

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS • DECEMBER 2002

LIAHONA



LIAHONA



ON THE COVER

Front: Detail from *Beside Still Waters*, by Simon Dewey, courtesy of Altus Fine Art, American Fork, Utah. Back: *Behold, the Lamb of God*, by Walter Rane.



THE FRIEND COVER

My Son, My Savior, by Simon Dewey, courtesy of Altus Fine Art, American Fork, Utah.

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ENJOYED MISSIONARY ARTICLES

My mission call to serve in the California Ventura Mission arrived on 26 September 2001. When the October issue of the *Liahona* (Spanish) came to my home in Puerto Rico, it was all about serving a mission. This issue is one of my favorites because it gave me many ideas about how to be a good missionary.

*Elder José A. Román Serrano,
California Ventura Mission*

SHARE THE LIAHONA WITH FRIENDS

I enjoy reading the *Liahona* (English) each month. I take it with me everywhere I go. My friends borrow it to see what is inside, and they really appreciate it. That is what makes me happy—sharing the *Liahona* with my friends and relatives who are not yet members of the Church. I would encourage members to lend others the issues of the *Liahona* they have already read.

*Flora T. Gadaingan,
Calasiao Second Ward,
Dagupan Philippines Stake*

ENCOURAGED BY EXAMPLES OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

As elders quorum president in my ward, I like to read the *Liahona* (Spanish) because the messages from our prophet help me prepare to teach my quorum. The words of the living prophet also help me improve, and reading about the examples of Latter-day Saints in other parts of the world encourages me to press forward.

*Jahuner Francisco Orozco Campos,
Altagracia Ward,
Managua Nicaragua Stake*

Editors' note: We invite you to tell us of your concerns and suggestions regarding the *Liahona*. Please send letters, articles, and ideas to *Liahona*, Floor 24, 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3223, USA; or e-mail to cur-liahona-imag@ldschurch.org.

While we welcome your feedback and submissions, we do receive many letters and e-mails unrelated to our responsibilities with the *Liahona*. For instance, we are often asked to help contact members living in other countries or to provide special materials for lessons. Although we would like to accommodate such requests, doing so would hinder us in performing our primary responsibilities. We therefore ask that you limit your communications to items related to the *Liahona*. Your local leaders are better able to direct you to resources and help you with other matters.



A TESTIMONY OF THE SON *of* GOD

By President Gordon B. Hinckley



A little more than 2,000 years ago the Redeemer of mankind was born in Bethlehem of Judea (see D&C 20:1). While yet an infant, He was brought to the temple in Jerusalem.

There Mary and Joseph heard the wonderful prophecies spoken by Simeon and Anna about the tiny babe who was destined to become the Savior of the world.

He spent His boyhood in Nazareth of Galilee, and when 12 years of age He was brought to the temple again. Mary and Joseph found Him conversing with learned men, who were listening to Him and asking Him questions (see Joseph Smith Translation, Luke 2:46).

THE GREAT JEHOVAH

Later, as the Master stood on the temple's pinnacle, Satan tempted Him as He began His ministry. Still later, the Lord drove the money changers from the temple, declaring, "My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves" (Matthew 21:13).

Jesus was in very deed the great Jehovah of the Old Testament, who left His Father's royal courts on high and

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."



condescended to come to earth as a babe born in the most humble of circumstances. His birth was foretold centuries earlier by Isaiah, who declared prophetically, "For

unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

This Jesus Christ of whom we solemnly testify is, as John the Revelator declared, "the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth." He "loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever" (Revelation 1:5–6).

THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD

He was and is the Son of the Almighty. He was the only perfect man to walk the earth. He healed the sick and caused the lame to walk, the blind to see, the deaf to hear. He raised the dead. Yet He suffered His own life to be taken in an act of Atonement, the magnitude of which is beyond our comprehension.

Luke records that this anguish was so great that "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:44), a physical manifestation confirmed in both the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants. The suffering in Gethsemane and on the cross



After the agony of Gethsemane came His arrest, His trials, His condemnation, then the unspeakable pain of His death on the cross, followed by His burial in Joseph’s tomb and the triumphant coming forth in the Resurrection.

of Calvary, just a few hundred meters from Gethsemane, included both physical and spiritual “temptations, . . . pain, . . . hunger, thirst, and fatigue, even more than man can suffer,” said King Benjamin, “except it be unto death” (Mosiah 3:7).

After the agony of Gethsemane came His arrest, His trials, His condemnation, then the unspeakable pain of His death on the cross, followed by His burial in Joseph’s tomb and the triumphant coming forth in the Resurrection. He, the lowly babe of Bethlehem who two millennia ago walked the dusty roads of Palestine, became the Lord Omnipotent, the King of Kings, the Giver of Salvation to all. None can fully comprehend the splendor of His life, the majesty of His death, the universality of His gift to mankind. We unequivocally declare with the centurion who said at His death, “Truly this man was the Son of God” (Mark 15:39).

OUR LIVING LORD

Such is the witness of the testament of the Old World, the Holy Bible. And there is another voice, that of the testament of the New World, wherein the Father introduced His resurrected Son, declaring, “Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name” (3 Nephi 11:7).

Added to all of this is the declaration of modern prophets: “And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!” (D&C 76:22).

No event of human history carries a more compelling witness than does the reality of the Resurrection. His followers on two continents testified of it. Uncounted

millions of men and women through the ages have suffered, even unto death, for the witness in their hearts that He lives, the Savior and Redeemer of all mankind, whose Atonement came as an act of grace for the entire world. How long and how great is the concourse of brave and humble people who have kept alive the name of Jesus and a testimony of His Redemption!

Now He has come again, in the latter days, to bless us and warm our hearts, to quicken our faith and bring us sure and certain knowledge of His living reality. We, of all people, can sing:

*Joy to the world, the Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King!
Let ev’ry heart prepare him room,
And Saints and angels sing.*
 (“Joy to the World,” *Hymns*, number 201)

We honor Him, we worship Him, we love Him as our Redeemer, the great Jehovah of the Old Testament, the Messiah of the New Testament. The entire thrust of the testimony of the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants declares our living Lord, before whom we kneel in humility and faith.

THE SON OF GOD

And so at this Christmas season, we sing His praises and speak our words of faith and gratitude and love. It is His influence in our lives that stirs within us more kindness, more respect, more love, more concern. It is because of Him and His teachings that we reach out to those in trouble, distress, and need wherever they may be.

It is proper during this season when we commemorate His birth that we remember the Lord Jesus Christ in reverence and with love. He has done for us what we could not do for ourselves. He has brought meaning to our mortal existence. He has given us the gift of eternal life. He was and is the Son of God, who was “made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

God be thanked for the gift of His Son, the Redeemer of the world, the Savior of mankind, the Prince of Life and Peace, the Holy One. □

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

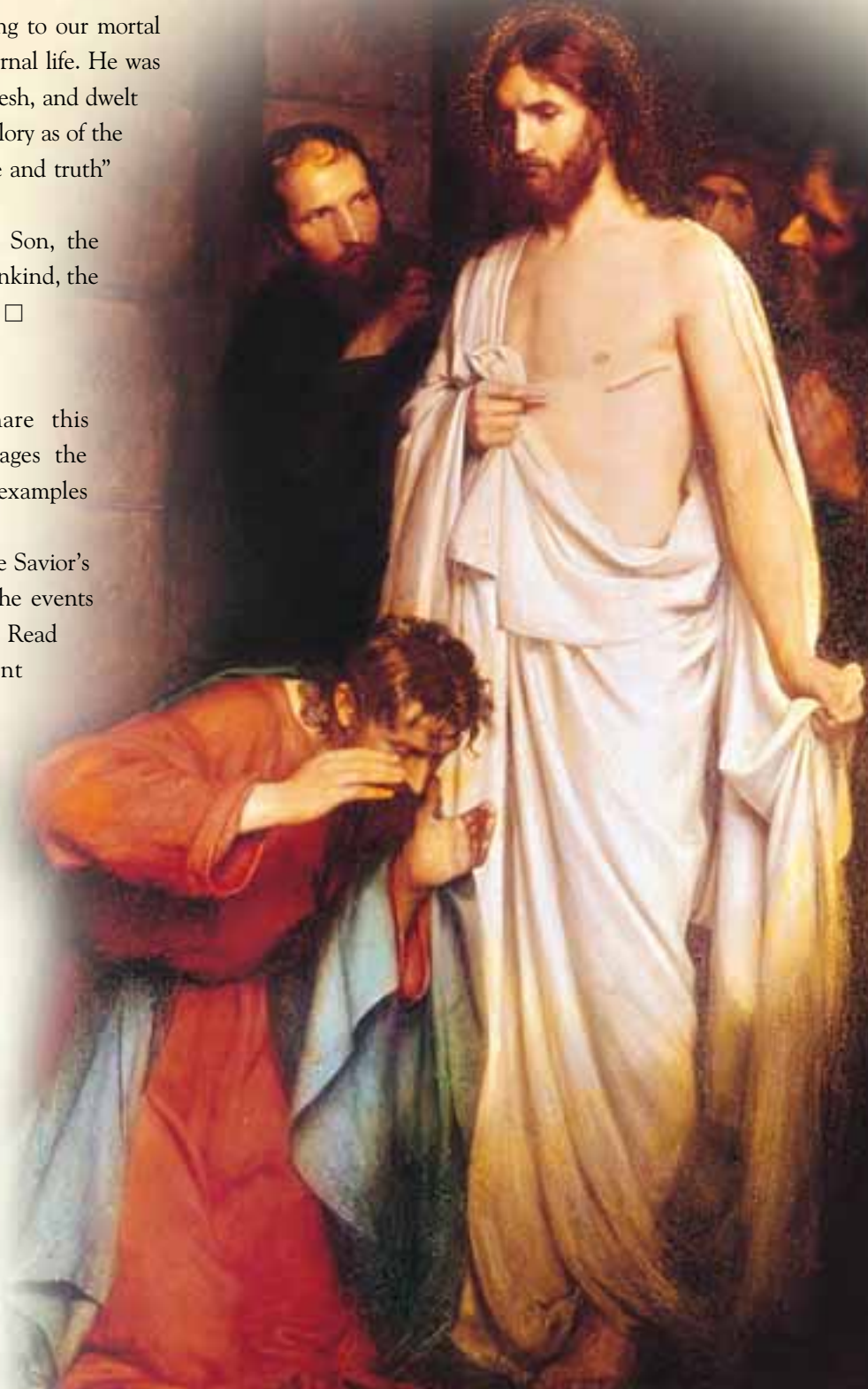
After you prayerfully prepare, share this message using a method that encourages the participation of those you teach. A few examples follow:

1. Show some pictures of events in the Savior’s life. Ask family members to tell about the events and about their feelings for Jesus Christ. Read the last three paragraphs of President Hinckley’s message, and bear your testimony of the Son of God.

2. Invite family members to join in singing several Christmas hymns. Read passages of President Hinckley’s message expressing his personal feelings for the Savior.

3. Write the following names or titles of Jesus Christ on separate sheets of paper: Jehovah, Prince of Life and Peace, Beloved Son, Savior, Giver of Salvation, the Holy One, Redeemer of the world. One by one, show each name to family members and discuss what each name can teach us about Jesus Christ.

No event of human history carries a more compelling witness than does the reality of the Resurrection.



"A CLOUD OF



Mary and Elisabeth

We are overshadowed with testimonies of the Savior from the scriptures and from hundreds of special witnesses.

By Stephen K. Iba

Christmas is a time for remembering and for being thankful. We often take so much for granted. For example, when was the last time you looked into a beautiful blue sky and wondered at the miracle of stunning white clouds? They come in various sizes and types, such as cirrus, stratus, and cumulus.

In scriptural texts, clouds are often used to carry or convey spiritual presence. The Lord appeared in a cloud to guide the children of Israel through the wilderness to the promised land. The resurrected Jesus was received by a cloud as He ascended into heaven. At the end of the world, the Savior will descend in the clouds with power and great glory. (See Exodus 13:21; Acts 1:9; Matthew 24:30.)

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Hebrews: "Wherefore seeing we

also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, . . . looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:1–2).

The Apostle Paul's metaphor of "a cloud of witnesses" in the meridian of time has grown into many clouds of witnesses. We are overshadowed with witnesses of the divinity of Jesus Christ from the fulness of the scriptures and from hundreds of special witnesses since the Restoration commenced.

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES BEFORE HIS MORTAL BIRTH

At Christmastime our thoughts turn particularly to our Savior's birth. We often read and ponder the testimonies of those who were witnesses of His coming in the flesh, as recorded in the scriptures: **Mary** (see Luke 1:26–56; 2:7, 19) and **Joseph** (see Matthew 1:18–25; 2:13–23), **Elisabeth** (see Luke 1:41–45) and **Zacharias** (see Luke 1:67–79), **the shepherds** (see Luke 2:8–20), **Simeon** (see Luke 2:21–35), **Anna** (see Luke 2:36–38), **the Wise Men** (see Matthew 2:1–12), and **people**



The shepherds

WITNESSES”

of ancient America (see 3 Nephi 1:15–21).

We may also review and reflect on the scriptural record from some of those who knew of His coming long before He came:

“And the Lord spake unto **Adam**, saying: . . . The name of [the] Only Begotten is the Son of Man, even Jesus Christ, a righteous Judge, who shall come in the meridian of time. Therefore I give unto you a commandment, to teach these things freely unto your children” (Moses 6:55, 57–58; emphasis added).

“And it came to pass that **Enoch** talked with the Lord . . . [and] saw the day of the coming of the Son of Man, even in the flesh; and his soul rejoiced” (Moses 7:20, 47; emphasis added).

Abraham recorded in Canaan: “Thus I, Abraham, talked with the Lord, face to face. . . . And the Lord said unto me: . . . I am the Lord thy God” (Abraham 3:11, 19). “Abraham saw of his coming, and was filled with gladness and did rejoice” (Helaman 8:17).

“**Moses** stood in the presence of God, and talked with him face to face” (Moses 1:31; emphasis added).

“Yea, did [Moses] not bear record that the Son of God should come?” (Helaman 8:14).

The Savior said to **the brother of Jared**: “Because thou knowest these things ye are redeemed from the fall; . . . therefore I show myself unto you. . . . And even as I appear unto thee to be in the spirit will I appear unto my people in the flesh” (Ether 3:13, 16).

Isaiah: “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given” (Isaiah 9:6); “Mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts” (Isaiah 6:5).

In vision **Father Lehi** “saw One [Jesus Christ] descending out of the midst of heaven” (1 Nephi 1:9).

Nephi: “I looked and beheld the virgin again, bearing a child in her arms. And the angel said unto me: Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father!” (1 Nephi 11:20–21). Nephi further testified: “My brother, Jacob, also has seen him as I have seen him” (2 Nephi 11:3).

Jacob: “In the body he shall show himself unto those at Jerusalem . . . ; for it behooveth the great Creator that he suffereth

himself to become subject unto man in the flesh. . . . And he cometh into the world that he may save all men” (2 Nephi 9:5, 21).

Abinadi: “God himself [shall] come down among the children of men, and take upon him the form of man” (Mosiah 13:34).

Alma prophesied, “He shall be born of Mary, at Jerusalem which is the land of our forefathers, she being a virgin, a precious and chosen vessel” (Alma 7:10).

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES SINCE HIS RESURRECTION

Consider the following who are among the cloud of witnesses in the scriptural record and annals of Church history who testify that the Lord lives today:

In a Jerusalem garden, “Jesus saith unto her, **Mary**. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni” (John 20:16; emphasis added).

When **eleven of the Apostles** were gathered, “then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst. . . . And Thomas



Brother of Jared



Abinadi



Mary



answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God” (John 20:26, 28).

From **John the Revelator**, exiled on an isle: “When I saw him, I fell at his feet. . . . And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not. . . . I am he that liveth, and was dead; . . . I am alive for evermore” (Revelation 1:17–18).

And from the **Apostle Paul**: “Last of all he was seen of me also” (1 Corinthians 15:8).

The chief **Apostle Peter** witnessed with certainty: “For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, . . .

but were eyewitnesses of his majesty” (2 Peter 1:16).

The **2,500 people at the city of Bountiful** in ancient America went forth, “one by one until they had all gone forth, and did see with their

eyes and did feel with their hands, and did know of a surety and did bear record” (3 Nephi 11:15).

Mormon testified, “I being fifteen years of age . . . was visited of the Lord, and tasted and knew of the goodness of Jesus” (Mormon 1:15).

Moroni witnessed, “I have seen Jesus, and . . . he hath talked with me face to face” (Ether 12:39).

From **Joseph Smith Jr.**, in his 15th year: “When the light rested

upon me I saw two Personages. . . . One of them spake . . . , pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*” (Joseph Smith—History 1:17; emphasis in original).

In Hiram, Ohio, the **Prophet Joseph Smith** and **Sidney Rigdon** (1793–1876) were enwrapped in heavenly vision and testified: “We saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father” (D&C 76:23).

At Kirtland, Ohio, after the temple dedication, the **Prophet Joseph Smith** and **Oliver Cowdery** (1806–50) declared: “We saw the Lord standing upon the breastwork of the pulpit . . . , saying: I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father” (D&C 110:2–4).

President Lorenzo Snow (1814–1901) said to his granddaughter:

“He stood right here, about three feet [one meter] above the floor. It looked as though He stood on a plate of solid gold” (quoted in LeRoi C. Snow, “An Experience of My Father’s,” *Improvement Era*,

September 1933, 677).

“I saw the hosts of the dead,” explained **President Joseph F. Smith**

(1838–1918). “While this vast multitude waited and conversed, . . . the Son of God appeared, declaring liberty to the captives who had been faithful” (D&C 138:11, 18).

In general conference, **President Spencer W. Kimball** (1895–1985)

bore witness by quoting **President John Taylor** (1808–87): “‘I know that Jesus Christ lives,’ said John Taylor, my predecessor, ‘for I have seen him.’ I bear this testimony to you brethren in the name of

Jesus Christ” (“Strengthening the Family—the Basic Unit of Society,” *Ensign*, May 1978, 48).

THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHIEF APOSTLE AT THIS TIME

“Of all the things for which I feel grateful . . . , one stands out pre-eminently,” said **President Gordon B. Hinckley**. “That is a living testimony of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Almighty God, the Prince of Peace, the Holy One. . . .

“ . . . I have become His Apostle, appointed to do His will and teach His word. I have become His witness to the world. I repeat that witness of faith. . . .

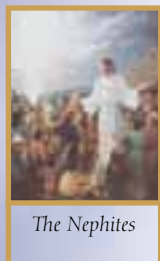
“*Jesus is my friend. . . .*

“*He is my exemplar. . . .*

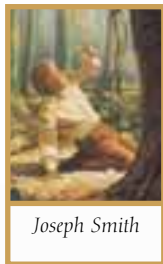
“*He is my teacher. . . .*

“*He is my healer. . . .*

“*He is my leader. . . .*



The Nephites



Joseph Smith



Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery

LEFT: BEHOLD YOUR LITTLE ONES, BY DAVID LINDSLEY; JOSEPH SMITH'S FIRST VISION, BY GREG OLSEN; THE LORD'S APPEARANCE TO JOSEPH SMITH AND OLIVER COWDERY IN THE KIRTLAND TEMPLE, 3 APRIL 1836, BY THEODORE GORKA; RIGHT: PHOTOGRAPH BY JED A. CLARK; DETAILS FROM THE SECOND COMING AND THE ASCENSION, BY HARRY ANDERSON



“He is my Savior and my Redeemer. Through giving His life in pain and unspeakable suffering, He has reached down to lift me and each of us and all the sons and daughters of God from the abyss of eternal darkness following death. He has provided something better—a sphere of light and understanding, growth and beauty where we may go forward on the road that leads to eternal life. My gratitude knows no bounds. . . .



President Gordon B. Hinckley

*. . . I add my own witness that He is ‘the way, the truth, and the life’ and that ‘no man cometh unto the Father, but by [Him]’ (John 14:6). Gratefully, and with love undiminished, I bear witness of these things” (“My Testimony,” *Liahona*, July 2000, 83, 85; emphasis in original).*

A TESTIMONY OF CHRIST

The Lord has explained that all of us may obtain a testimony of Him and that such testimony is a gift of the Spirit:

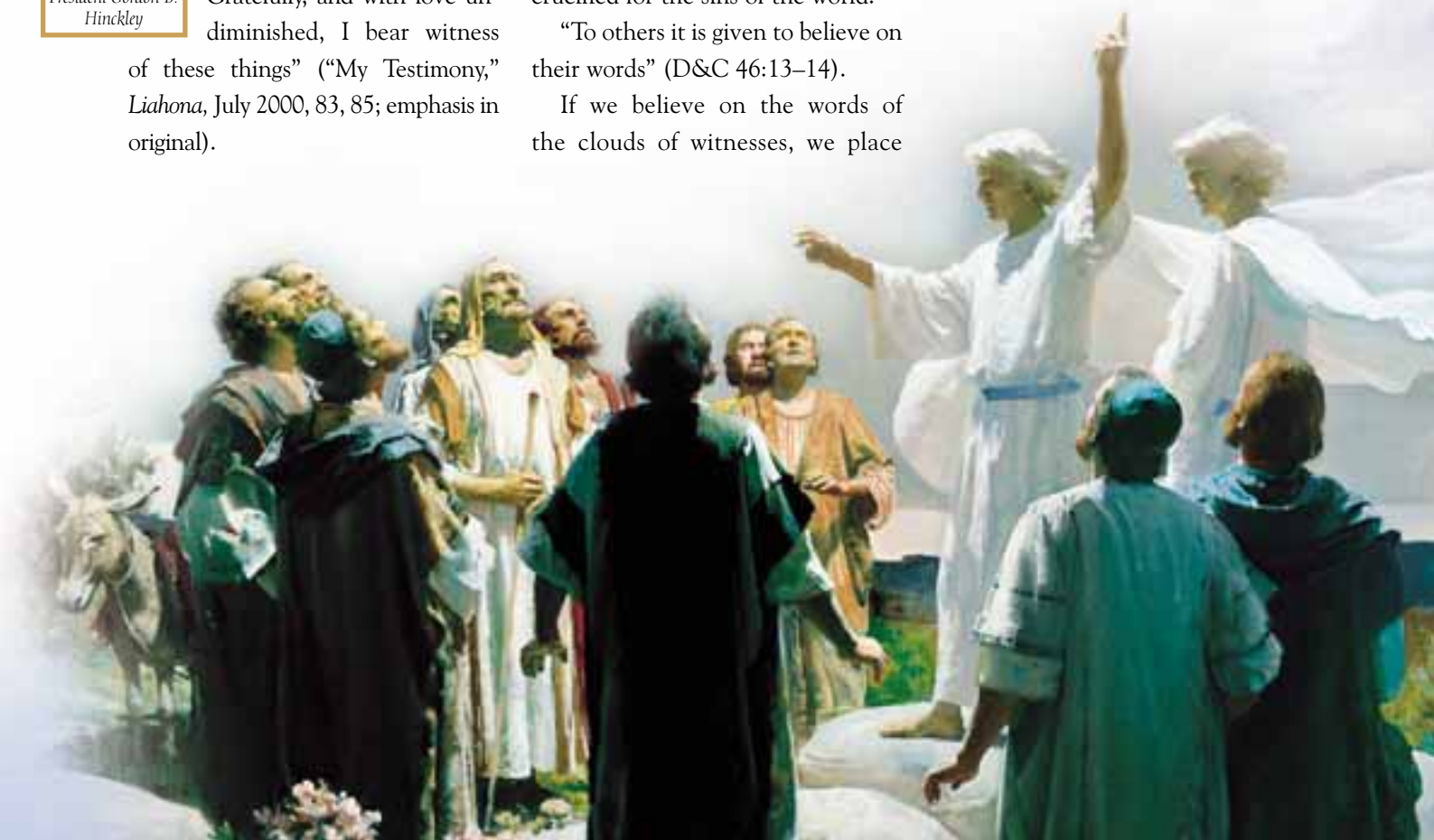
“To some it is given by the Holy Ghost to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that he was crucified for the sins of the world.

“To others it is given to believe on their words” (D&C 46:13–14).

If we believe on the words of the clouds of witnesses, we place

ourselves in a position to be instructed by the Holy Ghost. The Spirit testifies of Christ’s divinity as we read and ponder the words of the modern prophets and the holy scriptures. The latter-day apostles and prophets have made it clear that as Church members we should be witnesses of the Savior. And as we testify of Christ and His servants, you and I become part of the glorious clouds of witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ and His restored gospel. □

Stephen K. Iba is a member of the Olympus Seventh Ward, Salt Lake Olympus Stake.



Testimonies of Christ

Latter-day Saint Artists Bear Witness of Him

We may each have a mental picture of what we think the Savior looks like. But if each of us painted a picture of Him, they would all be different. We don't really know what He looks like, but we can come to know His love for us and draw closer to Him as we celebrate His birth.

Latter-day Saint artists have used paintbrushes to express their testimonies and love for the Savior. Some of these paintings may be familiar. Others may be new to you. Although you might not be able to use paint to create a beautiful picture of the Savior, you can have His image in your countenance (see Alma 5:14).

Christ Healing the Man with the Withered Hand, by Robert T. Barrett

“Then saith [Jesus] to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched [his hand] forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other” (Matthew 12:13).





COURTESY OF ALTUS FINE ART, AMERICAN FORK, UTAH

Beside Still Waters,
by Simon Dewey

“Behold, I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I am the life and the light of the world” (D&C 11:28).

ROBERT T. BARRETT

“I have always felt that the art is a reflection of what the artist believes. My testimony has been personally strengthened as I have had the opportunity to portray events in the life of the Savior and the history of the Restoration. I know that He lives and that His work is divine.

“How do I embody my feelings about that? You have to find a way to get the feelings of your heart out on your canvas.”

SIMON DEWEY

“I can boldly bear my witness to the truth as the Spirit has borne witness to me. I know that Jesus lives

and is my Redeemer. I know that His Father is mine also and hears me when I call upon Him, with gratitude for daily help and with a penitent heart. Some have asked whether I have had a vision or similar spiritual manifestation that forms the basis for my depiction of the Son of God. My eyes have never seen nor my ears

heard, yet in my heart I know, and it is enough.”

DEREK HEGSTED

“I feel no better peace than when I am bearing witness of Christ through a paintbrush. The ability to speak my feelings is not one of my strong points. But a gracious Heavenly Father has blessed me with

the ability to bear a witness of my Savior. In reflecting on my testimony and the effects of the arts in my life, I hope to have shown all brothers and sisters of Christ that I know Jesus is the Christ and that He lives.”

GARY L. KAPP

“I don’t remember ever not having a testimony of Jesus Christ, but it



Journey's End, by Derek Hegsted

*“Come unto me in my kingdom;
and with me ye shall find rest”
(3 Nephi 28:3).*



“That Ye May Know,”
by Gary L. Kapp

“Arise and come forth unto me, . . . that ye may know that I am the God of Israel” (3 Nephi 11:14).



Simeon Reverencing the Christ Child,
by Greg Olsen

Simeon "blessed God, and said, . . . mine eyes have seen thy salvation" (Luke 2:28–30).

wasn't until I arrived in the mission field that I began a serious study of His life, especially in the Book of Mormon. At that time, I truly began to feel the burning in my heart that comes from a sure knowledge that Jesus is the Savior of the world and the Son of God.

"All of my life I have wanted to give as much of my time and talent as possible to sharing my testimony through art. I sincerely hope my love for the Savior is evident in my art and that it will somehow strengthen the testimonies of those who view it."

GREG OLSEN

"Just as a light set up on a hill serves as a beacon to weary travelers, so Jesus Christ stands as a shining example to all the world, showing us a better way to peace and happiness. His light illuminates the path of life, leading us along the straight and narrow way.

"Those who press on, with their gaze fixed upon the light of Christ, have their own lights kindled within. He is real and, yes, He lives!"

JUDITH MEHR

"I know that Jesus Christ is my Savior and my Lord. I know He is the Son of our Heavenly Father. I think of Him as the One who gave



Woman Touching the Hem of the Savior's Garment, by Judith Mehr

"Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace" (Mark 5:34).

His life and sacrificed Himself for my sins so that I might be resurrected and live with God and my family after I die. The most ever-present thing about my testimony now is that I feel His presence in my life daily. I can never deny His existence and His supreme love



"In Remembrance of Me,"
by Walter Rane

"This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me"
(Luke 22:19).

for me. I love Him with all of my heart."

WALTER RANE

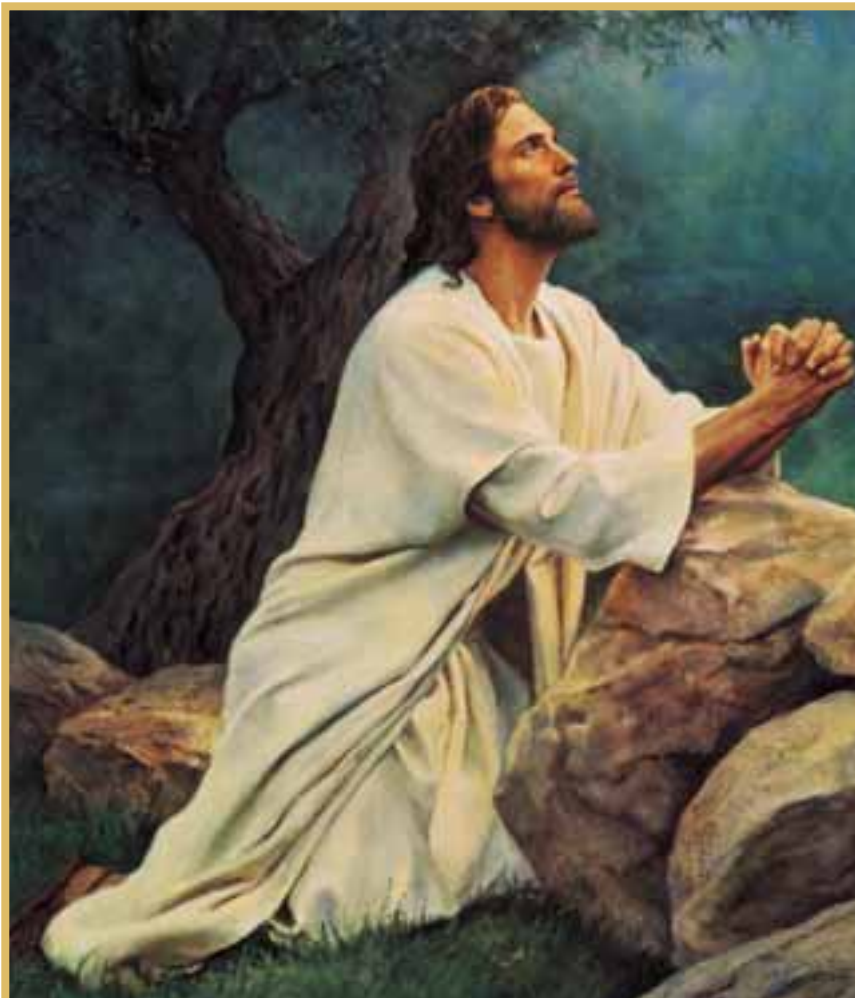
"I do not know what He looks like, of course, so I do not attempt to make Him look the same each time I paint Him. Every painting portrays a different event in Christ's life and is an attempt to express a different aspect of the Savior's personality.

"I know my efforts are very inadequate, but it is nevertheless an honor to try to capture, in some small way, some of the greatness of our Savior and to express, perhaps, a glimmer of His personality and express a feeling that may touch someone."

DEL PARSON

"Christ is my hero. I love to read about Him and His life. It is humbling to try to portray Him in art.

"My art has been greatly influenced



Prayer at Gethsemane, by Del Parson

"The Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him" (D&C 18:11).

FROM THE VISIONS OF FAITH COLLECTION BY MILL POND PRESS, INC., VENICE, FLORIDA

by the guidance given in my patriarchal blessing. It gave direction for my work. Early in my career, my wife and young daughter were in a car accident. At that time I felt as if the Holy Ghost showered me with comfort and God's love. This love is what I try to express in my paintings of the Savior."

MINERVA K. TEICHERT (1888–1976)

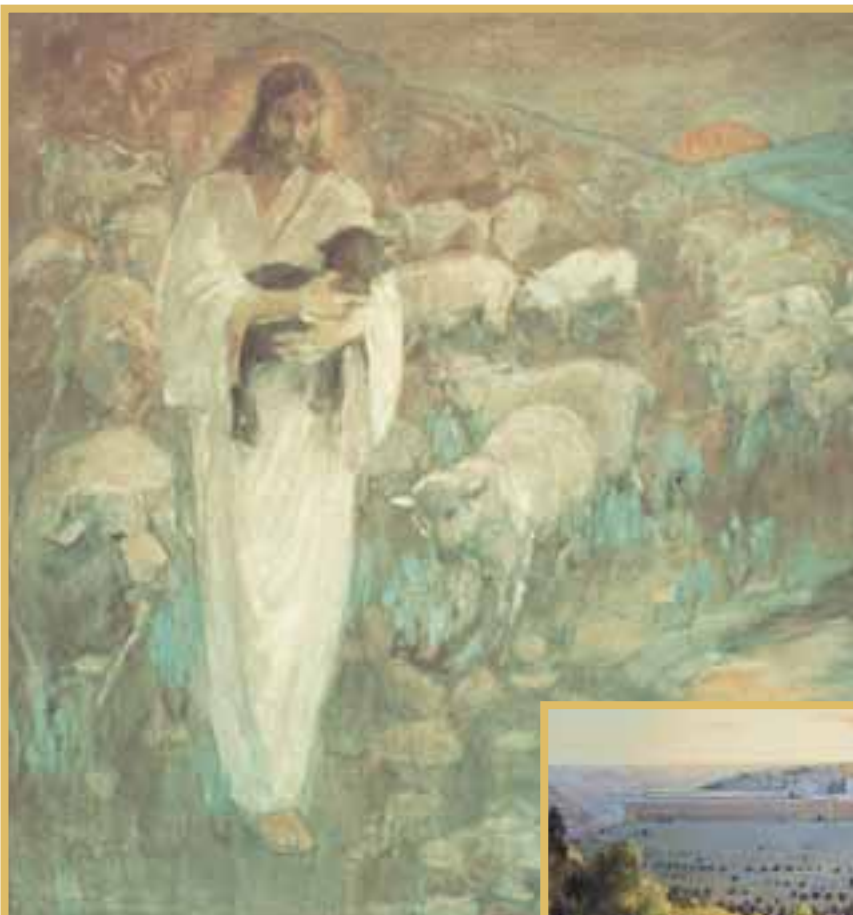
"I have a testimony of the gospel. Goodness, it's the first thing in my life" (interview by Robert Conrad and Frederick Teichert, 6 February 1974).

"The Lord does open doors when we knock. Sometimes the door we had been seeking isn't the

one that's opened, but the right door is usually the one that swings wide before us, even tho' we may not recognize it until afterward" (letter to her daughter Laurie Teichert Eastwood).

GARY E. SMITH

"My mother instilled within me a faith in the Lord Jesus Christ at an early age. When I heard the gospel and joined the Church at age 25, it was like finding the missing piece of a puzzle. Today, I still carry with me that faith I had as a boy. But now with wisdom, maturity, and experience that faith takes on a deeper and more profound understanding of our Savior's life and mission." □

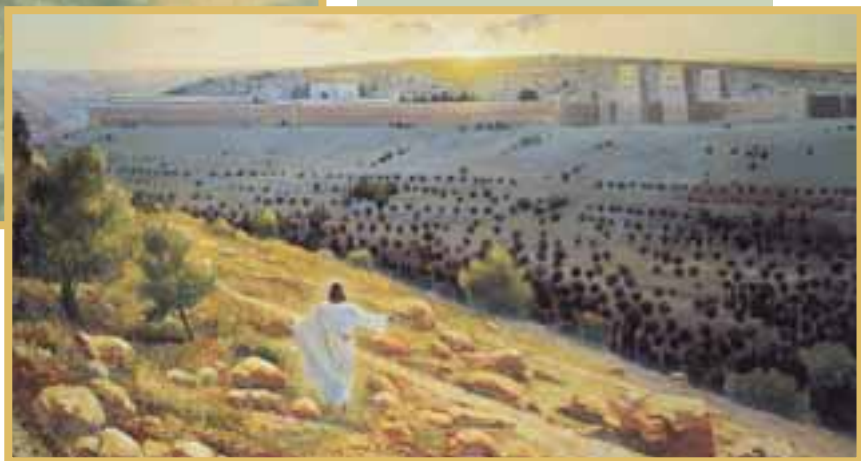


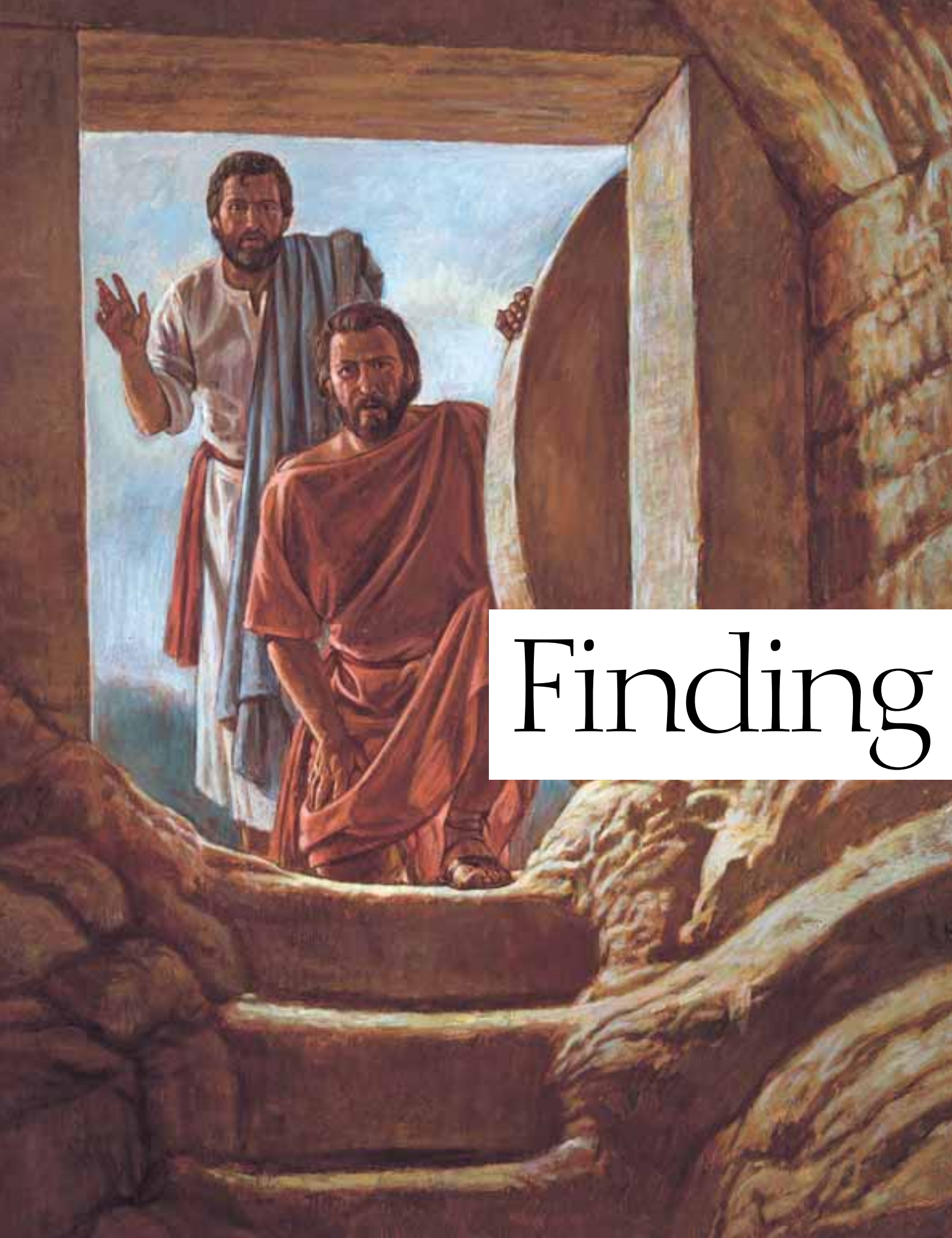
Rescue of the Lost Lamb,
by Minerva K. Teichert

"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (John 10:11).

Christ Laments over Jerusalem,
by Gary E. Smith

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, . . . Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Luke 13:34–35).





Finding

The gospel of Jesus Christ enables us to find peace and hope in any circumstances.



By Elder Johann A. Wondra
Area Authority Seventy

When I was a student at the University of Vienna in Austria, two missionaries came to my door, saying, “We have a message for you from God.” I invited them in, wondering why I did so because I didn’t have any interest in religion. Deeply affected by the Hungarian Revolution of 1956—which sent thousands of refugees streaming into Austria—I had been seeking to know the meaning of life. But I didn’t expect to find the answer in any church.

The message of these missionaries was the message of

trials, and afflictions in our mortal lives. The gospel of Jesus Christ, however, gives us the strength to prevail, to “overcome by faith” (D&C 76:53), and to go forward with hope and optimism.

THE WOUNDS OF PARTING

My wife and I came to better understand this truth through the loss of our beloved son Georg, who was 27 years of age when he died. When this occurred, I was serving as president of the newly created Austria Vienna South Mission, which included the countries of the former Yugoslavia. Following a zone conference in Zagreb, Croatia, Sister Wondra and I were given a message that we should call home. Soon our beloved daughter-in-law Regina was on the telephone, crying out in the anguish of her soul, “Papa, Georg is dead. Georg is dead!” Subsequent extensive investigations were unable

Hope in Christ

the Restoration. I think I loved the Prophet Joseph Smith from the first moment I heard about him. I was especially touched by the circumstances of his Martyrdom. Later, as I spent time reading the Book of Mormon and praying, I received through the power of the Holy Ghost a joyful, peaceful assurance that Jesus is the Christ, that Joseph Smith was the Prophet of the Restoration, and that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the Lord’s restored Church on the earth, led by living prophets who prepare the world for His Second Coming.

During more than 40 years of Church membership since that time, I have had many personal experiences that have confirmed to me that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the only true way to peace and happiness in this world. I also know that you and I cannot escape difficulties,

to provide any reason for his death. Our son had never been seriously ill. His heart simply stood still, without any medical explanation.

Georg was such a special son, full of joy and life, full of love for us and for his own family, pure in heart and without guile. In 1989 he had been one of the first missionaries to be sent to East Germany during what was a great time for missionary work. He spoke often about the baptisms in which he and his companion participated but never about the number of baptisms—he felt these experiences were too sacred to be reduced to statistics. At the end of Georg’s first letter from his mission, he wrote: “Don’t miss me too much. Life has to go forward without me.” On the day of his death, he had read President Gordon B. Hinckley’s message “The Victory over Death” and had underlined,

“How tragic, how poignant is the sorrow of those left behind. The grieving widow, the motherless child, the father bereft and alone—all of these can speak of the wounds of parting” (*Liahona*, April 1997, 3).

Our family has suffered from these wounds. We miss Georg so very much! But there is also a burning feeling in our souls that because we believe in the Atonement, in the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ—because we believe in the message of Gethsemane, Golgotha, and the empty tomb—we can also trust, during the sorrowful moments in our lives, that God is a God of love, mercy, and compassion, even when we don’t understand what has happened or why. God accepted the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ, who suffered all things “because of his loving kindness and his long-suffering towards the children of men” (1 Nephi 19:9).

Some weeks after Georg’s death, Sister Wondra and I traveled through Serbia and Montenegro and visited the White Angel fresco at the Mileseva Monastery. This fresco, one of the greatest works of art in existence, contains the words to one of the greatest messages ever spoken: “Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen” (Luke 24:5–6). This message was a message of comfort to the wonderful, peace-loving, and hospitable people of Serbia throughout all the centuries of tyranny and destruction in their history. And this message provides comfort for all of us—the only real and lasting comfort we have.

In the upper room on the night of the Last Supper—the night of the greatest suffering that ever took place in all the worlds created by Him—Christ spoke about peace, His peace: “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. . . . Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27). How could He speak about peace in this situation? I feel it was possible only because of His “perfect love” which “casteth out fear” (1 John 4:18). In His Intercessory Prayer, Christ prayed for His disciples and for all “which shall believe on me through their word”—which, it is important to note, includes us—“that they may be made perfect in one” and “that

the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them” (John 17:20, 23, 26).

Leaving the upper room, Jesus and His disciples crossed the Kidron Valley and came to a garden of olive trees on the lower slopes of the Mount of Olives. This garden was called Gethsemane, a name meaning “oil press.” Olives taste bitter, but when they are crushed in an olive press, their oil tastes sweet. Christ drank the “bitter cup” so that all bitterness may be removed from our lives and become sweet if we will forsake our sins and come unto Him. He said, “I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world” (3 Nephi 11:11).

While He prayed in Gethsemane, all of the agony and sorrow of the entire world was centered in Him. He was “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. . . . Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows” (Isaiah 53:3–4). He took upon His sinless soul the sins of the world and the weight of the world’s sorrows. “It was not physical pain, nor mental anguish alone, that caused Him to suffer such torture as to produce an extrusion of blood from every pore; but a spiritual agony of soul such as only God was capable of experiencing” (James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 3rd edition [1916], 613). He prayed to the Father, “Not my will, but thine, be done” (Luke 22:42). To do the Father’s will was the Son’s supreme desire—even when it was as painful as it was in Gethsemane.

“For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

“But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I; “Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore. . . .

“Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men” (D&C 19:16–19).

From Christ we learn to be obedient, even when it is painful, as it was painful for Him in Gethsemane. We learn



Because we believe in the Atonement, in the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, we can also trust, during the sorrowful moments in our lives, that God is a God of love, mercy, and compassion.

to serve others, even when it is inconvenient, as it certainly was “inconvenient” for Him on the cross of Golgotha. And we learn to trust in the love of God, even if we might feel God has forsaken us—for when we overcome through faith, these bitter and sorrowful moments in our lives can become like steps on Jacob’s ladder, leading us into the heavenly presence of God (see Genesis 28:12–13).

A GLORIOUS MOMENT

What a glorious moment when the resurrected Christ appeared to Mary Magdalene! “Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

“Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master” (John 20:15–16).

What exceedingly great joy Mary Magdalene must have felt seeing her beloved Lord risen from the dead. But He gently said to her, “Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God” (John 20:17). He left Mary Magdalene and went triumphantly into the presence of His Father. Again and again I try to imagine this wondrous scene.

ALL MY HOPE IS CENTERED IN CHRIST

Through His atoning sacrifice, Christ broke the bonds of death. Just as He took up His body and came forth from the tomb, even so shall all of us enjoy a reunion of body and spirit in the day of our own resurrection. “The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave. Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liahona*, October 1998, 24). What “glad tidings of great joy”! (D&C 128:19). Life is eternal. Families can be together forever. The loving relationship between husband and wife and between parents and children continues beyond the grave.

This will also prove true in our relationship with our beloved son Georg. It is a miracle to Sister Wondra and me that, even in the loss of our son, our faith in Christ has grown stronger and so has our confidence in His words: “For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee” (3 Nephi 22:10).

All my hope is centered in Christ. He is our Savior and Redeemer. He truly is the Good Shepherd who gave His life for His sheep. “God be thanked for the matchless gift of His divine Son” (“The Living Christ—The Testimony of the Apostles,” *Liahona*, April 2000, 2–3). □

Elder Johann A. Wondra is an Area Authority Seventy serving in the Europe Central Area.

In That Holy Place

Earnestly ♩ = 64-80

mf

1. Ho-ly tem-ple, hal-lowed walls are
 2. Ho-ly tem-ple where we learn cre-
 3. Ho-ly tem-ple where we bless our

slower *a tempo*

filled with heav-en's light. There the Spir-it teach-es truth and tes-ti-fies of Christ.
 a-tion's grand de-sign, Where our souls will be en-dowed with pow-er from on high.
 loved ones gone be-fore, Where e-ter-nal ties are sealed by sa-cred priest-hood pow'r.

There with-in that ho-ly place our hearts are made as one, U-nit-ed by the pow'r of God in
 There we kneel, our hearts pre-pared, to cov-'nant with our Lord. And there His Spir-it binds our lives in
 There we turn our hearts to those who gave us life and birth. How beau-ti-ful that ho-ly place where

pure e-ter-nal love. House of learn-ing, house of faith, house of peace and prayer,
 love for-ev-er-more. House of faith, house of prayer—
 heav-en dwells on earth. (Sing harmony last time only.)

House of glo - ry, house of God— I'll feel His pres - ence there. I will stand with heart and hands kept
 I will feel His pres - ence there. Heart and hands _____ kept

clean and pure each day, Wor - thy of the bless - ings found in that ho - ly place.
 clean and pure each day, Wor - thy of the bless - ings found in that ho - ly

place. _____
 place, that ho - ly place.

Words and music: Sally DeFord, born 1959
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 noncommercial church or home use.

D&C 88:119
 D&C 97:15-16

PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE TREGGLE



Questions & Answers

Why Does the Church Teach That We Shouldn't Date until We Are 16?

Answers are intended for help and perspective, not as pronouncements of Church doctrine.

LIAHONA'S ANSWER

The Lord's prophets have given specific counsel to help young men and young women keep their associations with each other worthy and uplifting. In cultures where dating is acceptable, that counsel

includes not dating before the age of 16.

Waiting until at least 16 to date may seem hard—especially if you desire to date and if you feel pressure from others to do so. But Heavenly

Father has given us this guideline through His prophets to help us live worthily so we might return to Him. And the blessings that come from following this counsel are great.

Church leaders have taught that dating before age 16 “can lead to immorality, limit the number of other young people you meet, and deprive you of experiences that will help you choose an eternal partner” (*For the Strength of Youth: Fulfilling Our Duty to God* [2001], 24).

In your early teens you are beginning a process of emotional, social, mental, and physical development that will continue for years. One important reason for not dating until age 16 is that early dating can complicate your life and interfere with your spiritual growth. For example, it is not unusual to develop strong romantic feelings during your early teens, along with strong desires toward the opposite sex. This may happen at a time when you are developing the emotional and mental



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN LUKE

maturity to handle those feelings. Studies have shown that there is a much greater chance of inappropriate physical relationships when dating starts too early.

Early dating can lead to exclusive relationships at the very time when you should be expanding your friendships and associating with a variety of people. If you get to know many young men and young women, you will develop social skills that will help your future dating be more enjoyable.

Even after you are 16, it is best to date in groups and avoid pairing off with just one partner. And since dating eventually leads to marriage, be sure to date the kind of people you would consider marrying.

Some young people find that they don't have the desire or the opportunity to date until long after they turn 16. Many happy, normal young people seldom date until later, even marriage age.

If you have the faith to follow the guidelines of our Church leaders, your dating years will be less stressful, more fun, and happier (see Alma 41:10). You will receive the blessings that come from obedience. And you will be better prepared for temple marriage.

READERS' ANSWERS

There is a good reason for the Church's teaching that we not date until we are 16. God is concerned about us, and His prophets are

concerned about us also. When we date before we are 16, we may be popular, but mainly to the world. Someone who doesn't date before the right age shows maturity, a desire to improve, and faithfulness to the Lord.

*Nadia Antuanette Reátegué Rivera, 13,
Las Viñas Branch,
Lima Perú La Molina Stake*

I believe that dating at a young age wouldn't have helped me create a good atmosphere to invite the Spirit. I agree with President Hinckley that we should be wise in dating, because this will be the best preparation for choosing an eternal companion.



*Amery C. Silvino, 16,
Santo Cristo Ward,
Gapán Philippines Stake*

This standard is intended to help us prepare for marriage. When we date one person steadily at an early age, it can turn to tragedy. At age 16, young people are somewhat more responsible and more able to control themselves.



*Elder Daniel Banza, 21,
Democratic Republic of Congo
Kinshasa Mission*

Physical attraction between a man and a woman is natural. But sometimes these feelings lead to unacceptable behavior, which some people



Dating Standards

"The Lord has made us attractive one to another for a great purpose. But this very attraction becomes as a powder keg unless it is kept under control. It is beautiful when handled in the right way. It is deadly if it gets out of hand.

"It is for this reason that the Church counsels against early dating. This rule is not designed to hurt you in any way. It is designed to help you, and it will do so if you will observe it.

"Steady dating at an early age leads so often to tragedy. Studies have shown that the longer a boy and girl date one another, the more likely they are to get into trouble.

"It is better, my friends, to date a variety of companions until you are ready to marry. Have a wonderful time, but stay away from familiarity. Keep your hands to yourself. It may not be easy, but it is possible."—President Gordon B. Hinckley ("A Prophet's Counsel and Prayer for Youth," *Liahona*, April 2001, 38–39) □

falsely say is a way of showing love. The Church encourages us not to date before age 16 because we are not yet mature enough to control these feelings and may fall into danger.

*Lupeolo Tupou, 18,
Nuku'alofa Eighth Ward,
Nuku'alofa Tonga North Stake*

At a young age a person is not yet capable of realizing the full consequences of his or her actions. Young people may often do things because of curiosity or pressure. The Church helps us avoid many dreadful mistakes by giving us wise counsel and recommendations.



*Natalya Fyodorovna
Frolova, 21,
Saratovsky Tsentralny Branch,
Saratov Russia District*

I think you should have a close relationship with someone only if you would seriously consider marrying him or her. And you should consider marrying someone only after you know who you are and what you really want for eternity. It is best to develop yourself first, without a partner.

The world sees dating in a very wrong way. Lucifer has completely

counterfeited dating values. I waited until age 16 to begin dating. It was rewarding to know I was acting in the Lord's way. It brought me a feeling of inner peace that was worth any sacrifice.



*Elisa Correa, 19,
Humaitá Ward,
Porto Alegre Brazil Moinhos
de Vento Stake*

Dating prepares us for marriage, and the Church teaches that at age 16 we are usually mature enough to understand what dating is about. We will be more likely to date those who have high standards and who respect our standards.



*Elder Emmanuel N. A.
Solomon, 22,
Nigeria Port Harcourt Mission*

The Lord knows we should devote our teenage years to learning the gospel, building good friendships, and preparing for missions and marriage. He loves us and wishes us to be ready for these important experiences.



*Maurício Imbroise, 18,
Benedito Bentes Ward,
Maceió Brazil Stake*

We need to remember that Satan is lying in wait for us. But our goal is to go to the temple with pure hearts that are full of gratitude to our

Heavenly Father. God loves us and wants us to have complete happiness. No matter how old we are, we need to use wisdom and pray constantly so that we will triumph over the adversary.



*R. Trinidad Guerrero Soliz, 20,
Pueblo Yaqui Branch,
Ciudad Obregón México
Yaqui Stake*

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS is a youth feature. We hope to publish answers from youth living in a variety of countries. Please mail your answer to arrive no later than 15 January 2003. Send it to **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS 01/03, Liahona, Floor 24, 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3223, USA;** or e-mail to **cur-liahona-imag@ldschurch.org**. Your answer may be typed or clearly written in your own language. For your answer to be considered, it must include your full name, age, home address, and ward and stake (or branch and district). Please include a photograph of yourself; this photograph will not be returned. We will publish a representative selection of answers.

QUESTION: For Christmas I have always bought my brothers and sisters gifts from the store. This year I want to give them something more personal and meaningful. What other kinds of gifts could I give for Christmas? □

Priceless Gifts

Gifts from the heart are far more valuable than anything you could ever buy. They often take more energy, thought, and sacrifice, so they mean more to both the giver and the receiver. Here are some ideas for priceless gifts you can give this Christmas.

✳ Give the gift of yourself to your family and loved ones. Spend the day doing kind things for your parents and siblings. You could make breakfast, help wrap and deliver presents, or clean up after dinner.

✳ Give your parents a break. Spend some time looking after your younger brothers and sisters during the Christmas holiday.

✳ Volunteer at a local food bank or shelter, or help with some other worthy cause.

✳ Visit someone who is sick or elderly. Ask him or her to tell you about a past Christmas.

✳ Express your love and gratitude for the Savior in your prayers.

✳ Christmas is a time for peace. Try to resolve differences with someone you don't get along with very well.

✳ You can also encourage peace by not quarreling with your siblings. Try to treat your family as well as you possibly can.

✳ Write a letter to your parents thanking them for the things they have done for you.

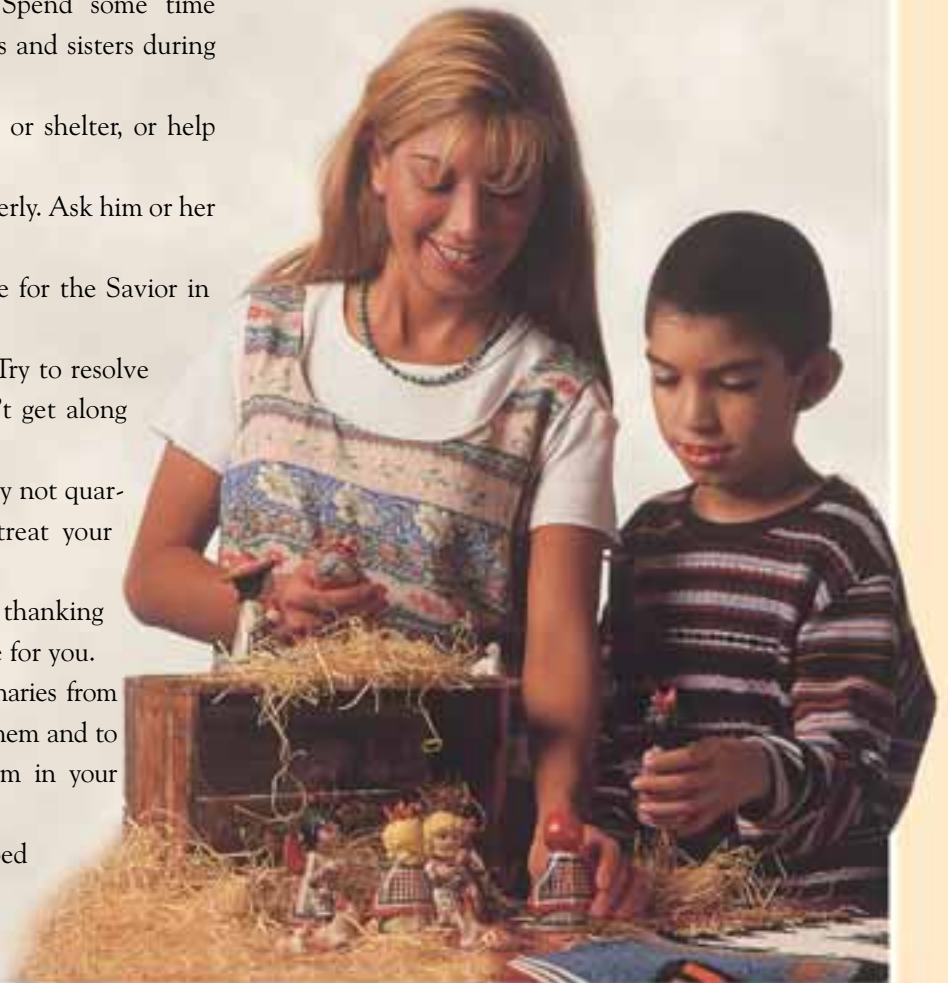
✳ Write letters to full-time missionaries from your ward or branch to encourage them and to let them know you remember them in your prayers.

✳ Make your brother's or sister's bed without letting anyone know who did it.

✳ Baby-sit for free so parents can enjoy an outing to a Christmas concert, attend the temple, or spend time together.

✳ Read the Christmas story to a younger brother or sister, and teach them about the Savior (see Luke 2).

✳ If you've saved some money by giving free gifts this Christmas, you can pay a generous fast offering next month. □



Wrapped in My Mother's Love

By Bonnie Danielson

When I was about three or four years old, my mother was the ward Relief Society president. Part of her responsibility, it seemed, was always to have a quilt in progress in our home. At any given time, sisters would filter in and out of our basement to quilt for a while. Often my mother would thread a needle for me and let me “quilt” with the sisters. (My clumsy stitches were patiently removed when I was not around.) I relished these moments and learned at a young age to love quilting and Relief Society.

My mother died suddenly when I was only five. It wasn't until years later that I found out she had left me a great gift of love. The Christmas of my 19th year is one I will always remember, for that was when I received this most precious gift from my mother, although she had passed away 14 years earlier.

Suddenly it came to me. I knew exactly why I had the quilt. I unfolded it and wrapped it around my son. “I have this quilt so Grandma Brown can give you hugs even though she is in heaven,” I said.



I hadn't known it, but before my mother died she had pieced together two special quilt tops, one for my older brother and one for me. She had used little pieces of fabric from our dresses and shirts. But she had passed away before she could put the quilts together and do the quilting.

When I turned 19, my older sister felt it was time to complete the quilts for my brother and me, and she asked the ward Relief Society to finish them. The sisters sewed the intricate stitches without knowing how much it would have pleased my mother.

On Christmas Day when I received the quilt, I loved the gift with all my heart. But I had no idea how much more it would yet come to mean to me.

Years went by, and I married and started a family of my own. I kept my quilt wrapped in a plastic bag in a drawer to protect it from damage and wear. One day I took it out and was carefully admiring it when one of my little boys came into the room and asked me where I got the quilt. I explained to him that his Grandma

Brown had made the quilt for me before she died.

"Who is Grandma Brown?" my young son asked.

How it pained me that my children had never known the mother I cherished. It hurt that she could not put her arms around them and tell them she loved them

in her tender, gentle way. I explained to my son once again that Grandma Brown, my mother, was someone special in heaven who loved him.

"Why do *you* have that quilt, Mommy?" he asked.

Suddenly it came to me. I knew exactly why I had the quilt. I unfolded it and wrapped it around his little body. "I have this quilt so Grandma Brown can give you hugs even though she is in heaven," I said.

A big smile spread across his face, and I could see that this was the best answer I could have given him.

Since then the quilt has made its way out of the drawer much more often. Whenever a family member is hurt, sad, or in need of extra love, the quilt is a great source of comfort. I love touching the quilt, knowing my mother's hands have touched it also.

Many years have passed, and I can now quilt correctly. My sisters and I have spent many hours around quilting frames, talking about our mother. Since I am the youngest, my sisters tell me stories about her to help me know her better. Yet no matter how many stories I hear, nothing has helped me or my children turn our hearts to my mother more than the quilt I got for Christmas the year I turned 19.

Bonnie Danielson is a member of the Rancho Del Mar Park Ward, Chandler Arizona Alma Stake.

Living Christmas

By Julia María Cortés de Peluso

A few days before Christmas, I went to a busy shopping area in Buenos Aires to do some errands. Like everyone else, I stopped to look at the Christmas decorations that seemed to be everywhere. "If only I had those decorations to get my house ready for Christmas," I thought.

On the way home, my bus stopped at a small square. On a bench sat a well-groomed young man with nice clothes and shoes. He was smiling, talking to, and most of all, listening to an old man with long hair and a beard. The old man's clothes were dirty and torn, and he had no shoes. The bench seemed to be his home.

I thought about the stark contrasts between the two men—in appearance, age, and walk of life. What a pleasure it was to see them talking together, especially because the old man had a lot to say and really seemed to be enjoying the conversation. At that moment I felt that Christmas had arrived. There were no twinkling lights, no ornaments, no wreaths, no Christmas trees—just someone giving the gift of his time, just listening to another with respect. There was no disdain, no prejudice, no selfishness, no discrimination, no arrogance.

It was then that I realized we can give such gifts of love all through the

year. We can kindle little lights of hope for those who need them.

I vowed never again to allow getting ready for Christmas to keep me from *living* Christmas.

Julia María Cortés de Peluso is a member of the Villa Elvira Ward, La Plata Argentina Villa Elvira Stake.

A White Christmas in Ecuador

By Carl Grossen

As a new full-time missionary I was anxious to see what Christmas would be like in Guayaquil, Ecuador, where I was serving.

I knew we would not be having a snowy white Christmas like those I was accustomed to. As other thoughts of turkey dinners, gifts, lights, and caroling flashed through my mind, I began to long for the Christmas traditions I was familiar with.

My companion and I felt a renewed urgency and greater responsibility to spread the restored gospel of Jesus Christ to make the Christmas season more meaningful.

One December day we stopped at the humble home of Señor Torres and were given a warm welcome. He told us he had been waiting and praying for the truth for eight years. For two months my companion and

I had passed by his house daily without stopping. Señor Torres said, "I always wanted to stop you to ask about your church, but you were always walking so fast that I thought you were too busy for me." Prayers had been answered. We began teaching Señor Torres and his family with great joy.

Christmas day drew nearer, and we could hardly wait to see the Torres family as we quietly approached their home for our fourth visit. Before we knocked on the door, we saw through the window a scene that touched our hearts.

Beauty emanated from the whole family, their loving eyes, rosy cheeks,

At the Torres family's baptism, Christmas became complete for me. My companion turned to me and whispered, "Looks like it's a white Christmas after all."



and gentle faces glowing in the dimly lit room. Beneath a tree on a table in the corner stood miniature Nativity figures, telling the story of a small family in a stable. Two young girls leaned eagerly over their mother's shoulder as she read from a book we had given her, *Gospel Principles*. The oldest child, eight-year-old Victor, was watching attentively as his father played "Silent Night" on a xylophone.

Victor saw us and ran to greet us. We joined in singing "Silent Night" in Spanish. Next they asked us to sing it in English, and then we all sang it together again in Spanish.

Sister Torres told us that before we had shared the gospel with her family she had not felt like celebrating Christmas. But now pictures of Christ, Christmas music, and the Nativity scene had been brought from their place in the cupboards, where they had been collecting dust for the past three years. The true Christmas spirit had been restored as we had presented the gospel message. As servants of the Lord, testifying in His name, we had helped to bring Jesus Christ back into the family's Christmas.

On the third week of December, Christmas became complete for me as I watched Brother and Sister Torres and Victor, all dressed in white, enter the waters of baptism and become members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. My companion turned to me and whispered, "Looks like it's a white Christmas after

all." I couldn't have asked for a more meaningful Christmas.

Carl Grossen is a member of the Crescent Park Third Ward, Sandy Utah Crescent Park Stake.

The Gift My Father Gave Me

By Ruth M. Anderson

I am now a great-grandmother, but I shall never forget a Christmas I experienced as a young child.

I was one of 14 children in my family, and we lived in a farming town. We were very poor as far as worldly goods are concerned, though I didn't know it then. A family in our town was even poorer than we were. The mother had died, and the father was working away from home, leaving the older children to care for the younger ones.

After we had opened our Christmas gifts, my father spoke to us about this motherless family and how they might not receive gifts. He suggested that each of us choose one of our new gifts to be placed in a box, along with food and other goodies, for this family.

I had three presents—a doll, a necklace, and an article of clothing. What a hard decision it was for me! I needed the clothing, and I wanted the doll badly, but the necklace was

so pretty and sparkly. After a time, I reluctantly dropped the necklace into the box.

It was dark on Christmas night when Dad buttoned our coats and placed all of us in our horse-drawn sleigh. We left the box on this family's doorstep, with no indication of the giver.

The next Sunday, I saw the necklace around the neck of a girl my age. She excitedly told me that Santa had left a box of gifts for them on Christmas night. Of course, my parents had sworn us to secrecy. Dad had told us that being anonymous was the best part of giving. But I can't say it felt that good to see what had been my necklace on someone else's neck.

Though it wasn't an easy lesson then, I now realize the great impact this experience has had on my life. As a child I thought my father was asking me to give up a gift, but later I understood that he was actually giving me one of the most precious gifts I have ever received. How much he must have loved me, to teach me that *loving* someone is far more important than *having* something! My father's example of love has helped me understand the love of Heavenly Father, who presented us the greatest gift of all when He gave His Only Begotten Son.

Ruth M. Anderson is a member of the North Logan Third Ward, North Logan Utah Green Canyon Stake.

She Brought Light

By Muriel Robinson

Many years ago my husband, Ken, and I moved to Provo, Utah, so he could attend Brigham Young University. Before our move, Ken had traveled there, bought a mobile home, and arranged for water, gas, and electricity to be turned on when we moved in.

We arrived in Provo on a cold December night. All our belongings were packed in the back of a rental truck. We were tired and tense from the long trip. Six months pregnant, I was feeling the effects of cleaning, packing, and traveling. Shawna, our 15-month-old daughter, was tired and crying.

As we opened the door to our home, a blast of cold air greeted us. The electricity and water had been turned on, but for some reason the gas had not. Too exhausted to do anything else, we put a mattress on the floor and plugged in an electric blanket to keep us warm. We tried to sleep with our daughter between us, but she cried most of the night. When morning came we were almost as tired as when we had gone to bed.

After we unloaded the truck, Ken left to return it, check with the gas company, and arrange for a phone to be installed. I dressed Shawna in her snowsuit. Then I placed her in her highchair to

The woman standing there was shivering, with soapsuds up to her elbows. She introduced herself as the branch Relief Society president and told me the Spirit had sent her.



play with a few toys while I started to unpack the boxes.

When I unpacked our electric frying pan, I decided to heat water in it to wash out the cupboards. As I turned on the kitchen sink, the faucet came off and water shot up into the air. I tried to turn off the water valve under the sink but could not get it to turn. Frantically, I searched for the water shutoff valve for the house. By the time I found it, the kitchen and living room were flooded.

As I desperately started moving boxes out of the water, Shawna sensed panic and began to scream. Carrying her with one of my arms, I continued trying to lift boxes with the other arm.

At that moment I started into premature labor. Now I was truly panicked. I didn't know anyone in the neighborhood, and I didn't have a phone to call for help. Desperately I prayed, "Heavenly Father, please help me!"

I'll never forget the knock that came at the door minutes later. The woman standing there was shivering, with soapsuds up to her elbows. She introduced herself as Amalia Van Tassel, the branch Relief Society president, and told me the Spirit had sent her.

I would later learn that Amalia had been standing at her sink washing dishes when she felt prompted to check on the new family who had just moved in. Sensing that it was urgent,

she called to her oldest daughter to watch her other children and, without even stopping to dry her hands or grab her coat, ran to my door.

Amalia had me lie down, comforted Shawna, cleaned up all she could, and invited our family to dinner. She brought light, safety, and comfort into that dark December day. Rest stopped my premature labor, Ken fixed the sink, the gas man turned the gas on, and portable electric heaters dried the soaked carpet.

I have always been grateful to Heavenly Father for answering my prayer that day and for the loving Relief Society president who quickly followed the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

Muriel Robinson is a member of the Sunset Heights Third Ward, Orem Utah Sunset Heights Stake.

The Little Christmas Miracle

Name withheld

At Christmastime in 1996, I was serving a mission in southern Spain. My companion, Sister Noel,* was filled with enthusiasm and had a gift for loving everyone. Many times I saw the love of Christ reflected in her countenance.

Sister Noel and I were working with all our hearts in a little Andalusian

town where the members loved us and seemed happy to have missionaries in their midst. It was a special time, and we could feel the spirit of Christmas in the streets and from the people of the ward. Sister Noel and I had both received little Christmas gifts from our families, friends, and home wards, so we had lots of goodies.

Almost everyone we knew seemed happy, except the Fernández family. The father was out of work and had no money to buy gifts for the children. When my companion learned about their situation, she felt we needed to help them in some way. Together we started talking about how we could help.

With the assistance of a member of the ward, we gathered together the goodies our families had sent. With the money we had received, we bought toys for the children.

The Fernández family was thrilled and astonished. But the little miracle did not end there. Thanks to this small act of service, my companion and I were also blessed with greater feelings of love for all the members.

Because of my companion, I learned that it is better to give than to receive. It gave me great joy to give something to a family who needed it more than I did. I'll always be thankful for Sister Noel, who taught me that every day can be Christmas when we share the love of the Savior with others. □

**Names have been changed.*

OUR LITTLE GIFT



By Joshua DeMoux ILLUSTRATION BY DILLEEN MARSH

It was our first Christmas away from home. Elders Heemeyer, Bright, Kehoe, Schulze, Westover, and I had all gathered in one apartment to share Christmas Eve. We hoped that spending the evening together as a missionary district might make it easier to be away from home.

It was about 5:30 in the afternoon, and we were all a little discouraged. Setting up appointments with investigators and finding new people to teach had been difficult recently. “Come back after Christmas,” everyone said.

After talking for a few minutes, Elder Schulze suggested we go caroling to the homes of our investigators and some of the members. We all thought it was a great idea, and we planned a short program. We would start with two hymns and a spiritual thought. Then we would conclude with another hymn and a prayer. The whole program would be only 20 minutes long, but we all felt pleased with it.

Before we left, we knelt to pray. Then we set out into the cold night on the south side of Chicago, Illinois, in the United States.

Our first stop was the apartment of a member whose daughter and two grandchildren were investigating the Church. We certainly weren’t the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, but for six elders we sounded pretty good. After we shared our program, the family told us our “gift” was the best they had ever received.

Soon we were at a different apartment presenting our program to another family. At every stop, our enthusiasm and joy grew. We kept hearing the same response: “This is the best gift ever. You really brought the Christmas spirit.”

That night I came to better understand the true meaning of Christmas—that sharing and serving others are what Jesus Christ’s ministry is all about. And while we were busy in the service of others and of the Savior, home didn’t really seem so far away. □

Joshua DeMoux is a member of the Wandamere Ward, South Salt Lake Stake.

REJOICE IN THE BLESSINGS OF THE TEMPLE

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

Isaiah 2:2–3: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, . . . and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths.”

Elder David B. Haight of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “Come to the temples worthily and regularly. Not only do you bless those who are deceased, but you may freely partake of the promised personal revelation that may bless your life with power, knowledge, light, beauty, and truth from on high, which will guide you and your posterity to eternal life. What person would not want these blessings, as expressed by the Prophet Joseph Smith at the dedication of the Kirtland Temple. He said: ‘We ask thee, Holy Father, that thy servants may go forth from this house armed with thy power, and that thy name may be upon them, and thy glory be round about

them, and thine angels have charge over them.’ (D&C 109:22.)

“When you return from the temple, share with your children and loved ones at home your feelings about what you experienced. Speak not of the sacred ordinances, but of the love and power manifest by them.

“. . . Your consistently positive expressions about what you experience in the temple will create in your children a desire to receive those same blessings and provide them with strong motivation to resist the temptations which could disqualify them from temple blessings” (“Come to the House of the Lord,” *Ensign*, May 1992, 16).

President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95): “The Lord does desire that his people be a temple-motivated people. I repeat what I have said before: It would please the Lord for every adult member to be worthy

of—and to carry—a current temple recommend, even if proximity to a temple does not allow immediate or frequent use of it. The things that we must do and not do to be worthy of a temple recommend are the very things that ensure we will be happy as individuals and as families” (“A Temple-Motivated People,” *Liahona*, May 1995, 6).

President Gordon B. Hinckley: “Every man or woman who goes to the temple comes out of that building a better man or woman than he or she was when entering into it. That’s something that’s remarkable that happens with all of us. . . . Do you have problems and concerns and worries? Do you want for peace in your heart and an opportunity to commune with the Lord and meditate upon His way? Go to the house of the Lord and there feel of His Spirit and commune with Him and you will know a peace that you will find nowhere else” (stake conference, Wandsworth, England, 27 August 1995).

■ *In what ways can the ordinances and covenants of the temple affect our lives?*

■ *How can we teach family members and others about the temple so they desire to live worthy of entering there?*

■ *How is our Christmas celebration made more meaningful through our knowledge of temple blessings?* □



WOMEN of RIGHTEOUSNESS



More than ever we need women of faith, virtue, vision, and charity who can hear and who will respond to the voice of the Lord.



By Elder M. Russell Ballard
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

My topic is something that is very close to my heart. I have been married to Sister Ballard for 50 years. The greatest day in my life was the day I met Barbara Bowen. My greatest accomplishment was convincing her to marry me. It was a most important day when we were married in the Salt Lake Temple. We are the parents of two sons and five daughters. Perhaps being the father of our five daughters and now the grandfather of 22 granddaughters makes me an expert on the subject of women.

As I have considered the days that lie ahead, I believe this message is vital to both men and women. So I invite the men to prayerfully consider these words: Your lives are significantly influenced by the women who are your wives, your daughters, and your associates with whom you are privileged to work and serve in the Church.

Let me set the stage by quoting from a letter sent to Church headquarters. This woman wrote:

“I have a wonderful husband and children, whom I love deeply. I love the Lord and His Church more than I can say. I know the Church is true! I realize I shouldn’t

feel discouraged about who I am. Yet I have been going through an identity crisis most of my life. I have never dared utter these feelings out loud but have hidden them behind the huge, confident smile I wear to church every week. For years I have doubted if I had any value beyond my roles as a wife and mother. I have feared that men are that they might have joy, but that women are that they might be overlooked. I long to feel that I, as a woman, matter to the Lord.”

I would like to respond to the issue that underlies the concern of this faithful woman. Does the Lord respect women? Do women matter to the Lord? The answer is yes—a resounding yes!

THE VALUE OF WOMEN

Elder James E. Talmage (1862–1933) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles stated that “the world’s greatest champion of woman and womanhood is Jesus the Christ” (*Jesus the Christ*, 3rd edition [1916], 475). I believe that. The first time the Lord acknowledged Himself to be the Christ, it was to a Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well. He taught her about living water and proclaimed, simply, “I . . . am he” (John 4:26). And it was Martha to whom He proclaimed: “I am the resurrection, and the life. . . . And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die” (John 11:25–26).

Then, during His greatest agony as He hung on the cross, the Savior reached out to one person—His

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loves righteous women—
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mother—when in that terrible but glorious moment He asked John the Beloved to care for her as though she were his own (see John 19:26–27).

Of this you may be certain: The Lord especially loves righteous women—women who are not only faithful but filled with faith, women who are optimistic and cheerful because they know who they are and where they are going, women who are striving to live and serve as women of God.

There are those who suggest that males are favored of the Lord because they are ordained to hold the priesthood. Anyone who believes this does not understand the great plan of happiness. The premortal and mortal natures of men and women were specified by God Himself, and it is simply not within His character to diminish the roles and responsibilities of any of His children.

As President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) explained, “The Lord offers to his daughters every spiritual gift and blessing that can be obtained by his sons” (in Conference Report, April 1970, 59). All of us, men and women alike, receive the gift of the Holy Ghost and are entitled to personal revelation. We may all take upon us the Lord’s name, become sons and daughters of Christ, partake of the ordinances of the temple from which we emerge endowed with power, receive the fulness of the gospel, and achieve exaltation in the celestial kingdom. These spiritual blessings are available to men and women alike, according to their faithfulness and their effort to receive them.

The basic doctrinal purpose for the Creation of the earth is to provide for God’s spirit children the continuation of the process of exaltation and eternal life. God said to Moses:

“And I, God, created man in mine own image, in the image of mine Only Begotten created I him; male and female created I them.

“And I, God, blessed them, and said unto them: Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth” (Moses 2:27–28).

The Church’s proclamation on the family confirms that God has not revoked or changed this commandment. The First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles “solemnly proclaim that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator’s plan for the eternal destiny of His children” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liahona*, October 1998, 24).

This doctrine sometimes causes women to ask: “Is a woman’s value dependent exclusively upon her role as a wife and mother?” The answer is simple and obvious: No. Although there is nothing a woman can do that has more far-reaching, eternal impact than to rear her children to walk in righteousness, motherhood and marital status are not the only measures of a woman’s worth. Some women do not have the privilege of marrying or rearing children in this life. Yet if they are worthy, these blessings will come later. Men and women who do have the privilege of rearing children will of course be held accountable for that priceless, eternal stewardship. Although there is simply not a more significant contribution you can make to society, to the Church, or to the eternal destiny of our Father’s children than what you will do as a mother or father, motherhood and fatherhood are not the only measures of goodness or of one’s acceptance before the Lord. Every righteous man and woman has a significant role to play in the onward march of the kingdom of God.

CONCERN ABOUT SATAN’S DISTORTIONS

I have a deep and abiding feeling about women and about the crucial difference they make in every important



***E*very righteous man and woman has a significant role to play in the onward march of the kingdom of God.**

setting—particularly in the family and in the Church. I have spoken boldly about the role women must play in the council system of the Church (see “Strength in Counsel,” *Ensign*, November 1993, 76–78). We cannot fulfill our mission as a Church without the inspired insight and support of women.

For that reason I am concerned about what I see happening with some of our young women. Satan would have you dress, talk, and behave in unnatural and destructive ways in your relationships with young men. The adversary is having great success distorting attitudes about gender and roles and about families and individual worth. He is the author of mass confusion about the value, the role, the contribution, and the unique nature of women. Today’s popular culture, which is preached by every form of media from movies to the Internet, celebrates the sexy, sassy, socially aggressive woman. These distortions are seeping into the thinking of some of our own women.

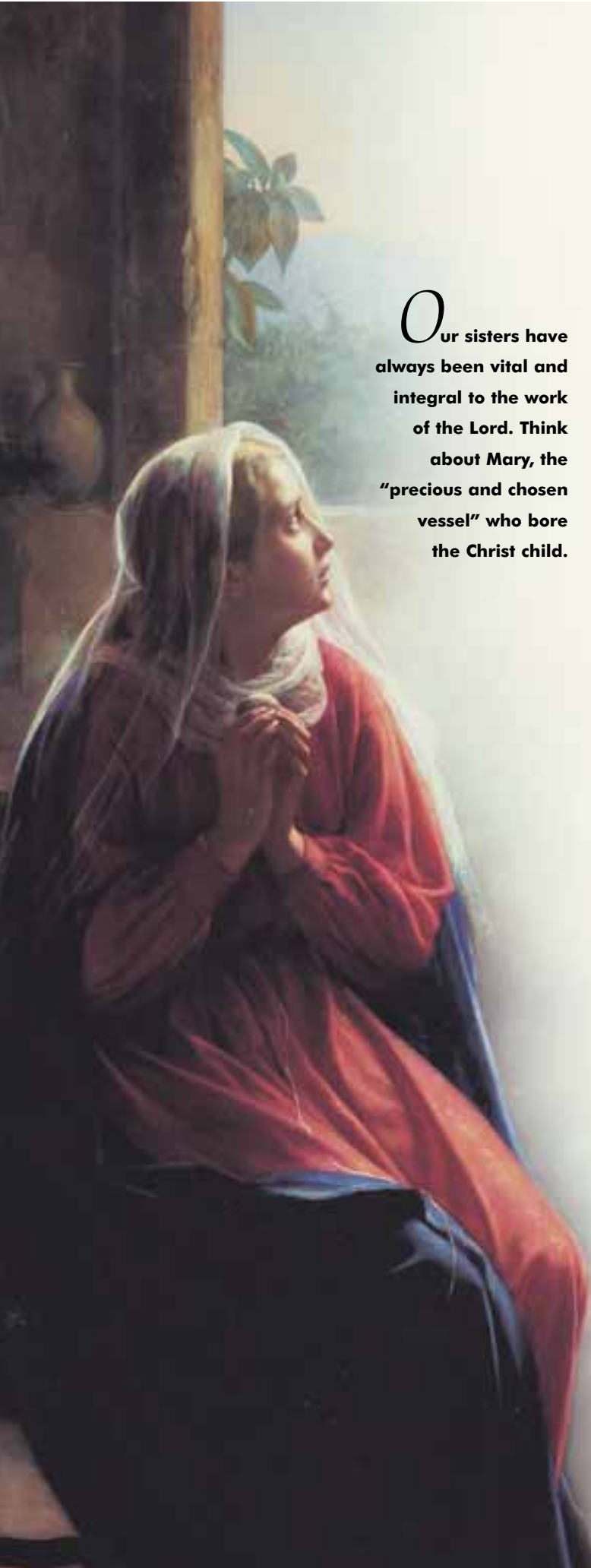
My deep desire is to clarify how we in the presiding councils of the Church feel about the sisters of this Church, how our Heavenly Father feels about His daughters, and what He expects of them. My dear sisters, we believe in you. We believe in and are counting on your goodness and your strength, your propensity for virtue and valor, your kindness and courage, your strength and resilience. We believe in your mission as women of God. We realize that you are the emotional (and sometimes spiritual) glue that holds families and often ward families together. We believe that the Church simply will not accomplish what it must without your faith and faithfulness, your innate tendency to put the well-being of others ahead of your own, and your spiritual strength and tenacity. And we believe that God’s plan is for you to become queens and to receive the highest blessings any woman can receive in time or eternity. On the other hand, Satan’s plan is to get you so preoccupied with the world’s glitzy lies about women that you completely miss what you have come here to do



***T*he first time the Lord acknowledged Himself to be the Christ, it was to a Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well. He taught her about living water and proclaimed, simply, “I . . . am he.”**

and to become. Remember, Satan wants us to “be miserable like unto himself” (2 Nephi 2:27). Never lose your precious identity by doing anything that would jeopardize the promised eternal future your Heavenly Father has provided for you.

Young men, lest you get too comfortable while I focus on the women, you have a significant role in all of this. You are sometimes the reason our young women get distracted from their eternal mission here. Let the women in your life know that you want them to be women of God and not women of the world. The Lord



Our sisters have always been vital and integral to the work of the Lord. Think about Mary, the “precious and chosen vessel” who bore the Christ child.

expects you to protect and safeguard His daughters. Great will be your remorse if you should steal from any young woman her virtue and purity.

WOMEN ARE VITAL TO THE LORD’S WORK

My earnest plea and prayer is that young men and women will understand that our sisters have always been vital and integral to the work of the Lord. Faithful women have labored valiantly in the cause of truth and righteousness from before the foundations of this world. In his vision of the redemption of the dead, President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) saw not only Father Adam and other prophets but “our glorious Mother Eve, with many of her faithful daughters who had lived through the ages and worshiped the true and living God” (D&C 138:39).

Think about the incomparable role of Eve, whose actions set in motion the great plan of our Father. And what about Mary, the “precious and chosen vessel” (Alma 7:10) who bore the Christ child? Surely no one would question the contributions made by these majestic women.

Our dispensation is not without its heroines. Countless women from every continent and walk of life have made dramatic contributions to the cause of Christ. Consider Lucy Mack Smith, the mother of the martyred prophets Joseph and Hyrum and the grandmother of President Joseph F. Smith. Her resilience and righteousness under the most emotionally and spiritually taxing conditions surely influenced her prophet sons and set them firmly on the path toward fulfilling their fore-ordained destiny.

At this point you may be thinking, “But what about me and my contribution? I’m not Eve or Mary or even Lucy Mack Smith. I’m just regular, plain old me. Is there something about my contribution that is significant to the Lord? Does He really need me?” Remember, the righteous who are not highly visible are valued too and, in the words of a Book of Mormon prophet, are “no less serviceable unto the people” (Alma 48:19).

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) responded

to that question this way: “Both a righteous man and a righteous woman are a blessing to all those whom their lives touch.

“. . . In the world before we came here, faithful women were given certain assignments while faithful men were foreordained to certain priesthood tasks. While we do not now remember the particulars, . . . we are accountable for those things which long ago were expected of us” (*My Beloved Sisters* [1979], 37).

Every sister in this Church who has made covenants with the Lord has a divine mandate to help save souls, to lead the women of the world, to strengthen the homes of Zion, and to build the kingdom of God. Sister Eliza R. Snow (1804–87), the second general president of the Relief Society, said that “every sister in this church should be a preacher of righteousness . . . because we have greater and higher privileges than any other females upon the face of the earth” (“Great Indignation Meeting,” *Deseret Evening News*, 15 January 1870, 2).

Every sister who stands for truth and righteousness diminishes the influence of evil. Every sister who strengthens and protects her family is doing the work of God. Every sister who lives as a woman of God becomes a beacon for others to follow and plants seeds of righteous influence that will be harvested for decades to come. Every sister who makes and keeps sacred covenants becomes an instrument in the hands of God.

THE SAVIOR’S EXAMPLE

I have been drawn to an interchange between God the Father and His eldest and Only Begotten Son, who is the ultimate example of living up to one’s premortal promises. When God asked who would come to earth to

prepare a way for all mankind to be saved and strengthened and blessed, it was Jesus Christ who said, simply, “Here am I, send me” (Abraham 3:27).

Just as the Savior stepped forward to fulfill His divine

responsibilities, we have the challenge and responsibility to do likewise. If you are wondering if you make a difference to the Lord, imagine the impact when you make commitments such as the following:

“Father, if You need a woman to rear children in righteousness, here am I, send me.”

“If You need a woman who will shun vulgarity and dress modestly and speak with dignity and show the world how joyous it is to keep the commandments, here am I, send me.”

“If You need a woman who can resist the alluring temptations of the world by keeping her eyes fixed on eternity, here am I, send me.”

“If You need a woman of faithful steadiness, here am I, send me.”

Between now and the day the Lord comes again, He needs women in every family, in every ward, in every community, in every nation who will step forward in righteousness and say by their words and their actions, “Here am I, send me.”

My question is, “Will you be one of those women? And will you men who hold the priesthood answer the same call?”

Now, I know most of you want to. But how will you do it? How, in a world filled with deceptive messages about women and the family—and the significance of both to the Lord—will you constantly respond to the Lord, “Here am I, send me”?

For those who really want to live up to who you are, for those who want to see through Satan’s deceptions



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and who at all costs want to repent if necessary, I have two suggestions: First, listen to and follow those whom we sustain as prophets, seers, and revelators. Second, learn to hear the voice of the Spirit, or the voice of the Lord as communicated by the power of the Holy Ghost.

FOLLOW THE PROPHET AND THE APOSTLES

I cannot stress enough the importance of listening to and following the prophet and the apostles. In today's world, where 24 hours a day television and radio commentators spew forth conflicting opinions, where marketers compete for everything from your money to your vote, there is one clear, unpolluted, unbiased voice that you can always count on. And that is the voice of the living prophet and the apostles. Their only motive is "the everlasting welfare of your souls" (2 Nephi 2:30).

Think of it! Think about the value of having a source of information whom you can always count on, who will always have your eternal interests at heart, and who will always provide inspired truth. That is a phenomenal gift and guide.

In November 2000, President Hinckley spoke to youth in a Churchwide fireside (see "A Prophet's Counsel and Prayer for Youth," *Liahona*, April 2001, 30–41). Have you young adults studied his message and identified things you need to avoid or do differently? I know a 17-year-old who just prior to the prophet's talk had pierced her ears a second time.

She came home from the fireside, took off the second set of earrings, and said to her parents, "If President Hinckley says we should wear only one set of earrings, that's good enough for me."

Wearing two pairs of earrings may or may not have eternal consequences for this young woman, but her willingness to obey the prophet will. And if she will obey

him now, on something relatively simple, how much easier it will be to follow him when greater issues are at stake.

I make you a promise. It is a simple one, but it is true. If you will listen to the living prophet and the apostles and heed our counsel, you will not go astray.



***E*very sister
who makes and keeps
sacred covenants
becomes an instrument
in the hands of God.**

LEARN TO HEAR THE VOICE OF THE SPIRIT

If you want to avoid the snares of Satan, if you need direction when the choices in front of you are puzzling and perplexing, learn to hear the voice of the Lord as communicated through the Holy Ghost. And then, of course, do what it tells you to do.

Nephi taught clearly that the Holy Ghost "is the gift of God unto all those who diligently seek him" and that "he that diligently seeketh shall find" (1 Nephi 10:17, 19). The stunning reality, my dear brothers and sisters, is that you control how close you are to the Lord. You determine just how

clear and readily available promptings from the Holy Ghost will be. You determine this by your actions, by your attitude, by the choices you make, by the things you watch and wear and listen to and read, and by how consistently and sincerely you invite the Spirit into your life.

Contemplate for a moment the extent and the impact of this blessing! You have been given a gift that when exercised and respected will give you the answers to all of the confusing, difficult questions and problems you face in your lives.

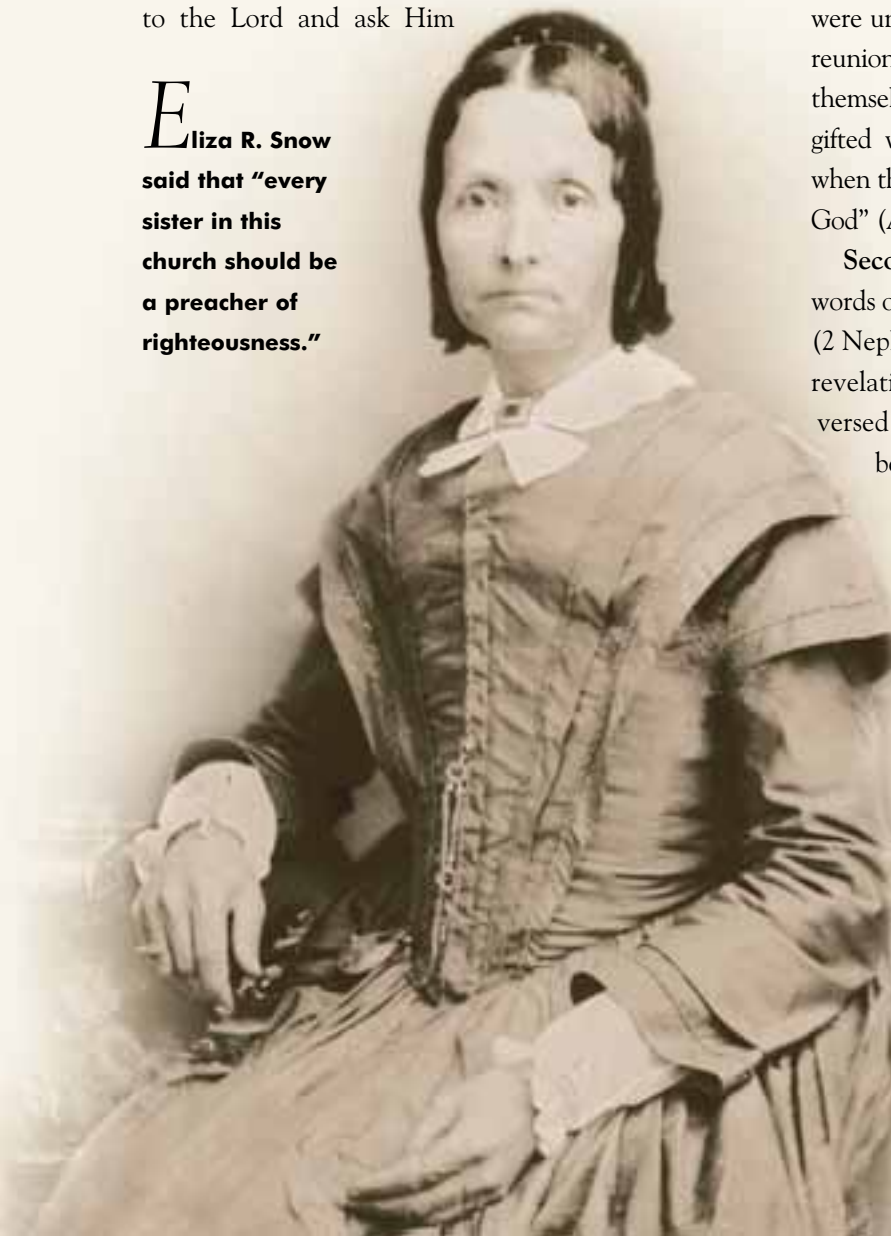
I can only imagine some of the questions you young women are facing right now. Should you marry the young man you are now dating, or not? Should you finish your degree, or not? Should you serve a mission, or not? What career should you pursue? Why pursue a career with vigor when all you've ever really wanted is to be a mother?

As life progresses, how will you respond to challenges

that will inevitably come? Will you know where to turn for peace and consolation if you are called upon to bury a child—as two of our own children have done—or if a child threatens to stray from the gospel path? How will you know what to do when you face financial reverses? Where will you turn for insight and inspiration when you are called upon to lead in your ward or stake? You young men are facing similar kinds of questions.

To all of you there is only one way to safely and confidently meet the obstacles and opportunities that are part of life's path. First, listen to the prophet and the apostles. Study the principles we teach. Then take those principles to the Lord and ask Him

***E*liza R. Snow
said that “every
sister in this
church should be
a preacher of
righteousness.”**



how you should apply them in your life. Ask Him to influence your thoughts, temper your actions, and guide your steps. “Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good” (Alma 37:37). He will communicate with you through the power and presence of the Holy Ghost.

HEED SPIRITUAL PROMPTINGS

There are several things that greatly enhance our ability to understand the promptings of the Holy Ghost and thereby hear the voice of God.

First is fasting and prayer. When the sons of Mosiah were united with Alma the Younger, they rejoiced in their reunion and acknowledged that because “they had given themselves to much prayer, and fasting,” they had been gifted with the spirit of prophecy and revelation, “and when they taught, they taught with power and authority of God” (Alma 17:3).

Second is immersing yourself in the scriptures. The words of Christ “will tell you all things what ye should do” (2 Nephi 32:3). The scriptures are a conduit for personal revelation. Young adults, your generation is much more versed in holy writ than was mine at your age. You have been taught to read and study the scriptures. I urge you to intensify your study of them. I promise that your ability to hear the voice of the Lord as communicated through the Holy Ghost will increase and improve.

Third is preparing to spend time in the house of the Lord. When the time appropriately comes for us to go to the temple, we leave the temple “armed with . . . power” (D&C 109:22) and with the promise that as we “grow up” in our knowledge of the Lord, we will “receive a fulness of the Holy Ghost” (D&C 109:15). The temple is a place of personal revelation. If you are endowed, visit the temple regularly. If you are not, prepare yourself to enter, for inside the doors of the temple

rests the power that will fortify you against the vicissitudes of life.

Fourth is listening to the counsel of your father and mother and your spouse. They are wise and experienced. Share with them your fears and concerns. Seek blessings from your father. If for some reason he is not worthy or able, go to your bishop or your stake president. They love you and will count it a privilege to bless your life. If you have not already done so, you should also receive your patriarchal blessing.

Fifth is obedience and repentance. There are certain things you simply cannot do if you want to have the Holy Ghost with you. It is not possible to listen to vulgar lyrics, watch movies filled with sexual innuendo, tamper with pornography on the Internet (or anywhere else, for that matter), take the name of the Lord in vain, wear revealing clothing, compromise in any way the law of chastity, or disregard the values of true manhood and womanhood and expect the Holy Ghost to remain with you. Anyone who participates in those kinds of activities should not be surprised if feelings of loneliness, discouragement, and unworthiness follow. Do not make the choice to live without the Spirit of the Lord to guide, to protect, to prompt, to warn, and to fill you with peace. Repent if you need to so you can enjoy the companionship of the Spirit.

Women and men who can hear the voice of the Lord, and who respond to those promptings, become invaluable instruments in His hands. I will never forget an experience I had following a stake conference. I was asked to participate in a blessing for a young woman who was suffering with cancer. The family were converts, and they had found peace through the promptings of the Spirit. Prior to our giving the blessing, this dear sister said to me: “Elder Ballard, I am not afraid to die, but I

would like to live here with my family. I am prepared to accept the will of my Father in Heaven. Please bless me to find peace and to know that He will be with me.” What faith, insight, and courage the Spirit had blessed her with! A few months later the family advised me that Heavenly Father had called her home. She died in peace, and the family lived in peace because they were familiar with the Spirit. One of the sweetest messages the Spirit will relay is how the Lord feels about you. And that reassurance will strengthen you in a way that almost nothing else can.

Now, finally, I turn again to you dear sisters, you who have such a profound, innate spiritual ability to hear the voice of the Good Shepherd. You need never wonder again if you have worth in the sight of the Lord and to the Brethren in the presiding councils of the Church. We love you. We cherish you. We respect you. Never doubt that your influence is absolutely vital

to preserving the family and to assisting with the growth and spiritual vitality of the Church. This Church will not reach its foreordained destiny without you. We men simply cannot nurture as you nurture. Most of us don’t have the sensitivity—spiritual and otherwise—that by your eternal nature you inherently have. Your influence on families and on children, youth, and men is singular. You are natural-born nurturers. Because of these unusual gifts and talents, you are vital to taking the gospel to all the world, to demonstrating that there is joy in living the way the prophets have counseled us to live.

More than ever before we need women of faith, virtue, vision, and charity, as the Relief Society declaration proclaims (see Mary Ellen Smoot, “Rejoice, Daughters of Zion,” *Liahona*, January 2000, 112). We need women who can hear and who will respond to the voice of the Lord, women who at all costs will defend and protect the family.



I **Inside the doors of the temple rests the power that will fortify you against the vicissitudes of life.**

We don't need women who want to be like men, sound like men, dress like men, drive like some men drive, or act like men. We do need women who rejoice in their womanhood and have a spiritual confirmation of their identity, their value, and their eternal destiny. Above all, we need women who will stand up for truth and righteousness and decry evil at every turn and simply say, "Lord, here am I, send me."

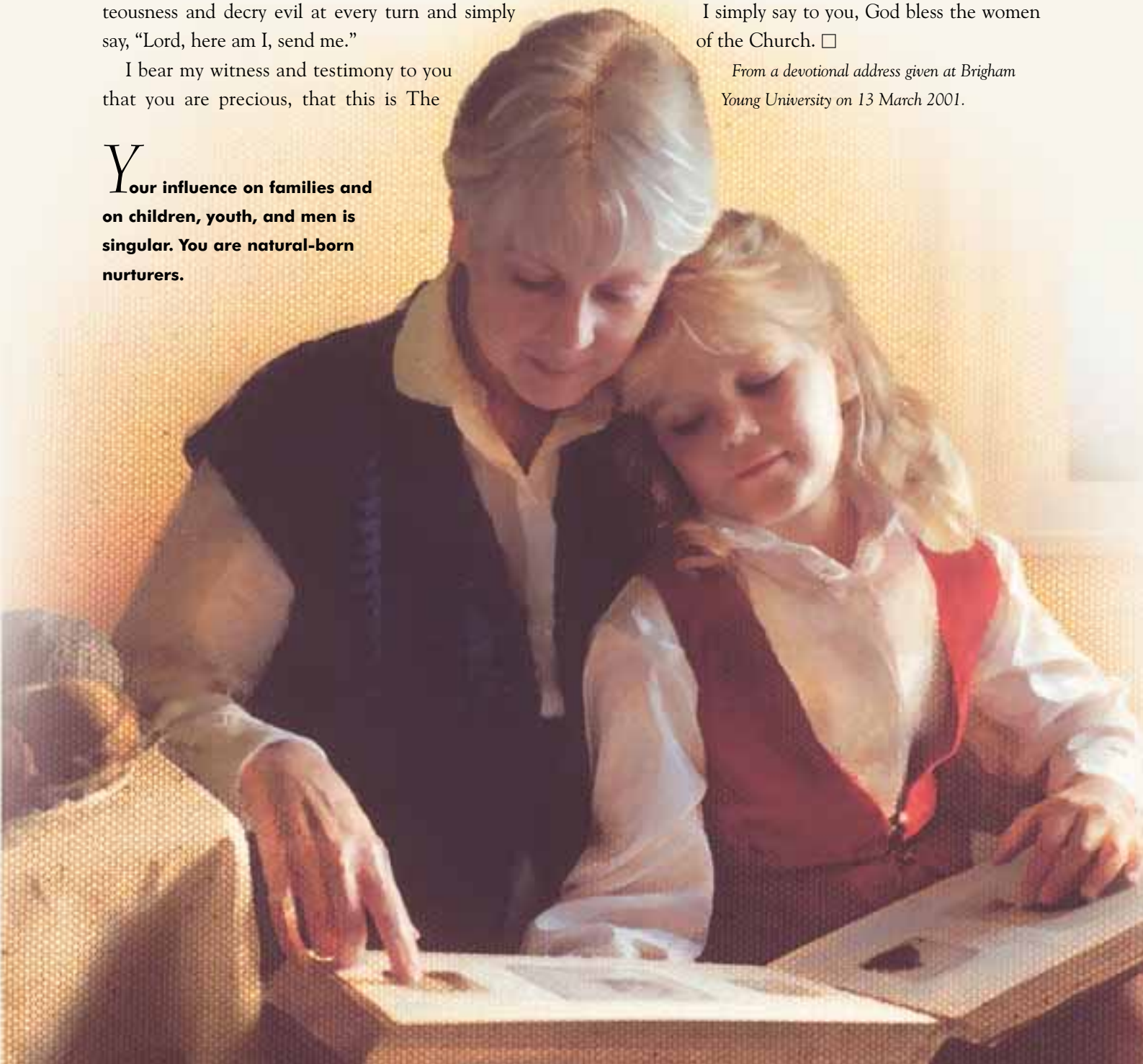
I bear my witness and testimony to you that you are precious, that this is The

Your influence on families and on children, youth, and men is singular. You are natural-born nurturers.

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The kingdom of God will roll forward until it fills the entire earth. It is for you to be beacons and banners to the entire world, to show the women and the men of the world that women have a natural disposition to do good and to seek after things of the Spirit.

I simply say to you, God bless the women of the Church. □

From a devotional address given at Brigham Young University on 13 March 2001.



The Testimony Which I Have Given Is True

By Lucy Mack Smith (1775–1856)

LEARNING FROM JOSEPH

About four years after the First Vision, the angel Moroni appeared to young Joseph several times, telling him about the book written on gold plates and preparing him for the work that lay ahead. Lucy Mack Smith tells how her 18-year-old prophet-son shared the wondrous news of the Book of Mormon and the Restoration with the Smith family.

By sunset . . . , we were all seated, and Joseph commenced telling us the great and glorious things which God had manifested to him. . . .

He proceeded to relate . . . particulars concerning the work which he was appointed to do, and we received them joyfully. . . .

From this time forth, Joseph continued to receive instructions from the Lord, and we continued to get the children together every evening for the purpose of listening while he gave us a relation of the same. I presume our family presented an aspect as singular as any that ever lived upon the face of the earth—all seated in a circle, father, mother, sons and daughters, and giving the most profound attention to a boy, eighteen years of age, who had never read the Bible through in his life: he seemed much less inclined to the perusal of books than any of the rest of our children, but far more given to meditation and deep study.

We were now confirmed in the opinion that God was about to bring to light something upon which we could stay our minds, or that would give us a more perfect knowledge of the plan of salvation and the redemption of

the human family. This caused us greatly to rejoice, the sweetest union and happiness pervaded our house, and tranquility reigned in our midst.

During our evening conversations, Joseph would occasionally give us some of the most amusing recitals that could be imagined. He would describe the ancient inhabitants of [the American] continent, their dress, mode of traveling, and the animals upon which they rode; their cities, their buildings, with every particular; their mode of warfare; and also their religious worship. This he would do with as much ease, seemingly, as if he had spent his whole life among them.

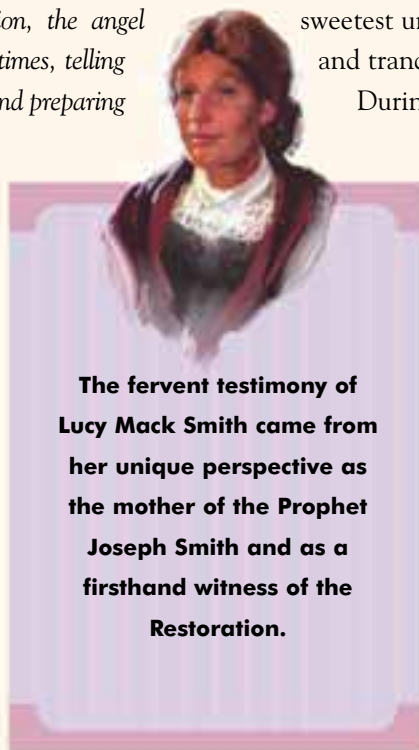
A MOTHER'S WITNESS

Writing of the traumatic experience of seeing her murdered sons, Joseph and

Hyrum, Lucy Mack Smith bore fervent and powerful witness of Joseph's prophetic mission.

After the [bodies of Joseph and Hyrum] were washed and dressed in their burial clothes, we were allowed to see them. I had for a long time braced every nerve, roused every energy of my soul and called upon God to strengthen me, but when I entered the room . . . , it was too much; I sank back, crying to the Lord in the agony of my soul, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken this family!" A voice replied, "I have taken them to myself, that they might have rest." . . .

As I looked upon their peaceful, smiling countenances, I seemed almost to hear them say, "Mother, weep not for us, we have overcome the world by love; we



The fervent testimony of Lucy Mack Smith came from her unique perspective as the mother of the Prophet Joseph Smith and as a firsthand witness of the Restoration.

carried to them the gospel, that their souls might be saved; they slew us for our testimony, and thus placed us beyond their power; their ascendancy is for a moment, ours is an eternal triumph.” . . .

This much I will say, that the testimony which I have given is true, and will stand forever; and the same will be my testimony in the day of God Almighty, when I shall meet them, concerning whom I have testified,

before angels, and the spirits of the just made perfect, before archangels and seraphims, cherubims and gods; where the brief authority of the unjust man will shrink to nothingness before him who is the Lord of lords, and God of gods; and where the righteousness of the just shall exalt them in the scale, wherein God weigheth the hearts of men. □

From History of Joseph Smith, edited by Preston Nibley (1958), 82–83, 324–28.



Paying Tithing

By Jennifer M. Severino

I believed the prophet Malachi when he said that the Lord pours out blessings to those who pay tithing (see Malachi 3:10). I had no problem believing that. But when it came to actually paying tithing, I had trouble.

On payday I would set aside money for tithing. However, payday often came in the middle of the week, and when I needed money later on I would “borrow” back money from my tithing. I told myself I would replace the money and give my tithing to the bishop on Sunday, but usually I was unable to return the money. So I would plan to pay the tithing I owed from my next paycheck. I tried to do this, but then very little would be left of my paycheck! Things went on like this for the first year I earned my own income.

Then one day I had a realization. A sales representative came to our house. He explained that I could pay for an appliance on an installment plan—receiving the item now and paying for it later. As he spoke, a question entered my mind: “Does the Lord give blessings on an installment plan?”

The next day in my institute class, the very first verse of scripture we discussed answered my question: “I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise” (D&C 82:10).

Every commandment brings blessings—and always in full. But we must keep the commandment, not just plan to keep it. That night I prayed for forgiveness for paying my tithes in such a lazy manner.

After meeting with a sales representative who told me I could buy now and pay later, I asked myself if the Lord works on the installment plan.

Now that I am paying my tithing faithfully, I have found that I am happier living on 90 percent of my income *with* the Lord’s blessings than I ever was living on 100 percent of my income *without* them. □

Jennifer M. Severino is a member of the Bacolod First Ward, Bacolod Philippines Stake.



Did You Know?

A MONUMENTAL DAY

On 23 December 1905, 100 years after the Prophet Joseph Smith's birth, the Church dedicated a memorial at his birthplace in Sharon, Vermont. By 1905 all that was left of the Smith family's small home in Sharon was a hearthstone and a decaying foundation. The Church rebuilt a memorial home around the hearthstone. A large monument was



also built and, with considerable difficulty, transported to the site.

The monument, a shaft of Vermont granite, was the tallest polished granite shaft in America at that time. It still stands today, 38 1/2 feet (11 meters) high—one foot for each year of the Prophet's life.

At the dedicatory service for the monument, Church President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918), a nephew of the Prophet Joseph, left

a blessing: "Peace be with you, and unto this place, unto this monument, and unto all who come to visit it with feelings of respect in their hearts; and those who come without feelings of respect, may it have the effect of softening their hearts, opening their eyes, and causing them to reflect soberly upon this great problem of human life and redemption that has been opened up to the world through the instrumentality of the Prophet Joseph Smith" (Proceedings at the Dedication of the Joseph Smith Memorial Monument [Family and Church History Department Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints], 26).



Each of us is an innkeeper who decides if there is room for Jesus!"
—Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles ("Settle This in Your Hearts," *Ensign*, November 1992, 66)



FELIZ NAVIDAD

Seminary students at the Juárez Academy in Chihuahua, México, made a plan to help the missionaries in their area spread the gospel for Christmas. Each of the 350 students contributed a brightly wrapped Book of Mormon for the missionaries to give to investigators in the Colonia Juárez and Colonia Dublán stakes.



PHOTOGRAPH OF MONUMENT BY WELDEN C. ANDERSEN; DETAIL FROM *NO ROOM AT THE INN*, BY ROBERT T. BARRETT; *THE FIRST VISION*, BY TED HENNINGER

LEADERSHIP TIP

Bearing your testimony to your quorum or class members is a good way to bless their lives and strengthen their testimonies, as well as your own. Being a leader means more than organizing and delegating. It also means being an example of faithfulness and obedience. □

Using the December 2002 *Liahona*

FAMILY HOME EVENING IDEAS

■ “A Testimony of the Son of God,” page 2: Read portions of President Gordon B. Hinckley’s testimony of the Savior, and bear your own testimony. Then invite other family members to express their testimonies.

■ “The Testimony Which I Have Given Is True,” page 44: Joseph Smith was born on 23 December 1805. Present a lesson about his life. Then read Lucy Mack Smith’s testimony of her son’s prophetic calling, and bear your own testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

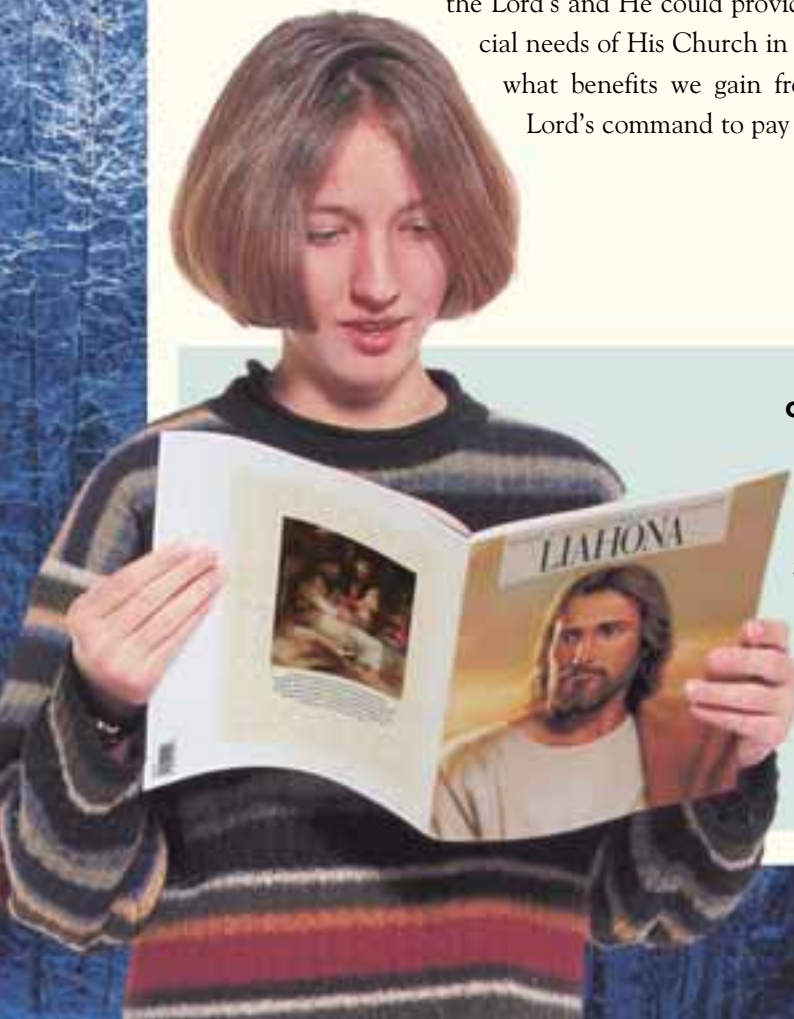
■ “Paying Tithing,” page 46: Ask family members to list ways the Church uses our tithing. Explain that the world and everything in it are the Lord’s and He could provide for the financial needs of His Church in other ways. Ask what benefits we gain from obeying the Lord’s command to pay tithing.

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CALL FOR ARTICLES

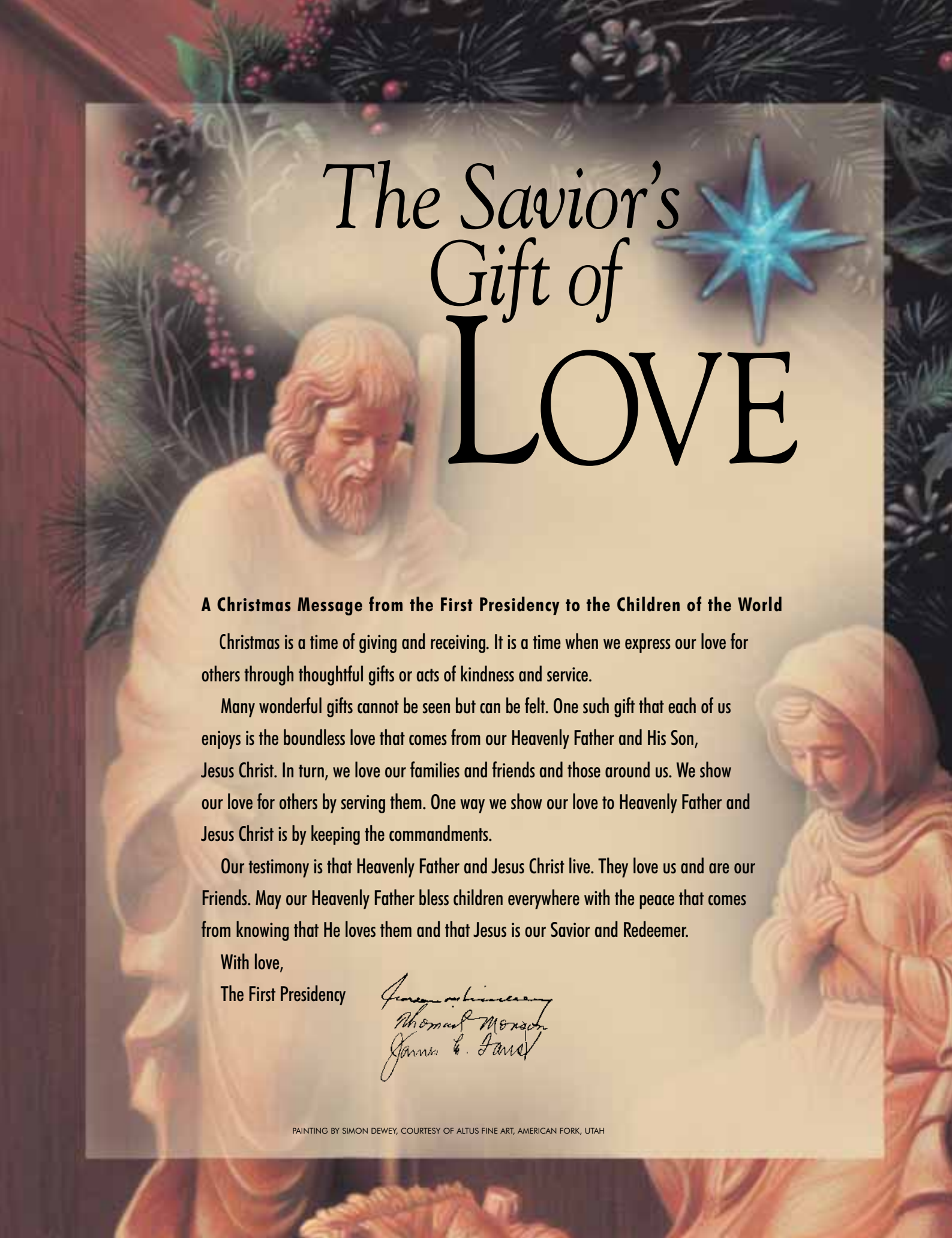
Please send experiences about children trying to follow the Savior’s teachings to *Trying to Be like Jesus*, *Liahona*, Floor 24, 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3223, USA; or e-mail to cur-liahona-imag@ldschurch.org. Please include the child’s complete name, age, address, and ward and stake (or branch and district). Include a photograph of the child and, if possible, of others in the article.



The Friend

FOR CHILDREN OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS ■ DECEMBER 2002





The Savior's Gift of LOVE

A Christmas Message from the First Presidency to the Children of the World

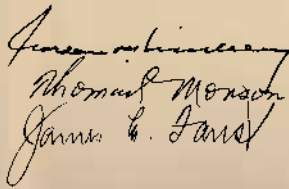
Christmas is a time of giving and receiving. It is a time when we express our love for others through thoughtful gifts or acts of kindness and service.

Many wonderful gifts cannot be seen but can be felt. One such gift that each of us enjoys is the boundless love that comes from our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. In turn, we love our families and friends and those around us. We show our love for others by serving them. One way we show our love to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ is by keeping the commandments.

Our testimony is that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ live. They love us and are our Friends. May our Heavenly Father bless children everywhere with the peace that comes from knowing that He loves them and that Jesus is our Savior and Redeemer.

With love,

The First Presidency



Gordon B. Hinckley
Thomas Monson
James E. Faust



“I Am the Light of the World”

By Kimberly Webb and Christine Rappleye
ILLUSTRATION BY THOMAS S. CHILD

Jesus Christ has many names and titles. One of them is “Light of the World.” He taught, “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12).

At Christmastime, we celebrate His birth. Twinkling Christmas lights symbolize the light He gives. And a star atop a Christmas tree reminds us of the star that appeared in the heavens. Before the electric light was invented, some people decorated their Christmas trees with candles to remind them of the Savior. As you count down the days until Christmas, remember the light He brings into your life.

Instructions: Remove these two pages from the magazine, and glue them onto heavy paper. Cut out the candles and the star on page 16, and place them in an envelope. Some of Jesus Christ’s names are written on the candles and the star. Starting on 1 December, read the scripture for that day. Then find the candle with the name mentioned in that scripture and glue it in place. On Christmas Eve, read the scripture reference for that day and glue the star to the top of the tree. □



1 December
1 Timothy 2:5

2 December
2 Nephi 9:5

3 December
John 10:14-15, 17

4 December
Acts 10:38

5 December
John 1:1-3

6 December
2 Nephi 10:7, 14

11 December
D&C 29:5

10 December
2 Nephi 25:29

9 December
Malachi 3:1

8 December
John 6:35

7 December
D&C 110:2-3

12 December
Ephesians 2:19-20

13 December
John 1:29

14 December
John 14:18,
21, 23

15 December
D&C 31:13

16 December
John 3:16

20 December
D&C 43:34

19 December
John 13:15

18 December
Revelation 22:21

17 December
2 Nephi 25:19



SONG FOR A PROPHET

By Lori Mortensen

Based on an actual event

Ten-year-old Olivia* rolled over on her side and tried to go back to sleep, even though she knew it would be impossible. After all, it was Christmas—Christmas 1843. “Well, just barely,” Olivia thought as she counted the 12 chimes that echoed softly from her mother’s clock.

Last Christmas, she had lived far away in Leek, England. Then Grandpa had listened to the missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. “These men speak the truth,” he had said. Three months later, Olivia and her entire family were baptized, along with Grandpa Richard and Grandma Lettice Rushton.

The decision to leave England to join the Saints in America had been a very hard one. Would Grandpa be able to sell his silk business? What kind of work would Papa find? Would baby James get sick and die, like Mama’s other baby? And what about Grandma Lettice? Because she was blind, it would be especially difficult for her to leave her home for an unfamiliar land. After a lot of prayer and asking the Lord, Papa knew they needed to follow the counsel of the Prophet Joseph Smith and join the Saints in Zion.

And now it was Christmas—and Christmas in Nauvoo was very different from Christmas back home. For one thing, Grandpa Rushton had died, and Olivia missed him terribly. For another thing, people here in Nauvoo didn’t burn yule logs, sing carols, and exchange presents, as people in England did. In fact, many people in Nauvoo didn’t celebrate the day at all. Mama said that it

was because of the religious customs many of them had before they joined the Church. But that didn’t seem like a very good reason to Olivia. “If only we could celebrate Christmas as we did in England!” she thought with a sigh.

Just then, she heard muffled voices by the front door. Olivia slid out of bed and tiptoed across the cold floor. “Mama?”

Her mother and father were bundled up in warm coats and hats!

“Where are you going, Mama?”

“What are you doing up, Olivia?” Mama whispered. “You should be in bed.”

“I couldn’t sleep—and then I heard you.”

“Well, go back to bed,” Mama said.

“Grandma Lettice asked us to go singing with her.”

“Singing—now? May I come too?”

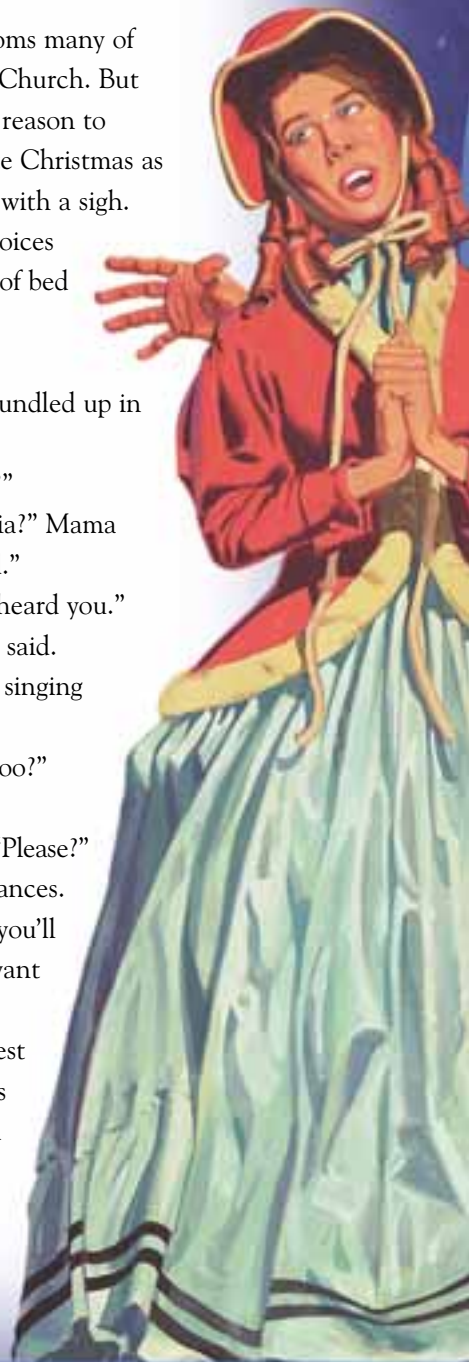
“It’s cold outside,” Papa said.

“I don’t mind,” Olivia replied. “Please?”

Mama and Papa exchanged glances. “Well, all right,” Papa said. “But you’ll have to dress quickly. We don’t want to be late.”

Olivia changed into her warmest clothes, then followed her parents into the chilly darkness. The cold stung her face, and her breath turned into puffy clouds. “Where are we going?” she asked. “Are we going to sing a song I know?”

“You’ll see,” Mama said.







Just as she was wondering how much farther she would have to walk, Olivia saw her aunts and uncles, Grandma Lettice, and several neighbors gathered together outside the Mansion House at the corner of Main Street and Water Street.

The Prophet's house! Olivia caught her breath. "Are we going to sing to the Prophet?" she wondered.

"All right, everyone," Grandma Lettice whispered. "Just as we rehearsed it."

For a split second, Olivia wondered if it had been a mistake to come—she hadn't rehearsed anything. But after hearing only two notes, Olivia realized that she did know the song. It was one of the songs in Sister Emma Smith's hymnal. She took a deep breath and sang with the rest of the carolers:

*"Mortals, awake! with angels join,
And chant the solemn lay;
Love, joy, and gratitude combine
To hail th' auspicious day."*

(A Collection of Sacred Hymns for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints [1835], number 77)

Soon lights flickered to life, and windows of the Mansion House opened. The Prophet Joseph Smith, his family, and the boarders who were living at the Smith home all looked out.

"Who's singing?" someone asked.

"How lovely," whispered another.

"Are there angels outside?"

Although Olivia wasn't an angel, she certainly felt like one as a wave of warmth spread from the top of her head to the tips of her toes. "How happy the Prophet looks," she thought.

When they finished singing, the Prophet thanked them for their beautiful serenade and blessed them in the name of the Lord.

"Merry Christmas," Olivia called as she and the other singers left. All at once she didn't want to be back in England anymore. She knew she belonged here with her family, the restored Church, and the Lord's prophet. In fact, she couldn't think of a better place to have Christmas. □

**Although Olivia is a fictional character, the event in this story really happened.*

THE GRANDMA WHO SANG

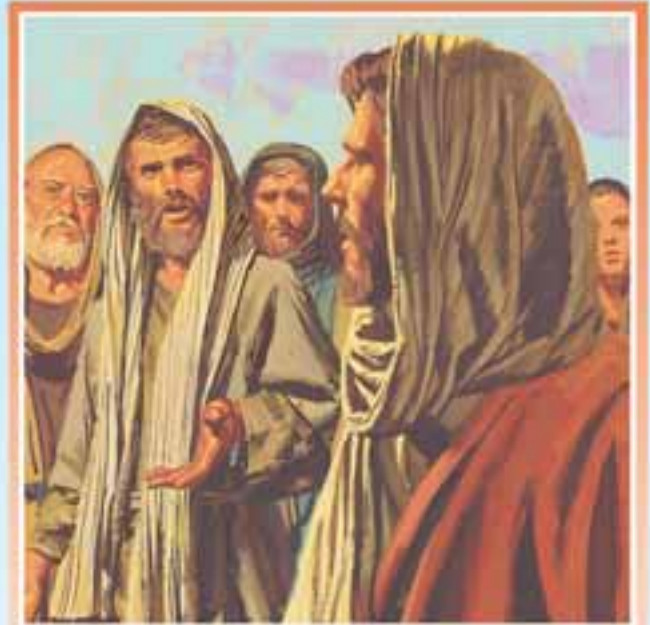
We don't know whether any children actually went along on the late-night caroling party. But the grandma in the story—Lettice Rushton—was a real person, and she and some of her family and neighbors actually did sing for the Prophet Joseph Smith on Christmas morning, 1843.

The mother of 10 children, Lettice Rushton became blind from cataracts five years before she was baptized. She was one of thousands of British converts who listened eagerly to the missionaries

and immigrated with their families to Nauvoo to join the Saints.

The Prophet Joseph Smith recorded that at 1:00 on Christmas morning, 1843, Lettice Rushton and her family and neighbors gathered under his window and began singing, "which caused a thrill of pleasure to run through my soul." The music so moved him that he "felt to thank . . . Heavenly Father for their visit, and blessed them in the name of the Lord." (See *History of the Church*, 6:134.) □

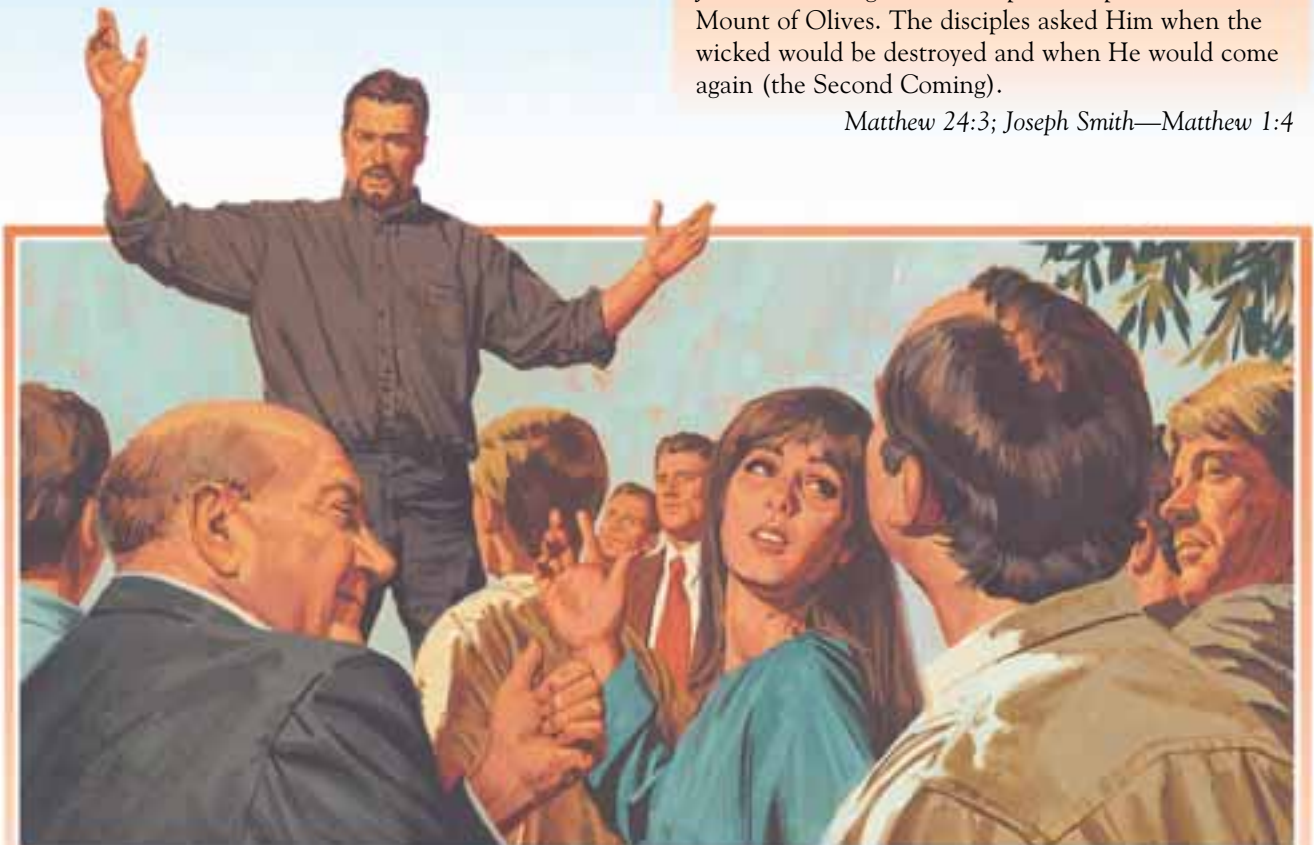
THE SECOND COMING



ILLUSTRATIONS BY PAUL MANN

Jesus was talking to His disciples at a place called the Mount of Olives. The disciples asked Him when the wicked would be destroyed and when He would come again (the Second Coming).

Matthew 24:3; Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:4



Jesus told them that before His Second Coming, false prophets will claim to be the Christ and that many people will follow them. But, He said, if the disciples obey His words, they will not be fooled by the false prophets and will be saved.

Matthew 24:4–5, 24–27; Mark 13:21–22; Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:21–22, 37



He also said that before He comes again, there will be many wars, famines, pestilences (plagues), and earthquakes. The love of men shall wax cold, iniquity shall abound, and a terrible sickness will affect many people.

D&C 45:20–23, 31–32; Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:23



The gospel will be preached to the whole world, but many people will not listen to the word of the Lord.

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:31



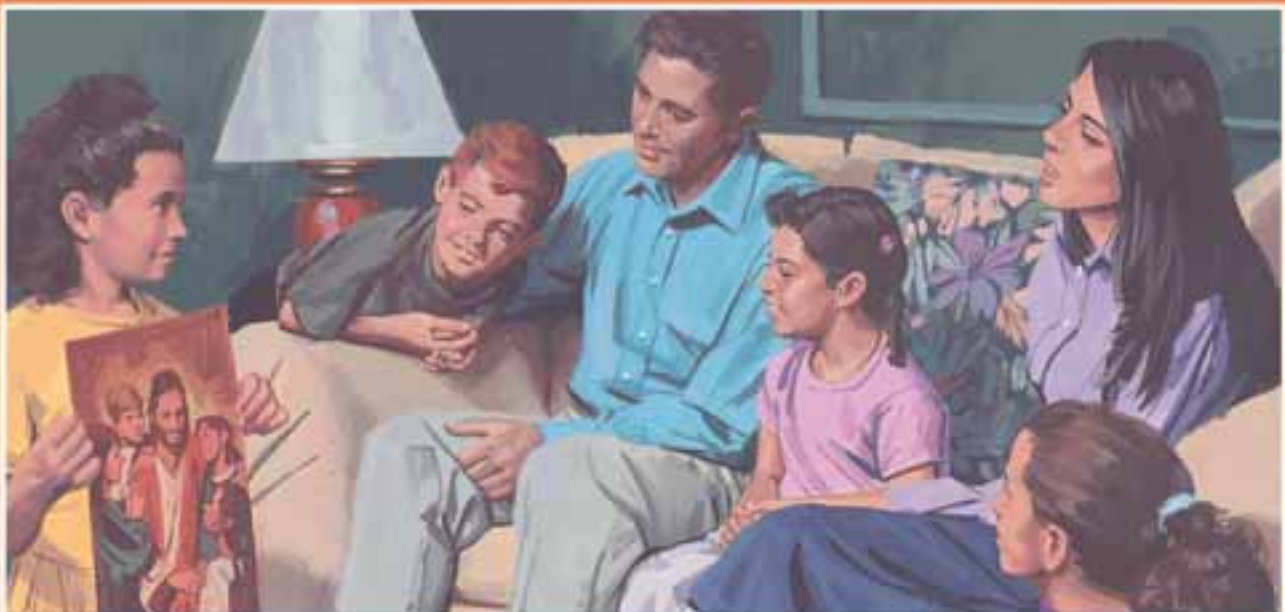
The sun will be darkened, the moon will not shine, and the stars shall fall from heaven.

Matthew 24:29; Mark 13:24–25; Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:33



When He comes again, the righteous shall see Him coming down from the clouds with power and great glory. He shall send His angels to gather the righteous together.

Matthew 24:30–31; Mark 13:26–27; Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:36–37



We can prepare for the Second Coming by doing what is right. We will know that His coming is near when we see the signs He has promised. No one knows exactly when He will come again, but if we are prepared, we can be with Him then.

Matthew 24:44; Luke 21:36; Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:39–40

THE PRINCE OF PEACE

By Vicki F. Matsumori



“And if you are faithful, behold, I am with you until I come—And verily, verily, I say unto you, I come quickly” (D&C 34:11–12).



In December we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. We sing and think about that peaceful night when He lay in a humble manger. One day He will come again—and this time He will come in great glory. Prophets tell us that He shall “reign on the earth over his people” (D&C 76:63).

No one knows exactly when He will come again. However, the Lord tells us this about His Second Coming: “I will suddenly come to my temple” (D&C 36:8). He may appear in other places too, but He will surely come to the temple because it is His house.

We can read about those who were with Jesus at the temple in ancient times. Simeon and Anna saw Him in the temple when He was presented there as a baby. They had been hoping and waiting to see the Messiah, or Savior. (See Luke 2:25–38.) And when Jesus was 12 years old, He astonished the learned men in the temple with His understanding and knowledge. They knew the law and the commandments, yet they were taught by the boy Jesus. (See Luke 2:41–47.)

Righteous Nephites saw the resurrected Savior when He appeared at the temple in the land of Bountiful. Jesus Christ blessed them and prayed for them, and they were filled with joy and peace. (See 3 Nephi 10:12; 17:5–17.)

Jesus Christ is the Messiah. If we believe in Him, repent, and keep His commandments, one day we will

stand in His presence. We will be the kind of people who will be at the temple when He comes in glory.

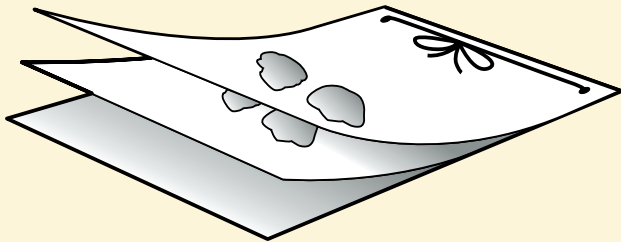
This Christmas, we can remember the baby in the manger. We can also think about the resurrected Savior, who will one day come to His temple.

Sharing Time Ideas

1. Write the following references on separate slips of paper: Luke 2:4–21; Luke 2:22–39; Luke 2:40–52. Divide the children into three groups, and have each group prepare to present the story from one of the scripture passages. Also have each group illustrate the people, buildings, and scenery from the story. Have the groups take turns presenting their scriptures. While one child reads the verses, have the others in the group display their drawings. Discuss how the people in the scripture were prepared to be with the Savior. Sing appropriate songs or hymns.

2. Show a picture of the resurrected Savior; explain that He will come to His temple when He returns to earth. Sing a song or hymn about the Savior or the Second Coming. Discuss and list on the chalkboard ways the children can be worthy to be in the Savior’s presence when He comes again.

3. Invite four adults, dressed in simple costumes, to tell the story of the Savior’s birth and visits to the temple. (See Luke 2:4–21; 22–39; 40–52; 3 Nephi 10:12; 17:5–17.) They may represent people who witnessed the event or who heard about it. Have each person present his or her story in a different area of the room. Divide the children into groups, and have them rotate to each area so they hear all four stories. Have the children draw a picture of one of the stories to take home and share with their families. □



ILLUSTRATION

Instructions

Mount this page on heavy paper. Cut out the three boxes and around the figures on the dotted lines. Punch holes where indicated. Make a book by putting the pages in order with page 1 on top and fastening the pages together with string or yarn (see illustration). Use the book to tell about when Jesus visited the temples in Jerusalem and in the land of Bountiful in ancient America. Talk about the time when Jesus will someday return to earth.



Elder Adhemar Damiani

Of the Seventy

From an interview by Jan Pinborough

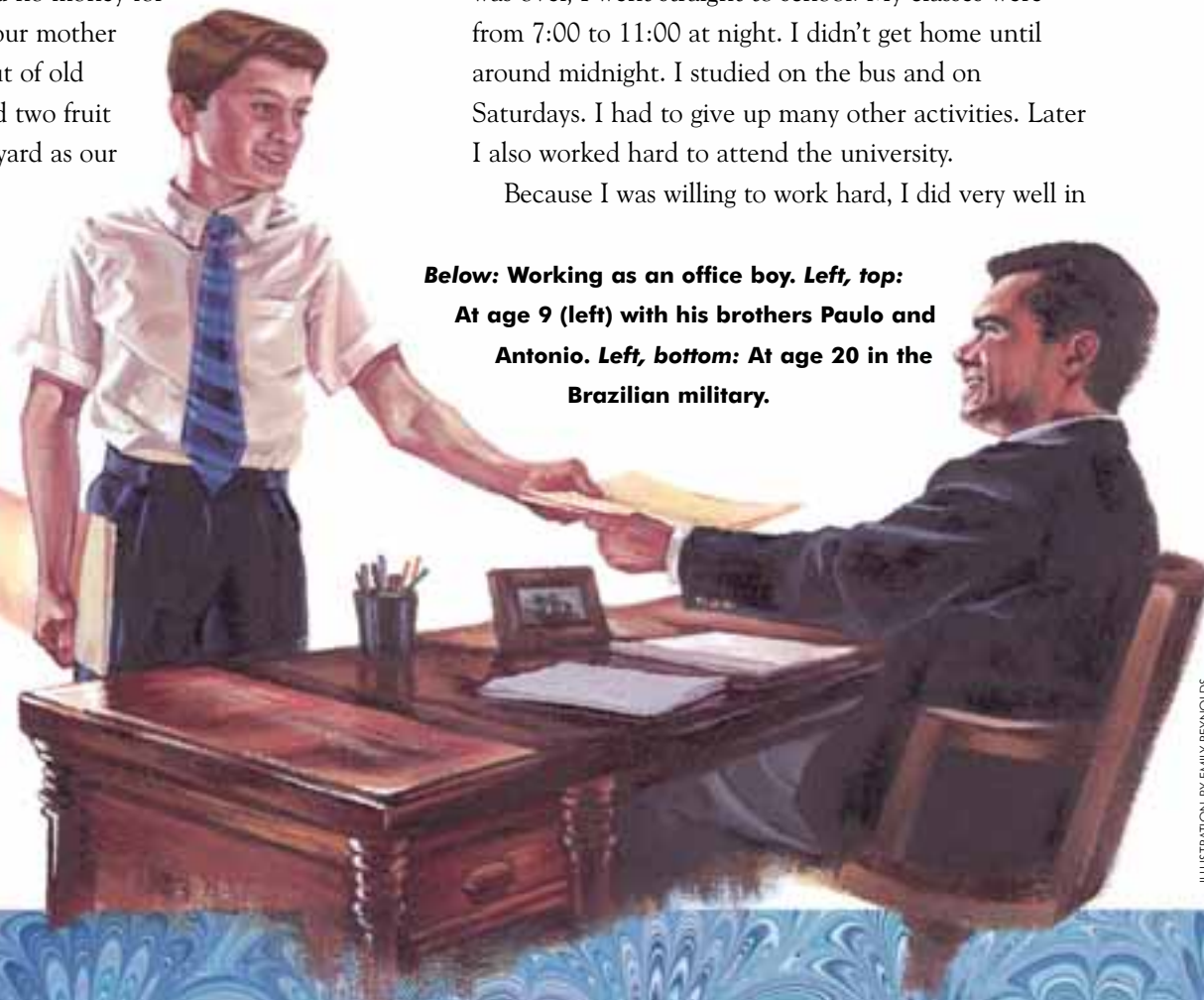


I was born in the big city of São Paulo, Brazil, in 1939. World War II began that year. Because of the war, my family faced many challenges. Food was scarce, and we had very little money. At that time, life was not

as easy and comfortable as it is today for many people. We did not have televisions or vacuum cleaners or computers. We used a fireplace for cooking.

My four brothers and I loved to play soccer in our backyard. We had no money for a soccer ball, so our mother made us a ball out of old clothing. We used two fruit trees in our backyard as our soccer goals.

When I was very young, my brothers and I



Below: Working as an office boy. Left, top: At age 9 (left) with his brothers Paulo and Antonio. Left, bottom: At age 20 in the Brazilian military.



learned to help our mother do chores around the house. Our parents taught us that every job is worthwhile. They said we should always do our work well and happily.

To pay my way through school and help my father support the family, I got two part-time jobs when I was 14 years old. To get to my morning job on time, I got on the bus at 6:30 A.M. In the mornings I worked as an office boy, running errands up and down the stairs to offices in a 15-story building. In the afternoons I made deliveries all over the city. As soon as my afternoon job was over, I went straight to school. My classes were from 7:00 to 11:00 at night. I didn't get home until around midnight. I studied on the bus and on Saturdays. I had to give up many other activities. Later I also worked hard to attend the university.

Because I was willing to work hard, I did very well in



Far left: The São Paulo Brazil Temple, where Elder Damiani served for many years. Left: Elder Damiani with his wife, Walkyria.

school and later I had very good jobs. I was the director of a big company for the whole country of Brazil. I could do these things because of the sacrifices I made as a boy.

What goals would you like to reach? If you will work hard and make sacrifices, you can achieve any goal you have.

When I was a mission president, I learned that the best missionaries were often those who had to make big sacrifices to serve a mission. I knew one young missionary who earned the money for his mission by delivering newspapers. While he was serving his mission, his younger brothers sacrificed for him too. Without telling him, they kept doing his job and saved all the money they earned. When he returned home, they gave him the money so he could attend the university. He is now about to graduate.

When I was 20, the missionaries baptized my girlfriend and her family. The missionaries taught me too. After I read the Book of Mormon, I received a testimony and was baptized. When I was 23, my girlfriend, Walkyria, and I were married. Several years later, we traveled to the Los Angeles California Temple to be sealed together. We couldn't afford to take our children with us, so they were sealed to us when the first temple in Brazil, the São Paulo temple, opened.

When this temple was being built, Church members who lived nearby helped build it. They were asked to spend one day a month working on the temple. Sometimes people had to risk losing their jobs to take a day off to work on it—but it was worth it! Many children also helped build the temple.

Church members are usually not asked to help build temples anymore. But every time you pay tithing, you are

helping temples be built all over the world. And because of your sacrifice, people in many countries will be able to go to the temple. Now there are four temples in Brazil!

For many years, I worked in the São Paulo Brazil Temple. I saw many families come there to be sealed. Many of them had to make great sacrifices to do so. I remember one family who had traveled for three days to get to the temple. They had six children, and only one of the children had shoes. The father was embarrassed that some of the children had only sandals to wear. But



Elder and Sister Damiani with their two children, their children's spouses, and their five grandchildren.

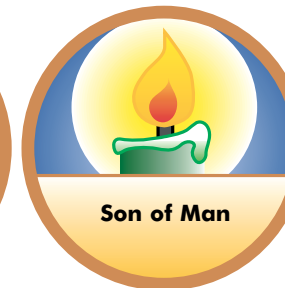
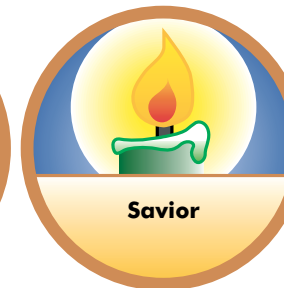
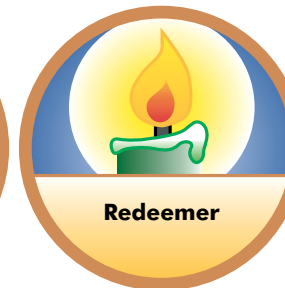
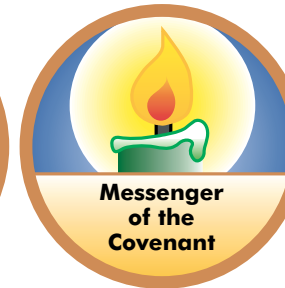
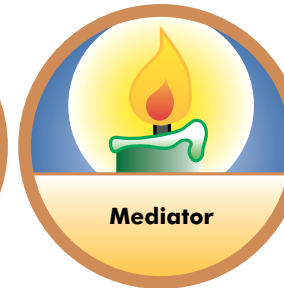
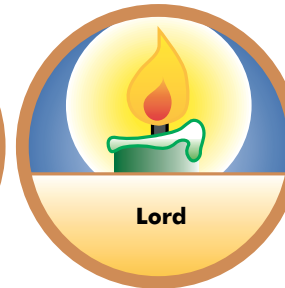
he knew that coming to the temple was more important than having shoes. It was a wonderful experience to see this beautiful family sealed together in the temple.

You can make a difference by making sacrifices. You can give up some of your free time to help others. You can work hard to do well in school and reach your goals. You can pay tithing to help temples be built and pay a fast offering to help poor people have food to eat. The sacrifices you make will bless you and others too! □

“I Am the Light of the World” Cutouts

By Kimberly Webb and Christine Rappleye

For instructions, see page 4.





Without Any Ire, by Nancy Glazier

"How blessed the day when the lamb and the lion Shall lie down together without any ire,
And Ephraim be crowned with his blessing in Zion, As Jesus descends with his chariot of fire!"
("The Spirit of God," *Hymns*, number 2).



“It is proper during this season when we commemorate His birth that we remember the Lord Jesus Christ in reverence and with love. He has done for us what we could not do for ourselves. He has brought meaning to our mortal existence. He has given us the gift of eternal life.” See President Gordon B. Hinckley, “A Testimony of the Son of God,” page 2.