

Liahona

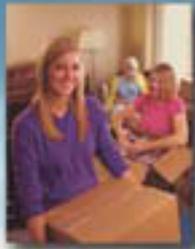


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through Service, p. 16**

**What Happened to the
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Be Not Afraid, p. F2

Liahona



ON THE COVER
Photography by Craig Dimond, posed by models.



THE FRIEND COVER
Photograph by Robert Casey, posed by models.

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Family Home Evening Ideas



"You'll Be Tested and Taught," p. 8: Make several stepping-stones out of

paper. On one stone write, "Matthew 5:16; 6:24, 33," and on another write, "D&C 82:10." Discuss how the ideas in these scriptures can be "stepping-stones" to happiness. Read, discuss, and invite family members to share their feelings about Elder Christoffel Golden's experiences.

"What Happened to Christ's Church?" p. 12: Draw a picture of a Church building, and cut it into 12 pieces. Write the titles of the sections in this article on the pieces, and hide the pieces. Ask family members to find and restore the "Church." Read and discuss each section. Bear testimony of the Restoration.

"Seven Lessons on Sharing the Gospel," p. 16: Invite family members to share thoughts about and experiences with the lessons in this article. Choose one of the lessons for your family to live during the next month. Consider inviting missionaries into your home to discuss how your family can help share the gospel in your area.

"Our Progress toward Perfection," p. 34: Invite family members to listen for and list ideas about the purpose of life as they read this article. Use the list to discuss the purpose of life. Consider memorizing a section of the family proclamation.

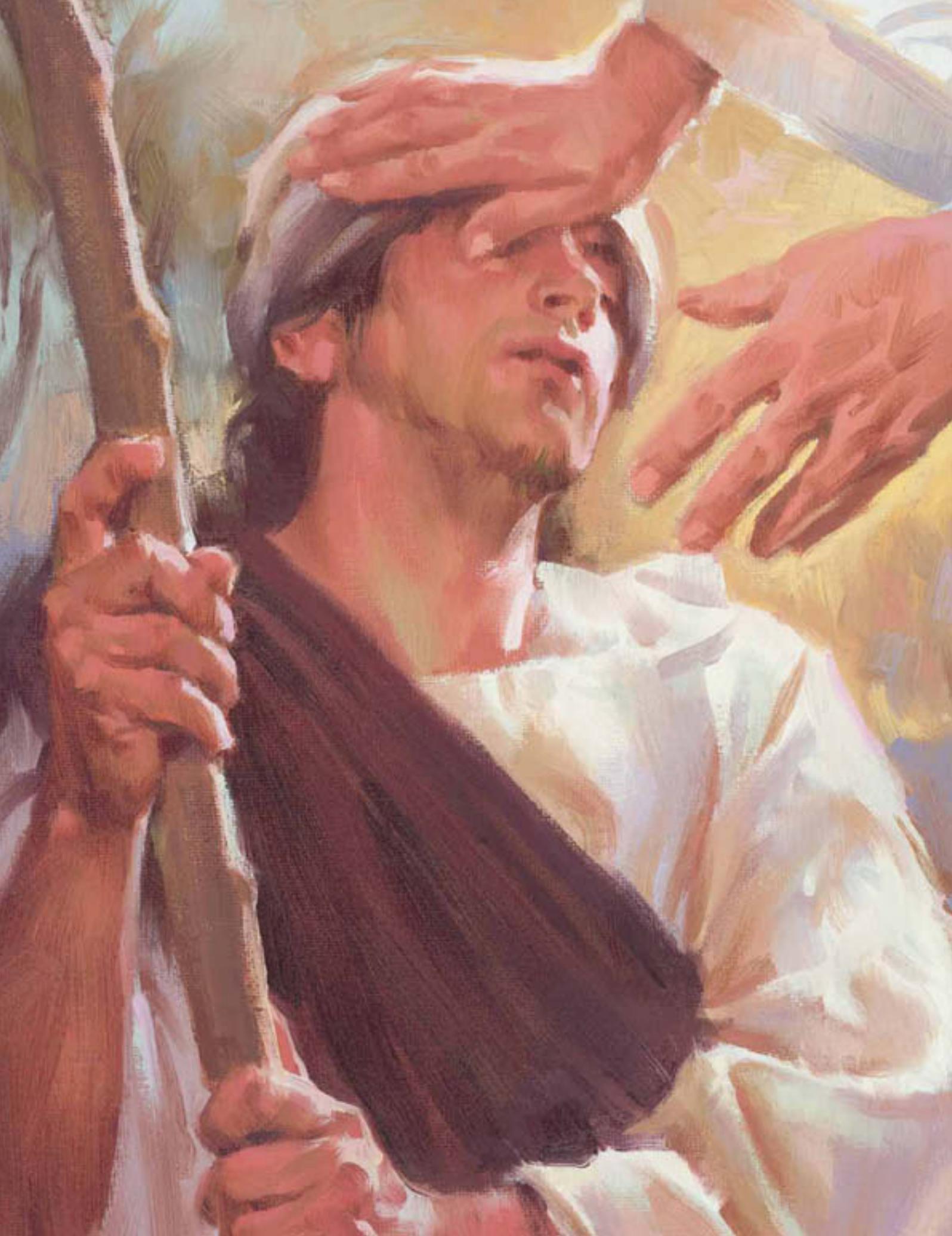
"Be Not Afraid," p. F2: Read why President Gordon B. Hinckley is so optimistic. Talk

about the courage of the woman in South America. Consider acting out what one might say when inviting a friend to church or answering a gospel question. Write, "Be not afraid, only believe" (Mark 5:36), on a piece of paper, and post it in your home.

"A Sister's Example," p. F11: Show family members an empty glass jar. Ask them what could be kept in it. Read this story together. Talk about the value of what was kept in this sister's jar. Share testimonies of tithing.

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To Truly See

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

When Jesus walked and taught among men, He spoke frequently of having hearts that could know and feel, ears that were capable of hearing, and eyes that could truly see.

Each of us knows those who do not have sight. We also know many others who have their eyesight but who walk in darkness at noonday. These in the latter group may never carry the common white cane and carefully make their way to the sound of the familiar “tap, tap, tap.” They may not have a faithful seeing-eye dog by their side nor carry a sign about their neck which reads, “I am blind,” but blind they surely are. Some have been blinded by anger; others by indifference, by revenge, by hate, by prejudice, by ignorance, by neglect of precious opportunities. Of such the Lord said, “Their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.”¹

Well might each of these people lament, “The gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored, and yet I am blind.” Some, like the friend of Philip of old, call out, “How can I [find my way], except some man should guide me?”²

Many years ago, while attending a stake conference, I noticed that a counselor in the stake presidency was blind. He functioned beautifully, performing his duties as though he had sight. It was a stormy night as we met in the stake office situated on the second floor of the building. Suddenly there was a loud clap of thunder. The lights in the building almost immediately went out. Instinctively I reached out for our sightless leader, and I said, “Here, take my arm and I will help you down the stairway.”

I’m certain he must have had a smile on his face as he responded, “No, Brother Monson, give me *your* arm, that I might help *you*. You are now in *my* territory.” The storm abated, the lights returned, but I shall never forget the trek down those stairs, guided by the man who was sightless yet filled with light.



Some have been blinded by anger; others by indifference, by revenge, by neglect of precious opportunities. Some, like the friend of Philip of old, call out, “How can I [find my way], except some man should guide me?”



Walter Stover chartered a train to bring Saints from all around Germany to meet, partake of the sacrament, and bear witness of the goodness of God.

The Light of the World

Long ago and at a place far distant, as Jesus passed by He saw a man who was blind from birth. His disciples questioned the Master as to why this person was blind. Had he sinned or had his parents sinned, causing him to have this affliction?

“Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. . . .

“As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

“When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay,

“And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam. . . . He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.”³

A great dispute ensued among the

Pharisees concerning this miracle:

“Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man [Jesus] is a sinner.

“He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.”⁴

One thinks of the fisherman called Simon, better known to you and to me as Peter, chief among the Apostles. Doubting, disbelieving, impetuous Peter, in fulfillment of the Master’s prophecy, indeed did deny Him thrice. Amidst the pushing, the jeers, and the blows, “the Lord in the agony of His humiliation, in the majesty of His silence . . . *turned and looked upon Peter.*”⁵ As one chronologist described the change: “It was enough. . . . [Peter] knew no more danger, he feared no more death.’ . . . [He] rushed forth into the night . . . ‘to meet the morning dawn.’ . . . This broken-hearted

penitent [stood] before the tribunal of his own conscience, and there his old life, his old shame, his old weakness, his old self was doomed to that death of godly sorrow which was to issue in a new and a [nobler] birth.”⁶

The Apostle Paul had a similar experience to that of Peter. From the day of his conversion until the day of his death, Paul urged men to “put off . . . the old man” and to “put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”⁷

Simon the fisherman had become Peter the Apostle. Saul the persecutor had become Paul the proselyter.

The Light of Christ

The passage of time has not altered the capacity of the Redeemer to change men’s lives. As He said to the dead Lazarus, so He says to you and to me, “Come forth.”⁸

Said President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973): “Every soul who walks the earth, wherever he lives, in whatever nation he may have been born, no matter whether he be in riches or in poverty, had at birth an endowment of that first light which is called the Light of Christ, the Spirit of Truth, or the Spirit of God—that universal light of intelligence with which every soul is blessed. [Mormon] spoke of that Spirit when he said:

“For behold, the Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil; wherefore, I show unto you the way to judge; for every thing which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ; wherefore ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of God.’ (Moroni 7:16.)”⁹

You and I know those who qualify for the Savior’s blessing in accordance with this definition.

Such was Walter Stover of Salt Lake City. Born in Germany, Walter embraced the gospel message and came to America. He established his own business. He gave freely of his time and of his means.

Following World War II, Walter Stover was called to return to his native land. He directed the Church in that nation and blessed the lives of all whom he met and with whom he served. With his own funds, he constructed two chapels in Berlin—a beautiful city that had been so devastated by the

conflict. He planned a gathering in Dresden for all the members of the Church from that nation and then chartered a train to bring them from all around the land so they could meet, partake of the sacrament, and bear witness of the goodness of God to them.

At the funeral service for Walter Stover, his son-in-law Thomas C. LeDuc said of him, “He had the ability to see Christ in every face he encountered, and he acted accordingly.”

The poet wrote:

*I met a stranger in the night,
Whose lamp had ceased to shine;
I paused and let him light
His lamp from mine.*

*A tempest sprang up later on,
And shook the world about,
And when the wind was gone,
My lamp was out.*

*But back came to me the stranger—
His lamp was glowing fine;
He held the precious flame
And lighted mine.¹⁰*

Perhaps the moral of this poem is simply that if you want to give a light to others, you have to glow yourself.

The Light of the Gospel

When the Prophet Joseph Smith went into a grove of trees made sacred by what occurred there, he described the event:

“It was on the morning of a beautiful, clear day, early in the spring of eighteen hundred and twenty. It was the first time in my life that I had made such an attempt, for amidst all my anxieties I had never as yet made the attempt to pray vocally.”¹¹

After enduring a harrowing experience from an unseen power, Joseph continued:

“I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me. . . .



A blessing was given as he requested, and Brother Mulipola prayed, “Whether in Thy wisdom I see light or whether I see darkness all the days of my life, I will be eternally grateful for the truth of Thy gospel, which I now see and which provides me the light of life.”

“When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*”¹²

Joseph listened. Joseph learned.

On occasion I will be asked, “Brother Monson, if the Savior appeared to you, what questions would you ask of Him?”

My reply is always the same: “I would ask no question of Him. Rather, I would listen!”

Late one evening on a Pacific isle, a small boat slipped silently to its berth at the crude pier. Two Polynesian women helped Meli Mulipola from the boat and guided him to the well-worn pathway leading to the village road. The women marveled at the bright stars which twinkled in the midnight sky. The friendly moonlight guided them along their way. However, Meli Mulipola could not appreciate

these delights of nature—the moon, the stars, the sky—for he was blind.

His vision had been normal until that fateful day when, while he was working on a pineapple plantation, light turned suddenly to darkness and day became perpetual night. He later learned of the Restoration of the gospel and the teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. His life had been brought into compliance with these teachings.

He and his loved ones had made this long voyage, having learned that one who held the priesthood of God was visiting among the islands. Brother Mulipola sought a blessing under the hands of those who held the sacred priesthood. His wish was granted. Tears streamed from his sightless eyes and coursed down his brown cheeks, tumbling finally upon his native dress. He dropped to his knees and prayed: “Oh, God, Thou knowest I am blind. Thy servants have blessed me

that if it be Thy will, my sight may return. Whether in Thy wisdom I see light or whether I see darkness all the days of my life, I will be eternally grateful for the truth of Thy gospel, which I now see and which provides me the light of life.”

He arose to his feet, thanked us for providing the blessing, and disappeared into the dark of the night. Silently he came; silently he departed. But his presence I shall never forget. I reflected upon the message of the Master: “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”¹³

Today is a day of temple building. Never before have so many temples been erected and dedicated. President Gordon B. Hinckley, God’s prophet on this earth, has a vision of the vital ordinances performed in such houses of the Lord. Temples will bless all who attend them and who sacrifice for their completion. The Light of Christ will shine on all—even those who have gone beyond. President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918), speaking of work for the dead, declared, “Through our efforts in their behalf their chains of bondage will fall from them, and the darkness surrounding them will clear away, that light may shine upon them and they shall hear in the spirit world of the work that has been done for them by their children here, and will rejoice with you in your performance of these duties.”¹⁴

The Apostle Paul urged, “Be thou an example of the believers.”¹⁵ And from James: “Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”¹⁶

I conclude with the words of the poet Minnie Louise Haskins, who wrote:

*And I said to the man who stood at the gate of
the year:*

*“Give me a light, that I may tread safely into the
unknown!”*

And he replied:

*“Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the
Hand of God.*

*That shall be to you better than light and safer than a
known way.”*

*So, I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod
gladly into the night.*

*And He led me toward the hills and the breaking of
day in the lone East.¹⁷*

May our light so shine that we glorify our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, whose name is the only name under heaven whereby we might be saved. ■

NOTES

1. Matthew 13:15.
2. Acts 8:31.
3. John 9:3, 5–7.
4. John 9:24–25.
5. Frederic W. Farrar, *The Life of Christ* (1874), 580; see Luke 22:61.
6. *The Life of Christ*, 581.
7. Ephesians 4:22, 24.
8. John 11:43.
9. *Stand Ye in Holy Places* (1974), 115.
10. Lon Woodrum, “Lamps.”
11. Joseph Smith—History 1:14.
12. Joseph Smith—History 1:16–17.
13. John 8:12.
14. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (1998), 247.
15. 1 Timothy 4:12.
16. James 1:22.
17. From “The Gate of the Year,” in James Dalton Morrison, ed., *Masterpieces of Religious Verse* (1948), 92.

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

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

1. Show a lightbulb or candle. Invite family members to make a list of some of the different ways we use the word *light* (see the section headings from this article to help make the list). Use a story or two from this article to discuss what a great blessing it is to be able to see. Bear testimony of the light Jesus Christ has brought into your life.

2. Ask family members to listen for how Walter Stover and Meli Mulipola brought light to others. After you read these stories, discuss ways family members can bring the light of the gospel to their families and others.

3. As you share one of the examples or stories found in this message, invite family members to discuss how Jesus Christ brings light into people’s lives. Share an experience of when a teaching concerning Jesus Christ brought light into your life.

You'll Be Tested and Taught

BY ELDER CHRISTOFFEL GOLDEN JR.
Of the Seventy



The Lord is bound when we do what He says. Our part of that promise is to not fail the Lord or ourselves.

This life is a probationary state in which we are to be tested and taught. Unfortunately, many of life's important lessons are not easily learned. Nevertheless, when properly learned, these lessons can become stepping-stones toward happiness in this life and eternal glory in the world to come.

The following experiences taught me two of the most important lessons I have learned.

Dare to Speak Up

It was a cold, blustery Sunday afternoon. I was away from home serving in the South African army, and the 10 men of our section had gathered in our tent to visit and relax after having just completed some chores. Unfortunately, much of the conversation became crude, as often happens among young men in such circumstances.

I was uncomfortable and thought about leaving. My eyes turned toward the tent door, which was flapping wildly in the wind and failing to hold back the chill of winter. The sight immediately convinced me it would be

foolish to leave, so I decided to remain inside and read my scriptures. Although it had not been uncommon for me to read from them in the presence of these men, on this day it would prove to be difficult. The discussion soon took a turn for the worse as my friend, something of a ringleader in the group, began telling some dirty stories.

My immediate impulse was to object out loud. However, I was checked by the thought that others might consider me self-righteous and accuse me of trying to spoil their fun. After a few troubling moments, I decided to do the only thing I thought possible under the circumstances: shut my ears and concentrate on my reading. This approach worked somewhat. Yet I could not shrug off a feeling of uneasiness.

Time has a way of clouding our memories, and within a few weeks I forgot about the experience. Then, two years later, my friend did something that brought the memory of that day back into focus. We were in the presence of a number of soldiers who were



drinking beer. In the group was a man I didn't know. He began teasing me for not joining them in drinking a little alcohol. My friend rose to my defense and added with an earnestness that surprised me, "Chris Golden is the only true Christian in our group." Others who knew me joined my friend in defending me, which silenced my critic.

Later, as my friend and I walked back toward our fox-hole on a gray, half-moonlit night, he suddenly stopped and looked at me with a seriousness I had not been accustomed to during our friendship. He recalled the event of earlier that evening and said, "I meant what I said. In fact, I have never met an individual who has been more true to his faith in God than you, Chris!"

This was unexpected. Even though I had always tried to live the gospel, I felt I had not done more than many Latter-day Saints would have done in similar circumstances, and I had always tried to do it without drawing attention to myself.

Still, he had more to say: "You have let me down only once." My shock at his matter-of-fact accusation was matched only by the speed with which my mind raced

through all of the events we had shared together. I finally remembered that blustery, cold Sunday two years earlier. My friend's words exposed painful memories of a day I would rather have forgotten.

He continued, "Do you remember that cold Sunday afternoon when we were sitting inside our tent and telling stories, some of which I frankly now feel quite embarrassed about?"

I nodded a little numbly in acknowledgment. Standing opposite him, I hoped that the shadows of the night hid my discomfort.

He said, "While I was talking, I had been silently praying that you would ask me to stop telling those dirty stories—*but you did nothing.*"

During the long silence that followed his stinging condemnation, a deep sense of disappointment welled up within me. I had let not only him down, but I had failed the Lord—and myself.

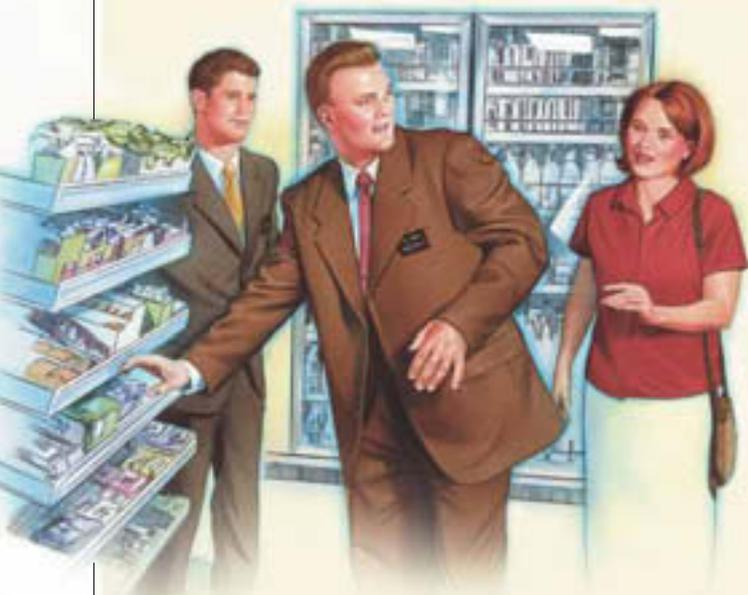
Ever since that day, I have tried not to make the same mistake. I was taught an important lesson about the true meaning of the Lord's command to "let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and

glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). Observing that “no man can serve two masters” (Matthew 6:24), the Savior counseled us, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness” (Matthew 6:33).

Trust in the Lord’s Promises

Another lesson I have learned came from an experience I had as a missionary many years ago in the South Africa Johannesburg Mission.

One particular day had been discouraging. My companion and I had met with no success from our proselyting efforts, even though we had worked long and hard in a



spirit of fasting and prayer. It was past the time we usually left for home when we turned our bicycles toward a nearby store. Our only thought was finding something to eat. Unfortunately, it was late and the store had already closed for the night. As we debated what to do, I remembered a store on the other side of town that might be open. We both felt impressed to go there. To our delight, we found it open.

I was bending down to select a chocolate bar when I felt a tap on my shoulder. On turning around, I looked into the smiling face of a woman I had not seen for many years.

In speaking with her, we learned that during the past several years she had become less active and had married someone who was not a member of the Church. Recently she and her family had moved into an area about nine miles (15 km)

from our proselyting area. She was feeling lonely and missed her association with the Church, but she was a shy person and was reluctant to make contact with strangers. So she had been asking the Lord to bring her into contact with someone she knew well who could introduce her family to the ward they now lived in. She felt our meeting in this store was an answer to prayer, as this was her first visit to this particular store and her decision to visit had come to her suddenly.

On the following Sunday my companion and I gratefully welcomed her and her husband to the local ward.

Many years after this event, she sent me a detailed summary of all the members of her family who in some way had been affected by this experience. Before she returned to Church activity, all of her extended family who were members of the Church were less active. Because of her renewed activity in the Church, her husband was baptized and together they raised their children in the gospel. Since her activation, more than 20 family members have been activated or baptized. Many of them have been married in the temple. Some have also served full-time missions. Three have served as bishops.

I continue to marvel at the faithfulness of this sister and at the graciousness of the Lord in responding to her humble prayer. The store we met in late that evening was out of the way and a long distance from both of our homes—and yet the Lord used it to perform a great work.

When I think of that experience, I see in my mind’s eye two tired, discouraged missionaries and a fulfillment of the Lord’s promise: “I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say” (D&C 82:10).

Isn’t it interesting that the Lord wants us to bind Him in fulfilling His promises? We put ourselves in that position simply by doing what He asks and trusting that He will do what He has said He will. Perhaps that is one of the most important lessons we can learn in life.

As I learned from these and other experiences, God watches over each of us in a very personal way. It is natural that He does, because we are His sons and daughters. We are precious to our Heavenly Father, and often, prompted by His infinite love, He allows us to have difficult experiences that help us become more like Him. ■

My Prayers Became *Blessings*

BY BERENGERE CAVIALE

A few years ago, I became active in the Church again after six months of inactivity. My spiritual thirst was unbelievable, for I was once again on the right path. After just a few months, I felt the desire to serve the Lord as a missionary. I had interviews with my bishop, who helped me prepare. I had to wait to be truly ready, and in the meantime the bishop advised me to tell my parents of my plans.

My parents are members of the Church, but they had been less active for more than nine years. From the day I spoke with them about my desire, the opposition became real. I agreed with my family that if I passed the competitive examination from the school I had been accepted to, they would let me go on a mission in one year.

That year ended up being the most difficult of my life. My mother thought I would forget about my desire to go on a mission. However, after I had attended a few months of school, she realized I was truly preparing for a mission. So she cut off my financial support. It was then that my prayers became great blessings.

My Heavenly Father inspired me to look for a job, which I did. After finding three good openings, I wrote my letters of application and pleaded with the Lord to let me receive

at least one positive response, for I had done all that He had commanded me.

A response came only three days later. I was called in for an interview with one of the companies. Following the interview, I got the job that day. The only problem was that I was still not earning enough money to cover all my expenses. After praying to God, I felt inspired to trust Him and not to fear. So I paid my tithing without fear.

A few weeks later my landlord asked to see me. "Most likely to talk about rent," I thought. What he said was, "You will not need to pay your rent until you finish school!"

I could not believe it. This blessing enabled me to pay for what I needed, and most important, it helped me prepare financially for my mission. Miracles were taking place in my life at just the right time.

I have now completed my mission. I feel such gratitude for the ability to pray to our Father in Heaven. I am so happy to know with a certainty that He lives and He loves His children. If we listen to Him, we will see many miracles in our lives. ■

Berengere Caviale is a member of the St. Quentin En Yvelines Branch, Paris France Stake.

What Happened to Christ's Church?

BY SHANNA BUTLER
Church Magazines

What if you could be arrested for going to Mutual? Or killed for bearing your testimony? Imagine what it would be like if it were against the law for you to have your own copy of the scriptures or if there were no living prophets to guide you.

Early Christians faced those kinds of situations after Jesus Christ's death. Fewer than 400 years after the death of the Savior, the Church as Jesus organized it was nowhere to be found in the whole world. This began the period known as the Great Apostasy. The New Testament Apostles and Book of Mormon disciples were gone. And gone with them was the authority to administer the Church and to hold the priesthood.

It was a time when people persecuted, tortured, and killed Christians and when the church itself became corrupt without inspired leadership. The world was in spiritual darkness.

JOHN THE BELOVED

The Apostle John

was banished to the Isle of Patmos in about A.D. 93 or 94. The Savior had promised John that he would live to see His Second Coming (see John 21:21–23; D&C 7). The Prophet Joseph Smith said John was ministering among the lost ten tribes (see History of the Church, 1:176).

What Is the Apostasy?

The term *apostasy* means turning away from the truth. Some people today leave the Church. But the Great Apostasy, as we call it now, was more than that. With the death of the Apostles, priesthood keys, or the presiding priesthood authority, were taken from the earth. Without these watchmen—the Apostles who had kept the doctrines of the gospel pure and who maintained the order and standard of worthiness in the Church—the members faced serious challenges. Over



BOTTOM: GO YE THEREFORE, AND TEACH ALL NATIONS, BY HARRY ANDERSON; TOP: PETER, BY MARILEE B. CAMPBELL; PAINTING OF JOHN THE BELOVED BY PAUL MANN

According to tradition, Peter was crucified in Rome.



A.D. 64 or 65

The Apostle Paul died while a prisoner in Rome.



A.D. 65

THE APOSTLE PAUL

The Apostle Paul was not one of the original Twelve Apostles. He was a Jew called Saul who persecuted the Christians for many years until the Savior appeared to him on the road to Damascus, and he was converted. (See Acts 8–9.) Saul, later called Paul, became a great Apostle and missionary. He was martyred for his faith in the Savior during Roman persecutions against the Church.

John the Beloved was banished to the Isle of Patmos.



A.D. 93 or 94

time doctrines were corrupted and unauthorized changes were made in Church organization and priesthood ordinances.

What Happened to the Apostles?

Following the Savior's death, the Apostles spread the gospel, and the Church grew quickly throughout the Roman Empire. But almost immediately after the Ascension of the Savior, the Apostles began to be persecuted. James, the brother of John and one of the original Twelve Apostles, was killed by Herod (see Acts 12:1–2).

Peter and Paul were also killed during New Testament times.

We don't have records of the deaths of all the Apostles, but we do know that all but John the Beloved died and, after a time, ceased to be replaced. The keys and authority of the holy priesthood were lost with the deaths of the Church leaders. Without this authority, no new revelation, doctrine, or scripture could come.

THE APOSTLE PETER

Peter was the head of the Church after the Savior's death and Resurrection. Although there are no scriptural records of Peter's martyrdom, tradition says Peter died on a cross, as did the Savior. Peter is said to have requested to be crucified upside down, because he did not consider himself worthy to die in the same way the Savior did (see Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954–56], 3:151–52).

Peter's life was one of faithfulness. Then in modern times he appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) said of Peter: "With his loyal associates, James and John, Simon Peter returned to the earth, bridging the gap of darkened centuries. Together they appeared on the banks of the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania, where Peter delivered to the young prophets the keys of the kingdom, which the apostles possessed from the Lord Jesus Christ" (Peter, My Brother, *Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year* [July 13, 1971], 8).



Constantine made Christianity a legal religion.



A.D. 324

EMPEROR CONSTANTINE

It is still a mystery why Constantine stopped years of persecution and made Christianity the religion of the Roman Empire. Some sources say he did so because of a vision he had during a battle. Whatever his reasons, Constantine tried to convince Romans to be baptized into Christianity.

What Happened to the Church?

The Apostles were killed during a time when the entire Church was being persecuted. Nero, a Roman emperor, was the first to make laws to exterminate Christians, in about A.D. 65.

Under his reign, thousands were cruelly killed. A second round of persecutions began in about A.D. 93 under Emperor Domitian. Succeeding emperors continued torturing and killing Christians. As a result of these persecutions, thousands of Christians were martyred. Many others apostatized.

In about A.D. 324 Constantine became the emperor of the Roman Empire. He made Christianity a legal religion, stopping centuries of persecution. His actions linked the church to the government, and corrupt church leaders began seeking power and the honors of the world.

Teachers within the church began to adopt false religious concepts from Greek philosophy and pagan religions. False ordinances and ceremonies were also introduced. Even though the church still taught some truth, the true Church of Christ and

THE NICENE COUNCIL

Since there was no prophet to receive revelation, the church would frequently decide issues in a council, or meeting of church leaders. In A.D. 325, Emperor Constantine called a council in Nicaea (in modern Turkey) to decide on the nature of the Godhead. There had been much argument about whether God was one or three individuals, and the decision of the council further confused understanding of the Godhead. The truth that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are three distinct beings and that They have separate roles was lost.

Moroni told of the apostasy of the Nephite nation.



A.D. 400–21

the priesthood were no longer on the earth. And as Christianity spread to various parts of the world—including to Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas—new churches were formed and grew. None of these churches, however, was the

true Church, since the Lord had already taken priesthood authority and priesthood keys from the earth.

INCORRECT PRACTICES

During the Apostasy, many ordinances were altered or added without proper authority. The church allowed infant baptism and baptism by sprinkling or pouring, instead of by immersion. Pagan influences and philosophies of the time crept into the church—such as burning incense, celibacy (the clergy remaining unmarried), and the belief that the body was evil and that God did not have a body. The honoring of martyrs turned to superstition and worship.

Because of the wickedness within the church, the gifts of the Spirit ceased and people began to deny true spiritual gifts. Without revelation, church organization changed through the government of men, instead of through inspiration from God. Church offices were bought, sold, and voted on.



Movable type allowed scripture to be widely available.



A.D. 1450

Reformers helped create an environment for the Restoration.



A.D. 1500–1600

God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, appeared to Joseph Smith.



A.D. 1820

Priesthood authority was restored and the Church was organized.



A.D. 1829–30

What Happened to the Scriptures?

We know from the Book of Mormon that the scriptures that came from the Jewish people had many plain and precious parts taken from them (see 1 Nephi 13:23–29). The eighth article of faith says, “We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly.”

During the time of the Apostasy, precious doctrines were lost from the Bible through carelessness, uninspired translation, or deliberate efforts to erase the truth. A restoration of that lost doctrine and truth was necessary. The Book of Mormon and other scripture revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith brought back many of those plain and precious parts of the gospel.

A Light out of the Darkness

The Lord knew the Great Apostasy would take place (see 2 Thessalonians 2:3), so He prepared a way for His gospel to be restored. In the centuries leading up to the First Vision in 1820, various translations of the Bible became widely available through the newly developed printing process of movable type. Because the church did not want people to read the word of God, many were imprisoned or martyred for reading or owning scriptures. But during this time, the Lord inspired people

to begin fighting against the abuses and evil they saw within the church. This period is called the Protestant Reformation. The Reformation eventually created an environment in which the Lord could restore His authority and truth to the earth.

Today we can be members of “the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth” (D&C 1:30) because the Lord restored His gospel and conferred priesthood authority to the Prophet Joseph Smith to organize His Church (see D&C 27; 65; 128:18–21).

We are blessed to live in this time, when the gospel in its fulness has been restored—a time when you can go to church, bear your testimony, and read the scriptures. ■

APOSTASY IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

In the Book of Mormon, we learn that Christ’s Church in the Americas disappeared by about A.D. 400. All those who would not deny Christ were killed, and the three Nephite disciples were taken from among the Nephite people. Moroni alone was left to tell of his people’s destruction. (See Mormon 8:3, 10–11; Moroni 1:2.)



TOP: MORROW BURNING THE PLATES, BY TOM LOVELL; PAINTING OF JOHANNES GUTENBERG © HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES, MAY NOT BE COPIED; PAINTING OF MARTIN LUTHER, THE FIRST VISION, BY DEL PARSONS; RESTORATION OF THE MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD, BY KENNETH RILEY; BOTTOM: BUST OF CONSTANTINE © HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES, MAY NOT BE COPIED; IF SPALL TAKE MY WORDS, BY JUDITH WEIR, MAY NOT BE COPIED



Seven Lessons on Sharing the Gospel

Invite the Ramos family to family home evening with the missionaries

Open a missionary savings account at the bank for Johnny

Call Smiths again about coming over for dinner

Remember to pick up tickets for the play on Friday



Finding people for the missionaries to teach can be easy and natural—if we go about it the Lord’s way.

BY ELDER CLAYTON M. CHRISTENSEN
Area Authority Seventy
North America Northeast Area
AND CHRISTINE QUINN CHRISTENSEN

Prior to His ascent to heaven, the Savior charged His tiny band of disciples: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations” (Matthew 28:19). Although this task seems overwhelming, President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has called us to act with faith: “Some who measure that challenge quickly say, ‘Why, that’s impossible! It cannot be done!’ To that we simply say, ‘Perhaps, but we shall do it anyway.’”¹

The ability to share the gospel isn’t a “gift” that has been given to only a few Latter-day Saints and denied to the rest. We have

concluded from our own experiences and from watching others that finding people for the missionaries to teach can be easy and natural for *all* of us—if we go about it the Lord’s way. Here are seven of the lessons we’ve learned about what His way is.

“Ideal Mormons” and “Deep Friendships”

The first two lessons, which we learned early in our efforts to be good member missionaries, have made sharing the gospel much easier: *We simply can’t predict who will or won’t be interested in the gospel, and building a friendship is not a prerequisite to inviting people to learn about the gospel.* We discovered these principles when we were newlyweds and the missionaries in our ward asked us to make a list of people with whom we could share the gospel. We were to start with those at the top of our list and begin “preparing” them through a twelve-step process. First, we were to invite them to our

home for dinner and follow that by going to a cultural event together. The sixth, seventh, and eighth steps were to invite them to church, give them a copy of the Book of Mormon, and ask them to take the missionary discussions. The program culminated in the twelfth step—baptism.

We dutifully made this list, placing those we thought most likely to be interested in the gospel at the top. They looked like “ideal Mormons”—people whose values, such as clean living and commitment to family, mirrored our own. We then began building deeper friendships with them, adding additional social events to our already busy lives. One by one, those we thought might be interested in learning about the gospel declined our invitations when we got to steps six through eight. Our invitations didn’t offend them, but in their own way they told us they were happy in their present approach to religion. After much work over many months, we didn’t find anyone who was interested in learning more about the gospel.

New missionaries were then transferred to our ward. Knowing nothing of our history, they came to our home, unfolded an identical chart on our table, and asked us to make a list of people with whom we could cultivate friendships in preparation to teaching them the gospel. We protested, “We’ve tried this. It took a long time and didn’t work.” We explained that we felt we had honestly tried with everyone we thought was a candidate for hearing the discussions.

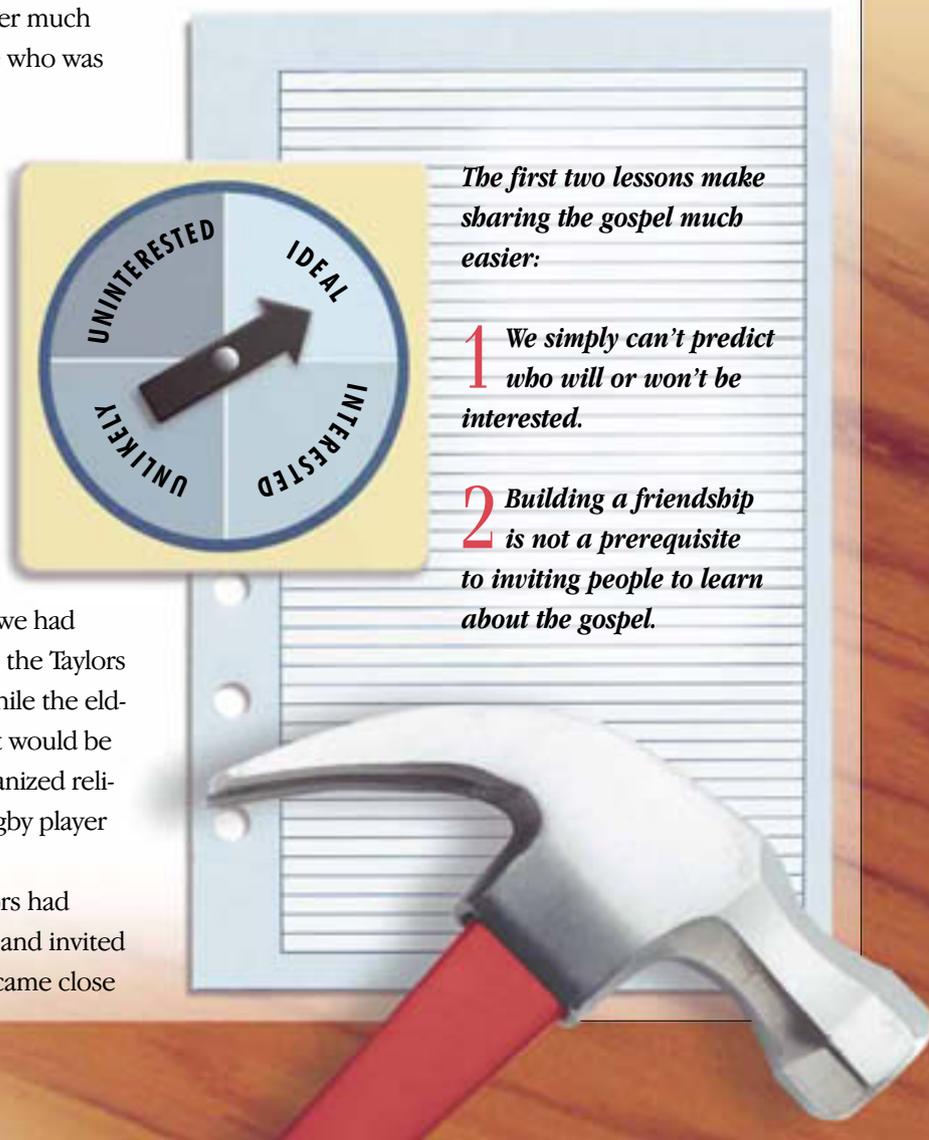
Desperate for a referral, the missionaries pleaded, “Don’t you know *anyone* we could visit?” We gave them the names of four couples we had excluded from our initial list. Among them were the Taylors (names have been changed). We warned that while the elders certainly could knock on the Taylors’ door, it would be a waste of time. Ken had bad feelings about organized religion of any kind. In addition, he was a tough rugby player and a high-volume consumer of ale.

The elders later returned, jubilant. The Taylors had invited them in, listened to the first discussion, and invited them back for the second. We subsequently became close

friends with the Taylors as we studied the missionary discussions together. We would never have imagined that they would have had any interest in the gospel.

We learned from this experience that we simply cannot know in advance who will and will not be interested in learning about the Church. We thought we could judge and therefore excluded from our list many people whose lifestyle, habits, or appearance made them seem unlikely candidates. As we reflect upon those who have joined the Church, however, it is clear that few of them would have been on our list of “likely members” when they first encountered the Church.

Many who accept the gospel are troubled or needy (see Alma 32:2–3). Living the gospel transforms them. The only way *all* people can have the opportunity to choose or



The first two lessons make sharing the gospel much easier:

1 *We simply can't predict who will or won't be interested.*

2 *Building a friendship is not a prerequisite to inviting people to learn about the gospel.*

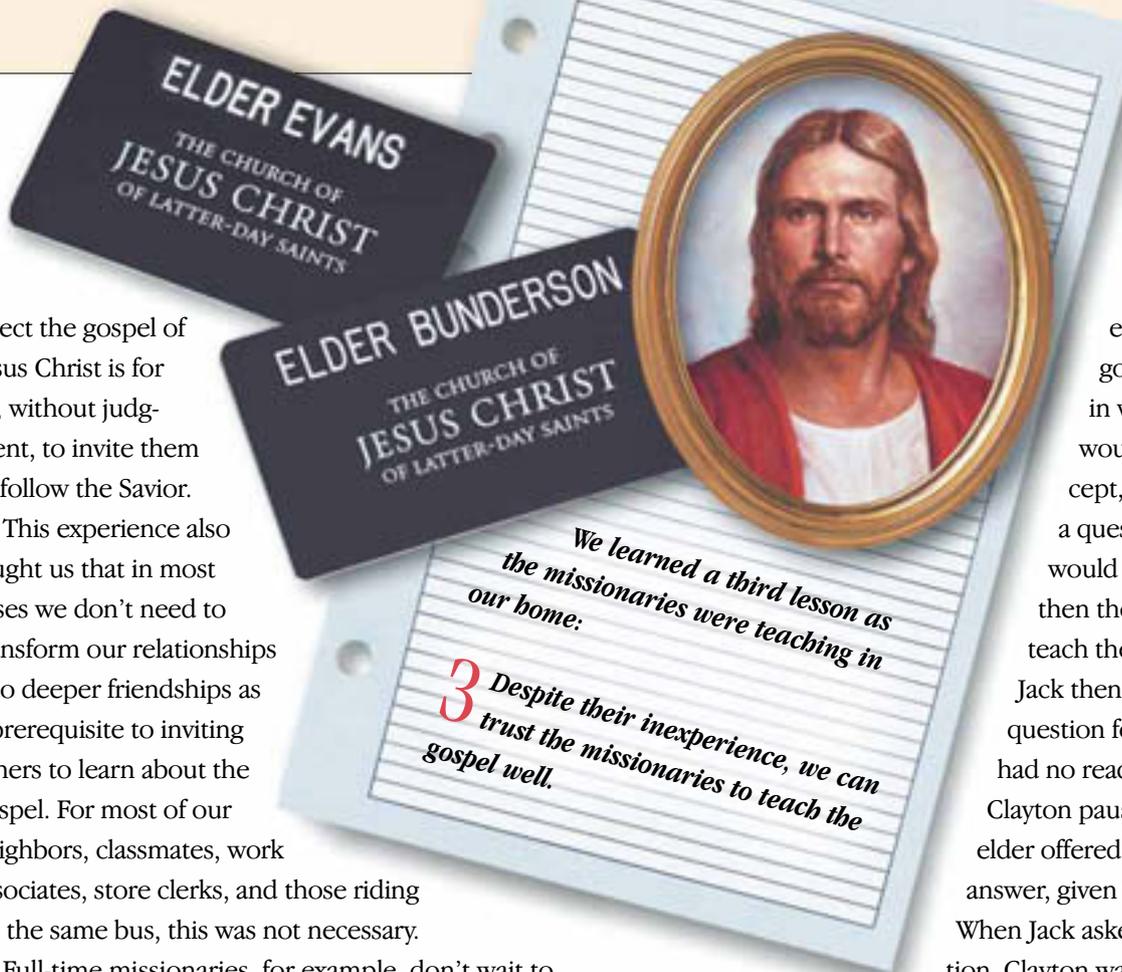
reject the gospel of Jesus Christ is for us, without judgment, to invite them to follow the Savior.

This experience also taught us that in most cases we don't need to transform our relationships into deeper friendships as a prerequisite to inviting others to learn about the gospel. For most of our neighbors, classmates, work associates, store clerks, and those riding on the same bus, this was not necessary.

Full-time missionaries, for example, don't wait to become friends with their contacts. They talk with everyone. A relationship of trust is built when they have the chance to teach. Over the past 20 years, we have observed no correlation between the depth of a relationship and the probability that a person will be interested in learning about the gospel. But the reverse is almost always true: Everyone who accepts an invitation becomes a closer friend, regardless of whether or not he or she ultimately accepts baptism. We have also learned that even when people decline our invitations, they are not offended if they can feel our love and God's love when we invite them to learn about Christ's gospel. They typically have expressed gratitude that we cared enough about them to want to share something so personal and important.

Trust the Missionaries

We learned a third lesson as the missionaries were in our home teaching Jack, a colleague of Clayton's. One elder was newly arrived on his mission, and his senior companion from Argentina was still struggling with English. As a result, when questions arose, Jack would instinctively ask Clayton, who answered—confident that he could answer more clearly and convincingly than these



elders could. We got into a rhythm in which the elders would teach a concept, Jack would ask a question, Clayton would answer it, and then the elders would teach the next concept. Jack then asked a difficult question for which Clayton had no ready answer. And as Clayton paused, the Argentine elder offered a profound answer, given by the Spirit. When Jack asked the next question, Clayton waited to see if this

elder could do it again—and he did. We learned an important lesson about sharing the gospel. Despite their inexperience, *we can trust the missionaries to teach the gospel well*, because whom the Lord calls, He qualifies.

People Need to Be Needed

The fourth insight coalesced as we moved an old, heavy refrigerator from the basement of an elderly sister Clayton home taught. We had tried to find another ward member to help us but could not. Desperate, we asked Jim, a non-member neighbor who happily agreed to help. It was a hot, horribly humid summer day, and soon our clothes were soaked with perspiration. When we reached the first turn in the staircase and had balanced the fridge on the landing, Jim said, "So tell me about the Mormon Church."

Mopping his brow, Clayton responded, "Frankly, this is it." He then explained how home teaching works and noted how much this sister needed us. We also told him that because graduate students and their families were moving in and out of our area all the time, our family was often helping someone load or unload a rental truck.

Jim was incredulous. "At our church we just listen to the sermon and go home. I have no idea who might need my

help. They never ask, and there's no way for me to offer. Will you ask for my help again when you need an extra pair of hands? I like this kind of thing." Although Clayton had tried unsuccessfully to engage Jim in discussions about religion in the past, Jim was uninterested. But he was interested in opportunities to help others.

Here's what this experience taught us: Many people who are satisfied with their lives feel a need to give service. The Light of Christ creates this desire to help. When our invitations to investigate the Church emphasize doctrine, we often do not connect with what people are looking for at the outset. When we involve them with us in serving others, they often find that the Church addresses an important need.

Inviting others to help us with our work in the Church helps them feel needed and helps them feel the Spirit. When these feelings come, many people often then realize that something *has* been missing from their lives. By helping us do God's will, Jim learned far more about what the Church feels like than he ever could have through a conversation or from attending a ward social. As a result, Jim subsequently accepted our invitation to take the missionary discussions.

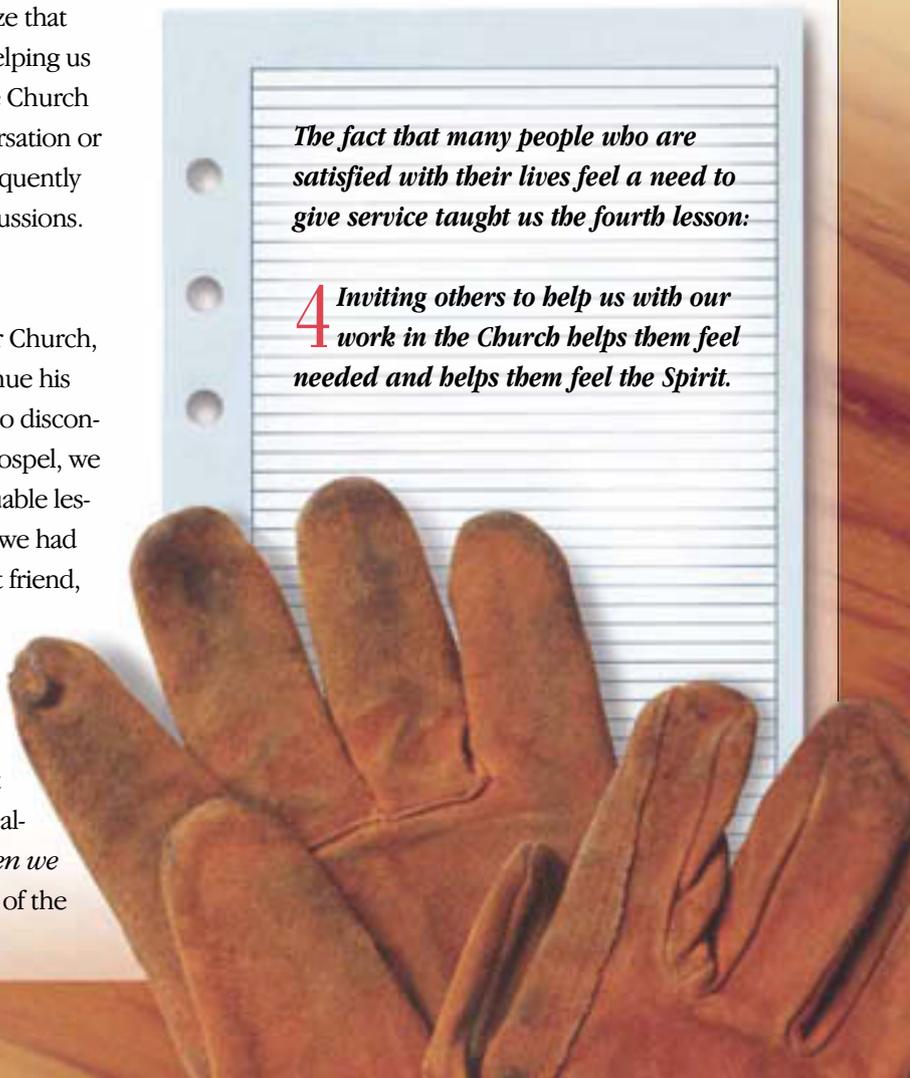
What Is Success?

Despite seeing much truth and goodness in our Church, Jim decided after the third discussion not to continue his investigation. Even though we know that many who discontinue investigating will later listen and accept the gospel, we were disappointed. But this taught us our fifth valuable lesson about member missionary work—we realized we had *succeeded* as missionaries. Jim had become a great friend, and we had given him the opportunity to understand the gospel of Jesus Christ more deeply. Whether or not he ever enters the waters of baptism, he has taken a step along the path of his own eternal progression and has made some important correct choices. Most of us fear failure. Once we realized that *we succeed as member missionaries when we invite people to learn and accept the truth*, much of the fear that kept us from sharing the gospel vanished.

Deadlines

Following the counsel of Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught us our sixth lesson: *Because we have so much to do in our busy lives, we need deadlines.* Like it or not, we tend to postpone activities without deadlines, while things that need to be finished by a particular time seem to get done. Without explicit deadlines, even rewarding responsibilities of eternal import—like missionary work—can easily get preempted.

To help us, Elder Ballard has asked us to regularly "write down a *date*." He explicitly counseled us that we need not write down a name. Rather, Elder Ballard challenged us to pick a date as a commitment to the Lord. He promised that if we then seek every opportunity to speak about the gospel with as many people as we can, the Lord will bless us by that date to meet someone who will accept our invitation to



The fact that many people who are satisfied with their lives feel a need to give service taught us the fourth lesson:

4 *Inviting others to help us with our work in the Church helps them feel needed and helps them feel the Spirit.*

listen to the missionaries.² Together we have accepted Elder Ballard's challenge and have found someone for the missionaries to teach every year. Each time we have prayerfully set a date, the Lord has provided someone for us to teach.

But the people we have found have rarely been discovered easily. It has required daily prayer, frequent fasting, and creating opportunities to have gospel conversations. We have found it helpful to use "Mormon" phrases in our conversations—referring to activities at church, our children who are serving missions, experiences we've had in Church assignments, and so on. When we use these phrases, it is as if we are opening a door, inviting the other person to walk in and talk about the Church. Most people choose not to come through that door, and that's fine. But sometimes they ask us about the Church. We then answer their questions. And

Lessons five and six help us identify and achieve success:

5 *We succeed as member missionaries when we invite people to learn and accept the truth.*

6 *Because we have so much to do in our busy lives, we need deadlines.*

Invitation

if it seems appropriate, we open a second door—inviting them to a Church meeting or to come to our home so we can tell them more. Most of those we have invited decline, but some accept. Regardless of the outcome, we have found that if they feel our love, they often express gratitude that we would care enough to invite them.

Several years ago Elder Christensen set a date of January 31. Early January came, and despite having initiated conversations with dozens and dozens of people and inviting several of them to meet the missionaries, he failed to find anyone who was interested. He was scheduled to travel to Honolulu, Hawaii, for an academic conference on January 20, and the way his schedule looked, it seemed clear that he had to meet the person he could introduce to the missionaries on his flight to or from Hawaii. There was no other time. He pleaded in daily prayer that God would cause a person to sit next to him on the plane who would accept his invitation.

After all that effort, he couldn't believe his eyes when he saw his seatmate—a man named Vinnie who was wearing a loud Hawaiian shirt unbuttoned to his sternum, sporting three gold chains on his hairy chest. Vinnie explained that he worked 11 months every year to save enough to escape to Hawaii for a month in winter to chase women. Clayton was so disappointed. He had tried and prayed so hard to find someone—and instead he got stuck next to a man who didn't seem to have a religious bone in his body. Discouraged, Clayton turned to some reading.

When the flight attendant brought lunch, Clayton put his reading down and made small talk with his seatmate. Vinnie asked Clayton if he had been to Hawaii before, and Clayton responded that he had attended a language training school in Laie en route to a mission he had served for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Korea. Surprisingly, Vinnie put his fork down and said, "So you're a Mormon? The funniest thing has happened to me over the past year. I've never had any interest in religion, but I've had this growing curiosity to know more about Mormons. I don't know why. Could you tell me a little about your church?"

For the next three hours, enveloped by a wonderful spirit, they discussed the gospel of Jesus Christ, article of faith by article of faith. Several times on the remainder of the flight, Vinnie interrupted to say thanks for telling him about the Church. As the plane landed, Clayton told Vinnie there were missionaries in his hometown and asked if they could visit him when he returned. Vinnie asked if there were missionaries in Honolulu. Clayton received this golden answer to his prayers by using a “Mormon” phrase to open the door to a conversation and by suspending his judgment of what might be in Vinnie’s heart.

Constants and Variables

We learned a seventh lesson from this experience: *When we are busy serving in the Church, we can expect God to bless us with miracles when we go and do the things He commands* (see 1 Nephi 3:7). In the equation that determines whether we can find people for the missionaries to teach, God’s role is a constant, not a variable. He always keeps His promises. The only variable is whether we have the faith to commit, obey, and expect miracles. Even more than other members, the busy men and women who lead our wards and stakes (or branches and districts) need to exercise this simple faith—because if they cannot speak in present-tense verbs and first-person pronouns about sharing the gospel, they cannot inspire others to fulfill our prophet’s member missionary call.

Blessings

Many of us know people who seem to be “natural missionaries,” almost as if they have an innate gift that makes sharing the gospel easy for them. We certainly are *not* naturals at this. We found the work to be uncomfortable and intimidating at the outset, but learning and following these



lessons has helped us share the gospel in ways that have become natural.

The blessings that have come to our family from doing this work have been incalculable.

Missionary work has brought the Spirit of God into our home and our hearts. About four years

ago, for example, we invited one of Clayton’s former students, Sunil, to take the missionary discussions in our home. The missionaries did a wonderful job, and at the close of the discussion they both testified of the truths they had taught us. We both bore our testimonies, and Clayton asked one of the missionaries to close with prayer. Just then our son Spencer raised his hand. “Dad, can I say something?” He then rose to his feet and, looking at Sunil with the purest gaze, said, “Sunil, I’m only 11 years old. But I want you to know that the things the missionaries have told you tonight are true. I know that God lives. I know that you and I are His sons and that Joseph Smith was truly a prophet of God.” As he shared his feelings, a sweet, powerful spirit came into the room.

The next day Sunil sent an e-mail saying that while he had appreciated the clear explanation of our beliefs that the missionaries and we had provided during the discussion, “when your son stood and said those words, I felt something inside that I have never felt before. This must be what you mean when you speak of the Spirit of God.”

Many blessings and friendships have come into our lives from trying to share the gospel. But this blessing has been one of the best: Having the missionaries regularly help us as a family teach the gospel to new and old friends through the power of the Holy Ghost has profoundly affected the faith of our five children and brought the Spirit of God into our home. ■

NOTES

1. “The Redemption of the Dead,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1975, 97.
2. See “Write Down a Date,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1984, 15–17; see also “We Proclaim the Gospel,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 31–33.

Questions & Answers

*I love the gospel, but talking about it with others terrifies me.
How can I overcome my fear?*

L I A H O N A

Even the best member missionaries are nervous about sharing the gospel sometimes. But they overcome their fear in the same way you overcome any fear—by replacing your fear with faith.

The scriptures are full of encouragement: “Fear not; I will help thee” (Isaiah 41:13). “If ye are prepared ye shall not fear” (D&C 38:30). “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord” (2 Timothy 1:7–8).

Developing the kind of faith that replaces fear with power and love will take effort and practice. You can’t just wait for faith to come to you. You need to develop it. Start by thinking of small ways to share your testimony. You could write your testimony in a letter. Or you could write your testimony in your journal every day for a week. Once you feel confident expressing your testimony in writing, try bearing it in sacrament meeting, in family home evening, or to a close friend. As you

You can overcome fear through developing your faith.

Faith requires action. Practice sharing the gospel in situations where you feel comfortable.

Seek added knowledge so you can be prepared to answer others’ questions. Preparation will help you share the gospel without fear.

Build on your righteous desire to share the gospel as you work to conquer your fear.

build your testimony-sharing skills, your confidence and faith will grow.

If you are nervous because you think you might be asked questions you cannot answer, a little preparation can help. The Lord told Hyrum Smith, “First seek to obtain my word, and then shall your tongue be loosed; then, if you desire, you shall have my Spirit and my word, yea, the power of God unto the convincing of men” (D&C 11:21).

Read the scriptures and other Church materials to help build your gospel knowledge. Share these resources—pamphlets, magazines, and so on—with others.

Mormon.org is another great place to learn more and to refer others to as well. Pray for added courage. Remember, if you don’t have all the answers, you can always ask someone or do some research.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, “The intensity of our desire to share the gospel is a great indicator of the extent of our personal conversion”



("Sharing the Gospel," *Liabona*, Jan. 2002, 7; *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 7). You have the desire. Now let that desire grow into action as you practice sharing the gospel (see Alma 32).

Heavenly Father for opportunities to share the gospel. He will give you the words He wants you to say.

Vikki Hamme, 17, Mountain Home Ward, Springfield Missouri South Stake

Then I'm sure you will love to speak about the Church and will want to do so again and again.

Dana Jill Barthel, 16, Bonn Ward, Düsseldorf Germany Stake

READERS



Your fear is natural. Ask the missionaries if you can go on exchanges with them. Have them teach a discussion in your home, and share your testimony. But most important, ask



I always used to be scared of talking with others about the gospel. But think of your testimony and that wonderful feeling you get because you know the gospel is true. Ask your Heavenly Father for a missionary experience, and pray for His guidance.

In seminary, I learned that Jesus Christ has called us to participate in His work. I understood from 3 Nephi 12:13-16 that I am a light and also the salt of the earth and that if I love the Lord, I must live by His words. That is how I overcame my fear.

Jean Garry Gilot, 17, Carrefour Ward, Port-au-Prince Haiti Stake

The love I feel for this great work has allowed me to talk about the gospel. We need to pray a lot, read the scriptures, attend seminary, and seek the guidance of the Holy Ghost. Then the words will come.

Cesar A. Flores Barrios, 15, Cantaura Ward,
El Tigre Venezuela Stake



If you try to talk to a good friend, you will feel more comfortable. If you start by talking about a gospel standard that is easy to explain, it will be easier to share more. Once you talk to one friend, you will be able to talk to anyone!

Gretchen Schillemat, 14, Keene Ward,
Concord New Hampshire Stake

It doesn't matter what others think, but it does matter what Heavenly Father thinks. If I were enjoying a wonderful feast and my friends were with me, I wouldn't ignore them. I also wouldn't just invite them to read the recipes. I would ask them to eat with me.

Kristina M. Harrop, 16, Palmer Third Ward,
Wasilla Alaska Stake



I learned to trust the Lord and let the Spirit guide me. You just have to remember that you don't have to be afraid when the Lord is on your side.

The Spirit will help you.

Amber Wilson, 14, Parkersburg Ward,
Charleston West Virginia Stake

To overcome this fear, I think of how much I wish I had known about this gospel sooner. My friends and family also need to receive it urgently. We must talk with enthusiasm of the activities we participate in, of the joy the gospel brings. Others will desire to know where our happiness and faith come from.

Évila Fernanda de Campos, 19, Bragança Paulista Ward,
Itatiba Brazil Stake



Do not let fear overcome your efforts. . . .

Fear comes not from God but from the evil one. The adversary of all truth would put into your heart a reluctance to make an effort. Cast that fear aside and be valiant in the cause of truth and righteousness and faith. If you now decide that this will become the pattern of your life, you will not have to make that decision again."

President Gordon B. Hinckley, "Words of the Living Prophet," *Liahona*, June 1998, 26; "Excerpts from Recent Addresses of President Gordon B. Hinckley," *Ensign*, Jan. 1998, 72.

Liahona and readers' answers are intended for help and perspective, not as pronouncements of Church doctrine.



Our fear will be gone when we are made perfect in love (see 1 John 4:18). Pray diligently for that gift of perfect love, and approach your friends with love. Smile, give a helping hand, and express gratitude. By doing so you can not only overcome fear, you can radiate the blessings of the gospel.

Elder Tomohiko Funai, 19,
Idaho Pocatello Mission



We can overcome this fear initially by becoming friends, and then we will feel more at ease about bearing our testimony to people so the Spirit can touch them.

Anne Diniz, 16, Valentina Ward,
João Pessoa Brazil Rangel Stake



One must have a testimony of this gospel to courageously share it with others. Use your testimony as a guide. Search and pray about overcoming your fear.

Aaron Michaelson, 13, Southbury Ward,
New Haven Connecticut Stake

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Youth readers: Send your answer, along with your name, birth date, address, ward and stake (or branch and district), and a photograph to:

Questions & Answers 3/05

50 East North Temple Street, Floor 24

Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA

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

Please respond by March 15, 2005.

QUESTION

"My friend doesn't feel that she fits in. What can I do to make her feel welcome at church?" ■

Rejoice in Our Knowledge of the Godhead

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.

Joseph Smith—History 1:17: “I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description. . . . One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*”

What Do We Know about the Nature of the Godhead?

President Gordon B. Hinckley: “I believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost. I was baptized in the name of these three. I was married in the name of these three. I have no question concerning their reality and their individuality. . . . Miracle of miracles and wonder of wonders, they are interested in us, and we are the substance of their great concern. They are available to each of us. We approach the Father through the Son. He is our intercessor at the throne of God. How marvelous it is that we may so speak to the Father in the name of the Son. I bear witness of these great, transcendent truths. And I do so by the gift and power of the Holy Ghost” (“The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,” *Liabona*, Mar. 1998, 8–9; *Ensign*, Mar. 1998, 7).

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “[Joseph Smith’s] experience clarified for mankind the existence of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. Thus to the world came the vision that three personages comprise this great presiding council of the universe and have revealed themselves to mankind as three separate beings, physically distinct from each other. . . . The Holy Ghost . . . is a personage of spirit. The Holy Ghost is a witness of the Father and of the Son declaring to man their attributes, bearing record of the other personages of the Godhead” (“The Articles of Faith,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 23–24).

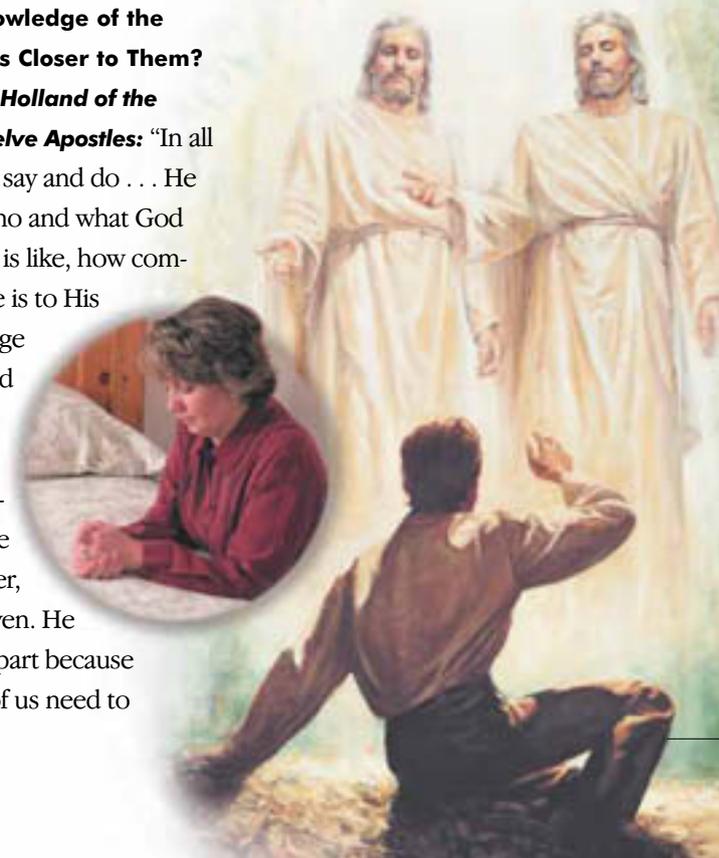
How Can Our Knowledge of the Godhead Draw Us Closer to Them?

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “In all that Jesus came to say and do . . . He was showing us who and what God our Eternal Father is like, how completely devoted He is to His children in every age and nation. In word and in deed Jesus was trying to reveal and make personal to us the true nature of His Father, our Father in Heaven. He did this at least in part because then and now all of us need to

know God more fully in order to love Him more deeply and obey Him more completely” (“The Grandeur of God,” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 70).

Anne C. Pingree, second counselor in the Relief Society general presidency: “As Latter-day Saint women who have made covenants, all of us must have a clear understanding of the nature and roles of the members of the Godhead. Praying to a Father in Heaven, who knows and loves us; having confidence in Jesus Christ as our Savior and Redeemer; and feeling the companionship and promptings of the Holy Ghost, who teaches and testifies of the Father and Son, bring peace and joy to us in these perilous times.”

Ether 12:41: “Seek this Jesus . . . that the grace of God the Father, and also the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, which beareth record of them, may be and abide in you forever.” ■



Teaching My Teacher

BY PRINCE IHENKORO

Several years back, some youth from my branch and I were returning from an activity and were standing alongside a lonely road waiting for a bus. Finally we saw a car coming. It stopped, and the driver was my former teacher, Mr. Enemor. We had not seen each other for some years. With great joy on his face, he exclaimed, "Ihenkoro, it's been quite some time. You've grown big."

Having him stop seemed a miracle, for we had been there for hours without seeing any cars. Now we would not even have to pay for a ride. As we drove, Mr. Enemor asked, "Where are you people coming from?"

I replied, "From a Church program."

He said, "Oh, that's nice. How I wish every young person would

attend church. This country would be fine." Then he asked, "Which church?"

"The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," I told him.

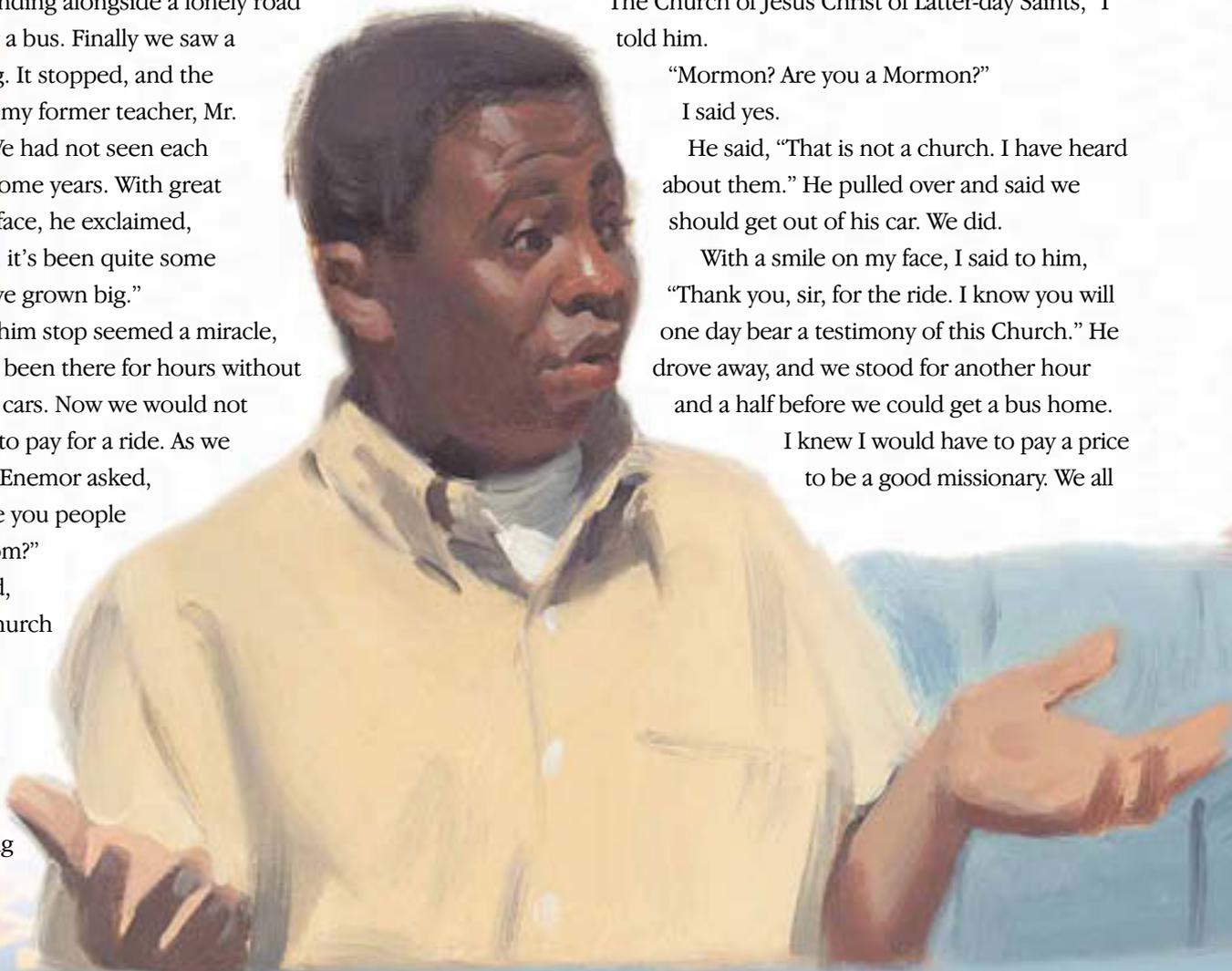
"Mormon? Are you a Mormon?"

I said yes.

He said, "That is not a church. I have heard about them." He pulled over and said we should get out of his car. We did.

With a smile on my face, I said to him, "Thank you, sir, for the ride. I know you will one day bear a testimony of this Church." He drove away, and we stood for another hour and a half before we could get a bus home.

I knew I would have to pay a price to be a good missionary. We all



have to pay a price for anything of value. Our Savior showed us that when He paid the price for our sins.

I wanted to share the gospel with Mr. Enemor, so I went to his house. He never allowed me in, but I dropped off several Church pamphlets and a Church magazine for him.

Many months after that I received a letter from him. In the letter he asked, "Please forgive me for what I did to you that evening. I owe you an apology and all our thanks. My family and I are now members of that church I was once against. I am now a Latter-day Saint."

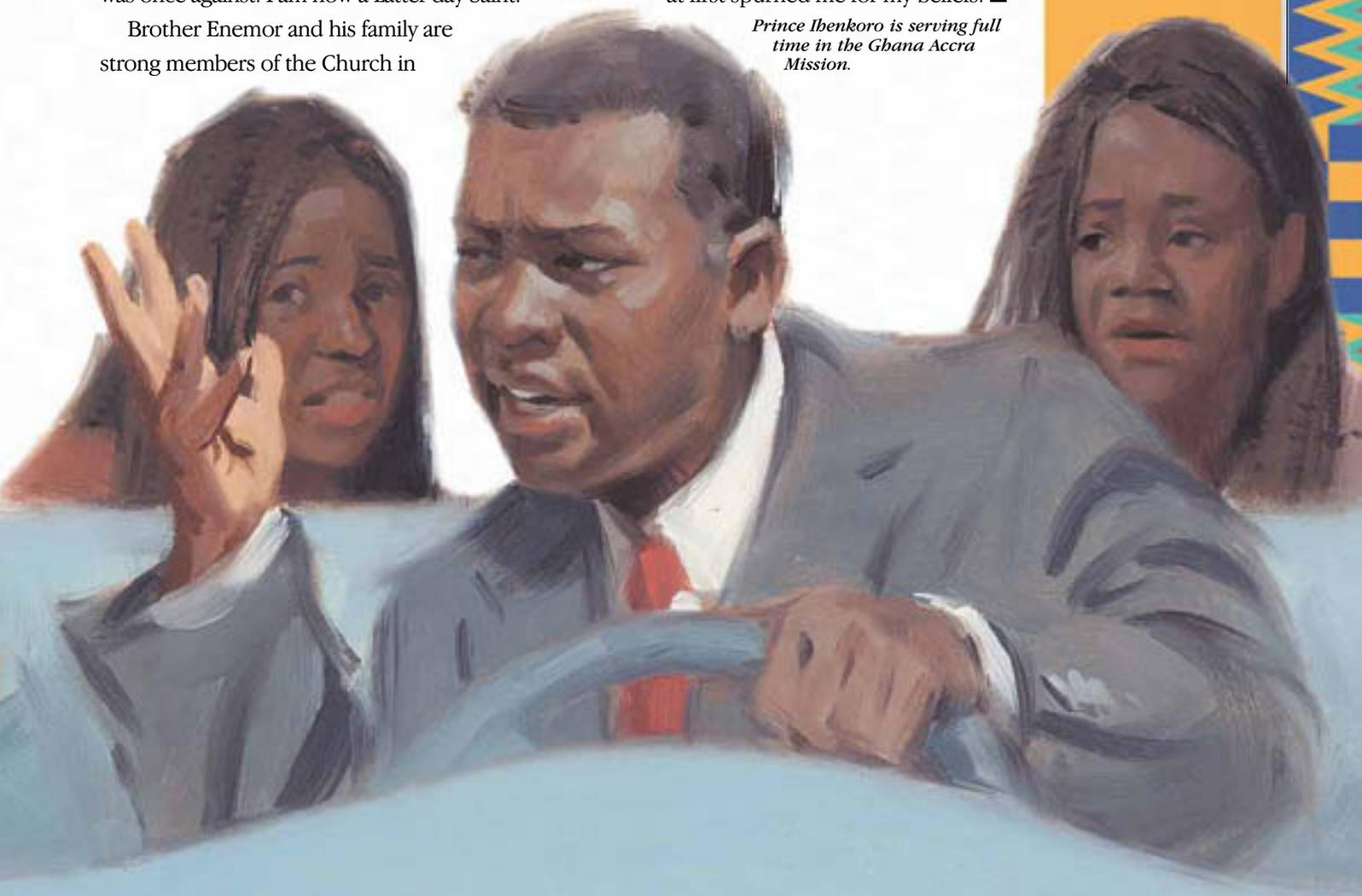
Brother Enemor and his family are strong members of the Church in

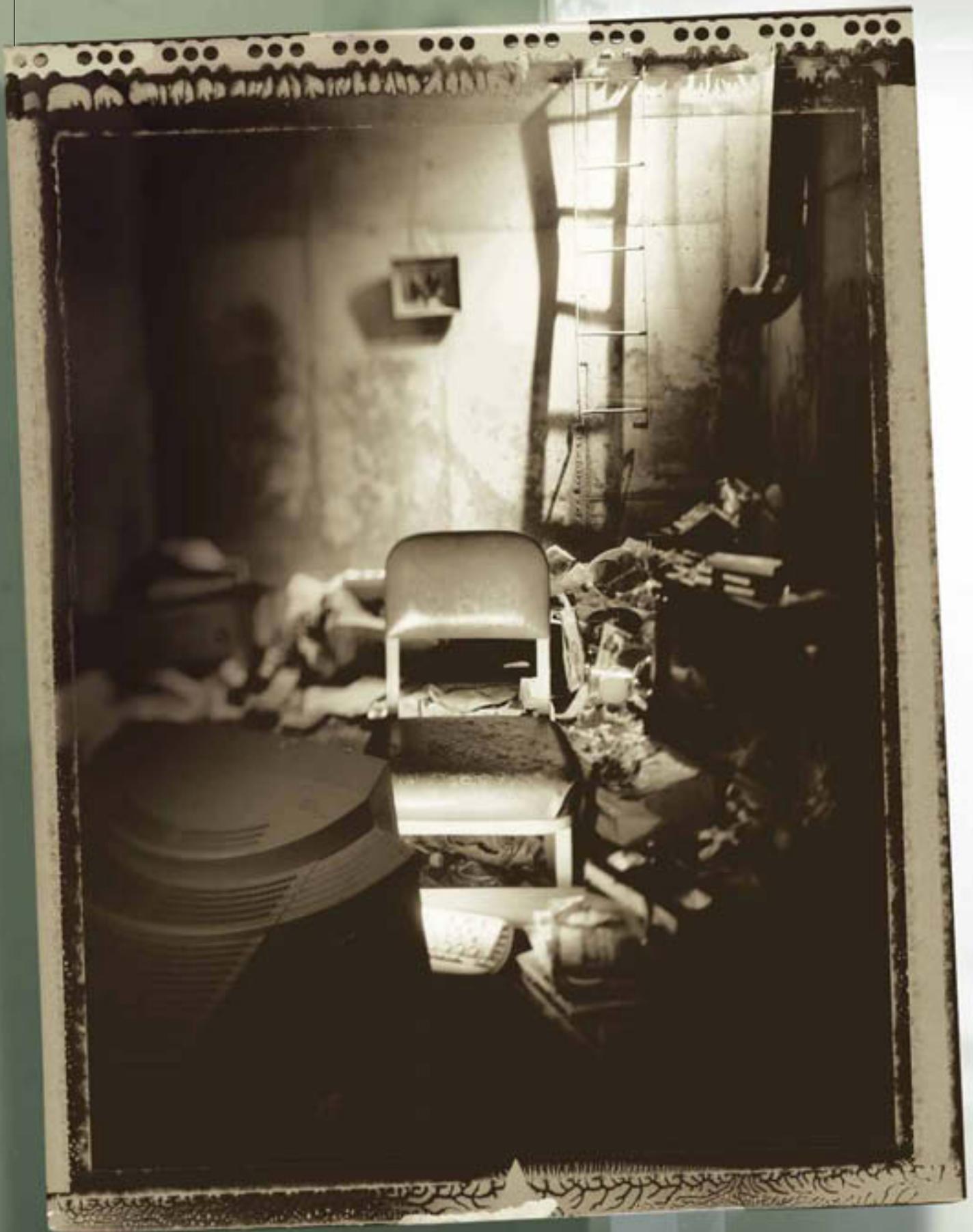
Abuja, Nigeria. He and his family have been sealed in the temple. He still writes me and always says, "I thank you for leading me to the light."

We gain a living by what we get, but we gain a life by what we give. We can give the gospel and bring light to the lives of many others. People may forget what you say and what you do, but they don't forget how you make them feel. Go and make them feel good by giving them the gospel light. I have been blessed with great rewards for the small price I paid to share the gospel with someone who at first spurned me for my beliefs. ■

Prince Ibenkoro is serving full time in the Ghana Accra Mission.

My membership in the Church cost me a ride home, but it also resulted in a good man and his family finding the gospel.





PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRADLEY SLADE

The Road Back: Abandoning Pornography

BY RORY C. REID

The Lord will support your efforts to overcome a pornography habit.

Pornography is increasing in popularity and accessibility, and many think of it as harmless fun. But Church leaders have consistently warned us about its destructive nature. President Gordon B. Hinckley cautioned: “Stay away from the great and terrible flood of pornography that is sweeping across the earth and makes a few men rich while it destroys many others who become enslaved to it. Stay away from it.”¹

Tragically, some have dismissed our prophet’s counsel and have become entangled in this salacious material. They have discovered that, like many other addictions, a pornography habit is extremely difficult to break.

But success is possible. As a psychotherapist counseling numerous clients struggling to overcome a pornography habit, I have observed several common denominators

among those who have successfully abandoned pornography. The following suggestions, while not comprehensive, are intended to provide some direction and possibly a beginning point for anyone who seeks to abandon the use of pornography.

Acknowledge the Problem

Many individuals minimize the extent of their problem because of feelings of shame. The Lord’s way, however, requires that we acknowledge our faults to Him (see Psalm 32:5; Alma 38:14; 39:13; D&C 5:28). Such confession is actually an exercise in honesty with ourselves, as we acknowledge to ourselves that which is already transparent to God. Involvement in pornography should also be acknowledged to one’s spouse (and for youth, one’s parents) and bishop or branch president.

Many who view pornography fear that a disclosure to their spouse may place their marriage at risk. Yet some studies indicate that

Those who become entangled in salacious material will find that it promotes selfishness, isolation, and secrecy. But through diligent effort and with the Lord’s help, it is possible to climb out of a pornography habit.

most marriages stay intact if both partners are willing to work through the problems together. Sometimes individuals put off disclosure because they fear they will hurt their spouse. A reason like this is usually just an excuse to protect the individuals with the problem from their spouse's reaction and from other consequences of their behavior. Thus they may continue to indulge in pornography while trying to keep it secret. But dishonesty in a relationship can be as damaging as pornography, and many spouses eventually discover the problem anyway. Spouses are more likely to offer support when approached in humility by a struggling partner who confesses the problem and requests encouragement in recovery.

Even if someone is able for a time to hide his or her actions, our secrets are never hidden from God. As Jacob tells us, "He knoweth all things, and there is not anything save he knows it" (2 Nephi 9:20).

Being truthful frees up energy previously used to maintain secrets and can provide a sense of relief for the person disclosing the problem. In fact, many spouses report that their partner's disclosure, although painful, gave them relief because they learned that their suspicions were not based on their own insecurities. When someone establishes honesty and begins the process of repentance, the Atonement can remove the burden of sin. And through the Atonement, the spouse can be given the strength to forgive the violations of his or her sacred trust.

Accept the Atonement

The Hebrew equivalent for the word *atonement* is *kaphar*, a verb that means "to cover."² Therefore, the word *atonement* suggests that Christ can cover sins by "blotting" them out through His mercy if we repent (see Acts 3:19). As a result of this process, our sins can become "as white as snow" (Isaiah 1:18).

In contrast, the adversary tempts those with a pornography addiction to try to hide, or cover, their sins—thus thwarting the repentance process and avoiding the true source of healing. In so doing they add the sin of dishonesty to the sin of pornography, "and thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell" (2 Nephi 28:21).

Through the Atonement, Christ can cover sins by "blotting" them out if we will repent. As a result, our sins can become "as white as snow."



The story of Adam and Eve illustrates how Satan tries to enslave us. After transgressing one of God's commandments, Adam and Eve were shamed by Satan, who told them to cover themselves and hide. Similarly, Satan tries to get us to turn away from God when we make mistakes. But an angel of the Lord instructed Adam to "repent and call upon God in the name of the Son forevermore" (Moses 5:8). Adam and Eve learned to turn their fear and shame into faith and trust. Likewise, individuals struggling with pornography must turn their fear and shame into faith and trust in the Lord and His Atonement.

When we accept the Atonement, we confess our sins and submit to the consequences of our choices. If we attempt to punish ourselves for sin through self-imposed guilt or shame, we erroneously try to usurp the authority of the Savior. The Savior has the right to extend mercy and the right to pass judgment. Our right is to submit our hearts to God and accept His mercy and justice in accordance with divine law. Although not entitled to mercy, we may qualify for it by the grace of God and through a broken heart and contrite spirit. This mighty change of heart, which sanctifies a son or daughter of God from unrighteousness, is a gift that comes through faith and trust in Him and by the power of His Atonement. Redemption from sin through this process will most likely take time, but eventually we can know, as the Spirit imparts assurance to our soul, that our sins are forgiven.

Be Aware

King Benjamin wisely admonished, "Watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds" (Mosiah 4:30). One

seeking to overcome a pornography habit should identify patterns and weaknesses in his or her life and be aware of events that may trigger indulgence in pornography.

One individual realized that when he experienced a negative emotion, he tried to escape his discomfort by thinking about pornography. As a result of this new awareness, he began to offer a silent prayer whenever he felt a negative emotion, asking for help to withstand the experience and to resist the urge to escape.

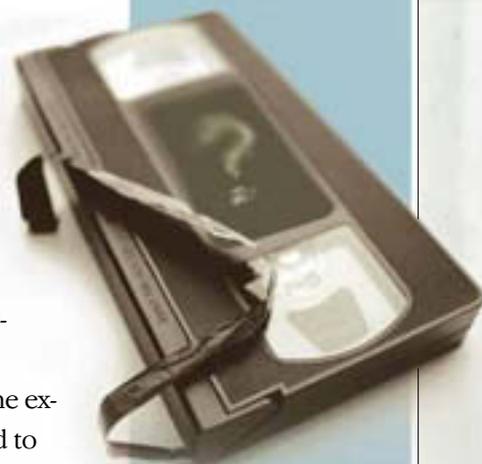
A Book of Mormon story helped this man understand how the Lord could help him with his problem. He noted that when the people of Alma were in bondage the Lord promised that their burdens would be made light (see Mosiah 24:14); He did not promise to completely remove their burdens. Likewise, this man did not expect the Lord to eliminate the negative emotions in his life but to help him cope with them in a healthy way.

As we take time to ponder our lives, awareness will come, especially if it is requested as part of sincere prayer.

Make Adjustments

In overcoming pornography habits, individuals must make many adjustments to their behavior or attitude. Often they have become "past feeling" (1 Nephi 17:45; Moroni 9:20). They must learn to reconnect with their feelings and with God, to be humble again, and to trust. The role of the Holy Ghost is paramount in this endeavor and can help individuals experience "a mighty change" of heart that will influence them "to do good continually" (Mosiah 5:2; Alma 5:12, 14; see also Alma 5:26).

Help can also come from those around us.



WHAT IS PORNOGRAPHY?

Legal, academic, and other definitions of pornography vary widely, but in a practical sense, pornography is any visual or written medium created with the intent to sexually stimulate. If the work was not intended to stimulate but nevertheless causes sexual arousal in an individual, it constitutes pornography for that person.

If you find yourself asking whether a work is pornographic, the question itself suggests the material makes you uncomfortable. That should be enough to tell you to avoid it.

As President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) taught, the Lord often uses others to bring about His righteous purposes.³ Bishops or branch presidents, family members, and qualified counselors can help someone successfully abandon a pornography habit. As the old adage goes, the Lord helps those who help themselves. And we are expected to take advantage of resources available to us.

Another necessary adjustment includes rededication to a daily, consistent habit of studying the scriptures. Great strength can be drawn from regularly feasting upon the words of Christ. The book of Alma teaches that the word has a “more powerful effect upon the minds of the people than the sword, or anything else” (Alma 31:5). Similarly, Nephi told his brothers, “Whoso would hearken unto the word of God, and would hold fast unto it, they would never perish; neither could the temptations and the fiery darts of the adversary overpower them unto blindness, to lead them away to destruction” (1 Nephi 15:24).

The power of the word is manifest in our lives when we live the principles we learn in our personal scripture study. The Lord will add to our sincere efforts the strength necessary to follow through with our righteous desires. He embraces us as we embrace His word.

Adjustments must also be made to the way we choose to interpret our experiences. Changing the way we think can be the most difficult change to make. Simply telling someone not to think about pornography is paradoxical in nature. To avoid thinking about something, people must know what they are to avoid, and so they must give thought to the very thing they’re trying not to think about.

Many who successfully abandon pornography report it is more helpful to focus on positive goals that are incompatible with viewing pornography than to divert all their energy to just not thinking about pornography. If individuals decide to focus instead on being more honest, for example, they could allow themselves to think often about honesty. This strategy avoids a focus on eliminating pornography—and subsequently thinking about pornography—that can trigger more pornography use.

I often suggest that people think honestly about their

temptations. One individual who tried this approach realized the women depicted in pornography would not act that way in real life. He learned that the images he saw were enhanced using computer technology and did not represent reality. He further discovered that some of the actors indulged in alcohol or drugs to numb their feelings, allowing them to participate in degrading activities. Because of this man’s honest approach to pornography and his efforts to recognize it for what it is, its attraction diminished significantly. He was able to cultivate more fully his ability to distinguish good from evil (see Genesis 3:5; Moses 4:11).

Be Accountable

Many people minimize their behavior by using phrases such as “I just happened to notice,” “I didn’t realize,” “It took me by surprise.” When we are accountable, we accept responsibility for our behavior. We are willing to make



REPENTANCE: A PROCESS OF CLEANSING

“Satan strives to convince one that sins can be hidden from others, yet it is he that causes them to be revealed in the most compromising circumstances. His objective is the enslavement of God’s children. All of his enticing, alluring temptations have as their root the destruction of the individual. . . .

“Seek out your bishop. He will show you how to repent and will help you do it. As you pray and act, you will be led to others who will support you. Repentance is a process of cleansing. It is difficult, but it has an end, a glorious end with peace and refreshing forgiveness and the miracle of a new beginning.”

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “To Be Free of Heavy Burdens,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 87.



changes in our environment that will make acting out less likely. For example, a person who is tempted by pornography on the Internet might agree to have filters installed on his or her computer, to leave the door open when using a computer, or to place a computer monitor so it faces high-traffic areas.⁴ The person would avoid being isolated in situations where he or she might be tempted to act out.

Consider the story of King David, who, “at the time when kings [went] forth to battle, . . . tarried still at Jerusalem” (2 Samuel 11:1). He should have been with the army, but instead he “walked upon the roof” and saw Bathsheba bathing (see 2 Samuel 11:2). He then made the mistake of succumbing to the temptation of lust. Likewise, those struggling with pornography should avoid any potentially compromising situations.

Abandon the Behavior

People struggling with pornography habits need to understand one aspect about their sins that is not often addressed: Sin and lust do bring temporary pleasure. If they didn't, they would have little power to entice us.

Focusing on positive goals that are incompatible with viewing pornography has proven to be an effective tool for those striving to overcome a pornography habit.

President Hinckley acknowledged that those who view pornography may find it to be exciting. “But,” he said, “it will destroy you.”⁵ This destruction may take months, even years, but it always occurs. Contemplating the wickedness of his people, Mormon said, “The Lord would not always suffer them to take happiness in sin” (Mormon 2:13).

Trusting the Lord enough to let go of pornography may be one of the most monumental steps people take on their road to repentance. But that's what repentance is about—a change of heart and mind and a willingness to abandon behavior that is contrary to God's will. Such abandonment replaces temporary gratification with permanent satisfaction in a healthy, meaningful marriage relationship, with closeness to God, and with the self-respect that comes from righteous living.

There Is Hope

If you struggle with a pornography habit, there is hope! Abandoning it and becoming free of its influence will require commitment, strength, and perseverance. Part of the battle will be fought by surrendering instead of fighting as you allow your will to be “swallowed up in the will of the Father” (Mosiah 15:7). Some battles will be fought within the silent chambers of the soul, where only you will know of your small victories along the road to recovery.⁶ The desire to abandon pornography is a righteous endeavor, one the Lord will support, provided you do your part. ■

Rory C. Reid is a member of the Pilgrims Landing Third Ward, Lehi Utah Jordan River Stake.

NOTES

1. “Selections from Addresses of President Gordon B. Hinckley,” *Ensign*, Mar. 2001, 65.
2. See Russell M. Nelson, “The Atonement,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 34.
3. See *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball (1982), 252.
4. See M. Russell Ballard, “Let Our Voices Be Heard,” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 16–19.
5. “A Prophet's Counsel and Prayer for Youth,” *Liabona*, Apr. 2001, 37; *Ensign*, Jan. 2001, 8.
6. See David O. McKay, in Conference Report, Oct. 1954, 83; see also Ezra Taft Benson, “In His Steps,” *Tambuli*, Feb. 1989, 3; *Ensign*, Sept. 1988, 2.

More on this topic: See “Danger Ahead! Avoiding Pornography's Trap,” *Liabona*, Oct. 2002, 12–17; *New Era*, Oct. 2002, 34–39; *Thomas S. Monson, “Pornography—the Deadly Carrier,”* *Liabona*, Nov. 2001, 2–5; *Ensign*, July 2001, 2–5; “*Breaking the Chains of Pornography,*” *Ensign*, Feb. 2001, 54–59.



STRENGTHENING THE FAMILY

OUR PROGRESS TOWARD PERFECTION

*A continuing series giving insights for your study and use of
“The Family: A Proclamation to the World.”*

“In the premortal realm, spirit sons and daughters knew and worshiped God as their Eternal Father and accepted His plan by which His children could obtain a physical body and gain earthly experience to progress toward perfection and ultimately realize his or her divine destiny as an heir of eternal life. The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave.”¹

Premortal Life Is the Key

If we are to understand our purpose here on earth and reach our divine potential, we must understand that we lived as spirit children of our Heavenly Father before we were



born. “When we comprehend the doctrine of premortal life,” said President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “we know that we are the children of God, that we lived with him in spirit form before entering mortality. We know that this life is a test, that life did not begin with birth, nor will it end with death. Then life begins to make sense, with meaning and purpose even in all of the chaotic mischief that mankind creates for itself.”²

The Blessing of a Physical Body

In our premortal life we rejoiced at the opportunity to come to earth, obtain a physical body, and gain mortal experience. We

knew this was the only way we could become like our perfect Father in Heaven and eventually enjoy the kind of life He lives—eternal life. President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) explained: “Nothing should be held in greater sacredness and honor than the covenant by which the spirits of men, the offspring of God in the spirit, are privileged to come into this world in mortal tabernacles. . . . The greatest punishment ever given was proclaimed against Lucifer and his angels. To be denied the privilege of mortal bodies forever is the greatest curse of all. These spirits have no progression, no hope of resurrection and eternal life! . . . Spirits cannot be made perfect without a body of flesh and bones. This body and its spirit are brought to immortality and blessings of salvation through the resurrection. . . . In no other way, other than through birth into this life and the resurrection, can spirits become like our Eternal Father.”³

Walking by Faith

Although some of God’s children need only to obtain a physical body and are then called back to His presence, the rest of us come to earth for additional reasons: to learn faith, to develop Christlike qualities in the face of opposition, and to be tried and tested. President Marion G. Romney (1897–1988), First Counselor in the First Presidency, taught: “In our upward climb, this mortal experience through which we are now passing is a necessary step. To obtain perfection, we had to leave our pre-earth home and come to earth. During the transfer, a veil was drawn over our spiritual eyes, and the memory of our premortal experiences was suspended. In the Garden of Eden, God endowed us with moral agency and, as it were, left us here on our own between the forces of good and evil to be proved—to see if, walking by faith, we would rise to our high potentiality by doing ‘all things whatsoever the Lord [our] God shall command [us]’” (Abraham 3:25).⁴



The sealing of generations does not happen automatically. We have the responsibility to search out our ancestors and employ the sealing power vicariously for them in the house of the Lord.

Eternal Family Relationships

When we speak of reaching our eternal potential, the ideal we have in mind is our Eternal Father. Those who inherit eternal life enter that high and holy station as married couples sealed by the power of the priesthood and enjoy relationships that endure beyond the grave. “That same sociality which exists among us here will exist among us there,” taught the Prophet Joseph Smith, “only it will be coupled with eternal glory, which glory we do not now enjoy” (D&C 130:2). Although we will certainly rejoice in the eternal fellowship of close friends, the associations that will mean most to us are family relationships that have been sealed eternally in the house of the Lord through priesthood ordinances.

This sealing does not happen automatically. We have the responsibility to search out our ancestors and employ the sealing power vicariously for them in the house of the Lord. President Brigham Young (1801–77) said: “We are called . . . to redeem the nations of the earth. The fathers cannot be made perfect without us; we cannot be made perfect without the fathers. There must be this chain in the holy Priesthood; it must be welded together from the latest generation that lives on the earth back to Father Adam, to bring back all that can be saved and placed where they can receive salvation and a glory in some kingdom.”⁵

It is a great blessing to live in this dispensation. We have been taught of our premortal existence and our choices there, we understand our purpose in mortality, we have the priesthood and the temple ordinances necessary to seal families eternally, and we have the resources to move this great work forward. As the Prophet Joseph Smith asked, “Shall we not go on in so great a cause?” (D&C 128:22). ■

NOTES

1. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liabona*, Oct. 2004, 49; *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.
2. “The Mystery of Life,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1983, 17.
3. In Conference Report, Oct. 1965, 27–28.
4. “Prayer Is the Key,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1976, 2.
5. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* (1997), 310.

Should We Climb?

By Michael T. Richie

A few years ago several friends from institute and I planned a two-day backpacking trip. We were experienced campers, quite familiar with the areas we would be traveling in and well equipped for most situations. We would soon learn, however, that without the guidance of the Holy Ghost our gear and knowledge would have been next to useless.

A few days before our trip the sky was clear and the temperatures were moderate. Our destination was Mount Chocorua in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. While it is true that the mountains of our region do not boast summits as high as those found in other parts of the world, the elevation gain from

trailhead to summit is often quite substantial, and New England is known for its highly unpredictable weather.

The day before our departure it started to rain. Normally this would not concern me; it often rained as we hiked. This time, however, I felt a growing sense of unease. I checked the forecast—light showers, nothing more. Still, I felt very uncomfortable as the evening progressed. The feeling grew as I prepared for bed, read

my scriptures, and said my prayers.

Finally I went to my pack and pulled out my guide map of the White Mountain National Forest. As I located Mount Chocorua on the map, my sense of unease doubled. It was so intense I considered calling off the trip, but that didn't feel right either. I found another

mountain we had on our list to climb and immediately felt better. After a prayer I felt good about this new destination. My only concern was possibly disappointing my friend Glenn, who had put much effort into planning this trip.

The next morning it was still raining lightly. After we all arrived at our departure point, I voiced my concerns and told my friends of my prayers and feelings. To my relief, two others had had the same feelings, and Glenn was more than willing to change mountains. We then prayed and asked the Lord to watch over us

After we had arrived at our departure point, I voiced my concerns. To my relief, two others had had the same feelings.



in our travels and to help us make the right decisions. We all felt comfortable with our new plans and departed.

Although the rain continued, our drive and climb passed without incident. After dinner the rain stopped and the clouds broke, revealing a beautiful sunset. Our spirits lifted, and we went to bed.

At midnight we were awakened by an intense electrical storm that lasted most of the night. While the rain, wind, and lightning were heavy where we were, we felt no impending danger. The lightning was far worse to the east where, from my vantage point, it was striking a particular area nearly every second and continued to do so for at least an hour. Glad that I was not there, I drifted back to sleep. The remainder of the trip was wet but passed safely and was very enjoyable.

A few days later I attended an institute cookout. All those who had gone on the backpacking trip were there. When Glenn arrived he had a curious look on his face. He showed us a section of a guidebook for the White Mountains. It stated that while Mount Chocorua is not as elevated as its neighbors, its bald face and position make it dangerous as one of the mountains in North America most frequently struck by lightning. We also confirmed that the area we saw bombarded by lightning was the Chocorua area.

How grateful we were that we were warned by the Holy Ghost not to go there at that time. ■

Michael T. Richie is a member of the Scituate Ward, Providence Rhode Island Stake.

Jazmín and the Sabbath Day

By Marcela Colaberardino de Mitillo

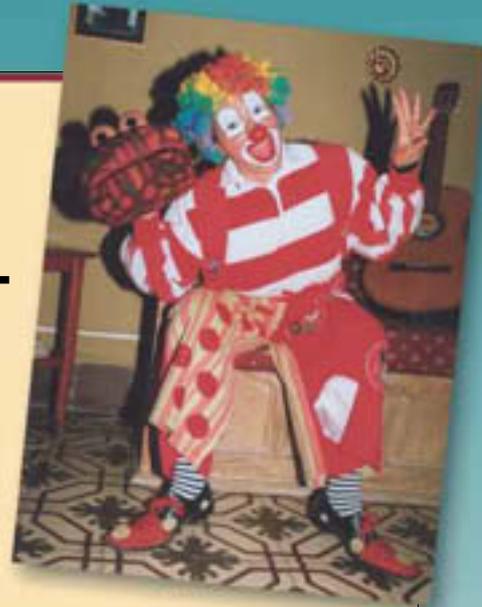
When my husband's salary was suddenly reduced by 30 percent several years ago, I began to think of ways I could help my family meet our expenses.

I had often organized birthday parties—including dressing up as a clown, providing games, and performing puppet shows—for my two children, and relatives had asked me why I didn't turn this into a job for other people's celebrations. Now seemed like a great time to turn their suggestion into action.

I began putting up posters at local businesses. Shortly thereafter Jazmín the Clown had her first job.

It wasn't a smooth start, however. For the first six months, most of the parties I received requests for were held on Sunday. Everyone, it seemed, needed a clown on the Sabbath! While I had promised the Lord I would never work on the Sabbath, it was discouraging to have to reject work when I needed it so much.

On one occasion I received an offer from the city government to help at the celebration for the Day of the Child, which was to be held on



Sunday. The officials offered to pay me well, but I couldn't break my promise. Some of my friends told me I would never be successful if I didn't accept work on the Sabbath, but I knew I couldn't disappoint the Lord. In the face of such opposition, I tried to focus on the promises He has made to those who honor the Sabbath (see D&C 59:9–13).

In time, circumstances began to improve. Now, some years later, I have lots of work on Saturdays and weekdays. I have even been able to persuade some of my clients to change their parties from Sunday to Saturday.

Initially, I wondered if I would be successful when it seemed that so many people treated Sunday like any other day of the week. But now I understand that when we show the Lord we are willing to keep His commandments and do our part, He will provide a way for us to do so. ■

Marcela Colaberardino de Mitillo is a member of the Roque Sáenz Peña Ward, Río Cuarto Argentina Stake.

A “Chance” Meeting

Name withheld

It was a gray, rainy day—very unusual for sunny southern California. My husband and I had just finished a full-to-overflowing endowment session as part of our stake temple day. My husband braved the driving rain to get the car while I waited inside the temple’s door.

As I quietly chatted with a member of my ward, a sister I did not recognize

approached us. She was dripping wet, and it appeared she had been crying. She explained that she had inadvertently left her vehicle’s headlights on and was now unable to start the car. She recognized us from the temple session—she was the only patron in that session not from our stake—and wondered if we had battery jumper cables she could borrow.

As we talked

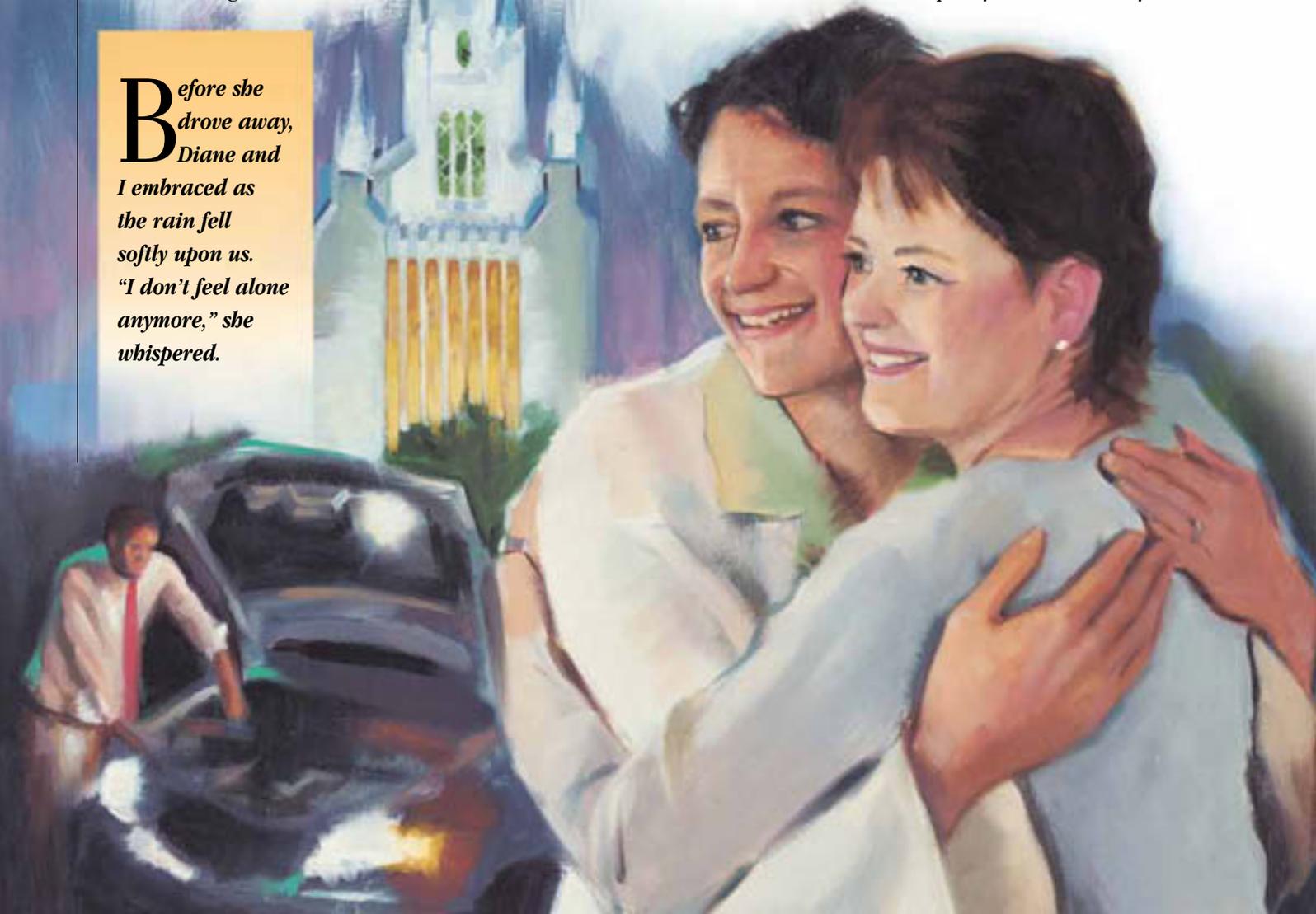
she began looking intently at me and finally asked, “Aren’t you Cathy West?” (Names have been changed.)

Surprised, I exclaimed, “That was my maiden name!”

“I’m Diane Cody Hart,” she replied, “Anne Cody’s little sister.”

Anne Cody—the name struck me like a bolt of lightning. I had not seen Anne for years. Three decades before and a thousand miles away, Anne had been my childhood friend—and my link to the Church. My mother and sisters and I were members of the Church, but my father was not. No one in my family was active. Anne quietly and consistently took

Before she drove away, Diane and I embraced as the rain fell softly upon us. “I don’t feel alone anymore,” she whispered.



me with her to church and Young Women and included me in Church activities. During those crucial years I remained active more because of Anne's friendship than because of my own testimony of the gospel.

That tenuous connection to the Church sustained me through my parents' divorce. It inspired me to counsel my heartbroken father to start attending church and to listen to the missionary discussions. It was strengthened as my father joined the Church and my parents remarried. It was my guide through the turbulent teenage years.

Through it all Anne remained my friend and example. When she decided to go to Brigham Young University, I didn't want to be left behind, so I went too. During that time good friends and full participation in the programs of the Church helped my testimony mature.

Then during my sophomore year, an unexpected tragedy befell my family. My oldest sister, who had suffered from emotional problems for years, took her own life. Our newly found testimonies comforted us through those difficult days.

I subsequently met a returned missionary and planned a temple marriage. The day before my wedding, my parents received their endowments, and we—my deceased sister included by proxy—were sealed as a family. Anne's quiet influence had brought the blessings of the temple not only to me but to my family as well.

I embraced Diane and expressed my appreciation for her sister's

friendship and example. When my husband arrived with the car, he reported that we had no jumper cables but insisted that Diane accompany us to a nearby mall to buy a set.

Diane and I waited in the car while my husband went inside to search for jumper cables. I asked Diane about her family, and she replied that they had all attended simultaneous temple sessions that evening—Anne in Chicago, Diane in San Diego, and their parents in Reno—while sacred temple ordinances were performed by proxy for her younger brother, who had died the previous year. Diane had come to the temple alone to participate in the special session while her husband took care of their three children.

I squeezed Diane's hand and asked how her brother had died. She began to weep and whispered that her brother—to whom she had been very close—had taken his own life. Through her tears Diane related how alone she had felt, even in the crowded endowment session, as she thought of the circumstances of her brother's death.

I could see the Lord's hand in bringing the two of us together that evening. To the gentle patter of the rain on the roof of the car, I told her about my sister's suicide many years earlier and my family's struggle to understand and cope. I held her hand and expressed my understanding and empathy until my husband arrived a short time later with jumper cables.

We returned to the temple, and my husband started Diane's car. Before

she drove away, Diane and I embraced as the rain fell softly upon us. "I don't feel alone anymore," she whispered.

As Diane disappeared into the rain, I marveled at Heavenly Father's goodness. He had brought me together with one of His daughters who needed comfort I was uniquely prepared to provide. And He had granted me a priceless opportunity to repay in some small way the special service a dear friend had given me 30 years before. ■

He Served Me Before He Met Me

By José Salvador Yanez López

I was baptized in Comayaguela, Honduras, in February 1992. After serving a mission in El Salvador, I moved to San Pedro Sula, Honduras. There I met Brenda, a beautiful young woman who had been home from her mission for only nine days. Some months later we were married in the Guatemala City Guatemala Temple.

We established our home in the Fesitranh Ward in Honduras, and before long I was called as the first counselor in the bishopric. At a priesthood executive committee meeting, the bishop informed us that one of our ward members, Brother Fidel Durón, was moving to another ward in the



stake. He told us that Brother Durón was a very service-minded person and that every ward member no doubt had something to thank him for.

Brother Durón helped anyone in need, whether it involved an electrical problem, some construction work, a broken pipe, or an early-morning trip to the hospital. His service was not limited to Church members but was also extended to his neighbors and acquaintances. He was loved and respected by all. The bishop gave us an assignment to find all those members who had something to thank Brother Durón for. A meeting was planned to honor him for the selfless service he had given for such a long time.

I said to myself, “I don’t have anything to thank Brother Durón for.” I had lived in the ward for just a short time and had spoken with him on a few occasions. He seemed to be a pleasant person, but I didn’t think I

had had the opportunity to be the recipient of an act of service at his hand.

Some time later I was called to be a member of the high council and assigned to the López Arellano Ward, the ward Brother Durón now attended. One Sunday I was in Sunday School in this ward, and the teacher asked class members to share personal experiences regarding service.

I happened to be seated to the left of a sister named Adela Rosa de Santos. She started to tell how the man at her right, Brother Durón, had served as her home teacher when she and her family were new members of the Church. She told how his kind service had given them strength and encouragement when they needed it and how he had blessed their lives. She concluded by saying,

Sister Adela told how her home teacher’s kind service had blessed their lives. *“If it weren’t for Brother Durón, I wouldn’t be here,” she said.*

“If it weren’t for you, Brother Durón, I wouldn’t be here.”

I could hardly believe my ears. Sister Adela’s daughter, Suyapa, was the missionary who had knocked on my door five years earlier, and now I was a member of the Church and my life had been filled with the richest possible blessings. I had been given

the opportunity to serve a mission, the privilege of receiving my temple ordinances, and the glorious hope of having an eternal family.

At that moment I learned that 20 years before, a humble man who was true to his commitment to serve others had unknowingly labored for the welfare of my soul. I was filled with a joy that is

hard to express and with love for my brother, Fidel Durón. I had once thought I didn’t have anything to thank Brother Durón for. Now I considered myself to be first and foremost on the list the bishop had asked us to make.

That special meeting for Brother Durón was never held, because he returned to the Fesitranh Ward for a time. We now have a beautiful friendship. I have so many reasons to be grateful to Jesus Christ for all He has done for me and also to Brother Durón for the love he showed me 20 years before he ever met me. ■

José Salvador Yanez López is a member of the Fesitranh Ward, Fesitranh Honduras Stake.

DON'T BE FOOLED



NO MATTER HOW IT'S DISGUISED,
SIN IS STILL SIN. STAY AWAY FROM IT.
(SEE D&C 50:3; MOSES 4:4.)



The Spirit of Revelation

BY ELDER M. GONZALO SEPÚLVEDA

Area Authority Seventy
Chile Area



If we will meditate over a situation that worries us, fervently pray to God for help, and strive to keep His commandments, revelation will flow into our minds.

Many years ago I had an experience with personal revelation that would forever change my life. I had recently graduated from college and was working for a good company. Everything seemed to be going well for me, but I had the unsettled feeling that something was missing. And I had many questions for which I could not find answers. I never thought that an invitation from my friend Imable to “meet the Mormons” would lead me to find answers to my questions—indeed, that it would have transcendent consequences for my life.

When Imable and I arrived at the meeting that Sunday in August 1974, the Church members—particularly the youth—greeted us with enthusiasm, as if we were old friends. We listened to a speaker who had great faith in what he was saying. When he finished I was surprised at the warm feeling I experienced.

Two days later I found myself in the home of one of the members, listening to the missionaries teach the gospel. Unfortunately my family would not allow the missionaries into our home because of our strong religious traditions and because they were afraid. I could understand their feelings; nevertheless, I

needed to know the truth for myself, no matter what the consequences. And so I studied it out in my mind (see D&C 9:8) and prayed to God for wisdom and knowledge.

One day, as the missionaries taught me about the First Vision, the Holy Spirit testified powerfully to me that the Prophet Joseph Smith had indeed seen the Father and the Son. I said to Elder Dennis Lamb, “It is true! I know it is true!”

That night I followed the missionaries’ counsel to pour out my heart to God and ask Him if the Book of Mormon was also true. Again I experienced that peaceful and joyful feeling I had felt earlier. I was grateful for the new life the Lord was offering me through the missionaries. My mind and heart were illuminated “by the Spirit of truth” (D&C 6:15), and I knew the sweet reality of a divine Father, who loves us and extends His arms to us through His servants.

The blessings soon followed. Two months after my baptism, I baptized my youngest sister and brother. And a year later I began my service as a full-time missionary in southern Chile. My mother was baptized while I was in the field, and I was able to baptize my

father when I returned home. My two sisters and my brother also served honorable missions. Months after I returned from my mission, I met my sweet wife, Adriana, and we were sealed in the temple. We were blessed with three children born in the covenant. All of this is because I listened to the quiet promptings that testified to me of the Prophet Joseph Smith and the restored Church. How grateful I am for the gift of personal revelation!

The Need for Wisdom

The prophet Joel foresaw the latter days approximately 3,000

I had recently graduated from college and was working for a good company. But I had the unsettled feeling that something was missing.

years ago and spoke about revelation. The Lord declared through him that after a spiritual drought, a time would come when “I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions” (Joel 2:28). The same scripture was quoted by the Apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost, when about 3,000 souls were baptized (see Acts 2:17, 41). And it was proclaimed again by the angel Moroni when he visited the Prophet Joseph Smith (see Joseph Smith—History 1:41).

In our world today we see fear and confusion, violence and corruption. These emotions and actions are caused, in part, by not trusting in the Lord’s arm and by failing to seek wisdom through personal revelation.

Wisdom was the only desire in King Solomon’s heart: “Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great?” (2 Chronicles 1:10).

Wisdom is generously offered to us, as stated in James 1:5: “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.” The Prophet Joseph Smith sought wisdom through revelation, and as a result, he brought to light monumental knowledge for humankind.

Seeking Wisdom through Personal Revelation

We can seek wisdom for our own lives through personal revelation. Most often it comes in quiet promptings and impressions. If we will meditate over a situation that worries us, fervently pray to God for help, and strive to keep His commandments, revelation will flow into our minds and we will be a light to those around us.

I testify that if we follow our Lord Jesus Christ and His teachings with faith and with repentant hearts, He will guide us with “the spirit of revelation” (D&C 8:3)—even in times of fear and doubt—and our lives will be blessed. ■

THE TEACHERS QUORUM

The second in a series of articles about priesthood quorums and their purposes. Here members of the Presiding Bishopric share some thoughts about teachers quorums.

How can the quorum help individuals become spiritually stronger, especially during the critical teachers quorum years?

Bishop H. David Burton (above center), Presiding Bishop: Our young people need the opportunity to feel the Spirit in a Church setting. Imagine what it means to have a young man kneel with his peers around a classroom table, or whatever the forum is, in humble prayer. This practice can make a big difference in the lives of young men.

Imagine what it means to have a young man kneel with his peers in humble prayer for another quorum member.



Bishop Richard C. Edgley (far left), First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric:

Think what it does if they kneel in prayer for another quorum member who is sick or has gone astray or is having a problem. It starts to build the brotherhood these boys ought to be feeling. At these young men's age, so often their friends are most influential in their lives. We would like them to have friends in the quorum with whom they have spiritual experiences, with whom they share support, and with whom they develop a real brotherhood.

Bishop Burton: It's one thing to have a quorum adviser call to inquire about a quorum member's welfare. It's quite another to have his quorum president visit or call.

What were some of your early assignments (see D&C 20:53–55) as a teacher in the Aaronic Priesthood?

Bishop Keith B. McMullin (above right), Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric: I remember my first home teaching assignment was with a brother from Scandinavia who spoke broken English. He called me on the phone, and I tried hard to understand what he was saying. He invited me to come to his home. He was an older man, a very fine Latter-day Saint, and my senior companion. He invited me in and said in a heavy accent, "I think we should say a prayer." We knelt down and had a prayer. At that time in my home, our family prayers were reserved for

major occasions—they weren't an everyday occurrence. My home teaching companion, however, placed prayer into a much different category for me. I thought to myself, "Home teaching is really important, and prayer is an important part of home teaching." And of course I learned what a wonderful, precious experience it is.

Bishop Burton: I can remember how frightened I was the first time I was assigned to go home teaching. My companion was a less-active Melchizedek Priesthood holder, but he was a faithful home teacher. When we went into the homes of the people, that tough, large, rather rough-appearing man was as meek and mild as anyone could be and always insisted that we kneel in prayer with the families. He was a marvelous human being who taught me—a young teacher—how to be a home teacher.

You have talked about the important role of youth in quorum leadership. What about the role of adult leaders in a quorum?

Bishop Edgley:

You've got to include the bishopric. It starts there. I like the counsel President Thomas S. Monson, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has given. He said you talk

With the help of a devoted companion, a teacher can learn that home teaching is important and that prayer is an important part of home teaching.



A young man's course usually will be right and true if he has a family that gathers together regularly to pray in the home.

with your counselor responsible for the deacons and tell that counselor to make sure every single deacon becomes a teacher. You talk with the counselor responsible for the teachers and tell him to make sure every teacher becomes a priest. As bishop, you say, "I'll take the priests. I'll make sure every one of them receives the Melchizedek Priesthood." It can be done; it has been done.

What are some of the biggest challenges teachers face today, and how can we help them stand firm?

Bishop Edgley: A boy this age wants his independence. He's testing his parents and is trying out his freedoms. That is one of the reasons the teachers quorum has to make sure his freedoms fall within the right sphere of friends and the right environment.

Bishop McMullin: There is a window of receptiveness in a young man's life when he is 12 to 15 years of age. Young people this age are often more inclined to wonder about patriarchal blessings; they are more inclined to wonder about the Book of Mormon. This is a pivotal period.

Bishop Burton: If the sail is set, the course will be right. If a family has a long tradition of having family home evening, if they have even cursory gospel study in the home, and if they gather together on a regular basis to pray in the home—that is a great advantage. Parents should do everything possible to accomplish those three things. That is the best insurance policy they can have. ■



A **TEACHER** IN THE **PRIESTHOOD**

BY PAMELA REID

When Darron Moller and his family moved to New Zealand, Darron was assigned Scott, a teacher in the Aaronic Priesthood, as his home teaching companion.

“I didn’t know who Scott was, and when I asked, I was told, ‘Just look for someone taller than you.’ I soon found him,” Darron remembers.

Scott, 15, is a counselor in his teachers quorum presidency, and like Nephi, one of his heroes in the Book of Mormon, Scott is large in stature. He also has Nephi’s determination to follow the Lord’s commandments.

“At school I listen to people in my class congratulating each other about doing crazy things, and I just think, ‘I’m so glad I don’t do that,’” Scott says. “Ever since I was small it’s been in my mind that those things are wrong, and knowing the consequences makes it easier not to do wrong things.”

As a member of the teachers quorum, which has the responsibility to prepare the sacrament, Scott was faced with an unfortunate situation one Sunday: there weren’t enough sacrament cups for his large ward.

“I felt bad—feeling that we hadn’t fulfilled our duty,” Scott says. “We decided



that the teachers had to be more organized, and now our quorum presidency meets the hour before sacrament meeting for our presidency meeting to make sure everything is in order for the sacrament and to prepare for the next few weeks. I like the order in the Church. When there is order, you don’t have to worry.”

As his home teaching companion, Darron has found that Scott adds a new dimension to his calling. “I resolved to be 100 percent

in visiting our families, and Scott definitely makes that possible. He calls me to make sure I’ve made the appointments. And when he taught the lesson the first time, he asked me to go early so I could hear what he’d prepared. Even the little children we taught listened to him.”

And how does Scott feel about being a home teacher? “I like going home teaching with Brother Moller. If it were two teachers going together, we just wouldn’t know as much. But by having someone older than me, I get to hear different viewpoints from different age groups. Sometimes it’s scary giving a lesson to just a few people—you don’t know how you’re going to be received. But it feels good when they listen.” ■

Pamela Reid is a member of the Birkenhead Ward, Auckland New Zealand Harbour Stake.



Did You Know?

WHO AM I?

Book of Mormon Hero

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

1. I am a descendant of Lehi.
2. At age 11 I went with my father to a highly populated southern city.
3. My teen years were a time of terrible war and violence.
4. At age 15 I was visited of the Lord.
5. I am a disciple of Jesus Christ.
6. As a teenager I was unusually “large in stature” for my age.
7. Starting in my 16th year I led my people into many battles and had some success as a military commander.
8. When I was older I preached the gospel to my people, the Nephites, between wars with the Lamanites but had little success.

9. After many years I resigned as commander of my people’s military forces.

10. I abridged a book covering almost 1,000 years of my people’s history.

11. Many years after resigning, I voluntarily returned to lead the armies of my people.

12. When I was separated from my son, I wrote him letters.

13. I wrote a strong warning for people in the last days.

14. My prayer to God was that my brethren might come to know Jesus Christ.

15. I was killed in a war with the Lamanites.

For the answer, see Words of Mormon 1:8; 3 Nephi 5:13, 20; 29–30; Mormon 1:6, 8–12, 15–16; 2; 3; 5:1; 8:3; Moroni 8–9.



Leadership Tip: Be a Goal Keeper

As you make goals, think about what you could do to become a better leader at church, at school, or in your community. You could develop your public-speaking skills, become more organized and keep better track of your activities, or improve your personal righteousness so you can be a better example.

Write your goals down where you will see them often, and be sure to do something at least weekly to bring you closer to achieving them.

Young Single Adults in the British Isles

Young single adults in the British Isles are standing a little taller after their largest-ever young single adult conference, held in Manchester, England. More than 540 young people from England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and elsewhere came together for one special weekend.

The young single adults helped bring others hope through a humanitarian aid project—sorting and boxing donated clothing and painting 250 blackboards for school

kits. The group also cleaned a local park in Wythenshawe.

The conference wasn’t all work though. The young adults had a dance, participated in a play, and listened to speakers, including Elder W. Craig Zwick of the Seventy, then First Counselor in the Europe West Area Presidency, who gave some advice on how to stand a little taller. “Here is the key,” he said. “Put on the whole armour of God” (see Ephesians 6:11–17).



Liabona Promotes Understanding

I am the president of a small association in Italy that works to strengthen interreligious understanding in our country. We have had many occasions to work with Latter-day Saints and have had very positive experiences.

Thanks to one of your members, I have for a number of years received the *Liabona*. I believe it is important reading not just for your members, but for anyone who wants to understand more about your church.

I have read and shared remarks from President Gordon B. Hinckley, President Thomas S. Monson, and others. One article that profoundly touched me was “The Currant Bush,” by Elder Hugh B. Brown (see *Liabona*, Mar. 2002, 22).

I also want to express my sincere appreciation to James A. Toronto for his beautiful article “A Latter-day Saint Perspective on Muhammad” (see *Liabona*, June 2002, 30). In my opinion, this article was respectful of the



truths expressed by another faith. I read it with sincere pleasure.

I hope the Lord will continue to pour out His love to all humankind in these difficult times.

*Pasquale Cardinale,
Rome, Italy*

Thankful for The Friend

Thanks for a wonderful publication that brings good news to all Church members as well as members of other faiths. I am especially thankful for *The Friend* section. Each issue contains perfect aids for the important work of teaching children the gospel, and we use it every Sunday in our Primary.

*Olga Lozano de González,
Azteca Ward,
Monterrey Mexico Moderna Stake*

Strength for Hard Times

I want to express my gratitude for those who make the *Liabona* possible as well as for those who share their personal stories. The magazine has been a part of my life since my first months as a member of the Church. In its pages I have found guidance and strength for hard times, and I have been awakened to a remembrance of my duties (see Mosiah 1:17) as I have read the inspired messages of the General Authorities.

*Miltbon Osciél Escobar Pelicó,
Nuevo Palmar Branch,
San Felipe Guatemala Stake*

**Listen to the Prophet**

The messages in the *Liabona* help me understand the purpose of life. The magazine is my guide; it helps me follow the strait and narrow way that leads to life eternal (see 2 Nephi 31:18).

I love to read the counsel of Heavenly Father given to us through the prophets. I know that President Gordon B. Hinckley is a prophet. Let us read the *Liabona* and hearken to his counsel.

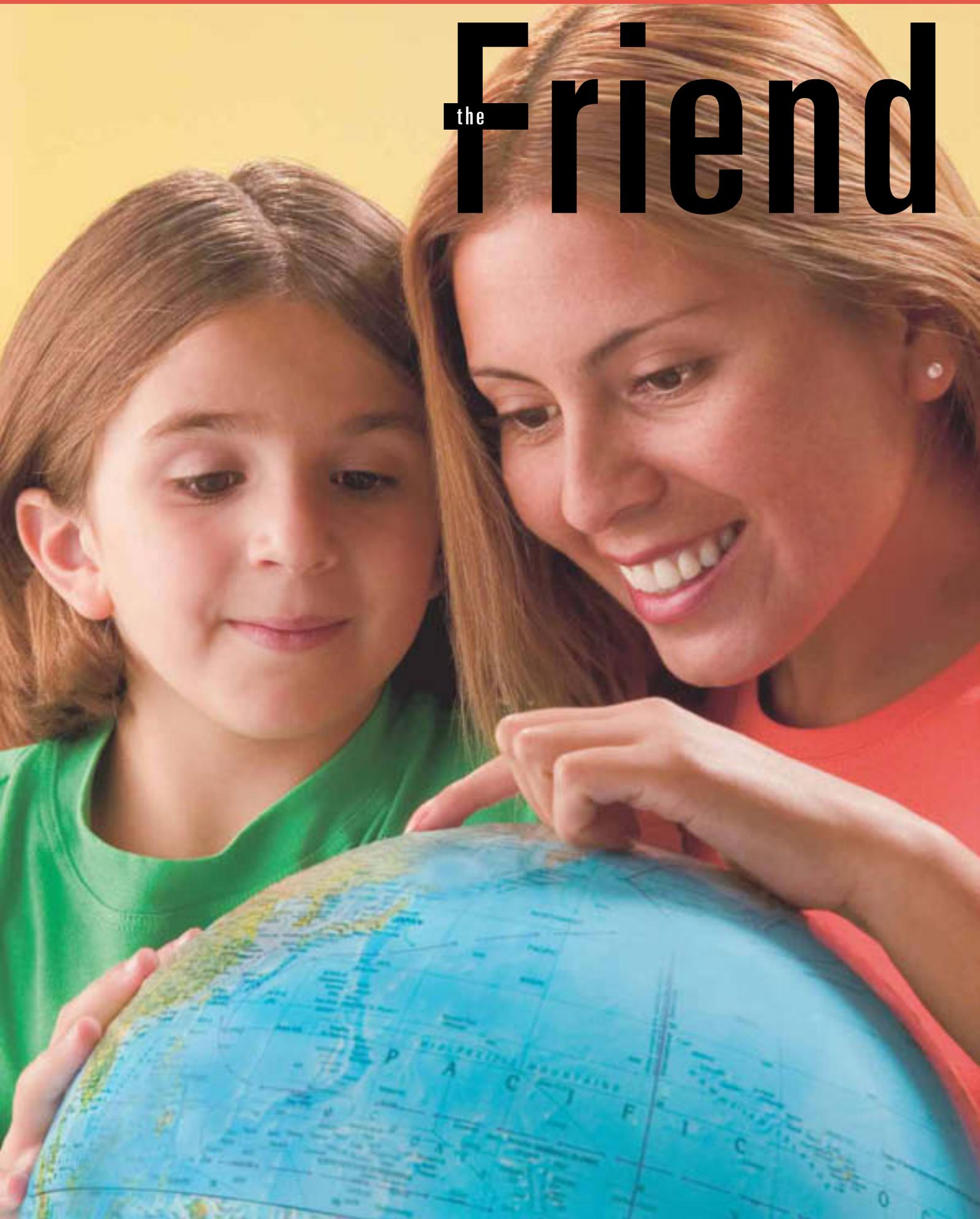
*Andre Tshamola,
Luputa Branch,
Democratic Republic of Congo Kinsbasa Mission*

A Spiritual Compass

I was filled with great peace and comfort when I read President Thomas S. Monson’s message “The Way of the Master,” in the January 2003 issue, because it was closely related to a personal experience. His message reinforced my knowledge of the importance of living prophets who help us stay on course. The Lord provides us with great help through the spiritual compass known as the *Liabona*.

*Jonatban Santacruz,
La Tabona Ward,
Caracas Venezuela Palo Verde Stake*

the Friend



Be Not Afraid



When President Hinckley left for a mission, his good father handed him a card on which were written five words: "Be not afraid, only believe."

BY PRESIDENT GORDON B. HINCKLEY

I am optimistic concerning the work of the Lord. I realize, of course, that we are beset in the world with many tragic problems. I have been in areas where war rages and hate smolders in the hearts of people. I have watched with alarm the crumbling morals of our society. And yet I am optimistic. I have a simple and solemn faith that right will triumph and that truth will prevail.

When I left for a mission years ago, my good father handed me a card on which were written five words: "Be not afraid, only believe" (Mark 5:36).

I believe in the triumph of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the triumph of the Church and kingdom of God on the earth. The Lord declared that "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached . . . for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14). Can it possibly be accomplished? I remember an insight that suggested how it can happen.

I met a woman in South America who had just joined the Church. Fired by a great

love for that which she had found, she had gone about enthusiastically telling others. During a period of only seven months since her baptism, she had referred 300 acquaintances to the missionaries. At one point, 60 had come into the Church.

Yes, this work requires sacrifice, it requires effort, it requires courage to speak out and faith to try. As Paul wrote to Timothy: "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord" (2 Timothy 1:7–8).

I wish that every member of this Church would put those words where he might see them every morning as he begins his day. They would give us the courage to speak up; they would give us the faith to try; they would strengthen our conviction of the Lord Jesus Christ. I believe that more miracles would happen over the earth.

I know that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, that this is Their holy work. ●

From "Be Not Afraid, Only Believe," Liahona, May 1996, 2–7; Ensign, Feb. 1996, 2–5.



Getting to Know President Boyd K. Packer

To learn more about President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, match the lettered pictures above with the clues below.

- ___ 1. The fifth son and tenth child in his family, President Packer was born here.
- ___ 2. About his childhood, he says, “I thought we were poor. I later learned that that was not true.” Though his family had little of this, they were rich in faith, testimony, and love of family.
- ___ 3. He shows his love for nature by painting and carving animals, especially these flying creatures.
- ___ 4. He was unable to serve a full-time mission because World War II broke out. Instead, he served his country by operating one of these.
- ___ 5. He and Donna Edith Smith were married here on July 27, 1947.
- ___ 6. These strong animals, sculpted by his son,

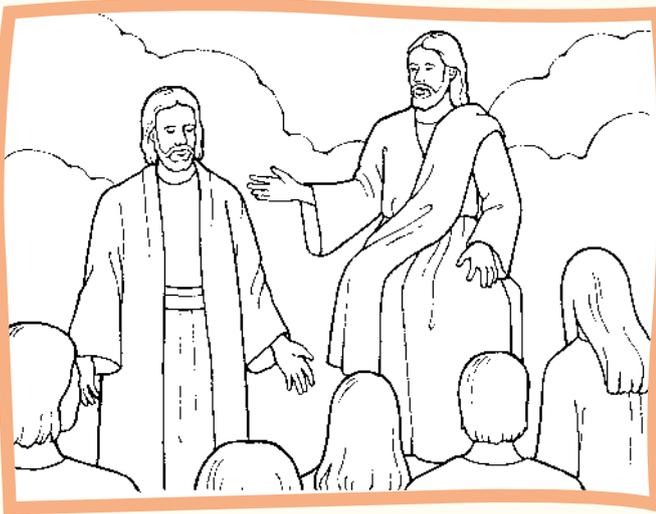
symbolize the faith of his pioneer ancestors and his own family’s cooperating and taking upon themselves the Savior’s “yoke” (see Matthew 11:29–30).

- ___ 7. He and his wife, Donna, have 10 children. They owned these so the children could learn to work.
- ___ 8. He taught seminary classes using these items.
- ___ 9. One of his grown sons says that early in the morning he sees this inside his parents’ house and knows his father is already awake. President Packer enjoys writing and studying.
- ___ 10. He has called this “the single most powerful influence in [his] life.”

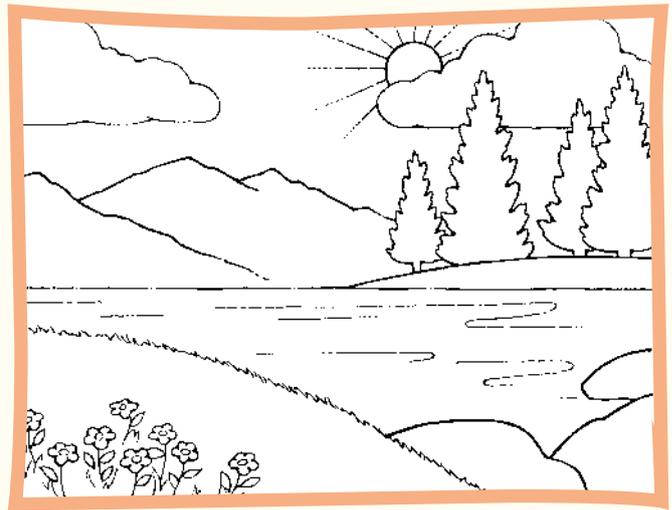
Adapted from “Elder Boyd K. Packer: Disciple of the Master Teacher,” Tambuli, May 1987, 10–15; Ensign, June 1986, 8–13.

I Am My Heavenly Father's Child

Instructions: Read the captions under each picture. Then color the pictures. You could use these captions and pictures for a family home evening lesson or a Primary talk.



1. I lived in heaven with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ before I was born.



2. A beautiful world was created for me.



3. Heavenly Father asked special people to help me and guide me.



4. I can talk to Heavenly Father in prayer, and He will answer me.



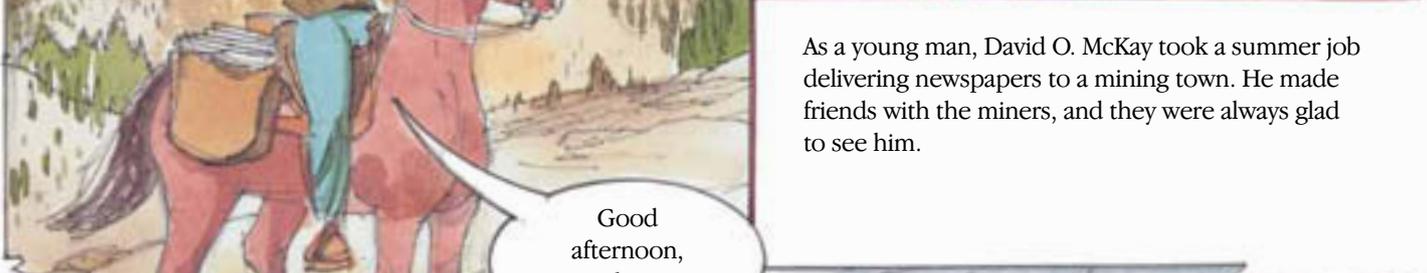
FROM THE LIFE OF PRESIDENT DAVID O. MCKAY

A Well-Educated Man

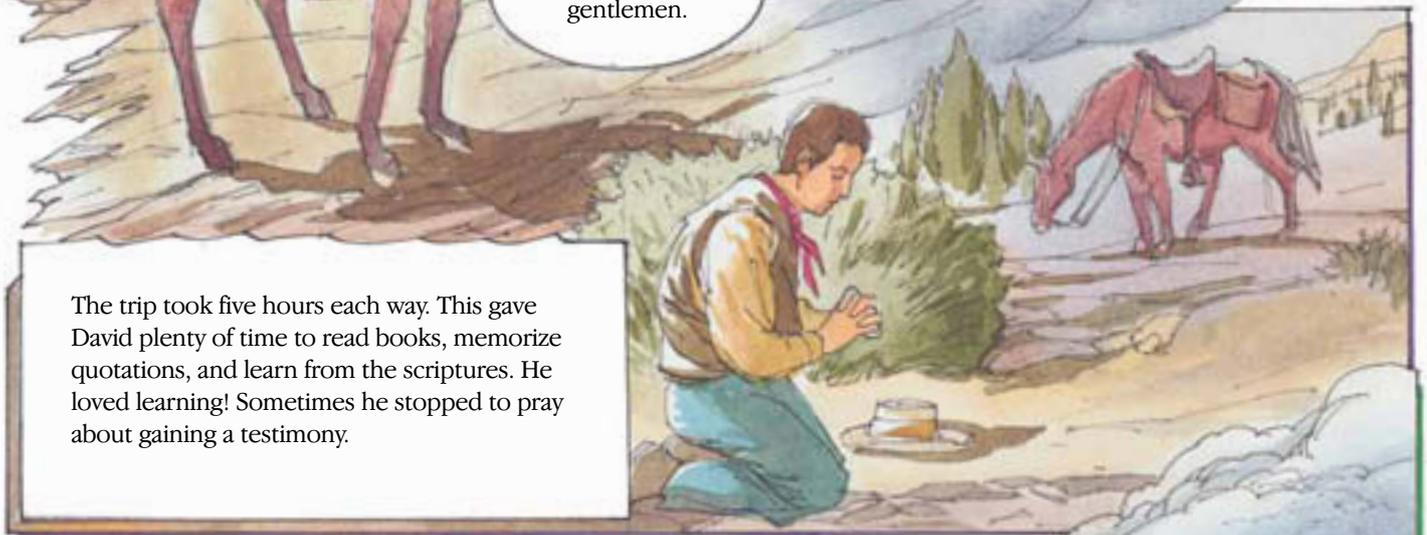


Here comes David with our newspapers!

As a young man, David O. McKay took a summer job delivering newspapers to a mining town. He made friends with the miners, and they were always glad to see him.



Good afternoon, gentlemen.



The trip took five hours each way. This gave David plenty of time to read books, memorize quotations, and learn from the scriptures. He loved learning! Sometimes he stopped to pray about gaining a testimony.



Good luck! We're so proud of you all.

Years later, he and his brother and two sisters packed a wagon full of vegetables, bottled fruit, flour, pots and pans, and clothing and moved to Salt Lake City to attend the University of Utah.

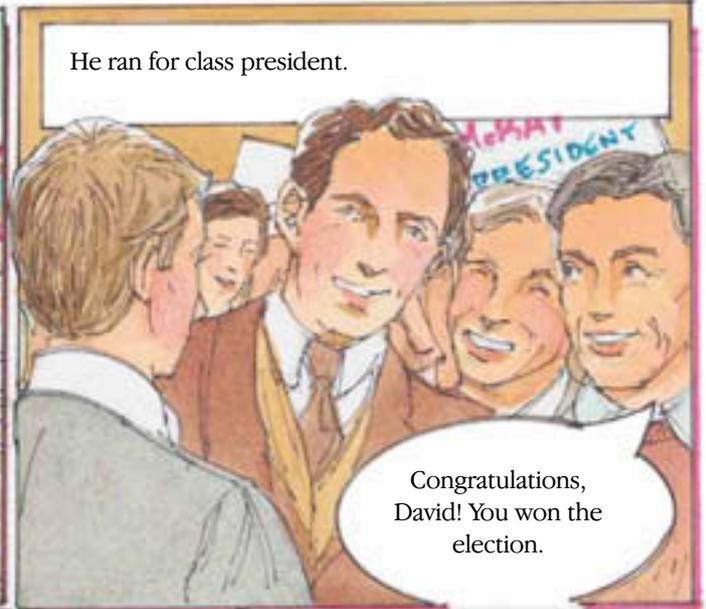


Thank you, Mother. We'll write often.

David made time for both studying and having fun. He joined the university's first football team.



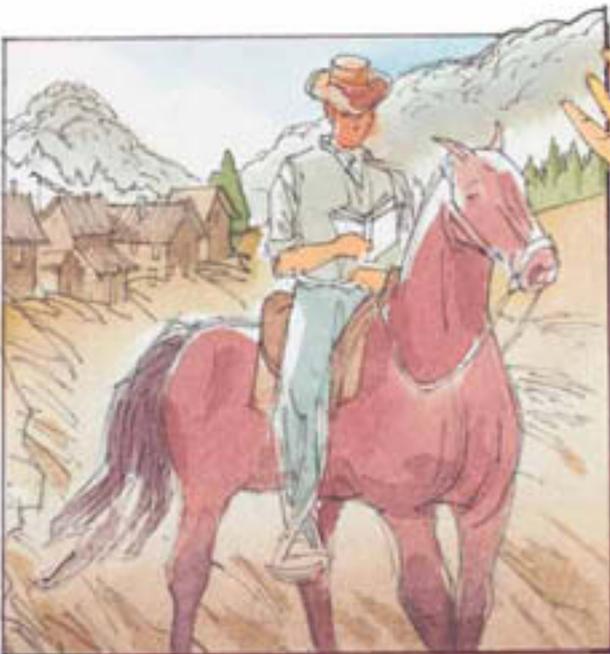
He ran for class president.



Congratulations, David. You've worked hard.



And when he graduated, he was the valedictorian—an award given to the person with the highest grades.



David never stopped learning. When he was President of the Church, some of his sermons included quotes he had memorized long before while riding his horse.

Adapted from Susan Arrington Madsen, The Lord Needed a Prophet (1990), 140–41, 143; and Joy N. Hulme, The Illustrated Story of President David O. McKay (1982), 17, 24.

You Must Choose for Yourself

“He that hath eternal life is rich” (D&C 6:7).

BY SUSAN B. MITCHELL

A true story taken from historical sources

Priscilla’s grandparents lived in a beautiful home in Liverpool, England. Though Priscilla was the fourth of nine children and had many cousins, Grandfather and Grandmother Mitchell made her feel like their favorite person in the entire world. She loved to be in their home, and they were always buying gifts for her.

Then, one day, everything changed. Missionaries from America taught her family the gospel, and her parents were baptized. Priscilla and her brothers and sisters planned to be baptized too. When Grandfather found out, he was angry.

Priscilla had never known Grandfather to be angry before. It frightened her. He shouted unforgettable, sickening words to Priscilla’s father: “Hezekiah, take your family and leave. Don’t ever come back!”

At home, the stunned family gathered around the fireplace. Father had never looked so sad. Mother hadn’t stopped crying since they had left their grandparents’ home.

Priscilla was confused and heartbroken. “Why don’t Grandmother and Grandfather love us anymore?” she cried.

Father tried to explain. “Grandfather is opposed to our new church. He wants no part of it, and he wants no part of us if we continue with it.” Father stood tall. “But I know that Jesus Christ lives. This is His true

Church. He will help us find the way, as long as we do everything we can to be like Him.”

Priscilla’s family tried to be happy, but everything seemed to get worse. Father lost his job as a minister in their former church, so money was scarce even though he taught school. Mother mended clothes instead of replacing them. Priscilla tried not to complain, but life seemed to get harder every day. She longed to visit her grandparents. If she could only talk to them . . .

A knock sounded at the door. Priscilla’s heart leaped with hope, but it wasn’t her grandparents. Uncle George and Aunt Hannah stood on the porch with gifts and a basket of food. Priscilla was happy to see them, but all too soon she was sent outside so they could talk to her parents. It sounded serious.

“Priscilla,” Aunt Hannah finally called. “How would you like to come live with us?” They had no children and wanted to adopt her, Uncle George explained. There would be plenty of room for her in their mansion, and she could receive better schooling.

“It will leave more of the basics for your brothers and sisters too,” Aunt Hannah added. Priscilla knew that it was a struggle for her parents to feed and clothe all nine of their children. If she went, it would make things easier for her family.





Father gazed sadly at the floor. Mother sobbed into her handkerchief. The offer was kind, but accepting it would not be easy. Priscilla packed her bags and bid her family farewell.

“This will be your bedroom,” Aunt Hannah said. Priscilla had always shared a room with her four sisters. Now she had a room of her own and a maid to clean it.

Aunt Hannah took her shopping to buy pretty dresses. In no time, the closet was full of them. Her aunt and uncle planned parties so Priscilla could meet new friends. Priscilla had many advantages, but she missed being with her family and listening to Father teach as they sat around the fireplace.

On the morning of her 10th birthday, Priscilla was making dancing dolls out of hollyhock blooms in the garden. She was excited for the party to be held

that afternoon, but she wished her sisters could come.

Suddenly, she spotted a tall, thin man coming up the road with a walking stick. Priscilla ran to meet him.

“Happy birthday, Princess Priscilla,” Father said. He swept her into his arms and swung her around.

“Oh, Father, you remembered!” she exclaimed.

Together they walked inside. Father pulled a letter from his pocket. “Priscilla, Uncle George and Aunt Hannah have requested to officially adopt you.” Priscilla knew what that meant—she would inherit great wealth and a respected name. She would never need to worry about money again.

“I have more news,” Father said. “Soon your mother, brothers, sisters, and I are going to America.”

“Will you ever come back?” Priscilla asked.

Father shook his head. “George and Hannah love you. They will take care of you and give you more wealth and opportunities than I can ever offer. On the other hand, life in America with the new church will be difficult and require many sacrifices.” Father looked into his daughter’s eyes. “You must choose for yourself, Priscilla.”

Priscilla didn’t hesitate. She ran to Aunt Hannah and hugged and kissed her. “I love you, Aunt Hannah, and I will always remember you,” she said. “But I know that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is true. I must go to America with my family and be baptized.”

And that is exactly what she did. ●

Susan B. Mitchell is a member of the West Bountiful Third Ward, West Bountiful Utah Stake.



“Sacrifice provides an opportunity for us to prove to the Lord that we love Him more than any other thing. As a result, the course sometimes becomes difficult since this is the process of perfection that prepares us for the celestial kingdom.”

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Law of Sacrifice,” *Liahona*, Mar. 2002, 12; *Ensign*, Oct. 1998, 7.

A Sister's Example

BY ELDER MATTHEW COWLEY

(1897–1953)

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

I had a little mother . . . in New Zealand. I knew her on my first mission when I was [young]. In those days she called me her son. When I went back to preside, she called me her father. . . .

Now, on one occasion I called in as I always did when I visited that vicinity to see this grand little woman, then in her 80s and blind. She did not live in an organized branch, had no contact with the priesthood except as the missionaries visited there. We had no missionaries in those days. They were away at war.

. . . She was out in her backyard by her little fire. I reached forth my hand to shake hands with her, and I was going to rub noses [in a Maori greeting] with her. And she said, “Do not shake hands with me, Father.”

I said, “Oh, that is clean dirt on your hands. I am willing to shake hands with you. I am glad to. I want to.”

She said, “Not yet.” Then she got on her

hands and knees and crawled over to her little house. At the corner of the house there was a spade. She lifted up that spade and crawled off in another direction, measuring the distance as she went. She finally arrived at a spot and started digging down into the soil with that spade. It finally struck something hard. She took out the soil with her hands and lifted out a fruit jar. She opened that fruit jar and reached down in it, took something out, and handed it to me. And it turned out to be [a lot of] New Zealand money. . . .

She said, “There is my tithing. Now I can shake hands with the priesthood of God.”

I said, “You do not owe that much tithing.”

She said, “I know it. I do not owe it now, but I am paying some in advance, for I do not know when the priesthood of God will get around this way again.”

And then I leaned over and pressed my nose and forehead against hers, and the tears from my eyes ran down her cheeks. ●

In Conference Report, Oct. 1948, 159–60; spelling and punctuation modernized.



Matthew Cowley was ordained an Apostle in 1945. As a young man he served a mission in New Zealand, and later he returned as mission president during World War II.



Because My Teacher

Loves Me



“By love serve one another” (Galatians 5:13).

BY PATRICIA REECE ROPER

Based on an experience from the author’s family

Desiree listened to her Primary teacher, Sister Ruiz, in wonder. She couldn’t believe what Sister Ruiz was saying. It seemed too good to be true. Desiree looked at the other children in her class. They didn’t seem to be as amazed as she was. Finally Desiree raised her hand. “Do you really mean it, Sister Ruiz? Would you really do anything for us?” she asked.

“Yes, Desiree.” The kind look in her teacher’s eyes, even more than her words, showed Desiree that she really meant it. But Desiree continued to wonder if it was really true. Maybe someday she would find out.

It wasn’t even a week later that Desiree was able to test her Primary teacher’s promise. One day when she came home from school, Desiree found a note taped to the front door and grabbed it. When she entered the house, no one answered her calls. The house was empty. A strange, spooky stillness surrounded her, making the hair on her neck prickle.

“Where are you, Mommy?” Desiree whispered as tears trickled down her face. She dropped her backpack

on the couch and sat down next to it. Remembering the note in her hand, Desiree opened it. She recognized her mother’s handwriting, but the letters were joined together by slants. Her mother had forgotten that she couldn’t read cursive writing.

“I’ll do anything I can for you, because I love you.” The memory of her Primary teacher’s words came to Desiree’s mind. Maybe she couldn’t read cursive, but she could read typing and she could read numbers. She could find Sister Ruiz’s phone number and call her to ask for help.

When Sister Ruiz heard Desiree’s dilemma, she told



her that she would be right over. To Desiree it seemed like a long time before she arrived, but even though Sister Ruiz lived in another town, she made the trip in just 10 minutes.

Desiree flung open the front door and ran down the sidewalk when she saw Sister Ruiz get out of her car. Through her tears, she handed her Primary teacher the note left by her mother.

Sister Ruiz read the note and smiled. "This says that your mommy is at your grandma's house working on a quilt."

Desiree suddenly remembered that her mother had told her to go to Grandma's house, just down the street, after school. She had left the note to remind Desiree but had forgotten to print it in letters Desiree could read.

"Do you want me to walk you to your grandma's?" Sister Ruiz asked.

Desiree shook her head. She looked up at Sister Ruiz. "You drove all this way just to read a note. Thank you."

Sister Ruiz smiled, and Desiree noticed that her eyes were glistening with tears. "This wasn't much, Desiree. I'll do anything I can for you."

"It was a lot to me," Desiree said.

Sister Ruiz hugged Desiree. "I'm glad you think so."

Desiree carefully looked both ways before crossing the street and walking down to Grandma's house. Sister Ruiz watched to make sure she arrived safely. Then she drove away.

"Where have you been?" Desiree's mother asked when she walked in. "I was starting to get worried."

"I just learned that my Primary teacher will come all the way to my house to read me a note."

"Why didn't you read it yourself?" Desiree's mom asked.

"Because I can't read cursive."

Desiree's mother's mouth dropped open in surprise. "I didn't even think about it, Desiree. I'm sorry you had to call your teacher to help you."

"That's OK." Desiree grinned. "My teacher said she was glad to do it, because she loves me." ●



"Love of God and love of His children is the highest reason for service."

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Twelve Apostles, "Gospel Teaching," *Liahona*, Jan. 2000, 96; *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 79.

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

I Am a Child of God

“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God” (Romans 8:16).

BY MARGARET LIFFERTH



Have you ever held a baby? Did you ever wonder where babies lived before they were born? Did you ever wonder where you lived before you came to your family? The First Presidency explains on the first page of the *Faith in God* guidebook: “You are a child of God. He is your Heavenly Father. He loves you and cares about you.”

How can you know that Heavenly Father loves you? One way our earthly parents show their love is by providing food and shelter for us. They also teach us to choose the right. Our Heavenly Father has provided us with many things that remind us of His love for us every day—the beautiful earth, the scriptures, the living prophets, and our families. Best of all, He sent Jesus Christ. Because of Jesus Christ, we can return to live with Heavenly Father if we choose the right.

President Gordon B. Hinckley has taught that we can show our love to our Heavenly Father as we speak to Him in prayer and keep His commandments. When we do this, President Hinckley promises: “He will watch over you and guide you and protect you. He will bless you in your schoolwork and in your Primary. He will bless you in your home, and you will be a better boy or girl. . . . Never forget, my dear young friends, that you really are a child of God who has inherited something of His divine nature, one whom He loves and desires to help and bless” (“You Are a Child of God,” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, May 2003, 119; *Friend*, May 2003, 6).

Child of God Crown Frame

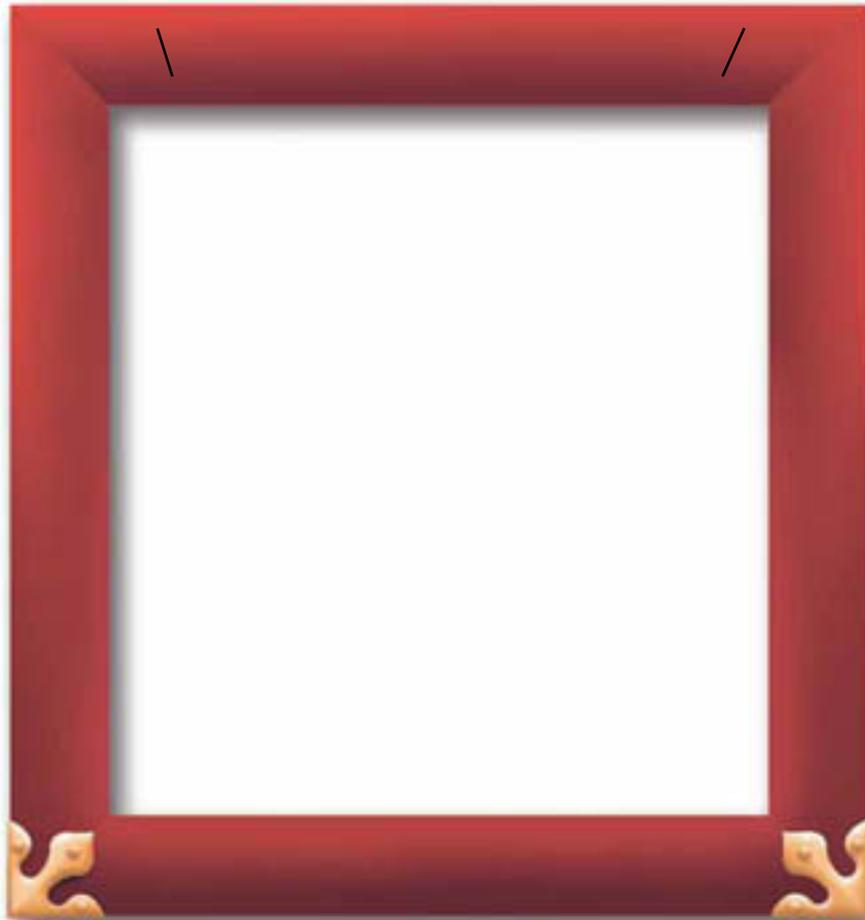
Make a crown frame to remind you that you are a child of God. Remove page F15, and attach it to heavy

paper. In the frame, attach a mirror or a picture of yourself. Cut out the frame, the slits on the frame, and the crown cutouts. Fill in the blanks on the crown cutouts. Every month attach a new crown to your frame by inserting the tabs on the crown into the slits on the frame.

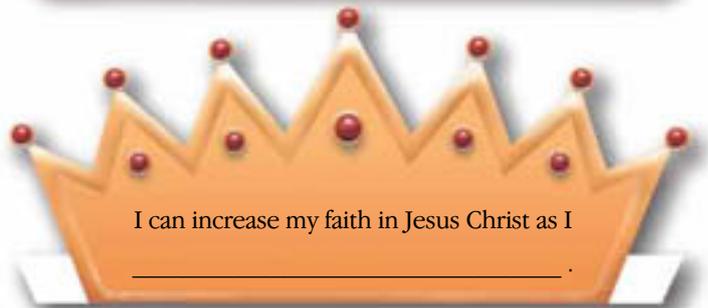
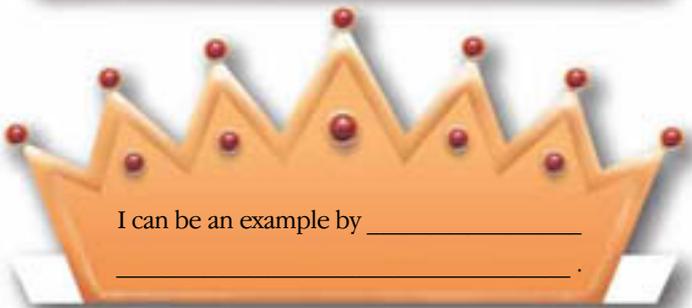
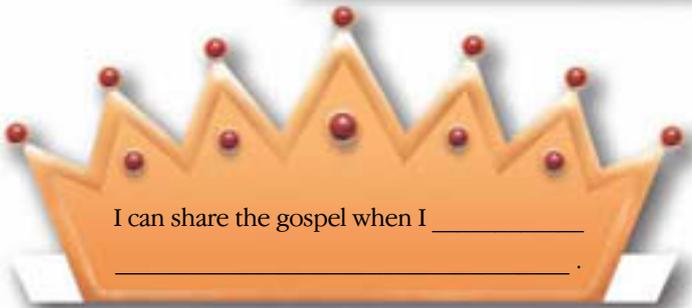
Sharing Time Ideas

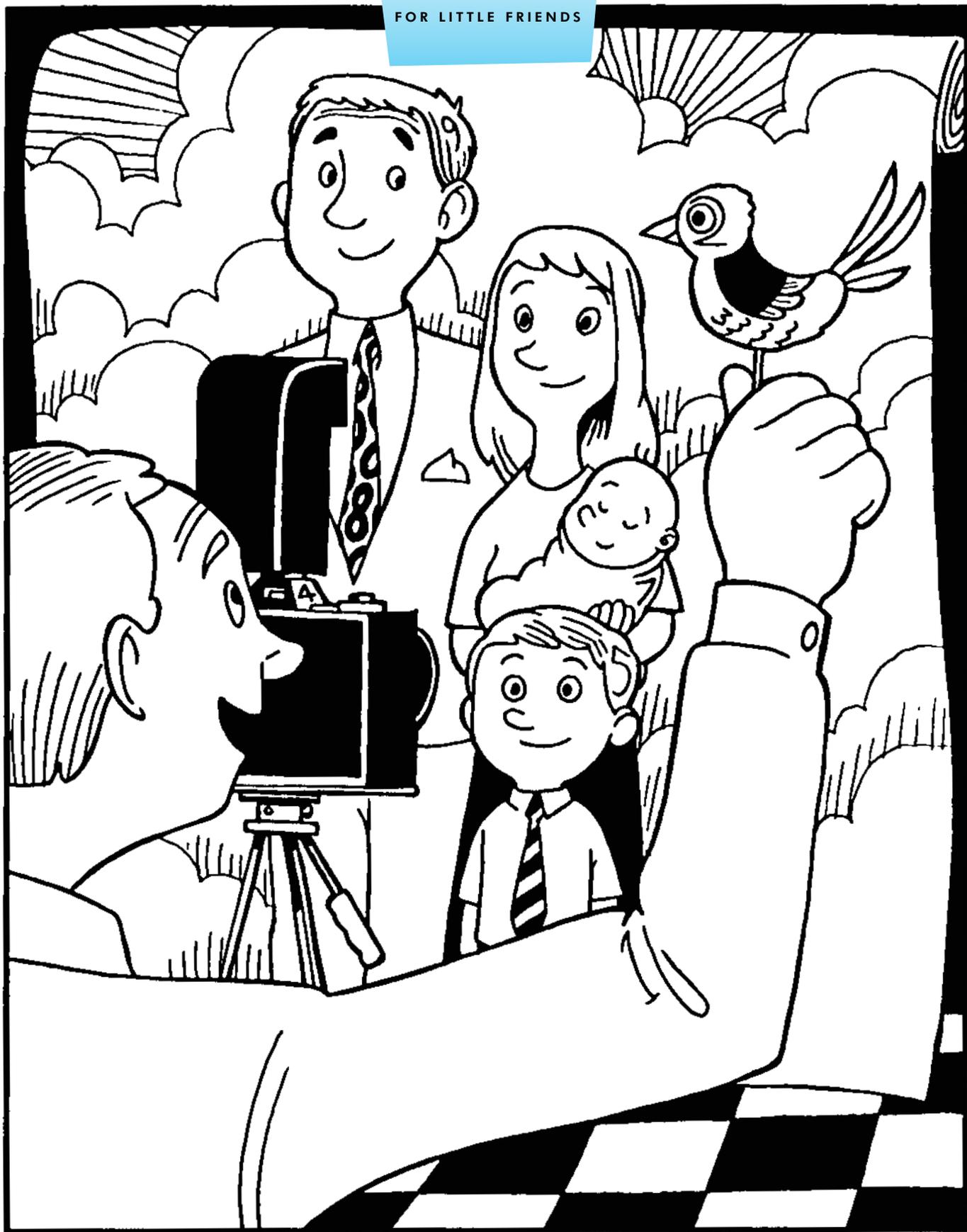
1. Help the children memorize the following lines from the *Faith in God* guidebook (inside front cover): “I know Heavenly Father loves me, and I love Him. I can pray to Heavenly Father anytime, anywhere. I am trying to remember and follow Jesus Christ.” Select a scripture story on prayer—for example, *Nephi with his brothers on the ship* (see 1 Nephi 18) or *Daniel in the lions’ den* (see Daniel 6). After the children role-play this story using simple costumes or name tags, discuss the principle of prayer. Repeat with the children the memorized lines. Have each class quietly discuss favorite scripture stories about prayer. Let each class choose a child to tell a story to the whole Primary.

2. Explain that making choices is an important part of our life on earth. Our right to choose is called agency (agency or moral agency—not free agency). As we use our agency to choose the right, we are following Jesus Christ and can return to live with Him and Heavenly Father. The scriptures help us choose the right. Post a picture of Jesus with a 10-step path leading to Him and a paper child at the end of the path. Give each class a paper in the shape of a road sign with one of the following scripture references printed on it: Exodus 20:8; Matthew 19:18; 2 Nephi 32:9; Mosiah 13:20; 3 Nephi 12:34; D&C 42:21; D&C 42:27; D&C 51:9; D&C 89:7–8; D&C 119:4. (Some classes may receive more than one paper.) Have the classes look up the references and write on the paper the principle we are to obey. Post the “road signs.” Prepare case studies that require the children to make a decision to obey one of the “road signs”—for example, “You hear someone talking unkindly about a friend. What do you do?” Let the children respond, and then move the paper child along the path toward the picture of Christ. ●



Note: If you do not wish to remove pages from the magazine, this activity may be copied, traced, or printed out from the Internet at www.lds.org. For English, click on "Gospel Library." For other languages, click on the world map.





Can you find the numbers 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9?

ILLUSTRATED BY ADAM KOFORD



Memory Grove, by Al Rounds

This view of the Salt Lake Temple in the early winter after its dedication on April 6, 1893, is from a peaceful area northeast of the temple near what is now known as Memory Grove.

4 *Inviting others to help us with our work in the Church helps them feel needed and helps them feel the Spirit.*



I*nviting others to help us serve is one of seven suggestions for member missionary work. For the other six, see “Seven Lessons on Sharing the Gospel,” p. 16.*