reaffirm the essential influence of a caring father in the life of a child—boy or girl. In the past 20 years, as homes and families have struggled to stay intact, sociological studies have revealed this alarming fact: much of the crime and many of the behavioral disorders in the United States come from homes where the father has

abandoned the children. In many societies, child poverty, crime, drug abuse, and family decay can be traced to conditions where the father gives no male nurturing. Sociologically, it is now painfully apparent that fathers are not optional family baggage.

Fathers need to do the best they can to be the primary provider for physical and spiritual support. I state this with no reluctance because the Lord has revealed that this obligation is placed upon husbands. "Women have claim on their husbands for their maintenance, until their husbands are taken."¹ Further, "all children have claim upon their parents for their maintenance until they are of age."² In addition, their spiritual welfare should be "brought to pass by the faith and covenant of their fathers."³ As regards little children, the Lord has promised "that great things may be required at the hand of their fathers."⁴

Complementary Roles

It is useless to debate which parent is most important. No one would doubt that



In my opinion, members of the Church have the most effective cure for our decaying family life. It is for men, women, and children to honor and respect the divine roles of both fathers and mothers in the home.

a mother's influence is paramount with newborns and in the first years of a child's life. The father's influence increases as the child grows older. However, each parent is necessary at various times in a child's development. Both fathers and mothers do many intrinsically different things for their children. Both are equipped to nurture children, but their approaches are different. Mothers seem to take a dominant role in preparing children to live within their families, present and future. Fathers seem best equipped to prepare children to function in the environment outside the family.

One authority states: "Studies show that fathers also have a special role to play in building a child's [self-respect]. They are important too, in ways we don't really understand, in developing internal limits and control in children." He continues: "Research also shows that fathers are critical in the establishment of gender in children. Interestingly, fatherly involvement produces stronger sexual identity and character in both boys and girls. It's well established that the masculinity of sons and the femininity of daughters are each greater when fathers are active in family life."⁵

Parents in any marital situation have a duty to set aside personal differences and encourage each other's righteous influence in the lives of their children.

Is it not possible to give to womankind all of the rights and blessings that come from God and legal authority without diminishing the nobility of God's other grand creation, manhood? A reflection on this theme stated in 1872:

"The status of women is one of the questions of the day. Socially and politically it forces itself upon the attention of the world. Some . . . refuse to concede that woman is entitled to the enjoyment of any rights other than . . . the whims, fancies or justice . . . men may choose to grant her. The reasons which they cannot meet with argument they decry and ridicule; an old refuge for those opposed to

correct principles which they are unable to controvert. Others . . . not only recognize that woman's status should be improved, but are so radical in their extreme theories that they would set her in antagonism to man, assume for her a separate and opposing existence; and to show how entirely independent she should be [they] would make her adopt the more reprehensible phases of character which men present, and which should be shunned or improved by them instead of being copied by women. These are two extremes, and between them is the 'golden mean.'"⁶



It is useless to debate which parent is most important. No one would doubt that a mother's influence is paramount with newborns and in the first years of a child's life. The father's influence increases as the child grows older.

Use of the Priesthood

Many people do not understand our belief that God has wisely established a guiding authority for the most important institutions in the world. This guiding authority is called the priesthood. The priesthood is held in trust to be used to bless all of God's children. Priesthood is not gender; it is blessings from God for all at the hands of the servants He has designated. Within the Church this authority of the priesthood can bless all members through the ministration of home teachers, quorum presidents, bishops and branch presidents, fathers, and all other righteous brethren who are charged with the administration of the affairs of the kingdom of God. Priesthood is the righteous power and influence by which boys are taught in their youth and throughout their lives to honor chastity, to

be honest and industrious, and to develop respect for and stand in the defense of womanhood. Priesthood is a restraining influence. Girls are taught that through its influence and power to bless, they can fulfill many of their desires.

Honoring the priesthood means following the example of Christ and seeking to emulate His example of fatherhood. It means constant concern and caring for one's own flesh and blood. The man who holds the priesthood is to



honor it by eternally cherishing, with absolute fidelity, his wife and the mother of his children. He is to extend lifelong care and concern for his children and their children. The plea of David for his rebel son is one of the most moving in all of the scriptures: “O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!”⁷

I urge husbands and fathers of this Church to be the kind of men your wives would not want to be without. I urge the sisters of this Church to be patient, loving, and understanding with their husbands. Those who enter into marriage should be fully prepared to establish their marriage as the first priority in their lives.

It is destructive to the feeling essential for a happy marriage for either party to say to the other marriage partner, “I don’t need you.” This is particularly so because the counsel of the Savior was and is to become one flesh: “For this cause shall a man leave father and

mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh[.] Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh.”⁸

Being of One Heart

It is far more difficult to be of one heart and mind than to be physically one. This unity of heart and mind is manifest in sincere expressions of “I appreciate you” and “I am proud of you.” Such domestic harmony results from forgiving and forgetting, essential elements of a maturing marriage relationship. Someone has said that we “should keep [our] eyes wide open before marriage, and half shut afterward.”⁹ True charity ought to begin in marriage, for it is a relationship that must be rebuilt every day.

I wonder if it is possible for one marriage partner to jettison the other and become completely whole. Either partner who diminishes the divine role of the other in the presence of the children demeans the budding femininity within the daughters and the

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PHOTOGRAPH BY WANG WEIHSIANG

The family relationship of father, mother, and child is the oldest and most enduring institution in the world. It has survived vast distances of geography and culture. This is because marriage between man and woman is a natural state and is ordained of God.

emerging manhood of the sons. I suppose there are always some honest differences between husband and wife, but let them be settled in private.

It must be recognized that some marriages fail. To those in that circumstance I extend understanding because every divorce carries heartache with it. But at all costs couples should avoid covenant breaking. In my opinion, any promise between a man and a woman incident to a marriage ceremony rises to the dignity of a covenant. The family relationship of father, mother, and child is the oldest and most enduring institution in the world. It has survived vast differences of geography and culture. This is because marriage between man and woman is a natural state and is ordained of God. It is a moral imperative. Those marriages performed in our temples, meant to be eternal relationships, then become the most sacred covenants we can make. The sealing power given by God through Elijah is thus invoked,

and God becomes a party to the promises.

Over a lifetime of dealing with human problems, I have struggled to understand what might be considered “just cause” for breaking of covenants. I confess I do not claim the wisdom nor authority to definitely state what is “just cause.” Only the parties to the marriage can determine this. They must bear the responsibility for the train of consequences which inevitably follow if these covenants are not honored. In my opinion, “just cause” should be nothing less serious than a prolonged and apparently irredeemable relationship which is destructive of a person’s dignity as a human being.

At the same time, I have strong feelings about what is not provocation for breaking the sacred covenants of marriage. Surely it is not simply “mental distress” nor “personality differences” nor “having grown apart” nor “having fallen out of love.” This is especially so where there are children. Enduring divine counsel comes from Paul:

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.”¹⁰

“That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, [and] to love their children.”¹¹

The Most Effective Cure

In my opinion, members of the Church have the most effective cure for our decaying family life. It is for men, women, and children to honor and respect the divine roles of both fathers and mothers in the home. In so doing, mutual respect and appreciation among the members of the Church will be fostered by the righteousness found there. In this way, the great sealing keys restored by Elijah, spoken of by Malachi, might operate “to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse.”¹²

President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) stated concerning the keys of Elijah: “This sealing power bestowed upon Elijah, is the power which binds husbands and wives, and children to parents for time and eternity. It is the binding power existing in every Gospel ordinance. . . . It was the mission of Elijah to come, and restore it so that the curse of confusion and disorder would not exist in the kingdom of God.”¹³ Confusion and disorder are all too common in society, but they must not be permitted to destroy our homes.

Perhaps we regard the power bestowed by Elijah as something associated only with formal ordinances performed in sacred places. But these ordinances become dynamic and productive of good only as they reveal themselves in our daily lives. Malachi said that the power of Elijah would turn the *hearts* of the fathers and the children to each other.¹⁴ The heart is the center of the emotions and a conduit for revelation. This sealing power thus reveals itself in family relationships, in attributes and virtues developed in a nurturing environment, and in loving service. These are the cords that bind families together, and the priesthood advances their development. In imperceptible but real ways, “the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul [and thy home] as the dews from heaven.”¹⁵

I testify that the blessings of the priesthood, honored by

fathers and husbands and revered by wives and children, can indeed cure the cancer that plagues our society. I plead with you fathers to magnify your priesthood calling; bless your families through this sacred influence, and experience the rewards promised by our Father and God. ■

NOTES

1. D&C 83:2.
2. D&C 83:4.
3. D&C 84:99.
4. D&C 29:48.
5. Karl Zinsmeister, “Fathers: Who Needs Them?” (address delivered to the Family Research Council, 19 June 1992).
6. “Woman’s Status,” *Woman’s Exponent*, 15 July 1872, 29.
7. 2 Samuel 18:33.
8. Matthew 19:5–6.
9. Magdeleine Scudéry, in John P. Bradley and others, comps., *The International Dictionary of Thoughts* (1969), 472.
10. Ephesians 5:25.
11. Titus 2:4.
12. D&C 110:15; see also Malachi 4:6.
13. *Elijah the Prophet and His Mission* (1957), 5.
14. See Malachi 4:5–6.
15. D&C 121:45.

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

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

1. Read the paragraph in “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” beginning, “Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children” (*Liahona*, Oct. 1998, 24; *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102). Ask how this responsibility is shared by every family member and individual child of God.

2. Read the third paragraph after the heading “Being of One Heart” in President Faust’s message. Ask family members what covenants are and with whom temple covenants are made. Emphasize the sacred nature of eternal marriage covenants.

3. Read President Faust’s statement that “members of the Church have the most effective cure for our decaying family life.” Ask family members to suggest what this cure might be. Then read President Faust’s ideas in the first paragraph after the heading “The Most Effective Cure.”

THE SIGN ON THE WALL

BY JEREMY ROBERTSON

Choose your friends wisely, for you will tend to be like them.” I had seen this little sign a million times and never thought anything of it. It was only one of many strategically placed thoughts and quotes that dotted the walls of our home. This one happened to be in the best location of all—right above the kitchen table.

When friends came over, we naturally congregated in the kitchen. Dates, late night movies, and quick lunches almost all involved the kitchen. Mom knew this and planned her attack accordingly. Years later I realized what a direct hit Mom had scored.

I was blessed with a lot of friends who are also members of the Church. We went to church and school together, and most of us went on missions at about the same time. However, there was one who was not exactly like the rest of us. His parents were divorced, and he was shuffled between their homes and the homes of friends. As a result, I think he always felt a little isolated and alone. He wore his hair long and always had at least one earring. Regardless, we loved him, and he was one of us.

During high school we witnessed him change; it was great. A short time after his 19th birthday he submitted his mission papers and received a call. A couple of months later we really understood the significance of this event.

The realization came on a cold, crisp Sunday in January. My friends and I had gathered to hear this young

It hung in a spot where we read it every day, and it changed one life forever.

man speak in sacrament meeting. I had been invited to perform a musical number, so I sat on the stand. As I gazed over the crowd, I saw all of our friends, as well as my family; it was a wonderful sight. As my friend ventured to the pulpit, his eyes were a little red.

His talk opened with a question: “Do any of you know why I am here? Well, it is really very simple. I am here because of the many

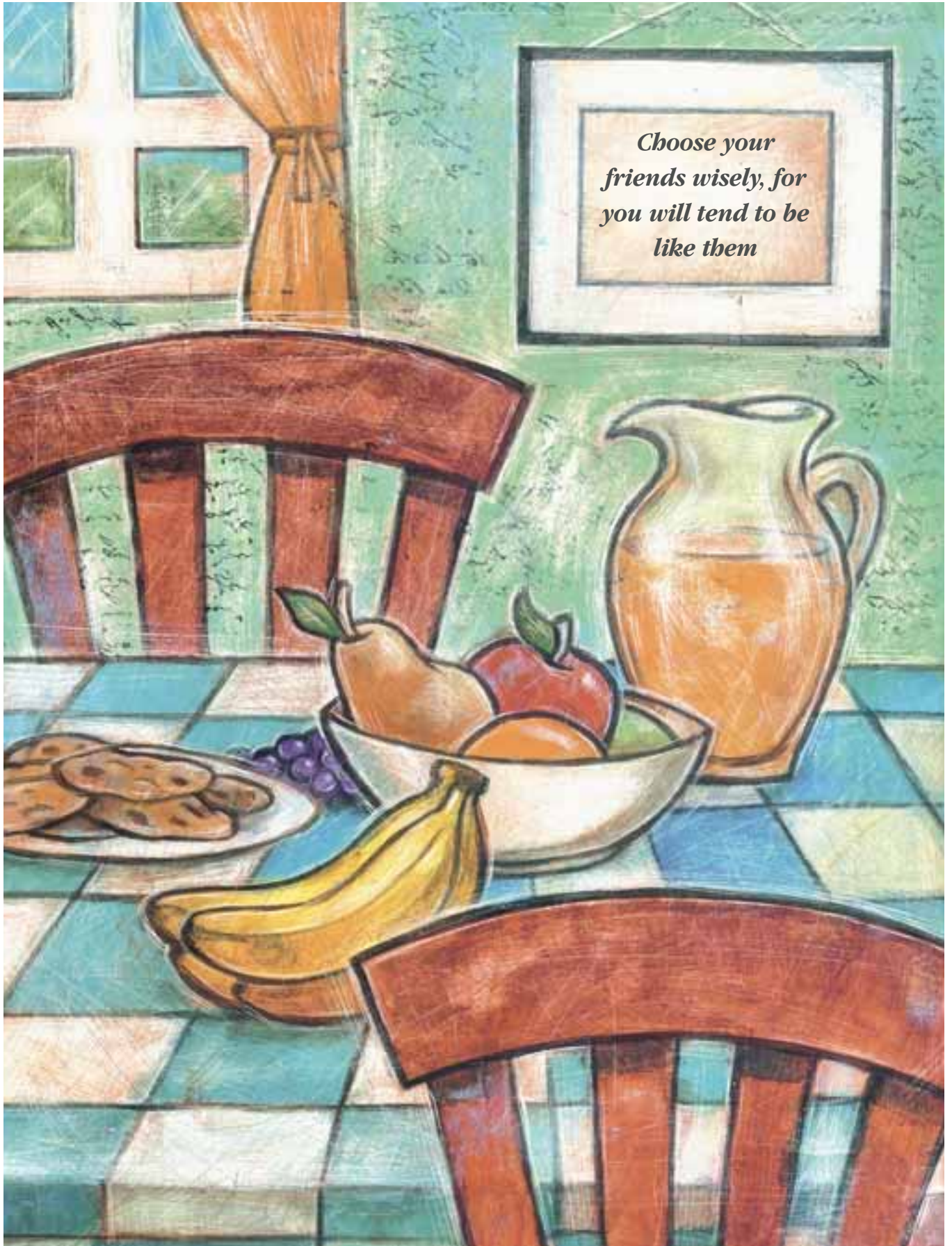
meals eaten at a friend’s table, a table with a sign above it that reads, ‘Choose your friends wisely, for you will tend to be like them.’ I want my friends to know that without their influence and love I wouldn’t be here today.”

As I looked down into the crowd, I saw my mother with teary eyes and a smile.

From that day on, I have also thought about the effects my friends have had on my life. I don’t know if I would have served a mission without their example. I don’t know what kind of a person I would be today if it hadn’t been for the strength and love I received from such wonderful people. For that, I will be forever grateful, both to them and to my Heavenly Father.

I know that no one has forgotten the message shared from that pulpit. I also know that that sign, to this day, still hangs above our kitchen table. ■

Jeremy Robertson is a member of the Grandview 19th Ward, Provo Utah Grandview Stake.



*Choose your
friends wisely, for
you will tend to be
like them*



Worshiping at Sacrament Meeting

Sacrament meetings can be planned and conducted to help us remember the Lord and His Atonement.

BY ELDER RUSSELL M. NELSON

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Bishoprics and branch presidencies have many responsibilities that can be delegated. But they cannot delegate responsibility for sacrament meetings. Generally, they preside and are thus responsible for both the spirit and the content of these meetings. My teaching on sacrament meetings will therefore be of particular interest to bishops and branch presidents and their counselors—as well as to members of the Church participating in these weekly services.

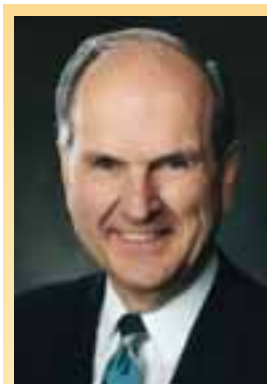
Doctrinal Foundation

Sacrament meeting is the one ward or branch meeting that we attend as a family—the basic unit of the Church. Families and members need to arrive well before sacrament

meeting begins. We attend, as the Lord commanded, to receive the sacrament and renew our covenants.

He instituted the sacrament to remind us of His Atonement. As a final and specially prepared Passover supper was ending, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to His Apostles, saying, “Take, eat” (Matthew 26:26). “This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19). Then He took the cup, said a blessing of thanks, and passed it to those gathered about Him, saying, “This cup is the new testament in my blood” (Luke 22:20), “which is shed . . . for the remission of sins” (Matthew 26:28). “This do . . . in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do [proclaim] the Lord’s death” (1 Corinthians 11:25–26). In this way, He linked the sacrament to His impending Crucifixion.

God had declared, “This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). Then the Son of God voluntarily laid down His life to complete the will of His Father. Thus,



I thank the Lord for the sacrament meeting and all that it has meant in my life. It has repeatedly rekindled my faith and allowed me to renew my covenants from week to week.

immortality became a reality and eternal life a possibility for all who would ever live upon the earth.

We commemorate His Atonement in a very personal way. We bring a broken heart and a contrite spirit to our sacrament meeting. It is the highlight of our Sabbath-day observance (see D&C 59:8–13).

The sacramental prayers have been revealed by the Lord. These prayers contain covenants *and* a promise (see D&C 20:77, 79). We covenant to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ and keep His commandments. We eat the broken bread in remembrance of His body.

We each need to forget our fears and sing as an opportunity to praise our Creator prayerfully.



We drink the water in remembrance of His blood that was shed for us. And we witness that we will always remember Him. The promise: we will always have His Spirit to be with us. What a blessing!

Planning Sacrament Meeting

With these doctrines in mind, bishoprics and branch presidencies need to plan sacrament meetings thoughtfully in order to keep the meetings focused on the Lord and His Atonement, His example, and the doctrines of the gospel.

Invitations to speak should be extended well in advance and include a clear description of the topic assigned and time allotted, along with an offer to help. Those asked to pray should include members not often called upon. Avoid patterns of prayers given by a husband and wife at the same meeting. This conveys an unintentional message

of exclusion to those who are single. And remember: prayers are not sermons.

Departing missionaries may be given an opportunity to speak in a sacrament meeting. Their family members and friends are not invited to speak. Two or more departing missionaries may speak in the same service. Returning missionaries who have served honorably should be invited to speak in sacrament meeting and be given time to share spiritual experiences and bear testimony.

Sacrament meetings afford an opportunity for youth to speak briefly on assigned gospel subjects. At other times, high councilors will be assigned by the stake president to speak.

Members may be called to serve as greeters and ushers. They can welcome worshipers and seat them comfortably, while holding a few rear and aisle seats for those with special needs.

Audiovisual materials such as video-cassettes and transparencies should not be used in a sacrament meeting.

Occasionally members may be unable to attend because of illness. In such cases, priesthood holders could be assigned by the bishop or branch president to administer the sacrament to them where they are confined.

A typical sacrament meeting will include:

- Prelude music.
- A welcome and acknowledgment of the presiding authority and representative from the high council, if assigned.
- An opening hymn and prayer.
- Ward or branch business, such as:
 - Releasing and sustaining of officers and teachers.
 - Recognizing children who advance from Primary, members called on missions or other assignments, attainments of young men and young women.
 - Presenting names of brethren to receive or advance in the Aaronic Priesthood, names of new ward or branch members.

- Confirmation of new members.
- The sacrament hymn and the administration of the sacrament.
- Gospel messages and optional additional music.
- A closing hymn and prayer.
- Postlude music.

Those to be released and sustained do not need to be presented individually. They may be proposed as groups—first those to be released, then those to be sustained in the priesthood, and those to be sustained for callings in the auxiliaries.

Sacrament meetings should begin and end on time and should not be overprogrammed. Prayer meetings need not be held before sacrament meeting. Those participating should be seated at least five minutes before the meeting begins so they can be spiritually prepared for a worshipful experience. During that quiet interval, prelude music is subdued. This is not a time for conversation or transmission of messages but a period of prayerful meditation as leaders and members prepare spiritually for the sacrament.

Music

The hymns of the Church are the basic music for worship services and the standard for congregational singing. Other appropriate selections may be used for prelude and postlude music, choir music, and special musical selections. Opening and closing hymns are usually sung by the congregation. The sacrament hymn is *always* sung by the congregation.

Ideally, each Church unit has a choir, with an invitation to sing periodically. A choir can bless lives. Sister Nelson and I have fond memories of our participation—years ago—



in the choir of our small branch in Minneapolis, Minnesota. When we and the others came forward to sing, there were more of us in the choir than there were members remaining in the congregation.

Pianos, organs, or their electronic equivalents are the standard for use in Church meetings. If other instruments are used, their use should be in keeping with the spirit of the meeting. Instruments with a loud or less worshipful sound, such as most brass and percussion, are not appropriate for sacrament meeting. If a piano, organ, or accompanist is not available, appropriate recordings may be used for accompaniment.

The song of the righteous is a prayer unto the Lord (see D&C 25:12). Some members seem reluctant to sing, perhaps because of fear. We each need to forget our fears and sing as an opportunity to praise our Creator prayerfully. Music in sacrament meeting is for

W*e eat the broken bread in remembrance of His body. We drink the water in remembrance of His blood that was shed for us.*

worship, not performance. We must not let our sacred music slip away from us nor allow secular music to replace it.

Conducting Sacrament Meeting

Bishoprics and branch presidencies have responsibility not only to plan these meetings, but to conduct them. They should do so reverently. Some in the congregation are praying for delicate promptings and communication from heaven. Establishing a spirit of reverence will help them receive those promptings. Remember: reverence invites revelation.

Those conducting the meeting begin by extending a cordial greeting. Detailed announcements are more appropriately handled some other time. Because we invite all to come unto Christ, friends and neighbors are always welcome but not expected to take the sacrament. However, it is not forbidden. They choose for themselves. We hope that newcomers among us will always be made to feel wanted and comfortable. Little children, as sinless beneficiaries of the Lord's Atonement, may partake of the sacrament as they prepare for covenants that they will make later in life.

Our meetings are always to be conducted as directed by the Spirit (see D&C 46:2). Occasionally something unexpected may arise that a presiding officer may wish to clarify or correct, as prompted by the Spirit. Otherwise, no additional commentary is given after the final speaker has spoken.

Administration of the Sacrament

Bishoprics and branch presidencies preside over the Aaronic Priesthood in wards and branches. They, along with quorum advisers, will take every precaution to see that the sacrament is prepared in advance of the meeting and that the passing of the sacrament has been thoroughly planned. Those who administer the sacrament are to look their best and be dressed appropriately. White shirts not only look nice, but they are a gentle reminder of other sacred rites, such as baptismal and temple ordinances, at which white clothing is also worn.

Each member of the Church bears responsibility for the spiritual enrichment that can come from a sacrament meeting.

Sacramental prayers are to be offered *understandably* because he who prays is giving voice to covenants that others are making. Cleanliness and purity of heart are expected of those privileged to bless the sacrament. The presiding authority receives the sacrament first.

Fast and Testimony Meeting

Fast and testimony meetings are held once a month, usually the first Sunday. Generally, babies are blessed on that day. After the sacrament, the conducting brother bears a brief testimony. He then invites members to bear brief, heartfelt testimonies of the Savior, His teachings, and the Restoration. Parents and teachers should help children learn what a testimony is and when it is appropriate for them to express it. Younger children should learn to share their testimonies at home or in Primary until they are old enough to bear an appropriate testimony unaided in fast and testimony meeting.

Personal Participation

Each member of the Church bears responsibility for the spiritual enrichment that can come from a sacrament meeting. Each should sing with a grateful heart and respond with an audible "amen" at the conclusion of a prayer or a testimony. We personally ponder the Atonement of Jesus Christ. We reflect upon the significance of His suffering at Gethsemane and His Crucifixion on Calvary. At this time, each of us is to "examine himself" (1 Corinthians 11:28) and reflect upon personal covenants made with the Lord. At this time, we meditate upon the sacred things of God.

Gratefully, I thank the Lord for the sacrament meeting and all that it has meant in my life. It has repeatedly rekindled my faith and allowed me to renew my covenants from week to week, helping Sister Nelson and me to live and rear our family in the glorious light of the gospel. ■

Adapted from an address given at a worldwide leadership training meeting on 21 June 2003.



My Inspired Mission Call

BY LINCOLN PIMENTEL MARTINS

As a Brazilian, I was surprised when I received my mission call to serve not in Brazil or even in South America but in the Texas Houston South Mission in the United States. My surprise soon turned to deep gratitude.

Four days after I arrived in my first area, the bishop of the local ward invited my companion and me to go with him to the hospital to visit Brother Noel Stevenson, an older member who was ill with leukemia. When I met Brother Stevenson, I was amazed that he started speaking Portuguese. He told me he had served a mission to Brazil in the 1950s. He mentioned several cities where he had served, including Ponta Grossa in the state of Paraná.

“When you were in Ponta Grossa did you know Raul Pimentel?” I asked hesitantly.

With an expression of joy, he replied, “Yes, I knew Raul. I baptized him.”

I told Brother Stevenson that Raul Pimentel was my grandfather, the first member of the Church in our family. We embraced, and tears rolled down our faces.

Then I told him that my grandfather was 84 and still

active in the Church. His 8 children were also active, all who are married having married in the temple and 5 having served full-time missions. And his 30 grandchildren were active in the Church as well. As we talked, the Spirit of the Lord filled my heart with joy and gratitude.

My grandfather was baptized in 1958 by two American missionaries. He had heard that the other elder had now passed away, but he had never had any news about Elder Stevenson. When my grandfather learned that I had met the missionary who baptized him, he was overwhelmed with joy.

He and Brother Stevenson began exchanging e-mail messages almost every week. Then the e-mails stopped abruptly. I received a telephone call telling me that Brother Noel Stevenson had passed away.

Although I felt sad, I felt even more grateful that the Lord had allowed me to meet the man who brought the blessings of the gospel to my family. This experience helped me be a better missionary and strengthened my testimony that mission calls are inspired by God. ■

Lincoln Pimentel Martins is a member of the Costa e Silva Ward, Campinas Brazil Castelo Stake.

IMPROVING OUR Prayers



BY ELDER JOSEPH B.
WIRTHLIN

Of the Quorum of
the Twelve Apostles

Do you feel that the time you spend in prayer enriches and uplifts your soul? Is there room for improvement?

Every person on the earth today lived at one time in heavenly realms. We walked with our Heavenly Father. We knew Him. We heard His voice. We loved Him. And although we were eager to enter mortality and continue our progression, we must have regretted the separation that would accompany it. We must have sorrowed that a veil would cover our eyes and the bright memories of our lives would be cloaked in the forgetfulness of mortality. How we must have yearned to stay close to our Father in Heaven. How we must have covenanted to ever reach after Him and commune with Him.

Undoubtedly our separation from our Heavenly Father was softened when He promised that as we sought after Him in prayer, He would reach toward us.

Now we are here. Our memories of our premortal life are dim and dark. We have

forgotten those things we supposed we could never forget. Unfortunately and tragically we sometimes even forget our Heavenly Father, whom we loved so dearly.

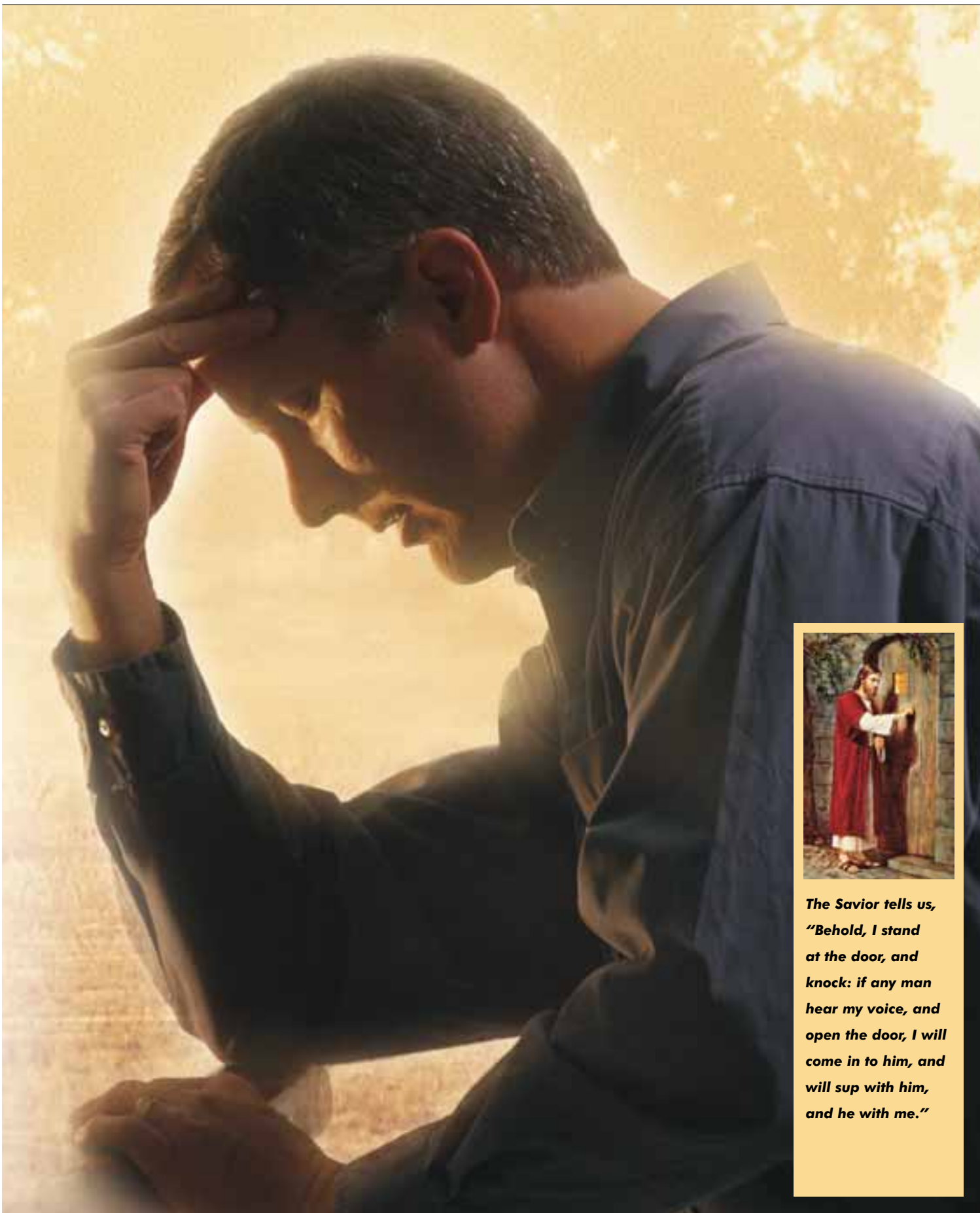
Have you considered the effectiveness of your prayers, your efforts to reach toward Him from this mortal life? How close do you feel to your Heavenly Father? Do you feel that your prayers are answered? Do you feel that the time you spend in prayer enriches and uplifts your soul? Is there room for improvement?

Make Prayers Meaningful

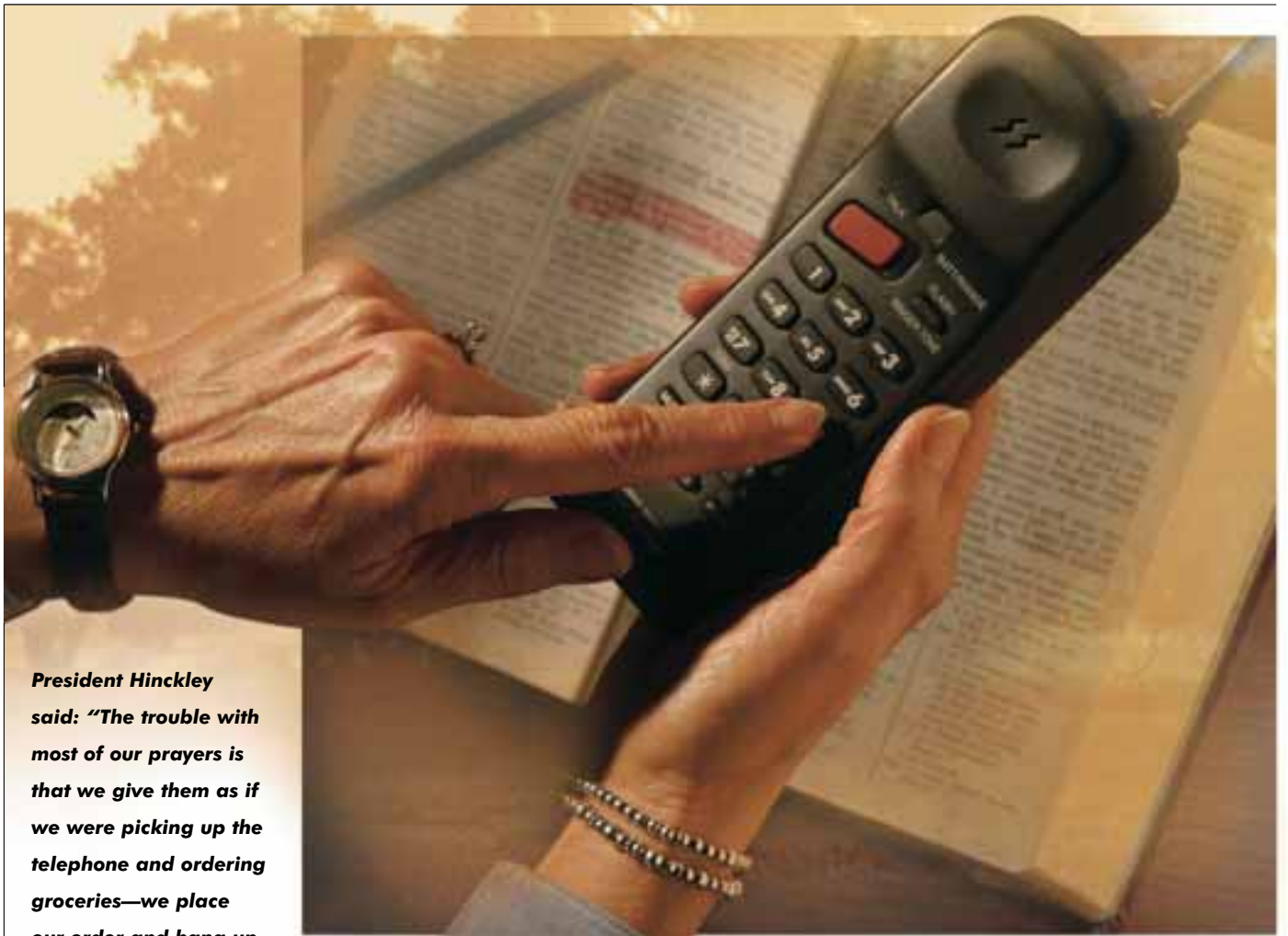
There are many reasons our prayers may lack power. Sometimes they become routine. Our prayers become hollow when we say similar words in similar ways over and over so often that the words become more of a recitation than a communication. This is what the Savior described as “vain repetitions” (see Matthew 6:7). Such prayers, He said, will not be heard.

Our beloved prophet, President Gordon B. Hinckley, has observed:

“The trouble with most of our prayers is



***The Savior tells us,
"Behold, I stand
at the door, and
knock: if any man
hear my voice, and
open the door, I will
come in to him, and
will sup with him,
and he with me."***



President Hinckley said: "The trouble with most of our prayers is that we give them as if we were picking up the telephone and ordering groceries—we place our order and hang up. We need to meditate, contemplate, think of what we are praying about and for and then speak to the Lord as one man speaketh to another."

that we give them as if we were picking up the telephone and ordering groceries—we place our order and hang up. We need to meditate, contemplate, think of what we are praying about and for and then speak to the Lord as one man speaketh to another."¹

Do your prayers at times sound and feel the same? Have you ever said a prayer mechanically, the words pouring forth as though cut from a machine? Do you sometimes bore yourself as you pray?

Will prayers that do not demand much of your thought merit much attention from our Heavenly Father? When you find yourself getting into a routine with your prayers, step back and think. Meditate for a while on the things for which you really are grateful. Look for them. They don't have to be grand or

glorious. Sometimes we should express our gratitude for the small and simple things like the scent of the rain, the taste of your favorite food, or the sound of a loved one's voice.

Thinking of things we are grateful for is a healing balm. It helps us get outside ourselves. It changes our focus from our pains and our trials to the abundance of this beautiful world we live in.

Think of those things you truly need. Bring your goals and your hopes and your dreams to the Lord and set them before Him. Heavenly Father wants us to approach Him and ask for His divine aid. Explain to Him the trials you are facing. Set before Him your righteous desires.

Our prayers can and should be focused

on the practical, everyday struggles of life. If we should pray over our crops (see Alma 34:24), then why not over other important challenges we face?

Some believe that the more eloquent a prayer, the more effective. Too often these prayers are not so much meant for the ears of the Almighty as they are for the ears of the audience. Do you want to commune with the Infinite? Then approach Him with reverence and humility. Don't worry so much about whether your words are polished or not. Worry instead about speaking from your heart.

Pray with Faith

Another reason many prayers have little power is that we lack faith. We approach our Heavenly Father like a child who asks something of his or her parents, knowing they will refuse. Without faith, our prayers are merely words. With faith, our prayers connect with the powers of heaven and can bring upon us increased understanding, hope, and power. If by faith the worlds were created, then by faith we can create and receive the righteous desires of our heart.

What is faith? Faith is absolute confidence in that which is in absolute conformity to the will of heaven. When we combine that confidence with absolute action on our part, we have faith.

Faith without works is dead. Sometimes we expect Heavenly Father to answer our prayers when all we have done is utter a prayer. The doors of heaven will ever be closed to those who hold out their hands, waiting for blessings to drop from heaven upon them.

The powers of faith are activated by action. We must do our part. We must prepare. We must do all that is in our power, and we will be blessed in our efforts.

Prayer is a private matter between you and Heavenly Father. Both He and you know when you have done what

you can. Do not give a thought as to whether or not your best compares with others. In the eyes of Heavenly Father, that doesn't matter.

The Challenge of Prosperity

Perhaps one of the great challenges the Church faces in our day is that of prosperity. President Brigham Young (1801–77) said:

“The worst fear that I have about this people is that they will get rich [and] forget God. . . . This people will stand mobbing, robbing, poverty, and all manner of persecution, and be true. But my greater fear for them is that they cannot stand wealth.”²

Prosperity can deaden us to spiritual things. It can give us the illusion of power. When we are sick, we can go to a doctor and get healed. When we are hungry, we can feed ourselves. When we are cold, we can get warm. In short, most of the

problems of life we can solve ourselves—we can answer many of our own prayers.

Because of the relative ease many have in acquiring their daily bread, they can

become deceived into thinking they are saviors unto themselves. In their pride and foolishness they feel they have little need of a Heavenly Father. They think little of the power that created the universe or of Him who gave His life that they might live.

In the Doctrine and Covenants we are warned of these modern-day idolaters: “They seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god, whose image is in the likeness of the world” (D&C 1:16).

Those who worship the things of this world will one day cry to their riches and plead with them to save them.



Undoubtedly our separation from our Heavenly Father was softened when He promised that as we sought after Him in prayer, He would reach toward us.

In that day they will learn the coldness of their god and realize the terrible error of their ways.

The Need for Charity

Another reason our prayers have little power is that we fail to succor those in need around us. The Book of Mormon teaches, “If ye turn away the needy, and the naked, and visit not the sick and afflicted, and impart of your substance, if ye have, to those who stand in need—I say unto you, if ye do not any of these things, behold, your prayer is vain, and availeth you nothing” (Alma 34:28).

Our willingness to aid those in distress around us has ever been the benchmark of the disciples of Christ. Indeed, the Savior taught that our very salvation depends upon the level of our compassion for others (see Matthew 25:31–46). If we turn our backs upon the poor and the distressed, can we, in turn, suppose that our Heavenly Father will be merciful to us? As we are to those in need, so our Heavenly Father will be to us in our time of need.

A Pattern for Prayer

In Psalm 37 David revealed an inspired process for active prayer and faith. It is a step-by-step process that may serve as a pattern for us to follow as we seek to increase our faith and improve the efficacy of our prayers.

“Fret not” is the first step (see verse 1). To fret means to worry or to brood about something. The first thing we must do is stop worrying. When we worry about the future, we create unhappiness in the present. Righteous concern may lead us to take appropriate action, but worrying about things we cannot control can paralyze and demoralize us.

Instead of worrying, focus on doing all that you can, and then leave the worrying to your Heavenly Father. If

your heart is right with Him, He will take care of the worry and the fear. We must learn to “fret not.”

The second step is to “trust in the Lord” (see verse 3). Why should we trust in Him? Because He is our loving and all-wise Father in Heaven. Because He is the giver of all good gifts. Because He knows us and wants us to be happy and successful and to return to Him. God is in His heaven. He is perfect. He loves us.

I remember the many times my dear mother trusted in our Heavenly Father for my safety. I played quarterback at East High School in Salt Lake City and running back at the University of Utah. During all that time I don’t think my mother ever stopped praying for my safety. She trusted in our Father in Heaven, depending on Him to protect me from major injury during the games. Although I had my share of bumps and bruises, I never

had a major injury.

I suppose my mother breathed a sigh of relief when I told her I was going to leave the football field for a season. I met

with my beloved bishop, Marion G. Romney, to express a desire to serve a full-time mission. But that short, worry-free season soon ended when I was called to serve in the German-Austrian Mission. Three months after I arrived in Salzburg, the name of the mission was changed to the Swiss-Austrian Mission.

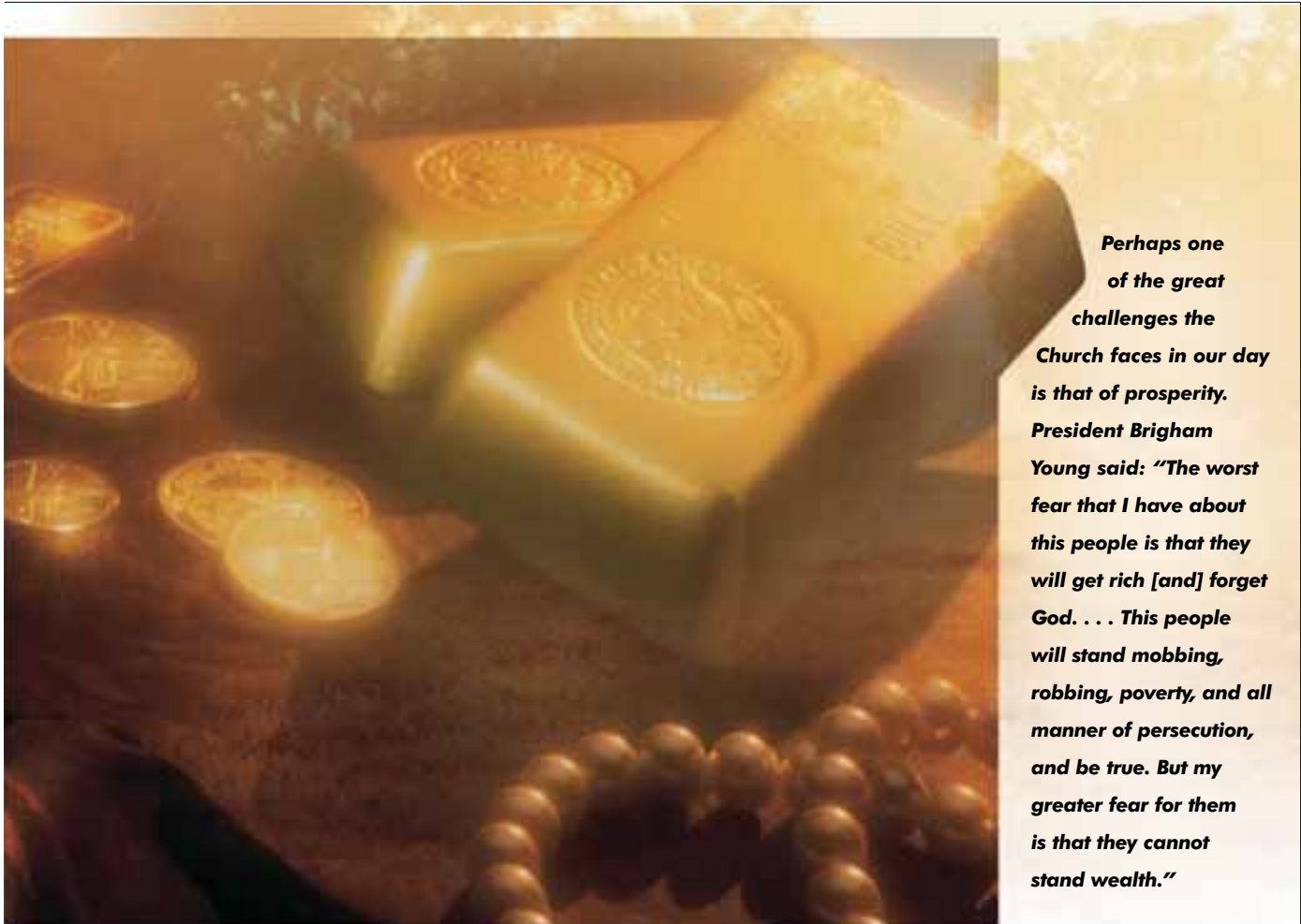
The year was 1937. I arrived in Salzburg, Austria, at the very time Hitler was amassing 300,000 troops on the border for the Anschluss, his invasion of Austria.

My mother and father gathered the family to kneel in prayer morning and night and pled for my safety. I know that I felt the influence of those prayers. I trusted my



Our Heavenly Father expects our actions to serve as a living testimony to our words. As we do good, the Lord can bless our efforts.





Perhaps one of the great challenges the Church faces in our day is that of prosperity. President Brigham Young said: "The worst fear that I have about this people is that they will get rich [and] forget God. . . . This people will stand mobbing, robbing, poverty, and all manner of persecution, and be true. But my greater fear for them is that they cannot stand wealth."

Heavenly Father would hear their prayers. I trusted in my prayers that He would preserve my life.

A month before Hitler invaded Austria, I was transferred to Switzerland. My testimony is that our prayers had been answered.

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding," we read in the scriptures. "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5–6).

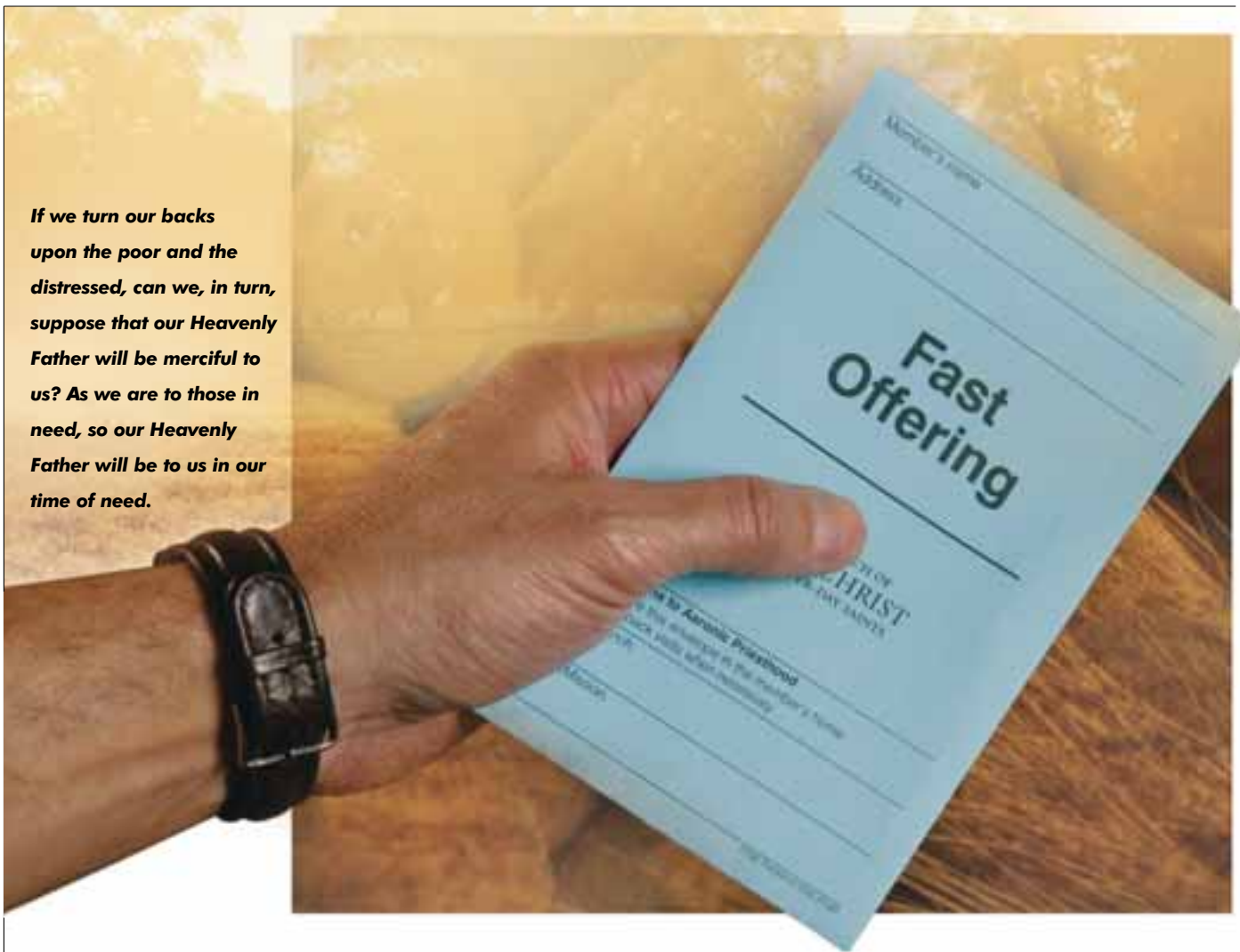
The third step is "do good" (see Psalm 37:3). We do good because we are followers of Christ. We do good because we are members of His Church. We do good because we have made solemn covenants to serve as a light unto the world. Our Heavenly Father expects our actions to serve as a living testimony to our words. As we do good, the Lord can bless our efforts.

This is not to say that we must never make a mistake, "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). The Lord requires that we seek Him with a humble heart, that we repent of our sins, and that we continue to do the best we can. As we make mistakes, we should learn from them and strive not to repeat them. As we do so, we become ever more Christlike, ever more as men and women of God.

As our actions contradict our professions of faith, our prayers become weak. When we do good, the Lord can work through us and magnify our efforts.

The fourth step is to "delight thyself also in the Lord" (see Psalm 37:4). What a wonderful doctrine! Instead of worrying or grumbling that our prayers have gone unanswered, we should delight ourselves

If we turn our backs upon the poor and the distressed, can we, in turn, suppose that our Heavenly Father will be merciful to us? As we are to those in need, so our Heavenly Father will be to us in our time of need.



in the Lord. Be grateful. Be happy. Know that the Lord, in His time, will bring about all your righteous desires—sometimes in ways we predict, sometimes in ways we could not have possibly foreseen. What a wonderful recipe for happiness and peace.

The fifth step is to “commit thy way unto the Lord” (see verse 5). No matter what your worries are, commit yourself to keeping His commandments. Brethren, honor your priesthood. Sisters, cleave unto the principles of light and truth.

The sixth step is to “rest in the Lord” (see verse 7). Sometimes the hardest thing we can do is wait. The Lord has His own timetable, and although it may frustrate us, His timing is always perfect. When we rest in the Lord, we allow Him to work His will for us in His own time and in His own way.

Prayer Brings Light

As we commune with our Father in humble prayer, our hearts receive the gentle outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The Lord tells us, “That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day” (D&C 50:24).

Those who do not have this light ever struggle with disbelief. They cannot understand the things of God because their souls have little light. On the other hand, as our souls become filled with light, we begin to understand clearly things that once were dark.

You recall the Prophet Joseph Smith’s experience with darkness and light in the Sacred Grove. President Lorenzo Snow

(1814–1901) wrote of an experience of his own:

“Some two or three weeks after I was baptized . . . I began to reflect upon the fact that I had not obtained a *knowledge* of the truth of the work . . . , and I began to feel very uneasy. I laid aside my books, left the house, and wandered around through the fields under the oppressive influence of a gloomy, disconsolate spirit, while an indescribable cloud of darkness seemed to envelop me. I had been accustomed, at the close of the day, to retire for secret prayer, to a grove a short distance from my lodgings, but at this time I felt no inclination to do so. The spirit of prayer had departed and the heavens seemed like brass over my head. At length, realizing that the usual time had come for secret prayer, I concluded I would not forego my evening service, and, as a matter of formality, knelt as I was in the habit of doing, and in my accustomed retired place, but not feeling as I was wont to feel.

“I had no sooner opened my lips in an effort to pray, than I heard a sound, just above my head, like the rustling of silken robes, and immediately the Spirit of God descended upon me, completely enveloping my whole person, filling me, from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet, and O, the joy and happiness I felt! No language can describe the almost instantaneous transition from a dense cloud of mental and spiritual darkness into a refulgence of light and knowledge, as it was at that time imparted to my understanding. I then received a perfect knowledge that God lives, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and of the restoration of the holy Priesthood, and the fulness of the Gospel. . . .

“. . . That night, as I retired to rest, the same wonderful manifestations were repeated, and continued to be for several successive nights. The sweet remembrance of those glorious experiences, from that time to the present,

bring them fresh before me, imparting an inspiring influence which pervades my whole being, and I trust will to the close of my earthly existence.”³

My brothers and sisters, spiritual experiences are available to all who come before their Eternal Father with a broken heart and contrite spirit. One of the things we must do in this mortality is chase away the darkness. We must fill our souls with the light of the Holy Spirit.



As our actions contradict our professions of faith, our prayers become weak. When we do good, the Lord can work through us and magnify our efforts.

Blessings Available to All

The rich blessings that can come into our lives through prayer are available to all. The poor have as much access as the rich. The movie star has no advantage over the laborer. We are all equal in our ability to approach the throne of our Heavenly King.

The Savior tells us, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20).

As we approach our Heavenly Father in the name of Christ, we open the windows of heaven. We can receive from Him truth, light, and knowledge.

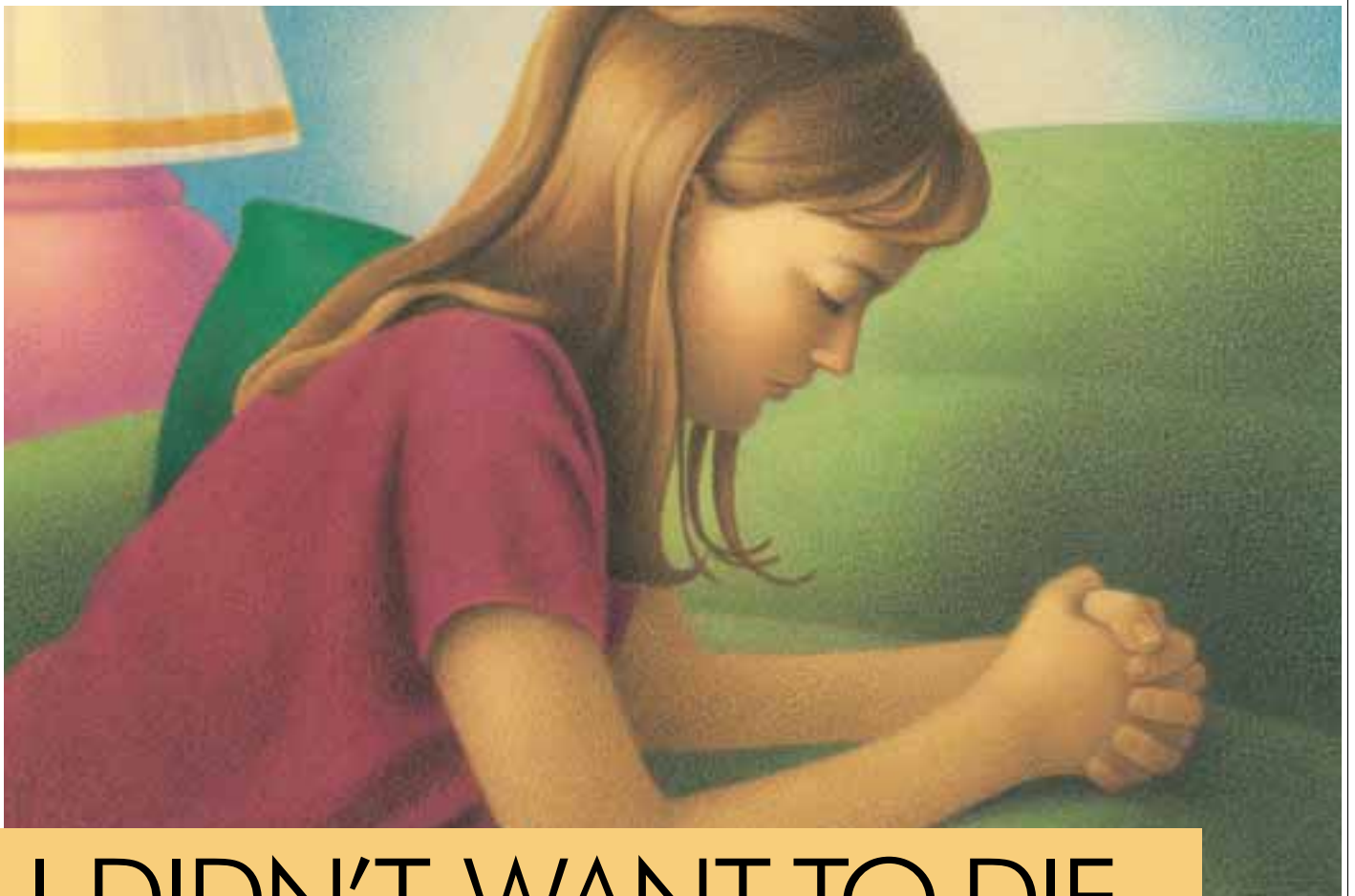
Prayer is the doorway through which we commence our discipleship to things heavenly and eternal. We will never be alone so long as we know how to pray.

It is my earnest desire that members of the Church will reexamine their own lives through the context of prayer. That we may ever lift up our voices to our Heavenly Father and fill our souls with celestial light is my prayer. ■

From a devotional address given at Brigham Young University—Provo on 21 January 2003.

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1997), 469.
2. Quoted in James S. Brown, *Life of a Pioneer* (1971), 122–23.
3. Quoted in Eliza R. Snow Smith, *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow* (1884), 7–9.



I DIDN'T WANT TO DIE

BY MARGED A. KIRKPATRICK

When I was 12, my mother died of cancer. After her death, I thought I was dying of cancer too. I didn't really have cancer, but my thoughts were very real to me. I didn't talk to anyone about it. I carried the burden alone and was quite troubled.

I knew that when we have a problem we should go to the Lord in prayer. I always said my individual prayers at night and would think my prayers in my head as I knelt by my bed. But this particular time, I felt I needed to pray out loud.

Now, it was not easy to find a time to be alone in our house. I had five brothers and sisters and shared a bedroom with a sister. One afternoon I remember coming home from school to an empty house. I went into the living room and poured out my heart aloud to my Heavenly Father. I didn't want to die. I didn't want to suffer as my mom had suffered. I pleaded with the Lord.

Immediately after I had closed my prayer, a peaceful, strong feeling surrounded me. It was as if loving arms were around my shoulders and as if a voice said to me, "You are fine. You are fine."

My prayer had been answered. I felt very loved, and I knew I was OK. A huge burden had been lifted from my shoulders. My thoughts of dying left me. Since that time, I have prayed to my Heavenly Father for answers. The answers never have come as quickly as they did that day, but I know prayers are answered—even if it is in the Lord's timing and not mine.

D&C 112:10 reads, "Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers." ■

Marged A. Kirkpatrick is a member of the Holladay 26th Ward, Salt Lake Holladay Stake.

Feeling the Love of the Lord through Self-Mastery

Payerfully 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.

Revelation 3:21: “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley: “When a man is motivated by great and powerful convictions of truth, then he disciplines himself . . . because of the knowledge within his heart that God lives; that he is a child of God with an eternal and limitless potential” (“The True Strength of the Church,” *Ensign*, July 1973, 49).

Alma 37:33: “Teach them to withstand every temptation . . . , with their faith on the Lord Jesus Christ.”

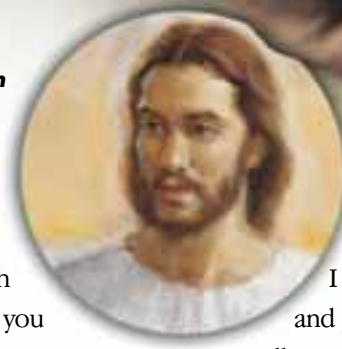
President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95): “When we have . . . an eternal perspective, we can more clearly evaluate what will bring us the greatest happiness in life. We should decide now, in the light of the morning, how we will act when the darkness of night and when the storms of temptation arrive” (“Commitment to God,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 58).

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “Not an age in life passes without temptation, trial, or torment experienced through your physical body. But as you prayerfully develop self-mastery, desires of the flesh may be subdued” (“Self-Mastery,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, 32).

Alma 38:12: “Bridle all your passions, that ye may be filled with love.”

President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency: “When . . . sin, disappointment, failure, and weakness make us less than we should ever be, there can come the healing salve of the unreserved love in the grace of God. It is a love . . . that lifts and blesses. It is a love that sustains a new beginning” (“A Personal Relationship with the Savior,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1976, 59).

Kathleen H. Hughes, first counselor in the Relief Society general presidency: “A woman I know was struggling with anger toward someone who had hurt her and her family. Though she told her children not to become embittered and resentful, she fought those feelings herself. After weeks of entreating her Father in Heaven, she finally felt a change. She related: ‘One day, in the midst of my nearly constant prayers, the healing came. I felt a



physical sensation spread through my body. After, I felt a sense of security and peace. I knew that

regardless of what happened, my family and I would be all right. The anger left me and so did my desire for retaliation” (“Blessed by Living Water,” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, May 2003, 13).

President David O. McKay (1873–1970): “It is glorious when you can lie down at night with a clear conscience, knowing you have done your best not to offend anyone and have injured no man. You have tried to cleanse your heart of all unrighteousness, and if you put forth precious effort, you can sense as you pray . . . that he accepts your effort. You have a sense that you are God’s child. . . . You have the strength, the sense of resistance to evil” (*Gospel Ideals* [1954], 502).

Philippians 4:13: “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

• *How does drawing closer to the Savior help you master your thoughts, words, and deeds?*

• *What scriptures or teachings of latter-day prophets have helped you gain self-mastery? What have you been able to change or improve? ■*

Your Next Step

... from Young Women is into the arms of Relief Society, where you will learn to become a woman of God through serving Him.

BY SHANNA BUTLER

Church Magazines

There is a wonderful place waiting for you after Young Women. It's a place where you can grow closer to your Father in Heaven. A place where you will learn to become more like the Savior through service. A place where you will make some of the best friends you could ever imagine, where you'll find sisters you never knew you had.

Relief Society is that place. "Relief Society is more than a class," says Sister Bonnie D. Parkin, Relief Society general president. It's where you will go to continue to learn how to become a woman of God.

"We have a prophet of God who loves the young women of the Church, and because he loves the young women so much, he wants to make sure that the Church is going to be part of their lives. The prophet knows what Relief Society can do for your life if you will just step forward," says Sister Parkin.

It's true that making the shift from Young Women to Relief Society can seem a little scary, but "that's just part of growing up," says Sister Susan W. Tanner, Young Women general president.

When Sister Tanner turned 18, she was excited to be a member of Relief Society, even though, she

says, "I felt a little between worlds. I think that's a very normal feeling. I didn't really feel like I fit in at first."

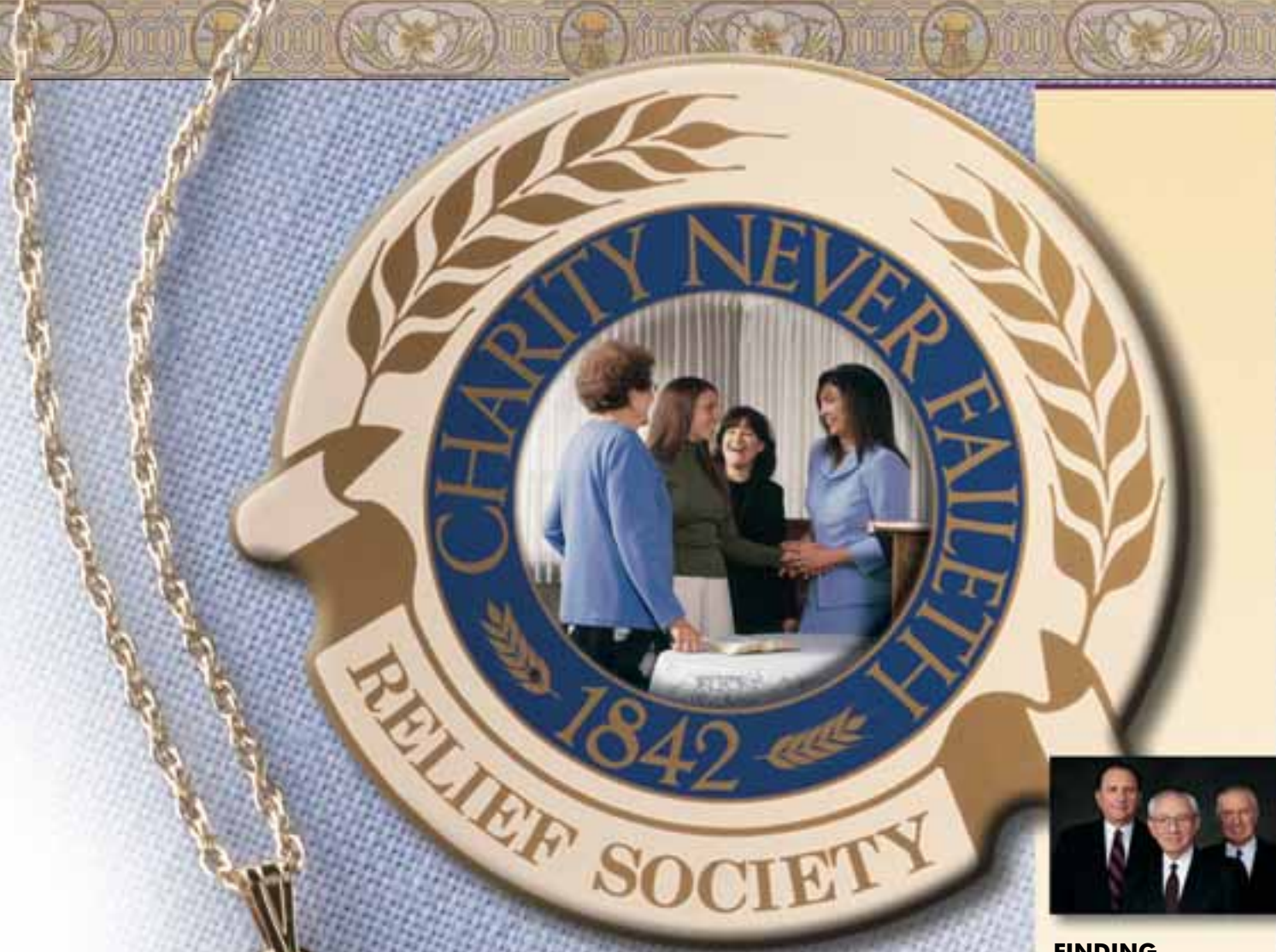
Feeling at home takes both sides working together. The Relief Society will welcome you in, and you can get to know and love the Relief Society sisters. "In the Church, there is no age barrier. We are all sisters," says Sister Tanner. "We just need to build this sisterhood."

And the most important thing about sisterhood? "True sisterhood is covenant keeping," says Sister Tanner. "The gospel unifies us. I hope we can feel the unity rather than the differences."

Keeping the covenants we made at baptism means strengthening and serving others. It means bearing "one another's burdens, that they may be light" and being "willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort" (Mosiah 18:8-10). What better place to learn to do that than in Relief Society? It's an organization set up by God, with the motto "Charity never faileth."

When you become a Relief Society sister, the knowledge you gained in Young Women will be added to, and you will learn more about being a covenant woman of God. "Womanhood in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints means active participation in





FINDING YOUR PLACE

“The transition from youth to womanhood is a defining time in the lives of young women. We desire that every young woman successfully make this transition and prepare for her future responsibilities as a faithful woman, wife, and mother, and in her opportunities to serve within the Church.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley, President Thomas S. Monson, and President James E. Faust, First Presidency letter, 19 Mar. 2003.

Relief Society,” says Sister Parkin.

When you take your next step forward and join the sisters of Relief Society, you will find women of God waiting with open arms to receive you (see “Welcome to Relief Society,”

p. 28). “The Savior loved His disciples so much, and yet He knew He wasn’t always going to be with them. But He promised them, ‘I will not leave you comfortless’ (John 14:18),” says Sister Tanner. “I think of how much we love you young women. We’re not going to leave you comfortless. You’re not leaving friends behind. You will be in the arms of others who love you.”

Sister Parkin adds, “And when you feel the love of the Lord in your life, you will reach out to someone else, and the circle grows bigger and bigger. That’s always what happens.”

As you continue to keep your covenants and follow the Savior’s example, you will add your faith and goodness to the circle of sisterhood in Relief Society and do your part to make sure “charity never faileth.” ■





Welcome to *Relief Society*

Parents, leaders, and bishops have special roles in helping young women make the transition into Relief Society.

BY LARENE PORTER GAUNT
Church Magazines

Sister Bonnie D. Parkin, Relief Society general president, and Sister Susan W. Tanner, Young Women general president, readily agree they are a team. “We have both worked in Relief Society and in Young Women,” says Sister Parkin. “We’re united because we’ve seen both sides of the spectrum. We love young women and Relief Society sisters.”

Sister Parkin and Sister Tanner know the importance of working together to help young women successfully make the transition from the Young Women program into Relief Society.

To young women, they say, Relief Society is going to be a safe place for you, a place where you can increase your testimony of the Savior and feel His love. Though you may be leaving some friends behind, you are coming into the arms of others who love you. Your circle of friends is simply growing larger (see “Your Next Step,” p. 26).

To Relief Society sisters, they say, step out of your comfort zone and reach out to young women. Sit by them and learn their names. Share your stories with each other. The

moment you begin to share, you begin to become sisters.

To leaders, they say, work together and make a plan for each young woman that will bless her life and help her realize her divine potential.

A Decade of Decision

In the decade of decision and change that marks the transition from youth to adulthood, mothers and fathers, Church leaders, and friends all play a role in helping young women progress. But parents have the primary responsibility. The process of making a transition should begin well before a young woman turns 18 and continue after she enters Relief Society.

“My mother loved the women in Relief Society as her sisters,” says Sister Parkin. “She did what was required of her with a happy heart. Her example was a blessing in my life. If every mother would bear her testimony of Relief Society to her daughter, it would change what happens to young women. A grandmother, friend, or sister who helps the young woman grow in the gospel changes that young woman and her future.

“A father also has a responsibility to encourage a daughter to bring the goodness of Relief Society into her life,” continues Sister Parkin. “One father said to his daughter, ‘I hope you make Relief Society a part of your life because it has blessed our home and helped make you the young woman you are.’”

HELPING YOUNG WOMEN WITH THE TRANSITION TO RELIEF SOCIETY



Here are a few suggestions of what leaders can do:

1. Encourage mothers to help their daughters gain an understanding of the value of Relief Society.
2. Assign a Relief Society counselor the specific responsibility of working with young adult women until they successfully make the transition into Relief Society.
3. Provide new members of the Relief Society with meaningful callings, visiting teaching, and compassionate service assignments.
4. Have the young women and Relief Society sisters meet together occasionally in home, family, and personal enrichment meetings, with planning under the direction of both auxiliaries.
5. Emphasize provident living, homemaking, and personal application of gospel principles in Mutual activities. (See suggestions included with First Presidency letter, 19 Mar. 2003.)

The bishop or branch president, Relief Society leaders, and Young Women leaders have special roles to fill. A bishop's interview is one of the most powerful tools available to help youth through this stage of life. Young Women leaders especially can help facilitate this interaction by visiting with the bishop, helping him to be aware of the young women who will be leaving their organization.

Sister Tanner encourages Young Women leaders to "chat with the parents and ask how you can help. Seek out the Relief Society leaders assigned to mentor the young women, and let them know of each young woman's talents. Be positive in all you do."

Skirts and Scripture Study

Leaders in both organizations can work together to plan activities that will build friendships. In one ward, the young women wanted to learn to sew, so they asked the sisters in Relief Society to help. At a Mutual activity night, each young woman was paired up with a Relief Society sister who helped her make a skirt. Later the pairs finished the skirts at home. Then the young women invited the Relief Society sisters to a fashion show where the girls modeled their colorful new skirts.

In another ward, Relief Society sisters sought out the young women as partners in scripture study. They read together and checked up on each other.

In the first instance, the young women reached out to the Relief Society sisters, and in the second, the Relief Society sisters reached out to the young women. In both instances, the friendships continued and blessed the lives of all.

"It's 'hearts knit together in unity and in love' (Mosiah

18:21)," says Sister Parkin. "You're never the same when you know someone's heart. You no longer judge others, because you understand their motives and goodness."

Creating Sisterhood

When asked to define sisterhood, Sister Parkin and Sister Tanner agree, "It's covenant keeping."

From baptism to temple sealing, we "make and keep sacred covenants,"¹ says Sister Tanner. "Through covenants we are bound to our Father in Heaven. When we keep those covenants we treat others with love. That's sisterhood."

It's this covenant keeping that makes Relief Society different from other women's organizations. "I believe that womanhood in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints means active participation in Relief Society," says Sister Parkin. Relief Society should be a place where women come together in an environment that nurtures faith.

Coming unto Christ

Together young women and Relief Society sisters expand their circle of sisterhood as they reach out to each other and come unto Christ through covenant keeping. "During this defining time in a young woman's life," says Sister Parkin, "we as parents, leaders, bishops, and friends can be a powerful influence for good. Young women, in turn, can be positive examples in our lives. We become a team; we become one." ■

NOTE

1. Young Women theme, in *Young Women Personal Progress* (2001), 5.



OUR RELIEF SOCIETY HERITAGE

"We all need to know our beginnings," says Sister Bonnie D. Parkin (left top), Relief Society general president. "Relief Society was founded through a prophet and organized under the hand of God."



Of Relief Society's beginnings, Sister Susan W. Tanner (left center), Young Women general president, says, "Young women need role models. Noble Latter-day Saint women of the past provide that. It's one of the reasons we talk about history."



The first Relief Society meeting also serves as a role model for all of us.

"When we look at

who was there, we can see that there were no age barriers," says Sister Parkin.

"They were all sisters. Three of them were teenagers. The oldest was in her 50s. Eleven of them were married, two were widows, and six were unmarried. That is our beginning and our foundation."

When we stop to think about it, we can see that ours is a powerful heritage. One young sister wrote of this realization in a letter to Sister Parkin and said that over the last few years she has learned why women talk about the history of Relief Society: "It's because we're a part of something great! Those early Latter-day Saint women took something and made it great. And I'm a part of all that. It's in my blood."



Someone to Listen

BY NGOZI F. OKORO

My roommates and friends ignored my missionary efforts. But I continued to pray for a chance to share the gospel.

It was a noisy evening in my dormitory at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria. There was a downpour outside, and a cool breeze blew through the window. Music of different sorts came from many rooms on my floor, and girls were singing and calling to one another.

My older sister had gone to visit friends, but I chose to stay and prepare supper for myself and my roommates. I couldn't explain why, but I had a strong feeling that I should stay behind.

As I began making soup, Ifeoma came in. She was a missionary for a church that met on campus. A discussion ensued between Ifeoma and my roommates. She preached to them for some time and invited them to attend her church. My roommates willingly accepted her invitation.

I was disappointed because my invitations for my roommates to attend The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints had been unsuccessful. The first time I invited them, they ridiculed me and the Church. Subsequent attempts during the following three years were also failures. I felt like a poor member missionary. But a voice within me insisted, "Don't give up." So I often fasted

and prayed to meet someone in school who would listen to the gospel.

"Hello!" Ifeoma said, turning her attention to me. "Would you mind listening to me while you cook?"

"Not at all," I answered.

"Are you born again?" she asked.

"Yes, if you mean by 'born again' what Jesus taught Nicodemus," I said (see John 3:1–21).

"That's interesting," she said. "May I know which church you attend?"

"I attend The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," I answered.

"The Mormons?" she asked in amazement. "I understand they use a different Bible."

"It is not a Bible but the Book of Mormon," I explained. "It is another testament of Jesus Christ."

"Would you tell me what your beliefs are?" she asked.

"Certainly," I answered with confidence. I told her about the Articles of Faith and the Book of Mormon. I told her about faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, and baptism. She listened quietly. Then I bore my testimony and gave her a copy of the Book of Mormon I had intended to give to someone else.

"You mean I can keep this?" she asked.

“Yes. It is a gift from me to you,” I said. Then I asked her to open the book and read 2 Nephi 25:26. She did so gladly: “We talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins.”

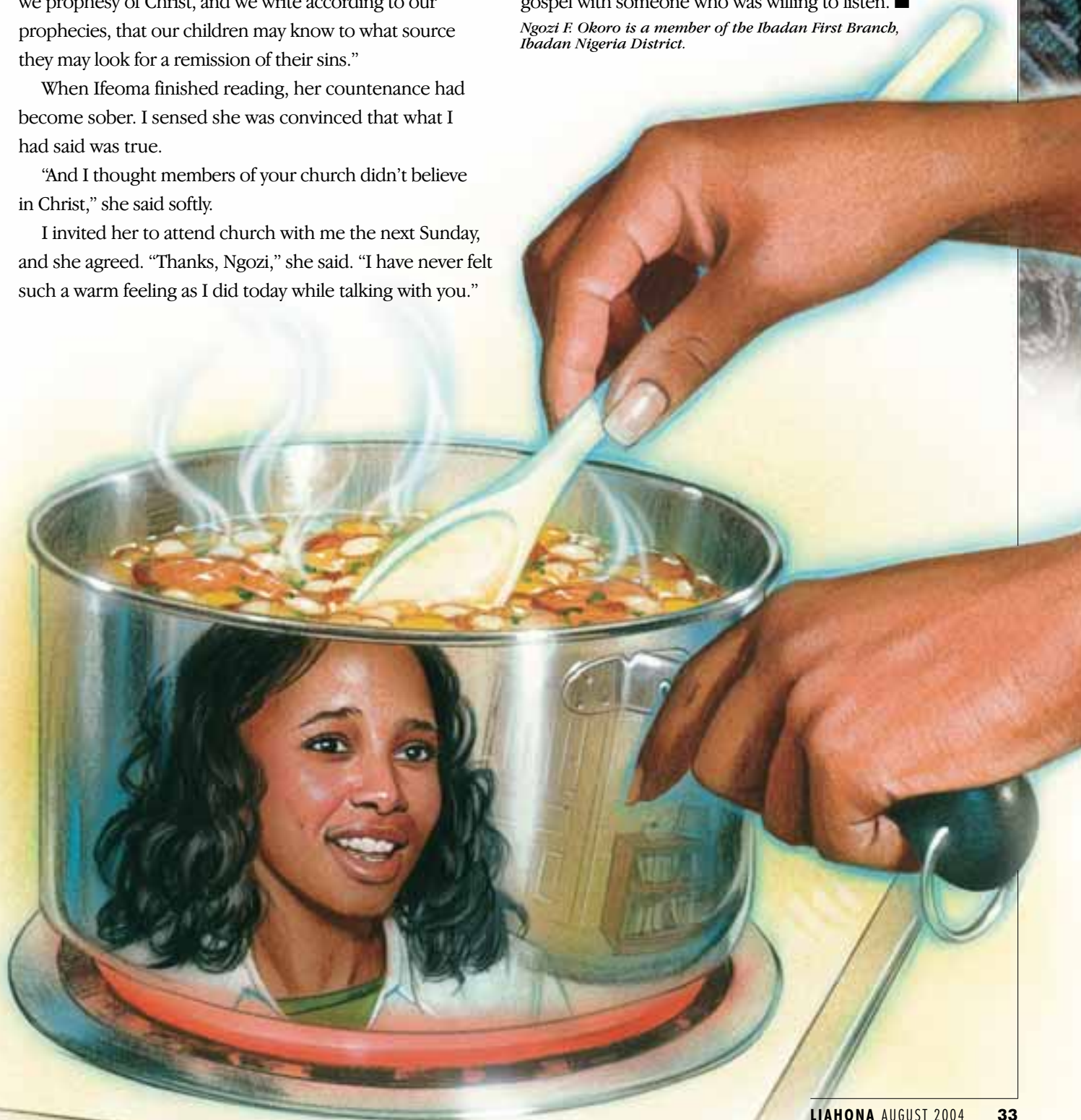
When Ifeoma finished reading, her countenance had become sober. I sensed she was convinced that what I had said was true.

“And I thought members of your church didn’t believe in Christ,” she said softly.

I invited her to attend church with me the next Sunday, and she agreed. “Thanks, Ngozi,” she said. “I have never felt such a warm feeling as I did today while talking with you.”

She left, and I understood why I had had the strong impression to stay rather than go with my sister. I had been led by the Spirit and had at last succeeded in sharing the gospel with someone who was willing to listen. ■

Ngozi F. Okoro is a member of the Ibadan First Branch, Ibadan Nigeria District.



A Voice for Values

When Liriel couldn't talk about her values, her values spoke through the medallion she had earned for living them.

BY JEANETTE N. OAKES

Raquel “Liriel” Domiciano was about to sing in front of millions of people. Was she worried about messing up? A little. Was she worried about what to wear? Naturally. But what worried her most? Only 19 at the time, Liriel, a member of the Church for five years, wanted to stand as a witness “of God at all times and in all things, and in all places” (Mosiah 18:9).

Liriel was about to perform in Brazil’s largest televised talent competition, the *Raul Gil Amateur Show*. She had been told she couldn’t say anything about her religion. But she knew that many of Brazil’s Latter-day Saints would be watching, and she wanted everyone to know she wasn’t ashamed of the gospel. After praying in her room before her



first performance, she looked up and saw her Young Women medallion. It was the answer she had been looking for.

Liriel wore her medallion during every level of the competition. Eventually she and her partner, tenor Rinaldo Viana, won the contest, signed a recording contract, and watched as their first CD became the second-highest best-seller in Brazil's history, with more than one million copies sold.

Almost overnight, Liriel and Rinaldo were a huge hit. But Liriel's success is based on years of preparation, during which she trained herself as a lyric soprano. She credits her participation in the Young Women program with preparing her for life.

Learning Spiritual Values

Liriel was baptized at age 14 after being introduced to the Church by her older sister, Patricia, who lived in another part of the country.

"She invited us to church while visiting home one time," Liriel says. "The people were spiritual and neatly dressed. They all had standards that I liked. I was very happy. I felt the power of the Holy Ghost working

in my heart. I was hungry for the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Not long after their introduction to the Church, Liriel and her younger sister Priscila were baptized. Their mother later followed. Liriel and Priscila jumped wholeheartedly into the Young Women program.

"Lots of times we were in the same class, and we were very united," Liriel says. "We'd reach one Personal Progress goal and then talk about working toward our next goal."

Before long, Liriel had earned the Young Womanhood Recognition—the medallion she would wear in front of millions. To her, the medallion represented her desire to follow the Savior.

"Earning my Young Women medallion was an accomplishment," she says. "To me it means that I am spiritually prepared for temple marriage and a family."

She wishes all young women would earn a medallion. "It doesn't matter what age you are, as you look at your medallion you will always remember the goals you reached, what it represents to you, and the preparation it gave you for life," she says.

Wearing the medallion as she performed

Liriel spends a lot of time standing as a witness in front of a lot of people, performing for audiences around Brazil (above and far left) and with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir (above left). She was awarded the Troféu Imprensa (Brazilian Grammy Award) for her recent release "I Believe in Thee."





As Liriel grew (below), she dreamed of singing. Now her greatest dream is that her family (right) will be together forever.



was her way of letting people know she was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and willing to stand as a witness, even in front of millions.

Lifelong Value

Since joining the Church, Liriel, now 22, has learned a lot about the Young Women values—especially faith.

“Even when I was very small, I always read the scriptures,” she says. “I always wanted to know about God. I wanted to feel close to Him.”

As Liriel grew, her dream of becoming a singer took shape—but not as quickly as she would have liked, partly because of her family’s financial struggles. “I cried and I cried and I cried about this,” she says. “I was impatient. But a voice would come to my mind saying, ‘Be calm. It isn’t your time yet.’”

She continued to work toward her dream while working to help her family financially. It was a hard time. “God will try us, but all these things are for our growth,” she explains.

Through it all, Liriel has learned a lot—about herself and about her Heavenly Father. “I know Heavenly Father loves me,” she says. “As long as I am humble He will hear my prayers and will help me overcome my problems. I know that He hears our prayers, listens, and answers—not always as we would like, but I don’t have the least doubt that He does answer.”

She hopes her story inspires others and that she can be a good role model not only for Latter-day Saints, but also for young people all over Brazil. She’s off to a good start, having been featured on various Brazilian television shows.

Of Great Value

Liriel’s favorite scripture is Proverbs 31:10, 25–26, a scripture that has a lot to do with young women who live the Young Women theme:

“Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. . . .



“Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.

“She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.”

As each young woman comes “to accept and act upon [the Young Women] values,” her capabilities will also be of far greater value than rubies—whether she’s standing as a witness in front of millions or in the quiet of her own room—because she “will be prepared to strengthen home and family, make and keep sacred covenants, receive the ordinances of the temple, and enjoy the blessings of exaltation.”¹ ■

Jeanette N. Oakes is serving full time with her husband, George, in the Brazil South Area Office.

NOTE

1. Young Women theme, in *Young Women Personal Progress* (2001), 5.

CLEAN UP YOUR ACT



SOAP AND WATER WON'T DO THE TRICK. TRUE CLEANLINESS
AND PURITY COME FROM SINCERE REPENTANCE.
(See D&C 58:42–43.)

Drifting to Starboard

By Archie D. Smith

One evening after the United States Navy destroyer on which I served left Pearl Harbor for the North Pacific, I was the officer of the watch for the night shift. I retired to my bunk after supper to get some sleep before going on duty. I felt the roll of the

ship as I was dropping off to sleep. Later when I relieved the watch, the roll was more pronounced, and as I stepped out into the blackness of the open bridge, I felt the bite of the wind.

During the winter the North Pacific can be quite rough, and that

night the waves were large enough that the wind was starting to catch their crests and cause a white streaking of foam.

“I am ready to relieve you, sir,” I said.

The officer on duty’s face reflected the soft glow of the compass, and he reported the ship’s course and speed. He added that the captain had turned in for the evening, then said, “The barometer has dropped

Fear rose inside me because I knew if one of these waves bit us broadside, the ship could capsize.



three-hundredths in the past hour.” This meant stormy weather.

“Does the captain know this?” I asked.

“Yes, but he did not leave any special orders.”

He closed the door to the pilot-house behind him, and I found myself alone looking out at a menacing sea.

When ships encounter heavy weather, officers are to keep the ship’s bow heading into the wind with just enough speed to maintain steering. If waves strike the ship broadside, heavy rolling occurs, which can cause injury to the crew or even capsize the ship.

After an hour the waves had become mountainous. The wind was howling, and sheets of water were being blown through the air from huge cresting waves. The ship would climb the front side of the approaching wave, reach the crest, hang momentarily, then glide swiftly down the back side of the wave, plunging into the trough and resurfacing with water running over the deck, all the while pitching and shuddering. To steady the ship I had to reduce speed.

As the storm increased, I learned that the barometer had dropped another five-hundredths. I called the captain to report the worsening conditions. He simply replied, “Very well,” and hung up.

Soon the helmsman called out to me, “I am having trouble, sir. She is falling off to starboard!” I quickly

checked the compass and discovered that the bow was inching toward the trough. If that continued, we could end up in a dangerous position broadside to the waves. I ordered the helmsman to make the necessary adjustment, but before long the needle started drifting back. The helmsman tried to correct the drift again, but the ship was slow to respond.

Conditions were worsening. The wind was now shrieking at about 100 miles (160 km) per hour, the waves were 50 feet (15 m) high, and the ship’s bow kept moving toward the trough. Fear rose inside me because I knew if one of these waves hit us broadside, the ship could quite possibly capsize. I called the captain, who was awake because the violent motion of the ship made it impossible to sleep. He was worried too. He did not have any advice but told me to do the best I could.

The helmsman informed me with a frightened voice that he had done all he could, but the bow was still drifting to starboard. I was utterly desperate and fear was turning to panic as I continued my frantic mental search for a solution. The most nightmarish thoughts flooded my mind. I felt helpless and entirely humbled.

In my childlike state, I cried out to the only one who could help me—my Heavenly Father. The answer to my impassioned plea was immediate and clear. A voice in my mind said, “Use your engines. Use your engines in opposition.” I instantly understood.

I ordered, “Starboard engine ahead two-thirds. Port engine ahead one-third.” Slowly the ship’s bow responded by moving out of the impending trough. As the ship headed back into the waves, a great feeling of gratitude engulfed me. The storm continued, but I was able to maintain the ship’s direction by adding to one engine and subtracting from the other.

A skeptic might say the solution was in my mind all the time, but I know better. It came in answer to prayer. ■

Archie D. Smith is a member of the Edgemont Fourth Ward, Provo Utah Edgemont Stake.

Overcoming the Pain Made Us Better

By Washington Zambrano

We will never forget the Sunday when a new family of German origin moved into the Pusuqui Branch in Quito, Ecuador. The branch president introduced the Fuchs family during sacrament meeting, and we immediately felt they were special people.

After sacrament meeting I took my family to welcome them. Andreas, the oldest of their children, greeted us warmly and introduced himself as Andy. Something about that moment signaled the beginning of a friendship

that was to be deep, true, and certainly eternal—a friendship that left us an unforgettable legacy.

Time passed, and the Fuchs family became very involved in our branch. I was Young Men president at the time, and I soon saw that Andy's enthusiasm showed in all areas. When we began a service project, he was first to appear—with a big smile.

Andy was an extraordinary person, due to the goodness of our Heavenly Father and the guidance of his earthly parents. From an early age, Andy had been nourished by their affection and patience. He and his father, Horst, shared many activities and were indispensable to each other. This example so matured Andy that at age 14 he was a person of ability and usefulness. His many abilities never ceased to surprise us, but he was humble about them. He was totally dedicated to learning the gospel of Jesus Christ and lost no opportunity to talk to people about the Church.

No one supposed Andy would leave us so soon. We still remember that painful Saturday when we learned of his tragic death.

That morning Andy decided to ride his bike to the top of a hill in the area. He had already done so once with his father and was determined to repeat the feat alone. After getting his father's permission, he set out. As he rode up the hill, a truck transporting wood down the hill careened wildly. It struck Andy and killed him instantly. It was difficult for us to accept that this tragedy had

occurred to such a bright, promising young man.

The truck driver was seriously injured. He was taken to a hospital in Quito under police watch so he would not escape justice for what he had done. Surely, we thought, he should be held accountable for the accident. But from Horst Fuchs we all learned to forgive.

The branch president and I went with Brother Fuchs to identify Andy's body. While the death of his son was very painful, he forgave the person who had taken Andy's life. He refused to hold animosity in his heart. A few days later he visited the truck driver in the hospital and told him that he forgave him. He offered his help and spoke to him about the gospel of Jesus Christ. While the truck driver was recovering at home, he started receiving the discussions from the missionaries, who were accompanied by Brother Fuchs. Brother Fuchs also intervened in the justice system to have all charges against the man dropped.

I know this demonstration of love has its foundation in the gospel of Jesus Christ—the gospel by which the Fuchs family lives. The Fuchs family is indeed exceptional. Their example showed us that only through Christ does great strength come, as well as comfort and support.

Overcoming the pain made us better people. Although we understood that there would be tears along our path through life, our branch saw from Andy's legacy and his father's

example that we must have faith and work diligently to live and share the gospel every day. And because of Jesus Christ, we have faith that we will meet Andy again. ■

Washington Zambrano is a member of the San Juan Ward, Quito Ecuador Santa Ana Stake.

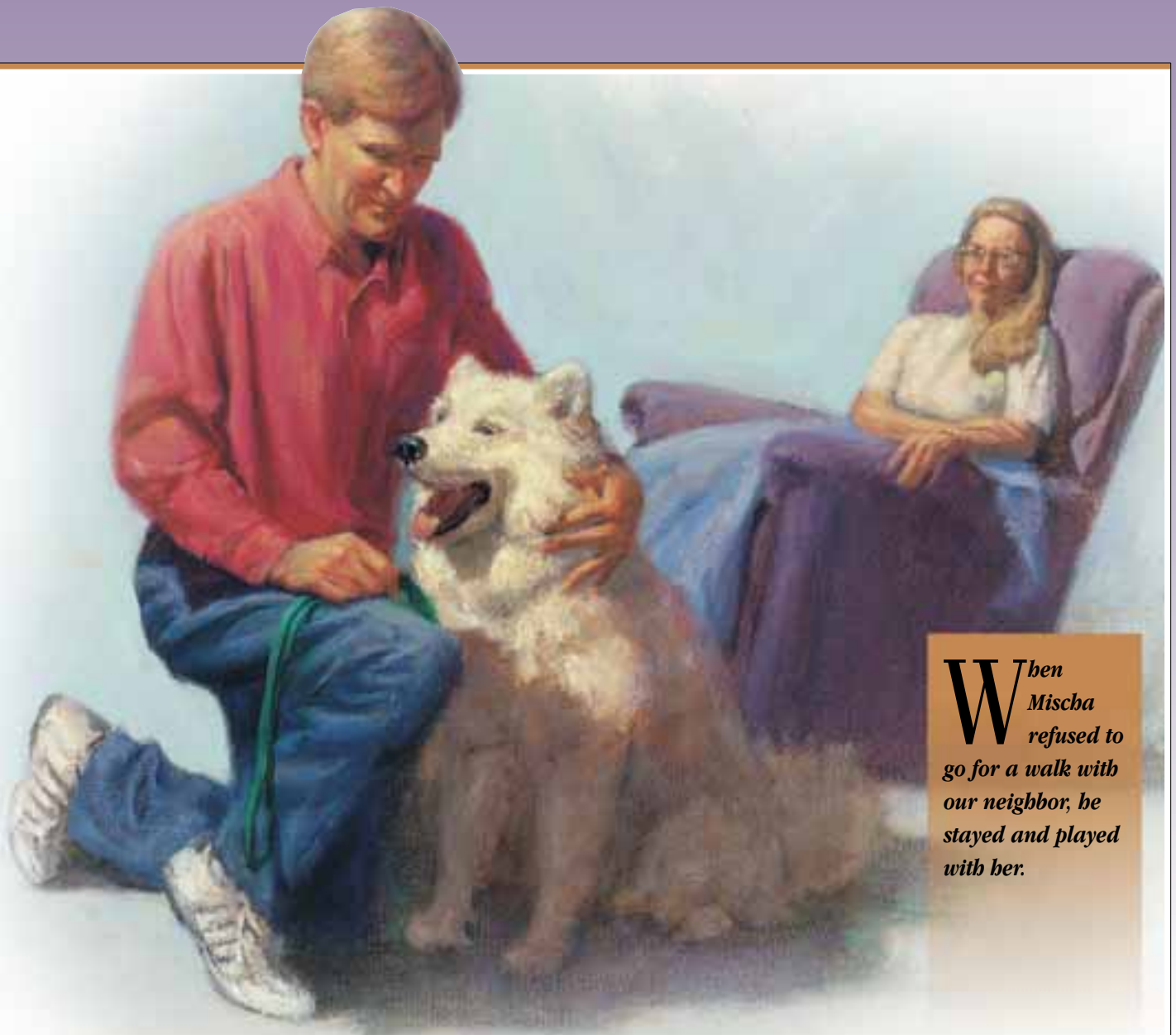
Just the Help I Needed

By Margaret Kay Christensen

An act of service on the part of my neighbors taught me a memorable lesson on the importance of identifying others' needs and helping to meet them.

As a single mother of three children, I had learned to be rather self-reliant in caring for my family. However, in the spring of 1989, changes in my circumstances brought new challenges. My older son, a returned missionary, was married and serving far away as a United States Navy officer. My daughter and younger son were preparing to leave within two weeks of each other for missionary service. For the first time, I would be alone.

Well, I would not be *completely* alone—there was Mischa, our large, beautiful Samoyed dog. One of the children took her for a walk every day, but now that they would all be gone, this task would become mine. The problem was, I was scheduled to undergo surgery for bone spurs in my



When Mischa refused to go for a walk with our neighbor, he stayed and played with her.

heel, and walking would be extremely painful for at least several weeks.

During one of the last walks my younger son took with Mischa before leaving for the Missionary Training Center, he was stopped by our neighbor. The man said he would walk our dog every day until one of the children returned home.

The first evening our neighbor came to walk Mischa, she would not go with him because he was a stranger. So he stayed and just played with her for about 15 minutes. He came the next night to play with her and make friends, but she still refused to go for

a walk. Finally on the third night, she was willing to go, and soon she was waiting impatiently for her new friend each night.

Long after my foot had healed from the surgery and I could have taken over the responsibility, my neighbor continued to walk Mischa. When a night job kept him busy three nights a week, his wife took over. For a year and a half until my daughter returned, these wonderful neighbors walked my dog for at least one hour every night except for three nights when they apologetically took a brief vacation out of town. That totaled

more than 547 hours of service!

I am convinced my neighbors were in touch with the Spirit, and I am grateful they identified my need and responded to it. It was not something I would have asked them to do. But given my responsibilities at that time, no other service would have been of greater help to me. Following Alma's admonition "to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light" (Mosiah 18:8), these neighbors set an example of loving service that will always remain with me. ■

Margaret Kay Christensen is a member of the Midvale Fifth Ward, Midvale Utah Stake.

The Heavens Rained

BY ELDER RONALD T. HALVERSON
Of the Seventy



The Polynesian people have a simple faith, a deep faith. When they hear the truth and they feel it, they accept it.

While serving in the Pacific Islands Area Presidency, I had the marvelous experience of getting acquainted with the people of the islands. They are people of great faith. As I watched them and met their children, I soon learned that to be happy, you don't need all of the trappings of worldly wealth.

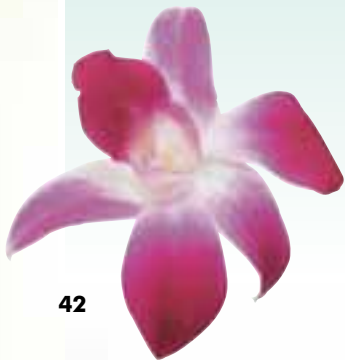
Once while I was in Tonga, I was traveling between islands to attend a district conference. Traveling with me were my wife, a translator, and the mission president and his wife. To get from island to island, the people travel by boat. This particular boat trip between Ha'apai and Ha'afeva took us four hours. When we arrived at Ha'afeva, the Saints were lining the shore and singing to us. We rolled up our pants, took off our shoes, and waded ashore.

We soon learned that the people there had been suffering because of a drought. In the islands, drinking water is collected in barrels from rainwater running off roofs. The islanders drink the water from the barrels. If it doesn't rain, they're out of drinking water,

and their crops don't grow either. They had been experiencing the drought for so long that they were out of water, and for dinner that afternoon, they shared with us the last of their food. I thought to myself, "What faith!" They had been fasting, and they asked if we would join them in a prayer for rain, which we did.

After the conference had ended and we prepared to leave, the people on the island prayed not only for rain, but they prayed that we would have good weather until we arrived back at our destination. We got into our boats and traveled back with good weather. But as we arrived at our final destination the heavens opened, and the islands were blessed with rain.

That's the kind of faith many Polynesian people have and the kind of miracles they bring about. They have a simple faith, a deep faith. They don't have to have proof. They don't doubt at all that the Lord lives and that He loves them. When they hear the truth and they feel it, they accept it. Then they build upon that testimony. ■





Questions & Answers

My friend says he wants to be baptized, but I think he might be more interested in me than in the gospel. What should I do?

L I A H O N A

It is important to realize that there are two issues to consider here. The first is your friend's interest in the Church and your responsibility to be a missionary. The second issue is deciding what your relationship should be—friendship or something more.

Your Missionary Responsibility

When we are faithful, God often brings people into our lives so we can bless them with the gospel. Missionary work is most effective when we have built relationships of trust. So our friends are more likely to listen to our message when they already trust us. However, it's not uncommon for relationships to become confused when those involved share deep feelings.

Regardless of your friend's motivation, you may be his only link to the Church. Make sure he is introduced to and accepted by as many other members as possible. By giving him

Heavenly Father often puts us in positions to teach others the gospel. Take pressure off yourself by introducing your friend to other Church members.

Church leaders have advised against serious relationships unless you're old enough to consider marriage.

Tell your friend why your standards for relationships are important to you.

Seek guidance from your parents and Church leaders and from Heavenly Father through fasting and prayer.

more links to the Church than just his relationship with you, he will feel more comfortable with the Church and his developing testimony will be less dependent upon just you.

Your Relationship

Our leaders have been clear on dating standards. Those who are not yet 16 should not be dating, let alone considering a serious relationship. Older teens should avoid pairing off until they are old enough and mature enough for courtship that will lead to marriage. (For more information, see "Dating," in *For the Strength of Youth* [2001], 24–25.)

It is important to be honest with your friend up front. If you are not old enough to be in a steady or long-term relationship, you need to explain that to him. Let him know the gospel is the most important thing in your life and that not only do you want to do what's right, but you want him to find the same joy in the gospel that you have found.



If you are old enough to consider a serious relationship and you think your friend wants your friendship to be something more, let him know as soon as possible that it would be best for him to decide how he feels about the Lord's Church before you discuss how you feel about each other. Baptism is the first step toward salvation. That's something too important to be jeopardized by the hurt or angry feelings that often come when a romantic relationship is broken off.

Seeking Guidance

When you are in situations like this one, it is appropriate to pray, fast, and seek the advice of your parents and Church leaders. You can take comfort in knowing that Heavenly Father cares about you and that marrying the right person in the right place at the right time is important enough to your eternal salvation that He wants to help you. It is up to you to be worthy of His blessings and to seek to know and do His will.

READERS



Talk to your friend. Explain to him that joining the Church is something he should do for himself, not for others. When we are

baptized we make special covenants with God that need to be kept. Knowing this will help him make a decision for the right reasons.

Sherice Bradley, 17,

Howell Ward, Garland Utah Stake



When a friend decided to investigate the Church, I was afraid that he was doing it only because he was interested in me. But as we studied the Book of Mormon and took the missionary discussions together, I saw him growing in faith. Being a good example made me a better member. Today he's serving a mission.

Giuliana Giusti, 22,
Pleasant View Seventh Ward, Provo Utah Sharon East Stake

Many people have joined the Church through the examples of their friends. So be an example for this friend, and help him to acquire his own testimony. Beyond this, I would ask help from the Lord. Who are we to say if this friend will not be a great leader in the Church one day?

Paula Brandao Cavalcanti, 15,
Torre Ward, João Pessoa Brazil Stake



I had a friend who was attending church because he liked someone in the ward. After a few weeks he finally got the hint that she wasn't interested. He was disappointed, but he felt something every time he went to church. So he kept coming and was baptized. He went on to serve a mission. The Church is true; share it with everyone.

Elder Chad L. Cronin, 21,
England London Mission

Fast and pray. Then talk to him, and tell him that baptism will be one of the most important decisions that he will make in his life. Baptism isn't about courting. It is a sacred ordinance. Ask him to pray about baptism.

Emily Pagulayan, 18,
Makati First Ward, Makati Philippines Stake



In His own way and His own time the Lord is preparing persons to accept His gospel. . . . When we are standing as 'witnesses of God at all times and in all things' (Mosiab 18:9), the Lord will open ways for us to find and have appropriate communications with those who are seeking."

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Sharing the Gospel," *Liahona*, Jan. 2002, 8-9; *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 8.

If you really want your friend to be a good member of the Church, you should first be a strong member yourself. If you go forward with faith, the Lord will help you and your friend. The Lord works in different ways, and although we sometimes don't understand it, He has a purpose.

Belkys Suguey Velásquez Hernández, 18,
La Esperanza Ward, Tegucigalpa Honduras
La Esperanza Stake



Avoid getting involved in a serious relationship with him. Just be friends and have fun. Encourage him to get better acquainted with the gospel, and always remember him in your prayers. Help him understand that he is a child of God and that being baptized is a stepping-stone back to Him.

Faith Ejokeoghene Imoh, 17,
Mini-Okoro Ward, Port Harcourt Nigeria Stake

Answers 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, birth date, ward and stake (or branch and district), and a photograph to:

**Questions and Answers 9/04
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 September 2004.**

QUESTION

"Pornography is ruining my life. But every time I try to quit looking at it, I fall again. What can I do?" ■

Did You Know?



It Happened in August

25 August 1878: The very first Primary meeting was held in Farmington, Utah.

6 August 1903: Russia was dedicated for the preaching of the gospel.



21 August 1927: President Thomas S. Monson's birthday! He was born in Salt Lake City.

14 August 1935: The Argentine Mission was organized. (There are now 10 missions in Argentina.)

WHO AM I?

Book of Mormon Hero

Read about my life to figure out who I am. Discover more about me from the scripture references at the end.

* My grandfather and father were prophets.

* I had two younger brothers.

* When he was young my father was "a very wicked and an idolatrous man" (Mosiah 27:8).

* Later my father had a remarkable spiritual experience that turned his life around.

* Late in his life my father took my brothers on a mission to the Zoramites.

* After returning from his mission, my father challenged me to trust in God and prepare myself to take responsibility for the sacred records.

* During my life a wicked man named Amalickiah wanted to be king.

* I was a friend and colleague of Moroni, leader of our armed forces.

* I helped persuade the people of Ammon not to go to war. I led their sons in battle.

* I fought many battles with my "sons," and we helped drive the Lamanites out of our land.

* Before I died I returned to preaching the gospel and gave the sacred records to my younger brother.



For the answer see Mosiah 18; 27; 29:42; Alma 31:7; 36-37; 38:6-9; 45:20-22; 46:1-3, 38; 48:19; 49:30; 53:10-22; 58:41; 62:38, 45; 63:1.

Leadership Tip

President Gordon B. Hinckley (below with television's Larry King) has told us we should lead out in honorable causes: "Become a leader in speaking up in behalf of those causes which make our civilization shine and which give comfort and peace to our lives. . . . Do not let fear overcome your efforts. . . . The adversary of all truth would put into your heart a reluctance to make an effort. Cast that fear aside and be valiant in the cause of truth and righteousness and faith. If you now decide that this will become the pattern of your life, you will not have to



make that decision again" ("Words of the Living Prophet," *Liabona*, June 1998, 26; see "Excerpts from Recent Addresses of President Gordon B. Hinckley," *Ensign*, Jan. 1998, 72).

FROM TOP LEFT: FIRST MEETING OF THE PRIMARY ASSOCIATION, BY LYNN FAUSETT; PHOTOGRAPH OF PRESIDENT HINCKLEY COURTESY OF CHURCH NEWS, MAY NOT BE COPIED; DETAIL FROM TWO THOUSAND STRIPLING WARRIORS, BY ARNOLD FRIBERG



“A Latter-day Saint Perspective on Muhammad”

I was baptized two years ago. As an undergraduate at a university in Nigeria where a large percentage of the students are Muslim, it was difficult for me to adapt easily to their culture and to relate with them. I am grateful for the article “A Latter-day Saint Perspective on Muhammad” in the June 2002 *Liabona*. It highlights that I need to live peacefully among people of different beliefs and doctrines. It gives me a better understanding that all people on earth are wonderful children of our Heavenly Father.

*Imogu Anthony,
Abeokuta First Branch,
Abeokuta Nigeria District*

God’s Work Fills the Earth

Before I fell asleep last night I read the *Liabona* as I usually do. The Spirit compels me to write what the magazine means to me. I was baptized 34 years ago in Sweden. Eight years ago I moved to the United States to live with my daughter. Here I receive the magazine in Swedish.

I love to read what President Gordon B. Hinckley has to say to us.

When I see pictures from the new Conference Center, it helps me understand the prophecy in Genesis 22:17 that we shall be “as the sand which is upon the sea shore.” I am thankful for the reports about how God’s work fills the whole earth (see Daniel 2:34–35, 44).

*Ulla Mårtensson,
Susquehanna Ward,
Baltimore Maryland Stake*

Faith in the Philippines

While I am reading the *Liabona*, tears flow from my eyes—not just once, but many times. One article that really touched my heart was “Walking by Faith in the Philippines” in the December 2001 issue with the sidebar by Elder Duane B. Gerrard. I do feel that President Gordon B. Hinckley’s pleas in the Manila Philippines Temple dedicatory prayer were heard and will continue to be heard.

*Eliza O. Villamor,
Santo Cristo Ward,
Gapan Philippines Stake*

“Women of Righteousness”

The article “Women of Righteousness” by Elder M. Russell Ballard in the December 2002 issue was magnificent. I was a little discouraged, but now I am spiritually invigorated.

*Elisangela Pinheiro Pechim Soares,
Poços de Caldas First Ward,
São João da Boa Vista Brazil Stake*

Church Resources You Can Get Your Hands On



Need help with a lesson or talk? Can’t remember where you read that quote?

Visit www.lds.org for

a complete list of

Church-produced

resources available online

in your language.

Click on the world map located in the upper right corner of the home page.

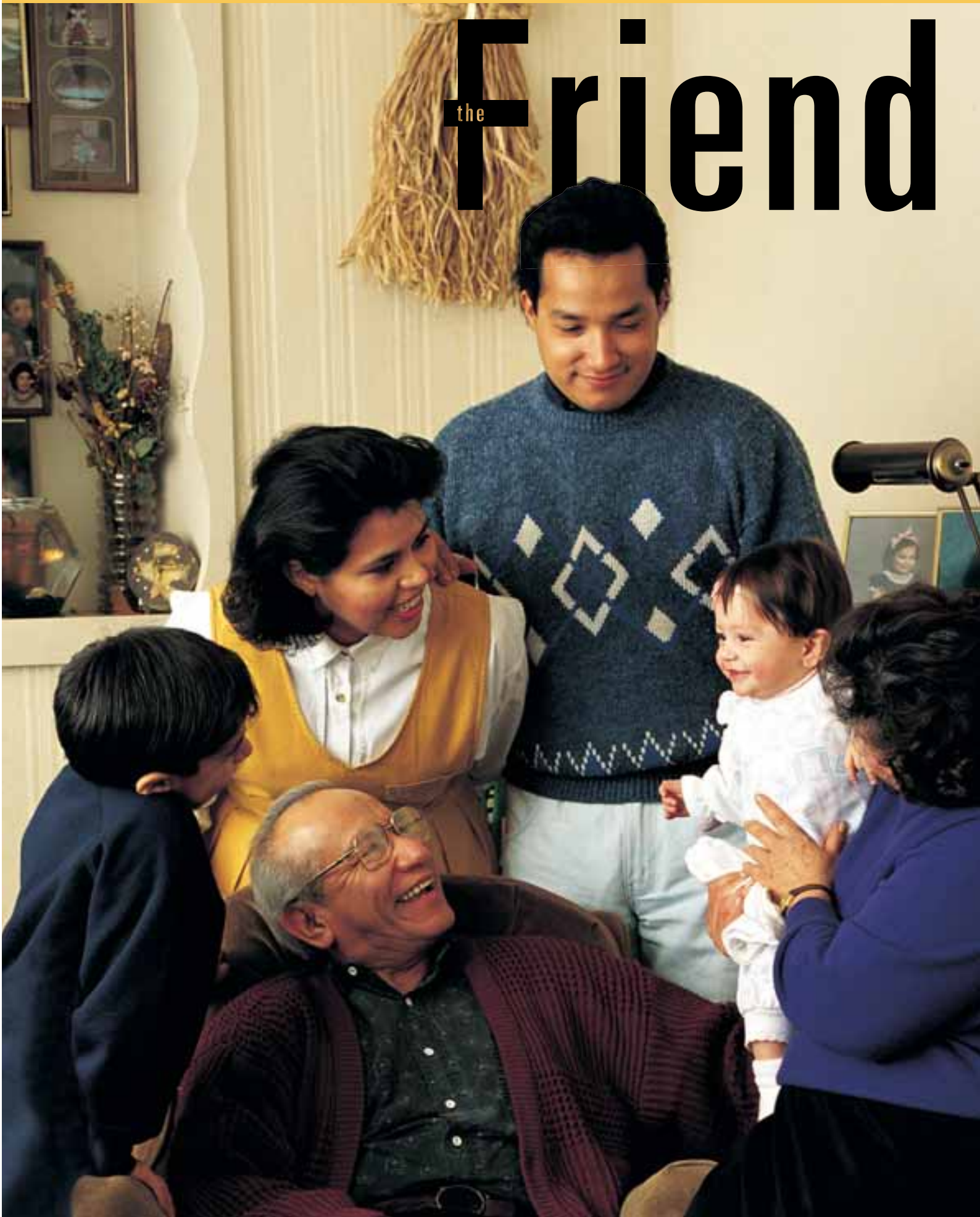
Availability of materials

varies by language.



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN LUKE,
POSED BY MODELS

the Friend



Following the Crowd

BY PRESIDENT GORDON B. HINCKLEY



President Hinckley tells of a time he learned about having the courage to make his own decisions.

The year we enrolled in junior high school, the building could not accommodate all the students, and so our class was sent back to the elementary school. We were furious. We'd spent six years in that building, and we felt we deserved something better. The boys of the class all met after school. We decided we'd go on strike.

The next day we did not show up. But we had no place to go. We couldn't stay home, because our mothers would ask questions. We didn't think of going downtown to a show. We had no money for that. We didn't think of going to the park. We were afraid we might be seen. We just wandered about and wasted the day.

The next morning, the principal, Mr. Stearns, was at the front door of the school to greet us. He told us that we could not come back to school until we brought a note from our parents. Striking, he said,

was not the way to settle a problem. If we had a complaint, we could come to the principal's office and discuss it.

I remember walking sheepishly into the house. My mother asked what was wrong. I told her. She wrote a note. It was very brief. It was the most stinging rebuke she ever gave me. It read:

"Dear Mr. Stearns,

"Please excuse Gordon's absence yesterday. His action was simply an impulse to follow the crowd."

I have never forgotten my mother's note. I resolved then and there that I would never do anything on the basis of simply following the crowd. I determined then and there that I would make my own decisions on the basis of my standards and not be pushed in one direction or another by those around me. That decision has blessed my life many times. ●

From an April 1993 general conference address.







Building My House Upon a Rock

***I will have faith in
Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.***

I will pray to Heavenly Father.

I will repent of any wrongdoing.

I will forgive others.

“Successful . . . families are established
and maintained on principles of faith,
prayer, repentance, [and] forgiveness”
 (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,”
Liabona, Oct. 1998, 24; *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102).

BUILD UPON MY ROCK

BY SHEILA E. WILSON

“Successful . . . families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, [and] forgiveness” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liahona*, Oct. 1998, 24; *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102).



Have you ever built a house out of sand? Did you watch the waves wash it away?

If you were building a house to live in, you wouldn't build it on sand. You would want to build your house on a solid foundation—perhaps of concrete or rock. Then if the rain came down, a flood started, or the wind blew, your house would be safe.

Jesus explained: “Therefore, whoso heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, who built his house upon a rock—and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock” (3 Nephi 14:24–25). That rock is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

When Nathan was five years old, he suffered an eye injury. During the next few years, Nathan needed several operations. Nathan and his family prayed and had faith that he wouldn't lose his sight. Heavenly Father heard their prayers and blessed Nathan so he could see.

Like Nathan, you will have challenges. These are like the floods, rain, and wind that can come down upon your house. When you say your prayers, have faith, and live the teachings of Jesus, you will help strengthen yourself and your family. You will be building your testimony upon the rock of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Build-upon-My-Rock Door Hanger

Paste the door hanger on heavy paper, and cut it out. On the rock, write something you will do to strengthen your family. Hang it on a doorknob to remind you of what you can do to build your house upon a rock.

Sharing Time Ideas

1. Write “Prayer Strengthens Me and My Family” on the board. Display a piece of paper and a book. Explain that the book represents challenges; the paper represents us. Invite a child to stand the paper on its edge and balance the book on top. After a few children have tried it, explain that there is a way to make the paper strong enough to hold the book. Roll the paper into a tube, and secure it. Stand the paper tube on its end. Carefully place the book on top (practice beforehand). Similarly, when we pray and keep the commandments, Heavenly Father will shape our character and give us strength. Invite two or three families to share how prayer has strengthened and blessed them. Have each family share a favorite song or hymn and sing it together or with the Primary.

2. Act out the parable of the unforgiving servant (see Matthew 18:23–35). Point out that the debts were as if the servant would not forgive a debt of U.S. \$1 after the king had forgiven him a debt of \$600,000 (see James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 3rd ed. [1916], 396–7). Prepare seven large question marks with the following questions, and place them underneath every seventh chair: 1. Whom does the king represent? (Our Heavenly Father.) 2. Whom does the unmerciful servant represent? (Each of us.) 3. Whom does the fellow servant represent? (Anyone who has offended us.) 4. What is Jesus teaching us in this parable? (That we must forgive others if we want God to forgive us.) 5. How do you feel when you forgive someone? 6. How do you feel when you do not forgive? 7. How do you feel when Heavenly Father forgives you? Have the children count off. When they reach seven, ask the child to look under his or her chair and answer the question. Continue until all the questions have been answered. Read Matthew 18:21–22. Have the children multiply 70 times 7. Jesus was teaching us that we should always be willing to forgive. Encourage the children to memorize D&C 64:10. Sing a song or hymn about forgiveness. ●



FROM THE LIFE OF PRESIDENT HEBER J. GRANT

Testimony of an Apostle



When Heber J. Grant was a new Apostle, he traveled with a group of brethren to Arizona to visit the Native Americans there.

Look, the path splits in two. Is the other one safe?

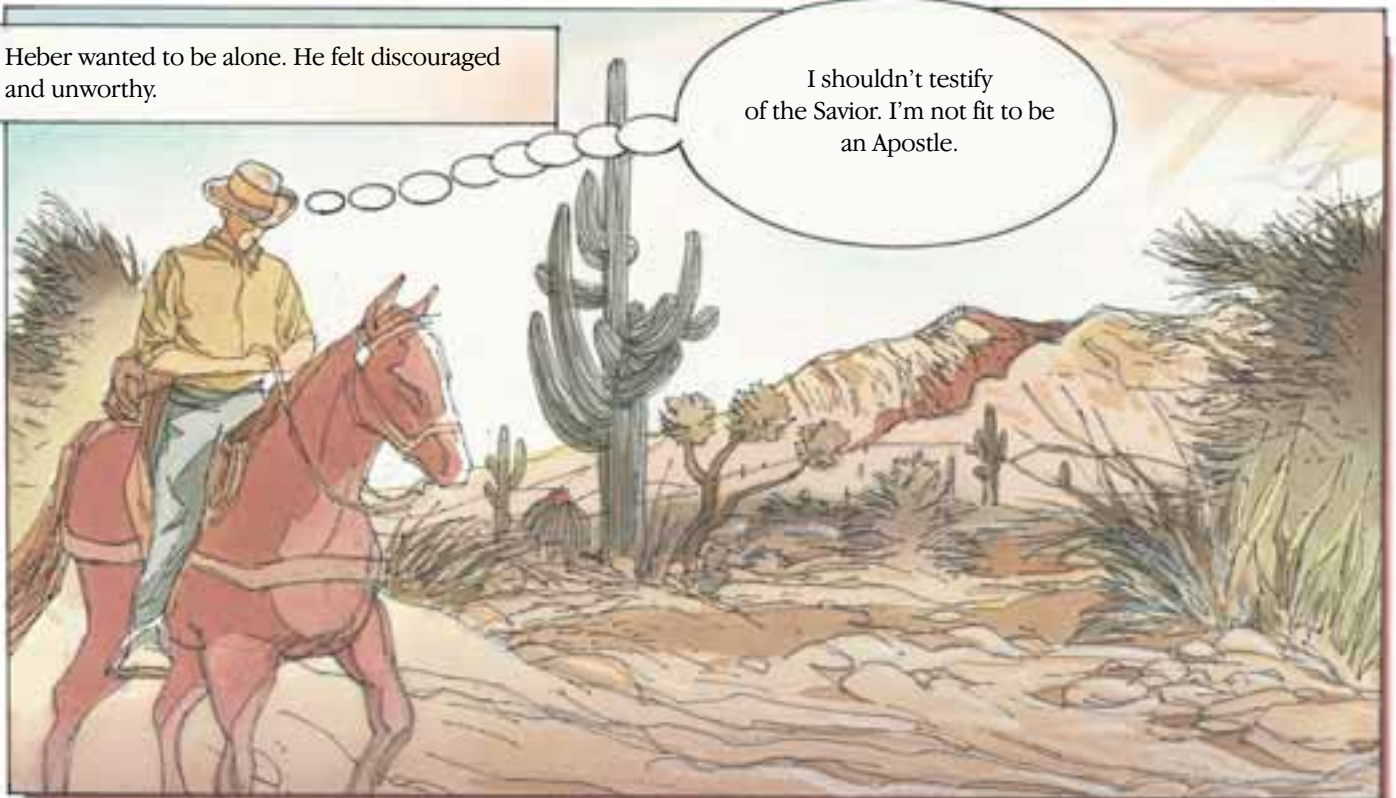
A rider can travel it, but it's too muddy for wagons.

Why don't the rest of you drive on while I take this path? I'll meet up with you soon.

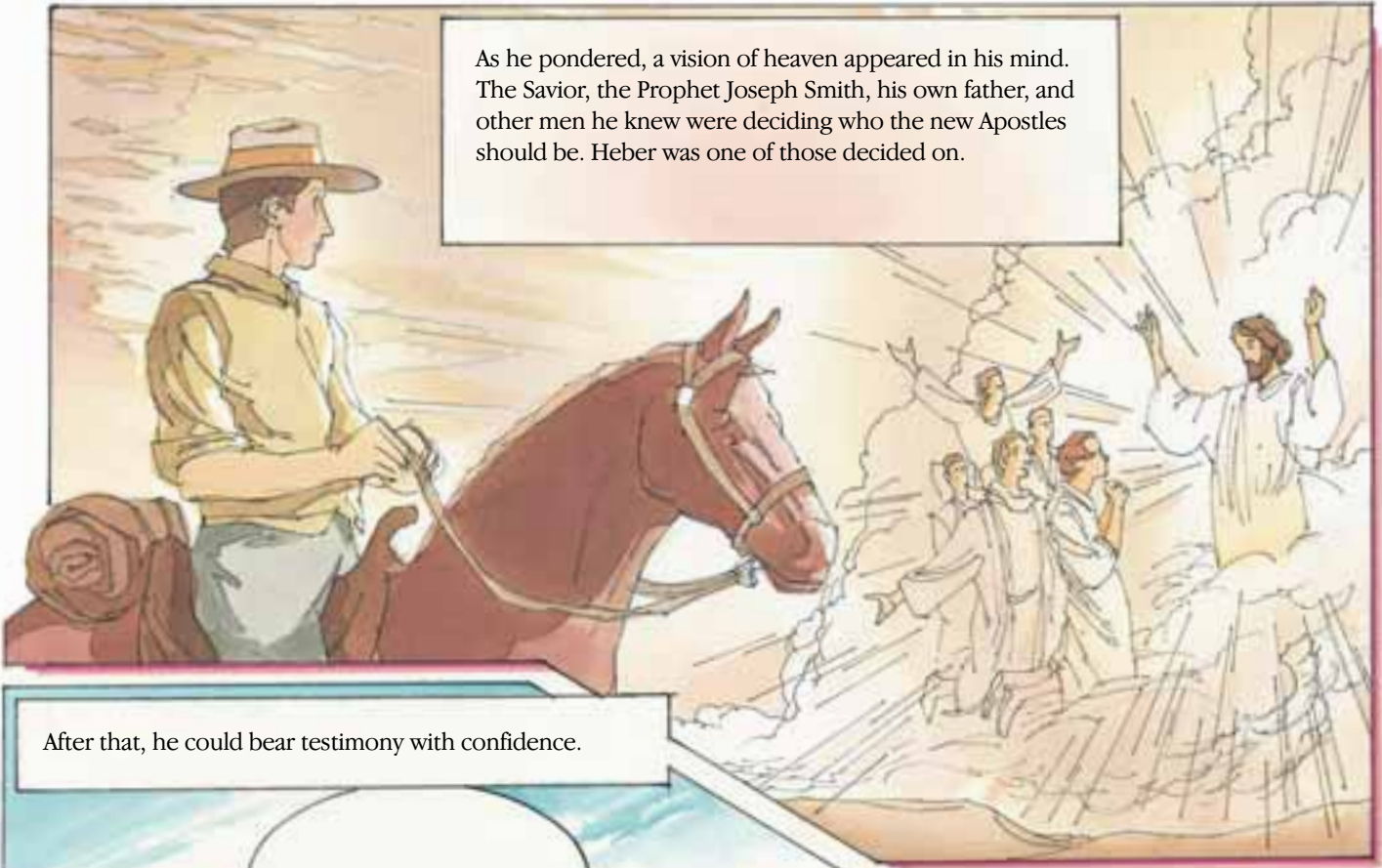


Heber wanted to be alone. He felt discouraged and unworthy.

I shouldn't testify of the Savior. I'm not fit to be an Apostle.



ILLUSTRATED BY MIKE EAGLE

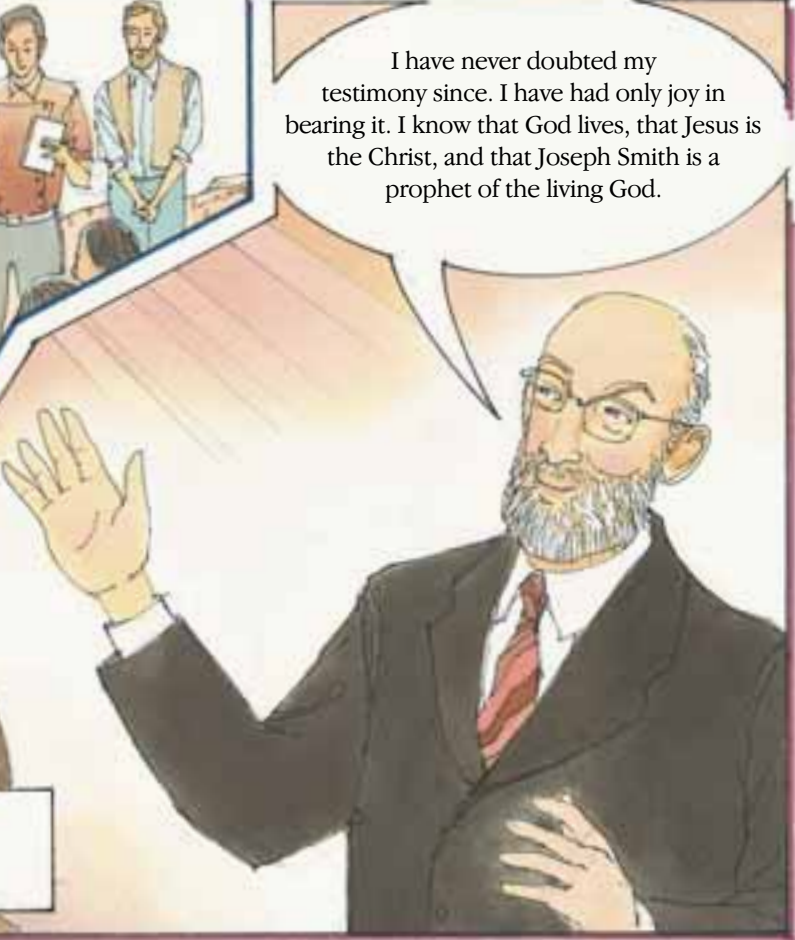


As he pondered, a vision of heaven appeared in his mind. The Savior, the Prophet Joseph Smith, his own father, and other men he knew were deciding who the new Apostles should be. Heber was one of those decided on.


After that, he could bear testimony with confidence.



I know that Jesus lives.



I have never doubted my testimony since. I have had only joy in bearing it. I know that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, and that Joseph Smith is a prophet of the living God.



President Grant spoke of this experience years later.
Adapted from Conference Report, Oct. 1942, 24–26.

David's Prayer

"Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matthew 21:22).

BY PATRICIA REECE ROPER

A story from the life of President David O. McKay (1873–1970), Ninth President of the Church

David's heart thumped loudly in his chest, and he sat straight up in bed. Faint moonlight streamed through the bedroom window, leaving gray shadows on the walls. The only sound came from his brother Thomas's heavy breathing as he lay asleep.

It had been only a dream. Two Indians had come into the yard. When David saw them, he ran to the house for protection. One of them drew an arrow from his quiver and shot at David, hitting him in the back. Then they entered his home, sneering at his mother and frightening her.

Although it had been a dream, it seemed real. David rubbed his back where the arrow had hit him in the dream. He had felt the blow.

After that David became very afraid at night. Thoughts of people trying to hurt his mother and younger brothers and sisters seemed real to him.

One day David found his father packing a satchel. "Why are you packing, Papa?" David asked.

"I'll be gone with the cattle for a few days," his father answered. "Don't worry. It won't be long. I'll just be moving them to some fresh pasture."

"I don't want you to go," David said.

"Everything will be all right," his father replied. "I'll be back in a few days."

David watched sadly as his father took his satchel to the front gate where his horse was tied. After waving good-bye to the family, he rode off after the cattle. David felt sick inside. He tried not to worry, hoping everything would be all right like his father had said. But as evening drew near and the sun went down, his worries grew.

After supper the family prepared for bed. When they had all knelt down at their bedsides and said their prayers, they snuggled under the covers to go to sleep. But David couldn't sleep. His heart pounded, and his mind raced. Through the open doorway of his bedroom, he could see his mother going to her bedroom.

At last his mother blew out the candle and went to sleep. But David still couldn't close his eyes. He thought he heard noises around the house. His brother Thomas slept soundly, but the fear in David's heart grew. What could he do? Tears trickled onto his pillow. The palms of his hands were sweaty, and he could still hear the noises around the house.

David decided to pray as his parents had taught him. He was sure the Lord would help him, but he had one problem: kneeling by the side of his bed. How could he leave the safety of his bed to kneel and pray? What if someone was hiding beneath his bed?

David knew that the only way he would be able to sleep was if he prayed to the Lord for help. At last he slowly climbed out of bed onto his knees. He asked the Lord



“The Lord is not just an absent, faraway source. He is a kind father, solicitous of the welfare of his children and ready and willing to hear and answer their call.”

President David O. McKay (1873–1970),
in *Conference Report*, Oct. 1952, 129.

to protect his mother and his family. All the noises died away, and a calm feeling entered David’s heart. A voice spoke clearly to him, saying, “Don’t be afraid. Nothing will hurt you.” David felt the sweet assurance that he would be safe in bed at night.

Snuggling under his covers, David fell asleep. He didn’t worry at night anymore. Even though it had been a difficult test for him to get out of bed and kneel to pray, he had prayed the way he knew he should. And the Lord answered his prayer. ●

*Adapted from Conference
Report*, Oct. 1951, 182.

*Patricia Reece Roper is a
member of the Leamington
Ward, Delta Utah Stake.*

*David wondered,
“How can I leave
the safety of my
bed to kneel and
pray?”*

A Shield of Faith

“Successful . . . families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, [and] forgiveness” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” Liahona, Oct. 1998, 24; Ensign, Nov. 1995, 102).

In Primary we learn about faith, prayer, repentance, and forgiveness. Our families can help us follow these principles. Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles teaches, “The best place for individuals to build faith and strong testimonies is in righteous homes filled with love” (“Feasting at the Lord’s Table,” *Ensign*, May 1996, 81).

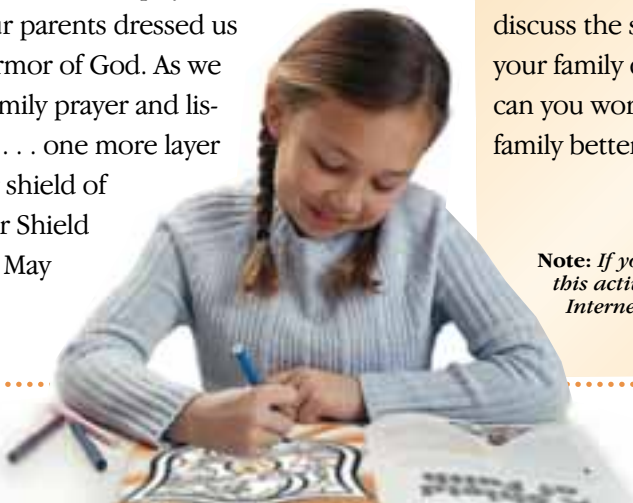
Our families can help us build shields of faith to protect us from “the fiery darts of the wicked” (Ephesians 6:16). Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles learned this as a child: “We were dressed in our home each morning, not only with hats and raincoats and boots to protect us from physical storm, but even more carefully our parents dressed us each day in the armor of God. As we would kneel in family prayer and listen to our father, . . . one more layer was added to our shield of faith” (“Build Your Shield of Faith,” *Ensign*, May 1974, 98).

Like Elder Perry, we can learn principles at home that can protect us from sin. We can do our part to strengthen our families by having faith in Jesus Christ, praying together, repenting, and forgiving family members who hurt us. When we do these things, the Holy Ghost will fill our homes with warmth and peace. ●

Family Home Evening Activities and Ideas

1. Cut out or copy the shield on page F11, and mount it on heavy paper. Color the pictures on the shield. Tell your family what each picture means, and hang the shield where it will remind you to work on these principles.
2. For a family home evening activity, cooperate in teams to color the four areas of the shield.
3. In a family home evening lesson or Primary talk, discuss the statement by Elder L. Tom Perry. What does your family do to help you build a shield of faith? How can you work on these four principles to make your family better?

Note: *If you do not wish to remove pages from the magazine, this activity may be copied, traced, or printed out from the Internet at www.lds.org. Click on “Gospel Library.”*





FAITH

PRAYER

REPENTANCE

FORGIVENESS



Family

TRADITIONS



From an interview with Elder Christoffel Golden Jr. of the Seventy, currently serving in the Africa Southeast Area Presidency; by Barbara Jean Jones

“By the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things” (Moroni 10:5).

I grew up in South Africa. South Africa has wonderful game parks where wild animals such as lions, elephants, giraffes, and zebras roam free. When I was a boy, our family would often visit these game parks. Seeing the beauty of the animals and the wilderness was always a spiritual experience. It gave me a love for the creations of the Lord. Visiting South Africa’s game parks is a tradition my wife, Diane, and I have continued with our own four children.

Other traditions I grew up with that have continued in my own family today are family prayer and scripture study. Although we were not members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when I was a boy, my parents had strong Christian roots and taught us good values.

Our regular prayer and scripture study prepared us for when the missionaries knocked on our door. I was 20 years old at the time. We immediately recognized the truths the missionaries were teaching as we learned about modern prophets, the Book of Mormon, and the Restoration of the gospel. As I read the Book of Mormon, from the very first verse I knew it was true. Our entire family was soon baptized.

I hope you young children will look forward to being baptized and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost. I did not receive those blessings until I was 20, so I remember well what it was like not to have the power of this gift in my life. I read the Bible every day starting when I was a young boy, but I understood the scriptures so much better after I received the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Even at a very young age, children can feel the influence of the Holy Ghost. I



School photo at age 11.



With his volleyball team (standing at right).

remember a family home evening in which tears started streaming down the cheeks of our five-year-old daughter, Chanel. I thought her brother, Christopher, might have pinched her or something, so I asked, "Chanel, why are you crying?" She answered, "Daddy, I feel so happy."

I can't remember what the family home evening lesson was about, but I stopped and said, "Chanel, what you're feeling is the power and influence of the Holy Ghost." She replied, "Yes, Daddy, I know that is true." Like Chanel, you can feel the happy, peaceful feeling, which will tell you when something is right or true.

The Holy Ghost will also help you to do what is right, even when that seems very difficult. I hope you children will never be afraid to stand up for what is right. I still remember an experience I had in primary school. Primary school includes first through seventh grades. When I was about 12 and in my final year of primary school, the head boy, who was supposed to be the school leader, was actually the school's biggest bully. He and three or four of his pals would go around teasing other kids.

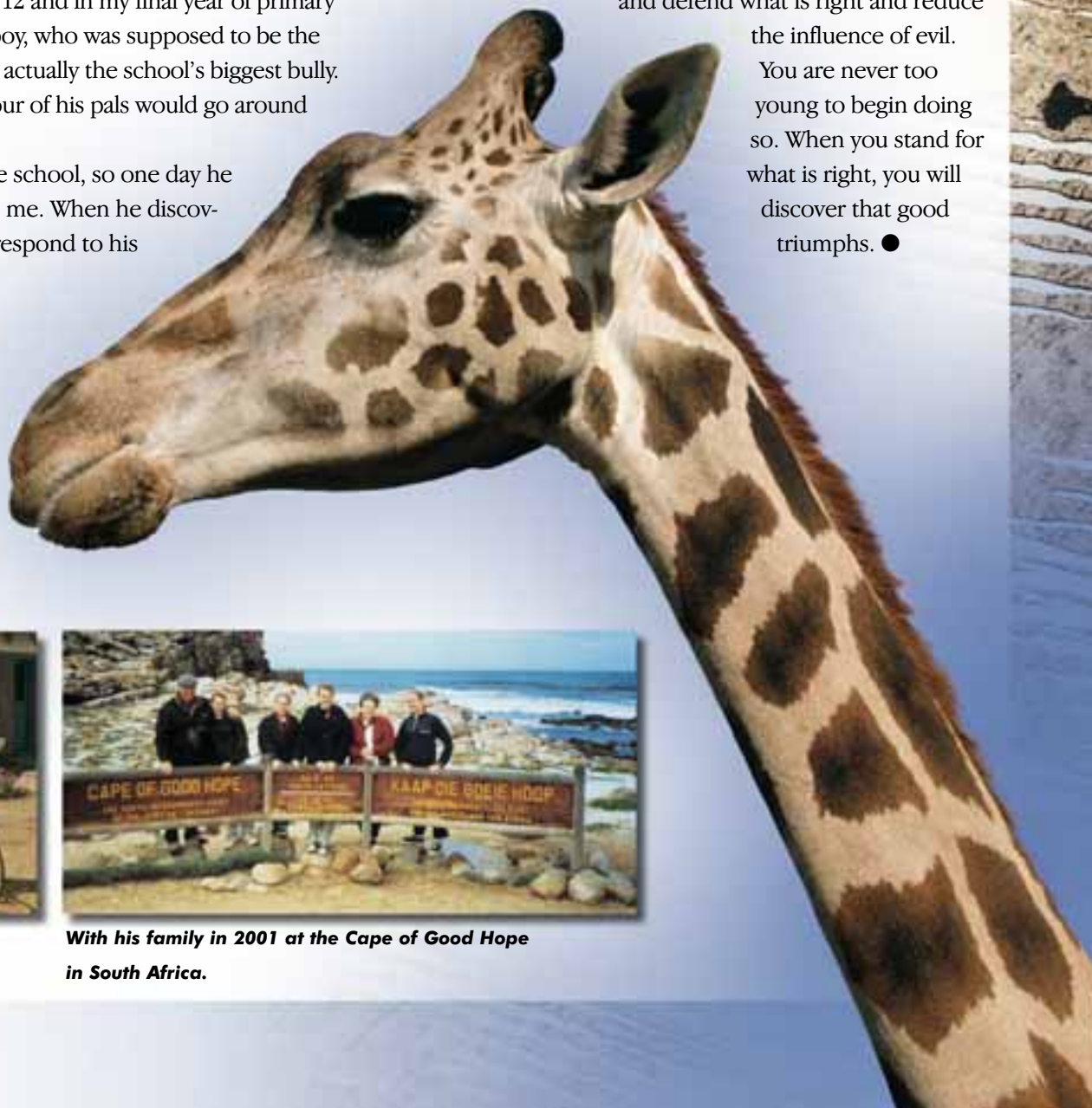
I was new at the school, so one day he tried to intimidate me. When he discovered I would not respond to his

intimidation, he gave up and bullied other kids, especially the weaker ones. One day when I saw this happening, I walked over and told him to stop. I said that if he did not stop I would defend the smaller boy. There stood the bully with his three or four friends, surrounding this small, timid boy and myself. It was very scary. I thought they were going to beat me up. To my surprise, the bully withered under my words. He and his friends made some smart remarks and left.

Throughout the rest of the year I continued to defend other boys from these bullies. Others started to do so too, until the bullies gradually lost all their power and influence. Children, the lesson I learned from this experience was that when we do things for the right reason, even when it is very difficult, the Lord will bless us and help us. He needs courageous people to stand up

and defend what is right and reduce the influence of evil.

You are never too young to begin doing so. When you stand for what is right, you will discover that good triumphs. ●



As a missionary in South Africa.



With his family in 2001 at the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa.

Watching Over Wasel

*“Call on the name of . . . God for protection”
(3 Nephi 4:30).*

BY JULIA OLDROYD

Based on a true story

The sun hung low after a warm summer day in Pacheco, in the Latter-day Saint colonies in Mexico. As five-year-old Mae and two-year-old Wasel played outside, they could smell smoke wafting from adobe chimneys and open fires. Supper would be ready soon. Sure enough, Mama called, “Mae! Wasel! Go wash up.” The girls quickly obeyed and went inside to eat.

After supper, Mama said, “Come, little Wasel.” Every night Wasel went with Mama and Papa to herd the cows. Mae and baby David stayed home with Aunt Hattie. Wasel loved this time alone with her parents. She was so excited that she ran outside still clutching her dinner spoon.

“I don’t think Wasel should come with us tonight. We have to care for some horses, and it may be too far for her to walk,” Papa said.

Mama nodded. “Wasel, Mama and Papa are going on a long walk tonight. Take that spoon back to the house and give it to Aunt Hattie. Then you can play with the other children, and tomorrow you can come with us to get the cows.”

Wasel just stood there, holding her spoon. She didn’t want to go back to the house.

“Run along now,” Mama said. Wasel turned and ran toward the house, but when her parents were out of sight, she put her spoon near the door and decided to go get the cows after all. She knew the way to the pasture. But she didn’t know that her parents hadn’t gone straight there.

The shadows grew long as the sun sank lower. Wasel walked and walked, through fields and corn patches. Wolves howled in the distance. Wasel came to a marshy area and walked there for a long time. She liked to feel the mud squishing between her bare toes.

When Mama and Papa returned from the cow pasture, Mama went inside to put the children to bed, and Papa went to the barn to take care of the animals.

“Hattie, where is Wasel?” Mama asked.

Aunt Hattie froze. “Wasn’t she with you?”

“Yes, but we sent her back here.”

“Well, I haven’t seen her!” Aunt Hattie exclaimed.

Mama and Aunt Hattie called for Wasel and searched in all the rooms and in the yard. Then Mama ran to the barn.

“Wasel isn’t here. I’m going to look for her,” she told Papa.

“She’s probably asleep somewhere,” Papa said. “I’ll look in the house.”

Mama knew that Wasel wasn’t in the house. She ran to the river and the cornfield calling, “Wasel! Wasel! Can you hear me, Wasel?” There was no answer, so she returned to the house.





“I think we need help,” Papa said.

Just then, Aunt Hattie pointed out the window.

“Look! It’s Brother Carroll.”

Papa ran outside and stopped him. “Wasel is lost,” he explained.

“I’m on my way to the church for a meeting,” Brother Carroll said. “I’ll tell everyone that you need help looking for her.”

When Brother Carroll told Bishop Hardy that Wasel was lost, Bishop Hardy dismissed the meeting and asked the brethren to go search for her.

As everyone searched under the beds, in the out-buildings, and through the house, Mama began to fear for Wasel’s life. “We are wasting time looking for her here. We have already done that, and I know she’s not here!” she cried.

Wasel’s grandpa gathered the men together. “Let’s divide into small groups and circle the area,” he said.

“Whoever finds her will return here and fire a gun five times to signal the rest of us.”

One group went with the bishop. They followed the road toward the cow pasture.

“Look, Bishop!” someone shouted. “Little footprints.”

The men held their lanterns high and carefully followed the footprints until they reached the marsh. The ground was too moist there to hold any tracks.

Bishop Hardy instructed the men to kneel on the soggy ground. Then he prayed for Wasel’s safety and for guidance to find her.

With teary eyes, Bishop Hardy rose. He thought he heard something and paused to listen. There, very faintly—yes! He could hear her! The others strained but heard nothing. “She’s calling for her mama!” he exclaimed.

Bishop Hardy ran toward the sound he heard so clearly. He stopped occasionally to listen—“Mama!”—and hurried on. He ran through fields and over hills for nearly two miles (3 km). He found himself in a rugged canyon, the moonlight falling softly around him. Then, suddenly, he saw Wasel walking wearily along the mountainside. Bishop Hardy ran to her and gathered her into his arms. “Mama,” Wasel whispered as she fell asleep.

The bishop carried Wasel back to the house as quickly as he could go. Mama took Wasel in her arms, and tears of joy flowed freely from her eyes. She offered a silent prayer of thanks to Heavenly Father for bringing little Wasel home safely.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bishop Hardy fired the gun with joy. When Papa arrived, he hugged his wife and daughter, weeping with gratitude. Then everyone knelt in a circle, and Bishop Hardy thanked the Lord for protecting Wasel. He knew that he couldn’t have heard her soft cries on his own. But the Lord was watching over Wasel and had helped him to find her. ●

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“God is mindful of us and ready to respond when we place our trust in Him. . . . [Seek] divine guidance through prayer.”

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Back to Gospel Basics,” *Ensign*, May 1993, 91.

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The First Vision, by Jacinta R. Freire Rosales Zumaeta

“I saw a pillar of light. . . . When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description,” wrote the Prophet Joseph Smith (Joseph Smith—History 1:16–17). This moment is captured in a Chilean crewel embroidery, based on a painting by Greg K. Olsen.



President Gordon B. Hinckley said: “The trouble with most of our prayers is that we give them as if we were picking up the telephone and ordering groceries—we place our order and hang up. We need to meditate, contemplate, think of what we are praying about and for and then speak to the Lord as one man speaketh to another.” See Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, “Improving Our Prayers,” p. 16.