

Liahona

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**How to Talk to Youth
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**Activity: Where in
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ON THE COVER

Front: Photograph by Riley M. Lorimer.

Back: Photographs of youth by Riley M. Lorimer;
photograph of handcarts by Welden C. Andersen.

THE FRIEND COVER

Illustration by Jerry Thompson.

FAMILY HOME EVENING IDEAS

*These ideas can be used for
classroom teaching as well
as in the home.*

"Remembering Iowa,"

p. 8: Ask the family what
they would take if they
had to move as the
pioneers did. What
spiritual qualities would be neces-
sary for the journey? Tell stories of
your own ancestors and what traits
helped them.

"Three Tools to Build a Sacred Home," p. 14: Begin by discussing

simple ways you can make your
home a more sacred place. Second,
enjoy a meal or dessert while dis-
cussing the importance of
having family mealtimes.
Finally, plan a project you
can do as a family, and
discuss what spiritual
and temporal blessings come
from working together.

**"This, the Greatest of All
Dispensations,"** p. 18: Invite family
members to either describe in
words or draw a picture of their



As you look for the German CTR ring hidden in this issue, think of how you can help make your family happy.



FOR YOUTH

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THE FRIEND: FOR CHILDREN

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- F10 It Is Enough *Jane McBride Choate*
- F14 Friend to Friend: Blessings of the Temple *Elder Paul E. Koelliker*
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F4 Family Faith



F8 Gathering to Zion

hopes for a bright future. Discuss events that could prevent these hopes from coming true. Read scriptures about faith. How can faith help alleviate fear? Using the article, discuss what your family can do to rejoice in the future.

"Thy Speech Reveals Thee," p. 30: Assign a family member to talk as if he or she were a specific type of person such as a baby, historical figure, or person in the scriptures. Have the family members guess the personality. Tell

the story of Elder L. Tom Perry in the Marines. How does language reveal your character? To help your family use good language, post Elder Perry's three suggestions.

"Courage in a Cornfield," p. F2: Compare the story of the Rollins sisters to the story of Nephi and his brothers getting the brass plates from Laban (see 1 Nephi 3–4). How was courage shown in each story? Why is it important to have the scriptures?

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FIRST PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

The Peril of Hidden Wedges

BY PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON

First Counselor in the First Presidency

In April 1966, at the Church’s annual general conference, Elder Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles gave a memorable address. He quoted an account written by Samuel T. Whitman titled “Forgotten Wedges.” I too wish to quote from Whitman’s account, followed by examples from my own life.

Whitman wrote: “The ice storm [that winter] wasn’t generally destructive. True, a few wires came down, and there was a sudden jump in accidents along the highway. . . .

Normally, the big walnut tree could easily have borne the weight that formed on its spreading limbs. It was the iron wedge in its heart that caused the damage.

“The story of the iron wedge began years ago when the white-haired farmer [who now inhabited the property on which the tree stood] was a lad on his father’s homestead. The sawmill had then only recently been moved from the valley, and the settlers were still finding tools and odd pieces of equipment scattered about. . . .

“On this particular day, [the lad found] a faller’s wedge—wide, flat, and heavy, a foot or more long, and



splayed from mighty poundings. [A faller's wedge, used to help fell a tree, is inserted in a cut made by a saw and then struck with a sledgehammer to widen the cut.] . . . Because he was already late for dinner, the lad laid the wedge . . . between the limbs of the young walnut tree his father had planted near the front gate. He would take the wedge to the shed right after dinner, or sometime when he was going that way.

"He truly meant to, but he never did. [The wedge] was there between the limbs, a little tight, when he attained his manhood. It was there, now firmly gripped, when he married and took over his father's farm. It was half grown over on the day the threshing crew ate dinner under the tree. . . . Grown in and healed over, the wedge was still in the tree the winter the ice storm came.

"In the chill silence of that wintry night, . . .

one of the three major limbs split away from the trunk and crashed to the ground. This so unbalanced the remainder of the top that it, too, split apart and went down. When the storm was over, not a twig of the once-proud tree remained.

"Early the next morning, the farmer went out to mourn his loss. . . .

"Then, his eyes caught sight of something in the splintered ruin. 'The wedge,' he muttered reproachfully. 'The wedge I found in the south pasture.' A glance told him why the tree had fallen. Growing, edge-up in the trunk, the wedge had prevented the limb fibers from knitting together as they should."¹

Wedges in Our Lives

There are hidden wedges in the lives of many whom we know—yes, perhaps in our own families.



There are hidden wedges in the lives of many whom we know—yes, perhaps in our own families.

Let me share with you the account of a lifelong friend, now departed from mortality. His name was Leonard. He was not a member of the Church, although his wife and children were. His wife served as a Primary president; his son served an honorable mission. His daughter and his son married companions in solemn ceremonies and had families of their own.

Everyone who knew Leonard liked him, as did I. He supported his wife and children in their Church assignments. He attended many Church-sponsored events with them. He lived a good and clean life, even a life of service and kindness. His family and indeed many others wondered why Leonard had gone through mortality without the blessings the gospel brings to its members.

In Leonard's advanced years, his health declined. Eventually he was hospitalized, and life was ebbing away. In what turned out to be my last conversation with Leonard, he said, "Tom, I've known you since you were a boy. I feel persuaded to explain to you why I have never joined the Church." He then related an experience of his parents many, many years before. Reluctantly, the family had reached a point where they felt it was necessary to sell their farm, and an offer had been received. Then a neighboring farmer asked that the farm be sold to him instead—although at a lesser price—adding, "We've been such close friends. This way, if I own the property, I'll be able to watch over it." At length Leonard's parents agreed, and the farm was sold. The buyer—even the neighbor—held a responsible position in the Church, and the trust this implied helped to persuade the family to sell to him, even though they did not realize as much money from the sale as they would have if they had sold to the first interested buyer. Not long after the sale was made, the neighbor sold both his own farm and the farm acquired from Leonard's family in a combined parcel, which maximized the value and hence the selling price. The long-asked question of why Leonard had never joined the Church had been answered. He always felt that his family had been deceived.

He confided to me following our conversation that he felt a great burden had at last been lifted as he prepared to meet his Maker. The tragedy is that a hidden wedge had kept Leonard from soaring to greater heights.

Choosing to Love Instead

I am acquainted with a family that came to America from Germany. The English language was difficult for them. They had but little by way of means, but each was blessed with the will to work and with a love of God.

Their third child was born, lived but two months, and then died. The father was a cabinetmaker and fashioned a beautiful casket for the body of his precious child. The day of the funeral was gloomy, thus reflecting the sadness they felt in their loss. As the family walked to the chapel, with Father carrying the tiny casket, a small number of friends had gathered. However, the chapel door was locked. The busy bishop had forgotten the funeral. Attempts to reach him were futile. Not knowing what to do, the father placed the casket under his arm and, with his family beside him, carried it home, walking in a drenching rain.

If the family were of a lesser character, they could have blamed the bishop and harbored ill feelings. When the bishop discovered the tragedy, he visited the family and apologized. With the hurt still evident in his expression, but with tears in his eyes, the father accepted the apology, and the two embraced in a spirit of understanding. No hidden wedge was left to cause further feelings of anger. Love and acceptance prevailed.

The Spirit must be freed from tethers so strong and feelings never put to rest so that the lift of life may give buoyancy to the soul. In many families there are hurt feelings and a reluctance to forgive. It doesn't really matter what the issue was. It cannot and should not be left to injure. Blame keeps wounds open. Only forgiveness heals. George Herbert, an early seventeenth-century poet, wrote these lines: "He that cannot forgive others breaks the bridge over which he himself must pass if he would ever reach heaven; for everyone has need to be forgiven."

Beautiful are the words of the Savior as He was about to die upon the cruel cross. Said He, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."²

Forgiving

There are some who have difficulty forgiving themselves and who dwell on all of their perceived shortcomings. I quite like the account of a religious leader who went to the side of a woman who lay dying, attempting to comfort her—but to no avail. "I am lost," she said. "I've ruined my life and every life around me. There is no hope for me."

The man noticed a framed picture of a lovely girl on the dresser. "Who is this?" he asked.

The woman brightened. "She is my daughter, the one beautiful thing in my life."

"And would you help her if she were in trouble or had made a mistake? Would you forgive her? Would you still love her?"

"Of course I would!" cried the woman. "I would do anything for her. Why do you ask such a question?"

"Because I want you to know," said the man, "that figuratively speaking, Heavenly Father has a picture of you on His dresser. He loves you and will help you. Call upon Him."

A hidden wedge to her happiness had been removed.

In a day of danger or a time of trial, such knowledge, such hope, such understanding will bring comfort to the troubled mind and grieving heart. The entire message of the New Testament breathes a spirit of awakening to the human soul. Shadows of despair are dispelled by rays of hope, sorrow yields to joy, and the feeling of being lost in the crowd of life vanishes with the certain knowledge that

our Heavenly Father is mindful of each of us.

The Savior provided assurance of this truth when He taught that even a sparrow shall not fall to the ground unnoticed by our Father. He then concluded the beautiful thought by saying, "Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows."³

Some time ago I read the following Associated Press dispatch in the newspaper. An elderly man had shared, from early manhood, a one-room cabin near Canisteo, New



York, with his brother. At the funeral for his brother, he disclosed that following a quarrel in their young manhood, they had divided

Beautiful are the words of the Savior as He was about to die upon the cruel cross. Of those who crucified Him, He said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

Who will subordinate ego, pride, and hurt—then step forward with “I am truly sorry! Let’s be as we once were: friends”?

the room in half with a chalk line, and neither had crossed the line or spoken a word to the other since that day—62 years before. What a powerful and destructive hidden wedge.

As Alexander Pope wrote, “To err is human; to forgive, divine.”⁴

Taking the Initiative

Sometimes we can take offense so easily. On other occasions we are too stubborn to accept a sincere apology. Who will subordinate ego, pride, and hurt—then step forward with “I am truly sorry! Let’s be as we once were: friends. Let’s not pass to future generations the grievances, the anger of our time”? Let’s remove any hidden wedges that can do nothing but destroy.

Where do hidden wedges originate?

disappointments, jealousies, arguments, and imagined hurts. We must solve them—lay them to rest and not leave them to canker, fester, and ultimately destroy.

A lovely lady of more than 90 years visited with me one day and unexpectedly recounted several regrets. She mentioned that many years earlier a neighboring farmer, with whom she and her husband had occasionally disagreed, asked if he could take a shortcut across her property to reach his own acreage. She paused in her narrative and, with a tremor in her voice, said, “Tommy, I didn’t let him cross our property but required him to take the long way around—even on foot—to reach his property. I was wrong and I regret it. He’s gone now, but oh, I wish I could say to him, ‘I’m so sorry.’ How I wish I had a second chance.”

As I listened to her, words written by John Greenleaf Whittier came to my mind: “Of all sad words of tongue or pen, / The saddest are these: ‘It might have been!’”⁵

From 3 Nephi in the Book of Mormon comes this inspired counsel: “There shall be no disputations among you. . . .

“For verily, verily I say unto you, he that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another.

“Behold, this is not my doctrine, to stir up the hearts of men with anger, one against another; but this is my doctrine, that such things should be done away.”⁶



Some come from unresolved disputes which lead to ill feelings, followed by remorse and regret. Others find their beginnings in

Let me conclude with an account of two men who are heroes to me. Their acts of courage were not performed on a national scale but rather in a peaceful place known as Midway, Utah.

Closing the Gap

Long years ago Roy Kohler and Grant Remund served together in Church capacities. They were the best of friends. They were tillers of the soil and dairymen. Then a misunderstanding arose which became somewhat of a rift between them.

Later, when Roy Kohler became grievously ill with cancer and had but a limited time to live, my wife, Frances, and I visited Roy and his wife, and I gave him a blessing. As we talked afterward, Brother Kohler said, “Let me tell you about one of the sweetest experiences I have had during my life.” He then recounted to me his misunderstanding with Grant Remund and the ensuing estrangement. His comment was “We were sort of on the outs with each other.”

“Then,” continued Roy, “I had just put up our hay for the winter to come when one night, as a result of spontaneous combustion, the hay caught fire, burning the hay, the barn, and everything in it right to the ground. I was devastated,” said Roy. “I didn’t know what in the world I would do. The night was dark, except for the dying embers of the fire. Then I saw coming toward me from the road, in the direction of Grant Remund’s place, the lights of tractors and heavy equipment. As the ‘rescue party’ turned in our drive and met me amidst my tears, Grant said, ‘Roy, you’ve got quite a mess to clean up. My boys and I are here. Let’s get to it.’” Together they plunged to the task at hand. Gone forever was the hidden wedge which had separated them for a short time. They worked throughout the night and into the next day, with many others in the community joining in.

Roy Kohler and Grant Remund have passed away. Their sons have served together in the same ward bishopric. I truly treasure the friendship of these two wonderful families.

May we ever be exemplary in our homes and faithful in keeping all of the commandments that we may harbor no hidden wedges but rather remember the Savior’s admonition: “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”⁷ ■

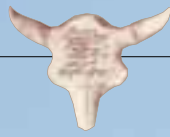
NOTES

1. In Conference Report, Apr. 1966, 70.
2. Luke 23:34.
3. Matthew 10:31.
4. *An Essay on Criticism* (1711), part 2, line 525.
5. “Maud Muller,” *The Complete Poetical Works of Whittier* (1892), 48.
6. 3 Nephi 11:28–30.
7. John 13:35.

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

After prayerfully studying this message, share it using a method that encourages the participation of those you teach. Following are some examples:

1. Have a family member try to tie a shoe with one hand. Discuss how holding grudges is like using only one hand and refusing help. Share some of President Monson’s examples of how people’s lives improved when they forgave one another. Invite another person to help tie the shoe. Testify how forgiving others enables us to receive greater blessings.
2. Summarize the story of the wedge and the tree. Ask how withholding forgiveness is like leaving a wedge in the tree. How does failing to forgive make us weaker? How does forgiving lead to healing? Read one of President Monson’s accounts to illustrate the need for forgiveness. Testify of the blessings that have come to you from following the Lord’s example of forgiving.
3. Bring a piece of string to divide the room in half. Have some family members stand on one side of the room and the rest on the other. Recount the story of the two brothers. Remove the string, and discuss ways to avoid the spirit of contention. Read John 13:35, and challenge family members to show love for each other.



REMEMBERING IOWA

Handcarts and the pioneers who walked to Zion have become a symbol of the Latter-day Saint migration and the building of the Church.

BY CAROLINE H. BENZLEY

One summer morning in 1856, 16-year-old Janetta McBride started walking from Iowa to the Salt Lake Valley.

Her journey had begun months earlier when she left England with her family and sailed across the Atlantic Ocean. Once in the United States, they continued by rail to Iowa City, Iowa, where a westbound railroad line ended.

In Iowa City Janetta's family joined the Latter-day Saints as they gathered their strength and supplies for the final part of the journey—a 1,300-mile (2,090-km) walk with handcarts. Janetta McBride was assigned to the Martin handcart company, one of seven companies that left Iowa City between 1856 and 1857.

Looking West

Now 150 years later, the date is June 9, 2006. One more handcart company is leaving Iowa City.

This time the company is made up of about 70 young men and young women from the Iowa City Iowa Stake.

Dressed in pioneer clothing, with their handcarts full of supplies, these youth are gathered at the Mormon Handcart Park just outside of Iowa City—the same place from which the first handcart company left exactly 150 years earlier on June 9, 1856. Looking west, they can't help but think of the original pioneers who stood here so long ago.

Kameron Hansen of the Iowa City First Ward thinks of his fourth great-grandmother, Janetta McBride. Kameron, 14, is almost the same age Janetta was when she started walking to Zion.

"I like to think how happy she would be to see me doing this," says Kameron. "I hope she is proud that her family is still faithful in the Church." Kameron knows his journey will be much shorter and easier than Janetta's, but he still feels grateful for this chance to remember and honor his ancestors.

Anna Shaner of the Fairfield Branch is also grateful to honor the pioneers. She is amazed they walked into the frontier not knowing whether they would live through the experience. Anna gains a lot of strength from the people who, as she puts it, "had faith in what they were supposed to do and the courage to do it."

This trek is a great opportunity for all the Iowa City youth to honor their ancestors. Whether they have handcart pioneers in their family line or not, the youth are members of the Church, so the handcart pioneers are their spiritual ancestors.



Teens in the Iowa City Iowa Stake start pulling their handcarts in the same spot the handcart pioneers started from in 1856. The trail is now protected as a state park.



Although their modern trek lasts just one day, it is enough for the youth to appreciate the struggles of the handcart pioneers. *Opposite page: Jeff Fillmore tries to replicate the clothing that a young pioneer his age might have worn. Allison Engle and Summer Burch give bonnets a try.*

Why Iowa?

Today Iowa City, Iowa, is in the heart of the midwestern United States, but 150 years ago it was on the frontier—as far west as the train could take you. Most of the early converts who camped outside Iowa City in 1856 were emigrants from Europe. They had already traveled far and had little money to buy wagons and supplies. The people in Iowa City were tolerant of the Latter-day Saints, and pioneer journals recount the Iowans' acts of kindness.

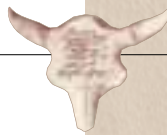
When President Brigham Young announced

handcart travel as a cheaper and faster option for traveling to Zion, these Saints were eager to try it. The first handcart company left Iowa City on June 9, 1856.

Most handcart companies made the exhausting journey safely to the Salt Lake Valley, but it was more difficult for Janetta McBride's group, the Martin company, and the Willie company. Both companies were caught in early snowstorms, and more than 200 people died. Their journeys required a great sacrifice, which was possible to endure only through faith in Heavenly Father and in His plan. This same faith motivated all the handcart companies that pushed and pulled their way to Zion.

In 2006 the handcart trek was part of a sesquicentennial celebration to honor this faith. Members of the Iowa City stake hosted events such as an academic symposium, a pioneer festival, and an interfaith devotional. These events honored not only the handcart pioneers but also the Iowans who helped them.





Following the Prophet

After a long day of trekking through the hills of Iowa, the youth now have a moment to reflect on their experience. Emma Pauley rereads Ether 12, a chapter on faith that she remembers learning about in seminary.

“I don’t know if I could have walked the whole way to Utah,” says Emma, “but the pioneers were able to do it, and I know that it was because of their faith. All great things are done by faith.”

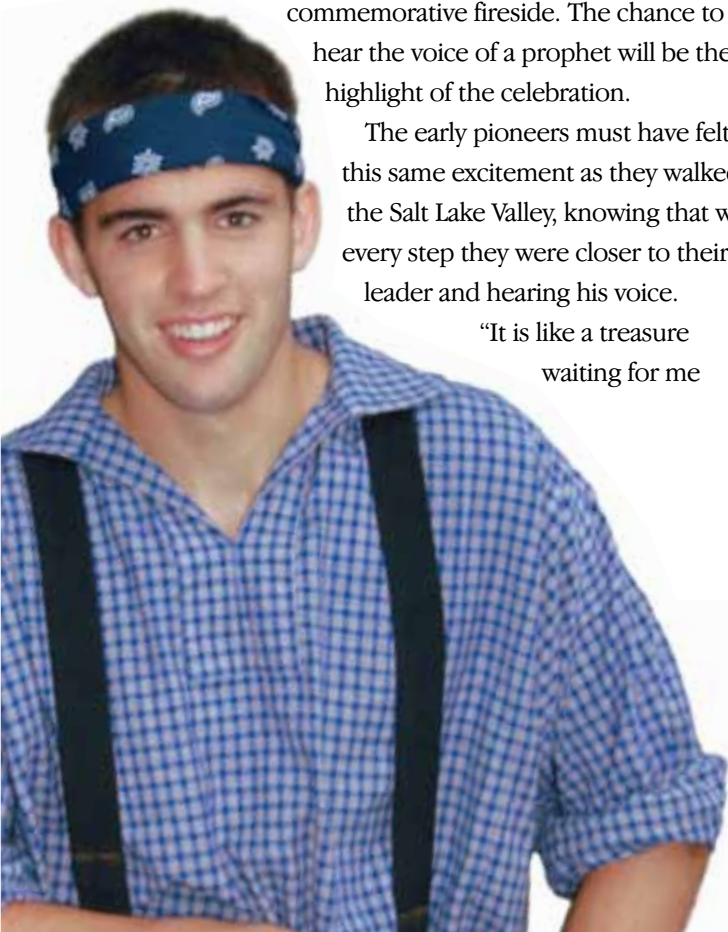
The faith of the handcart pioneers enabled them to respond to President Young’s call to gather to the Salt Lake Valley. Their example makes it easier for the Iowa City youth to follow the counsel of the prophet today.

One way young men like Kameron Hansen can follow the prophet is by completing the Duty to God program. As he explains, “When I think of the pioneers and their sacrifice, it makes me want to finish my requirements so I can follow the prophet too.”

Following the prophet is important to these youth, and they look forward to seeing him the following Sunday at a commemorative fireside. The chance to hear the voice of a prophet will be the highlight of the celebration.

The early pioneers must have felt this same excitement as they walked to the Salt Lake Valley, knowing that with every step they were closer to their leader and hearing his voice.

“It is like a treasure waiting for me



TELL ME A TALE

BY RILEY M. LORIMER

Church Magazines

The Beehives of the Iowa City First Ward were too young to participate in the youth handcart trek, but they were determined to be involved in the commemoration of the handcart pioneers. On a recommendation from one of their leaders, these young women volunteered to be storytellers at the Handcart Festival.

The girls decided to use this experience as a Personal Progress project. Each girl sewed her own bonnet as part of the authentic pioneer costume for the festival. They practiced for hours to memorize the story they had chosen—the story of Fanny Fry, who traveled with the George Rowley handcart company in 1859.

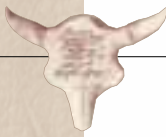


Fanny was separated from her family and endured hardships while crossing the plains. One day she fainted and was run over by her handcart. Thinking she was dead, the sisters began preparing her for burial. The Iowa Beehives love to tell how surprised those good sisters were when Fanny opened her eyes. Despite her injuries, Fanny pressed on and was later reunited with her sister.

“I love to think how brave Fanny was to have left her family and to survive,” says Summer Burch. “She was tough.”

“I admire her because she never had a bad attitude, even when things went wrong,” says Allison Engle.

On the morning of the festival, Summer and Allison, along with their fellow Beehives, Miranda Decker, Kendra Dawson, Lyssa Abel, and Jenna Abel, exhibited those qualities they admire in Fanny Fry. The day was windy, rainy, and cold. But they braved the chill with willing hearts and cheerful smiles. Every girl was at her post, dressed in full pioneer costume, ready to tell Fanny’s story to any and all who wanted to hear. ■



HANDCART HISTORY



Here's a little background on the handcart pioneers:

- President Brigham Young directed the Latter-day Saints to travel to Zion by handcart because it was less

expensive than covered wagons, and many more Saints could make the journey.

- There were 10 handcart companies in all, from 1856 to 1860.
- The Saints traveled by railroad to Iowa City, Iowa. After being outfitted, 7 of the 10 handcart companies left from Iowa City. The others left from Florence, Nebraska.
- Most of the handcart pioneers were emigrants from Europe. They came from England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, and Italy.
- Except for the Willie and Martin companies (who left late in the season and were caught in early snowstorms), the handcart companies experienced relatively few deaths along the trail.
- Although handcart pioneers endured hardships, the faith of many remained firm. Priscilla M. Evans of the Bunker company said, "People made fun of us as we walked, pulling our carts, but the weather was fine and the roads were excellent and although I was sick and we were very tired at night, still we thought it was a glorious way to go to Zion." ■

From LeRoy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen, Handcarts to Zion (1960).

at the end," says Skylar Hansen of the Iowa City First Ward.

Having finished their trek, the Iowa City youth are now getting closer to their treasure, but they are not there yet. The next day is Saturday, and there is a lot of work to do.

Saying Thank You

During 2006 members of the Iowa City Iowa Stake kept busy serving those in need throughout the area. It was the members' way of saying thank you to a community that gave assistance to those early Saints.



Today the youth got their chance to serve. Although 6:30 a.m. felt early, Marc Humbert of the Iowa City First Ward said the trek the day before actually made it easier for him to get up and start serving. "Going on the trek helped me remember what was important," he said, "and it was easy to serve."

Marc was not the only one eager to serve. Despite the pouring rain, excitement was visible as the youth took turns visiting rest homes, cleaning police cars, stocking food shelves at local shelters, and cleaning up a park.

Giving this service was the least they could do to thank a city that helped the early Saints.

LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH OF HANDCART BY WELDEN C. ANDERSEN

Handcart History Is My History

After walking all day Friday and giving service on Saturday, the youth are happy it is Sunday—time to listen to the prophet in person. Now seated with their families at the commemorative fireside, the young men and young women feel grateful for their new understanding of the handcart experience. The words of President Gordon B. Hinckley inspire them to continue the legacy of faith left by the handcart pioneers. He tells them, “We must ever look back to those who paid so terrible a price in laying the foundations of this great latter-day work.”

The pioneers who left Iowa City in 1856 would have rejoiced to hear about the modern pioneers living in the Iowa City stake. Perhaps they would be inspired by the courage of today’s youth who strive to live the gospel in such a confusing world.

Anna Shaner, for one, works hard to be a righteous example to her friends and family.



President Gordon B. Hinckley speaks at a fireside. The teens are excited to hear the prophet after a day of giving service in their community.

Her faith gives her the strength she needs to stay the course. She says, “The experience of the pioneers means a lot to me because they did it for me. It is my history.” ■



Three Tools to Build a SACRED HOME

Everyday activities in our homes offer opportunities to practice love, service, obedience, and cooperation.

BY SHIRLEY R. KLEIN

Brigham Young University associate professor,
School of Family Life

For the pioneers, caring for their homes required heavy labor and protection from the harsh physical environment. Consider the story of Ann Howell Burt. She emigrated from Wales, married, and lived in a dugout in northern Utah during the summer of 1863. As a young mother she had to work hard to keep order and see to the needs of her family. She recorded in her journal:

“Some days ago, I killed a rattlesnake with my rolling pin, as he came crawling down the steps. I was just cooking supper and the baby was on the floor or rather the ground. . . . I was badly frightened. . . .

“ . . . A few days ago, while keeping the flies off the baby’s face as he slept . . . , I discovered . . . a large tarantula crawling toward the child. I seized the broomstick, thrust the end of it at the tarantula and when it took hold . . . I hurriedly put it into the fire.”¹

Though many of us may not have to worry about tarantulas and snakes invading our homes, we have even more dangerous influences threatening us. Our tarantulas and snakes are moral ones, and they are ever so subtle. They include abortion, disdain for household work, the difficulty of holding family mealtimes, changing roles for mothers and fathers, and the erosion of marriage through divorce, cohabitation, same-sex marriage. It would be nice if we could beat

these invaders back with household implements, but we’ve lost many of our rolling pins and broomsticks.

Declining Home Life

Today it is normal to hear young women describe their goals for the future in terms of exciting career plans. These young women most likely also desire to be wives and mothers, but today it seems more appropriate to announce career goals first. Although we value these opportunities for women, motherhood and homemaking have almost disappeared from modern society as natural and valued pathways for women.

Instead the message seems to be that if mothers have access to modern conveniences to care for their homes and families, then they should be free to seek their own fulfillment. Home is often erroneously considered a place from which women need to break free. Some ideologies would even have women think that home duties limit their full potential, and women and men are tempted to disregard the important, everyday aspects of home life—thus the loss of our rolling pins and brooms.

While modern conveniences have delivered us from some of the work of caring for a home, they have led to a decline in home life. We are tempted to disregard the value of everyday home activities like having family meals, and in the process we lose important opportunities for individual and family growth. Author Cheryl Mendelson explains: “As people turn more and more to outside institutions to have their [everyday] needs met . . . , [our] skills and expectations . . . diminish, in turn decreasing the chance that people’s homes can satisfy their needs.”²



In general conference, President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) warned: “Many of the social restraints which in the past have helped to reinforce and to shore up the family are dissolving and disappearing. The time will come when only those who believe deeply and actively in the family will be able to preserve their families in the midst of the gathering evil around us.”³

Protecting Our Homes and Families

How can we successfully defend our homes from this “gathering evil” and progress toward our eternal goals?

First, we need to rediscover and preserve the sacred nature of the home and its purposes. In the Bible Dictionary we read, “Only the home can compare with the temple in sacredness.”⁴ If our homes compare to the temple, what is it about the home that makes it sacred? One dictionary defines *sacred* as “belonging to or dedicated to God; worthy of reverence; set apart for or dedicated to some person, object, or purpose; that [which] must not be violated or disregarded; properly immune, as from violence or interference.”⁵

Apply this idea of sacred to everyday activities in your home such as mealtime, music, recreation, laundry, and caring for your home and yard. Mundane activities can have a higher purpose and must not be disregarded; they give us opportunities to develop and practice character virtues and ethical behavior. By doing these everyday activities,

we can learn about moral truths and practice honesty, patience, charity, and brotherly kindness. Everyday work and recreation in the home provide rich contexts for children and adults to make choices and learn from them. For example, a child, a spouse, or even a roommate may choose to contribute in the home by seeing what needs to be done and doing it happily. Or he or she may wait to be asked and then complain about the inconvenience.

Everyday events in our home can seem so simple that we overlook their importance—like the children of Israel who were smitten by a plague of snakes. To be healed they had to just look at the brass serpent on a pole (see Numbers 21:8–9), but because it was so simple, many did not do it. “Because of the simpleness of the way, or the easiness of it, there were many who perished” (1 Nephi 17:41). Everyday activities in our homes may be simple, but *because* they are simple, frequent, and repeated, they offer important opportunities to build individuals and families.

Second, we need to make family mealtime a daily event. Today, many find it easier to graze individually in their kitchens, dine from their cars, or go to the nearest restaurant for a quick meal rather than prepare a meal and sit down together as a family.

What are we losing? Family meals have numerous beneficial effects. Evidence suggests that family meals help children have better nutrition,⁶ fewer psychological problems,



Even the smallest child can feel like a valued individual through something as mundane as folding laundry. Over the years as the tasks' complexity increases, the children gain confidence in their ability to choose and do worthwhile things.

and less risky or self-destructive behaviors.⁷ Family meals in a positive environment also play an important role in preventing unhealthy weight-control practices.⁸

The simple acts of creating a meal and enjoying it together help family members stay connected. The meal doesn't have to be elaborate to create a time to connect and get a feeling for each person's day. Outside distractions can be managed so that the emphasis is on passing food, talking, and interacting. Children learn to share family food instead of asking for individualized orders as they do in a restaurant. The regular family mealtime gives children a sense of security because they know what to expect at the end of each day. It is also a time to express gratitude to God in prayer for the meal and other blessings. Perhaps most important, the routine of family mealtimes can promote informal gospel discussions.

Third, we need to recognize that family activities have temporal and spiritual effects. God has given us only spiritual

commandments; none of them are temporal (see D&C 29:35). *Temporal* means lasting for time only. His commandments are everlasting. We can apply this to our homes by realizing that our actions on earth have eternal consequences. Our actions shape the person we become now and in the life to come. For example, as spouses "love and care for each other and for their children,"⁹ they foster the development of characteristics that enable them and their children to progress in eternity.

We learn lessons of life at home that build strong character. Family researcher Enola Aird reminds us that at home we learn how to work and how to govern ourselves, we learn manners and morals, we learn how to become self-reliant—or not.¹⁰ "Without parents' humanizing work, children may be quite smart, well-educated, and successful but so selfish, self-centered, and uncaring as to be essentially uncivilized—not able to live in a spirit of community with others."¹¹

If we realize the value of everyday life, we

can see that even the smallest child can feel like a valued individual through something as mundane as folding laundry. Little children can match socks, sort colors, fold towels, and be recognized for their accomplishments. Over the years as the tasks' complexity increases, the children gain confidence in their ability to choose and do worthwhile things.

Lighting Our Homes

Family responsibilities are opportunities to practice gaining light and truth through obedience. Jesus Christ is the Light of the world. When we follow Him and keep His commandments, we walk in His light. The closer we follow, the more light and truth we have. We can model obedience for our children by paying attention to our responsibilities. For example, by learning to do chores regularly, parents and children can learn obedience and exactness in small things, which have less severe consequences. Then they are better prepared to keep commandments and make sacred covenants.

Among the important foundational instructions given when the Church was organized was the counsel to “attend to all family duties” (D&C 20:47, 51). Three years later some of the leading brethren of the Church were chastened for neglecting their family duties (see D&C 93:41–50). Today, in the family proclamation, we are reminded again of our sacred family duties.

We often think about family duties in terms of family prayer, home evening, and scripture reading, but we should also remember that activities like feeding and clothing ourselves help us practice love, service, obedience, and cooperation. These simple, everyday routines have great power in our lives.

Can we draw closer to the Lord through everyday living—through family meals and wholesome recreation? Absolutely. How much light do we want? The Lord promised, “He that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light” (D&C 50:24), and, “[I] will give unto the faithful line upon line, precept upon precept; and I will try you and prove you herewith” (D&C 98:12).



Prove faithful in the little things, and the bigger things will be added on. Opportunities to learn and practice in the home are sacred; they are times to grow spiritually and draw closer to the Savior. This process of growth is a life-long quest, and our home environment gives us repeated, sustained chances to practice becoming godlike individuals and families. ■

From a devotional address given at Brigham Young University on April 5, 2005.

NOTES

1. In Sophy Valentine, *Biography of Ann Howell Burt* (1916), 24–25.
2. *Home Comforts: The Art and Science of Keeping House* (1999), 7–8.
3. “Families Can Be Eternal,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 4.
4. “Temple,” 781.
5. *The World Book Dictionary* (1984), “sacred,” 1830.
6. See Tami M. Videon and Carolyn K. Manning, “Influences on Adolescent Eating Patterns: The Importance of Family Meals,” *Journal of Adolescent Health*, May 2003, 365–73.
7. See Marla E. Eisenberg, Rachel E. Olson, Dianne Neumark-Sztainer, Mary Story, and Linda H. Bearinger, “Correlations between Family Meals and Psychosocial Well-Being among Adolescents,” *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*, Aug. 2004, 792–96.
8. See Dianne Neumark-Sztainer, Melanie Wall, Mary Story, and Jayne A. Fulkerson, “Are Family Meal Patterns Associated with Disordered Eating Behaviors among Adolescents?” *Journal of Adolescent Health*, Nov. 2004, 350–59.
9. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liabona*, Oct. 2004, 49; *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.
10. See “On Rekindling a Spirit of ‘Home Training’: A Mother’s Notes from the Front,” in *Taking Parenting Public: The Case for a New Social Movement*, ed. Sylvia A. Hewlett, Nancy Rankin, and Cornel West (2002), 13–28.
11. “On Rekindling,” 19.



This, the Greatest of All Dispensations

BY ELDER JEFFREY R. HOLLAND

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

I want to speak to you in the context of ongoing anxiety in the world and some of the challenges we face. Since September 11, 2001, we have been made more fearful and have been more alarmed by international events and the almost wholesale new use of the word *terror*. I know that many of you have wondered in your hearts what all of this means regarding the end of the world and your life in it. Many have asked, “Is this the hour of the Second Coming of the Savior and all that is prophesied surrounding that event?”

Indeed, sometime not long after 9/11, a missionary asked me in all honesty and full of faith, “Elder Holland, are these the last days?” I saw the earnestness in his face and some of the fear in his eyes. I said, “Yes, Elder, we are in the last days, but there is really nothing new about that. The promised Second Coming of the Savior began with the First Vision of the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1820. We can be certain that we are in the last days—years and years of them.” I gave him a friendly shake of the hand and sent him on his way. He smiled, seemed more reassured

to put all this in some context, and held his head a little higher as he left me.

I hasten to say that I *do* know what this young man was really asking. What he really meant was “Will I finish my mission? Is there any point in getting an education? Can I hope for a marriage? Do I have a future? Is there any happiness ahead for me?” And I say to you what I said to him, “Yes, certainly—to all those questions.”

As far as the timing of the triumphant, publicly witnessed Second Coming and its earthshaking events, I do not know when that will happen. *No one* knows. The Savior said that even the angels in heaven would not know (see Matthew 24:36).

We should watch for the signs, we should live as faithfully as we possibly can, and we should share the gospel with everyone so that blessings and protections will be available to all. But we must not be paralyzed just because that event and the events surrounding it are ahead of us somewhere. We cannot stop living life. Indeed, we should live life more fully than we have ever lived it. After all,



God expects you not simply to face the future; He expects you to embrace and shape the future—to love it, rejoice in it, and delight in your opportunities.



Above, from top:
Curitiba Brazil Temple
under construction,
December 2006.
Helsinki Finland
Temple, dedicated
on October 22, 2006.
Nauvoo Illinois
Temple, dedicated on
June 27, 2002. Today,
124 temples are
in operation, and
11 more have been
announced or are
under construction.

this is the dispensation of the *fulness* of times.

Have Faith, Not Fear

I have just two things to say to you who are troubled about the future. I say them lovingly and from my heart.

First, we must *never* let fear and the father of fear (Satan himself) divert us from our faith and faithful living. Every person in every era has had to walk by faith into what has *always* been some uncertainty. This is the plan. Just be faithful. God is in charge. He knows your name and He knows your need.

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ—that is the first principle of the gospel. We must go forward. God expects you to have enough faith, determination, and trust in Him to keep moving, keep living, keep rejoicing. He expects you not simply to face the future; He expects you to embrace and shape the future—to love it, rejoice in it, and delight in your opportunities.

God is eagerly waiting for the chance to answer your prayers and fulfill your dreams, just as He always has. But He can't if you don't pray, and He can't if you don't dream. In short, He can't if you don't believe.

Two Scriptures of Comfort

Here are two scriptures, both directed at those who live in perilous times.

The first is from section 101 of the Doctrine and Covenants. This revelation came as the Saints who were gathered in Missouri were suffering terrible persecution. I suppose, at its worst, this was the most difficult and dangerous time—may I say “terror filled”—that the Church had yet known.

Yet in that frightening time the Lord said to His people:

“Let your hearts be comforted concerning Zion; for all flesh is in mine hands; be still and know that I am God.

“Zion shall not be moved out of her place, notwithstanding her children are scattered.

“They that remain, and are pure in heart, shall return, and come to their inheritances, they and their children, with songs of everlasting joy, to build up the waste places of Zion—

“And all these things that the prophets might be fulfilled” (D&C 101:16–19).

So let your hearts be comforted concerning Zion. And remember the most fundamental definition of Zion we have ever been given: those who are “pure in heart” (D&C 97:21). If you will keep your hearts pure, you and your children and your grandchildren shall sing songs of everlasting joy as you build up Zion—and you shall not be moved out of your place.

The other verse I refer to is from the Savior, spoken to His disciples as He faced His Crucifixion and as they faced fear, disarray, and persecution. In His last collective counsel to them in mortality, He said: “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

So, in a world of tribulation, let's remember our faith. Let's recall the *other* promises and prophecies that have been given, all the reassuring ones, and let's live life more fully, with more boldness and courage than at any other time.

Christ has overcome the world and made a path for us. He has said to us in our day: “Gird up your loins and be prepared. Behold, the kingdom is yours, and the enemy shall not overcome” (D&C 38:9).

More than 2,000 years or so ago there was one temple in the Old World and two or three temples in Book of Mormon history, but now temples are multiplying so rapidly we can hardly count them!

Three Prophetic Quotes

That leads to the second point I want to make about the day in which we live. We are making our appearance on the stage of mortality in the greatest dispensation ever given to mankind, and we need to make the most of it.

Here is a favorite quote of mine from the Prophet Joseph Smith (1805–44): “The building up of Zion is a cause that has interested the people of God in every age; it is a theme upon which prophets, priests and kings have dwelt with peculiar delight; they have looked forward with joyful anticipation to the day in which we live; and fired with heavenly and joyful anticipations they have sung and written and prophesied of this our day; . . . we are the favored people that God has [chosen] to bring about the Latter-day glory.”¹

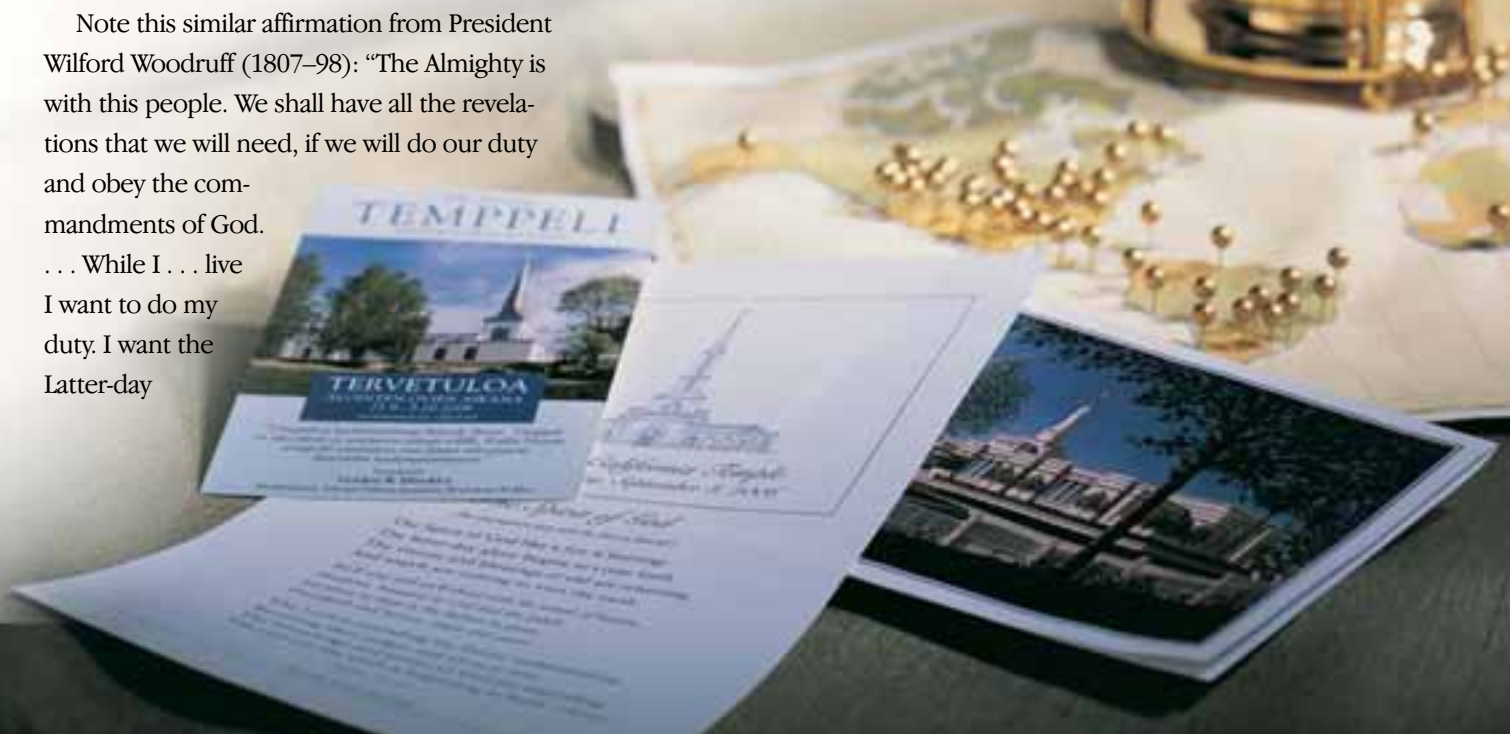
Note this similar affirmation from President Wilford Woodruff (1807–98): “The Almighty is with this people. We shall have all the revelations that we will need, if we will do our duty and obey the commandments of God. . . . While I . . . live I want to do my duty. I want the Latter-day

Saints to do their duty. . . . Their responsibility is great and mighty. The eyes of God and all the holy prophets are watching us. This is the great dispensation that has been spoken of ever since the world began. We are gathered together . . . by the power and commandment of God. We are doing the work of God. . . . Let us fill our mission.”²

Lastly, let me share this from President Gordon B. Hinckley, our modern prophet, who currently guides us through the challenging times of our present hour: “We of this generation are the end harvest of all that has gone before. It is not enough to simply be known as a member of this Church. A solemn obligation rests upon us. Let us face it and work at it.

“We must live as true followers of the Christ, with charity toward all, returning good for evil, teaching by example the ways of the Lord, and accomplishing the vast service He has outlined for us.

“May we live worthy of the glorious endowment of light and understanding and eternal truth which has come to us through all the perils of the past. Somehow, among all



who have walked the earth, we have been brought forth in this unique and remarkable season. Be grateful, and above all be faithful.”³

Over a representative period of time, our prophets have focused not on the terror of the times in which they lived and not on the ominous elements of the latter days, in which we are living, but they felt to speak of the opportunity and the blessing and, above all, the responsibility to seize the privileges afforded us in this, the greatest of all dispensations. I love the line from the Prophet Joseph Smith saying that earlier prophets, priests, and kings “have looked forward with joyful anticipation to the day in which we live; and . . . have sung and written and prophesied of this our day.” What were they so joyful about? I can assure you they weren’t concentrating on terror and tragedy. President Woodruff’s words were: “The eyes of God and all the holy prophets are watching us. This is the *great dispensation* that has been spoken of ever since the world began.” Let me repeat President Hinckley’s

words: “Through all the perils of the past, [s]omehow, among all who have walked the earth, we have been brought forth in this unique and remarkable season. Be grateful, and above all be faithful.”

I don’t know how all of that makes you feel, but suddenly any undue anxiety about the times in which we live dissipates for me, and I am humbled, spiritually thrilled, and motivated at the opportunity we have been given. God is watching over His world, His Church, His leaders, and He is certainly watching over you. Let’s just make sure we are the “pure in heart” and that we *are* faithful. How blessed you will be. How fortunate your children and grandchildren will be.

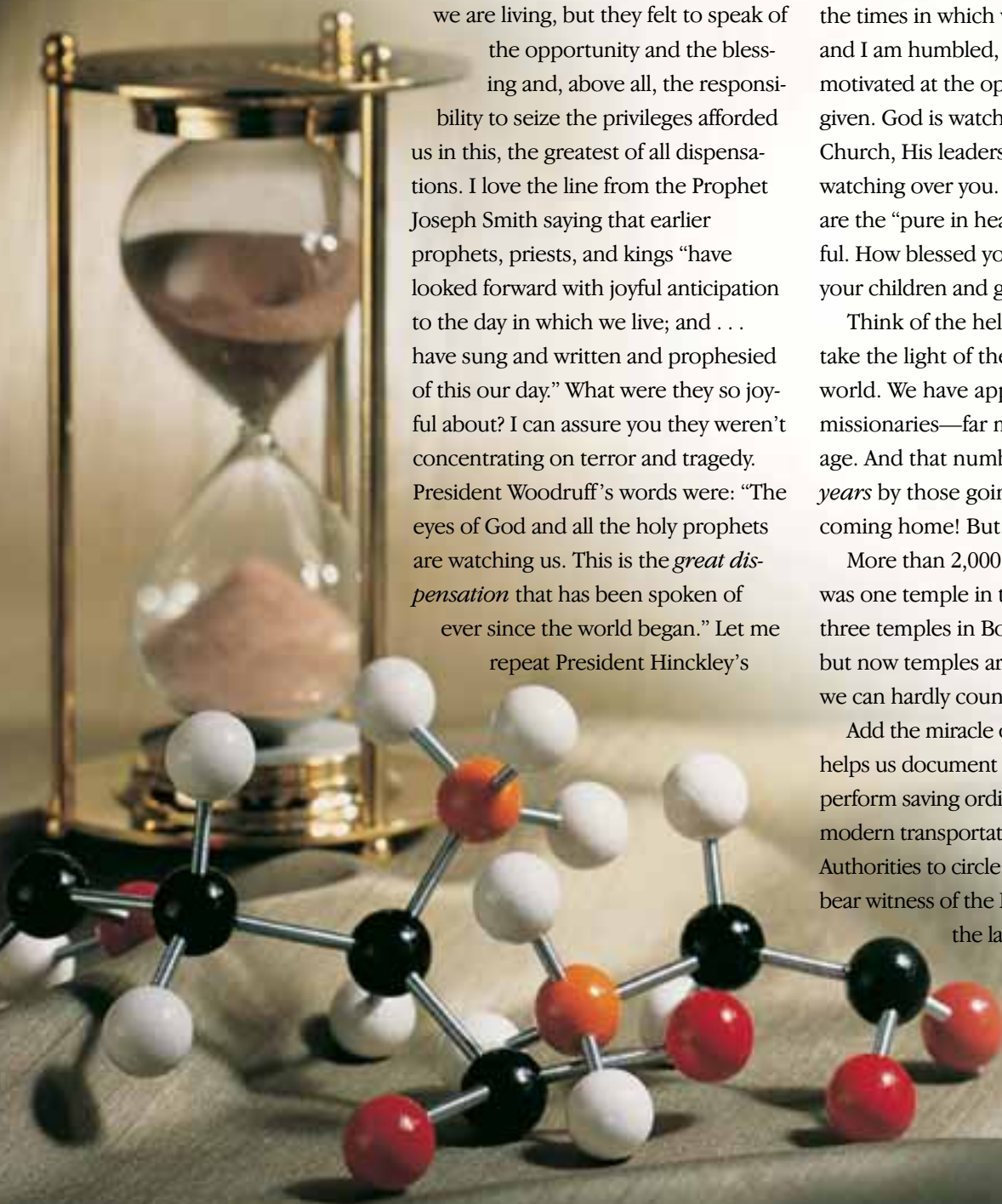
Think of the help we have been given to take the light of the gospel to a darkened world. We have approximately 53,000 missionaries—far more than in any other age. And that number is repeated *every two years* by those going out to replace those coming home! But we need even more.

More than 2,000 years or so ago there was one temple in the Old World and two or three temples in Book of Mormon history, but now temples are multiplying so rapidly we can hardly count them!

Add the miracle of the computer, which helps us document our family histories and perform saving ordinances for our dead. Add modern transportation, which allows General Authorities to circle the globe and personally bear witness of the Lord to all the Saints in all the lands. Add that where we

cannot go we can now “send,” as the scriptures say, with satellite broadcasts (see D&C 84:62).

Add *all* the elements of



education, science, technology, communication, transportation, medicine, nutrition, and revelation that surround us, and we begin to realize what the angel Moroni meant when he said repeatedly to the boy prophet Joseph Smith, quoting the Old Testament prophet Joel, that in the last days God would pour out His Spirit upon “all flesh” and that all

In the last days God will pour out His Spirit upon “all flesh,” and all humankind will be blessed by the light coming in all fields of endeavor as part of the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

humankind would be blessed by the light coming in all fields of endeavor as part of the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ (Joel 2:28; emphasis added; see also Joseph Smith—History 1:41).

We consider all these blessings that we have in our dispensation, and we pause to say to our Father in Heaven, “How *great* thou art.”⁴

A Wedding Feast

Let me add another element to this view of the dispensation. Because ours is the last and greatest of all dispensations, because all things will eventually culminate and be fulfilled in our era, there is, therefore, one specific responsibility that falls to those of us in the Church now that did not rest quite the same way on Church members in any earlier time. *We have a responsibility to prepare the Church of the Lamb of God to receive the Lamb of God*—in person, in triumphant glory, in His millennial role as Lord of lords and King of kings.

We have the responsibility as a Church and as individual members of that Church to be worthy to have Christ come to us, to

be worthy to have Him greet us, and to have Him accept, receive, and embrace us. The lives we present to Him in that sacred hour *must* be worthy of Him!

In the language of the scriptures we are the ones designated in all of history who must prepare the bride (the Church) for the Bridegroom (the Savior) and be worthy of an invitation to the wedding feast (see Matthew 22:2–14; 25:1–12; D&C 88:92, 96).

So, setting aside fear of the future, I am filled with an overwhelming sense of duty to prepare my life (and to the extent that I can to help prepare the lives of the members of the Church) for that long-prophesied day, for the time when we will make a presentation of the Church to Him whose Church it is.

I do not know when this singular day will come. I do not know who will be present to see it. But this *I do* know: when Christ comes, the members of His Church *must* be looking and acting like members of His Church are *supposed* to look and act if we are to be acceptable to Him. We must be doing His work, and we must be living His teachings. He must recognize us quickly and easily as truly being His disciples.

Surely that is why President Hinckley said: “It is not enough [for us, you and me, *now*, in our time] to simply be known as a member of this Church. . . . We must live as true followers of . . . Christ.” These are the *latter days*, and you and I are to be the best Latter-day *Saints* we can.

Live with Confidence

Is there a happy future for you and your posterity in these latter days? Absolutely! Will there be difficult times when those ominous



Among the knowledge and technology blessing humankind in these latter days are DNA research, computer-assisted family history research, and advanced medical treatments.



To be the best Latter-day Saints we can, we must be doing the Lord's work—building strong families, increasing personal spirituality, and serving others.

latter-day warnings and prophecies are fulfilled? Of course there will. Will those who have built upon the rock of Christ withstand winds, hail, and the mighty shafts in the whirlwind? You know they will. You have it on good word. You have it on His word! That “rock upon which ye are built . . . is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men [and women] build they cannot fall” (Helaman 5:12).

I leave you my love and my testimony that God not only lives, but He loves us. He loves *you*. Everything He does is for our good and our protection. There are evil and sorrow in the world, but there is no evil or harm in Him. He is our Father—a perfect father—and He will help us find refuge from the storm.

I testify not only that Jesus is the Christ, the holy and Only Begotten Son of God, but that He lives, that He loves us, that on the strength and merit of His atoning sacrifice, we too will live eternally.

This is the Church and kingdom of God on earth. Truth has been restored. Live with confidence, optimism, faith, and devotion. Be serious about life's challenges but not frightened or discouraged by them. Feel the joy of the Saints in the latter days—never crippling anxiety or destructive despair.

“Fear not, little flock. . . . Look [to Christ] in every thought; doubt not, fear not” (D&C 6:34, 36).

“Ye have not as yet understood how great blessings the Father hath . . . prepared for you. . . . Be of good cheer. . . . The kingdom is yours and the blessings thereof are yours, and the riches of eternity are yours” (D&C 78:17–18).

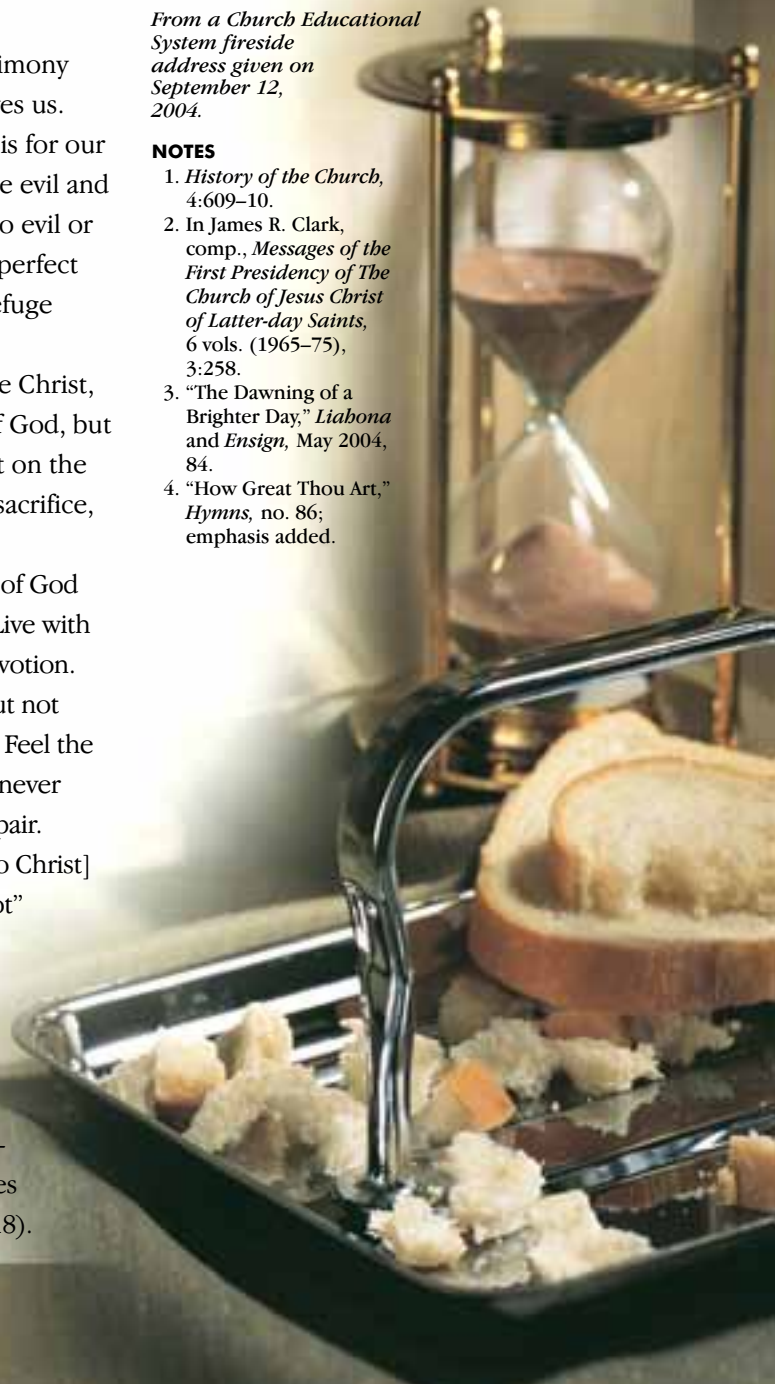
When Christ comes, the members of His Church must be looking and acting like members of His Church are supposed to look and act if we are to be acceptable to Him.

I leave you my blessing, my love, and an apostolic witness of the truthfulness of these things. ■

From a Church Educational System fireside address given on September 12, 2004.

NOTES

1. *History of the Church*, 4:609–10.
2. In James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (1965–75), 3:258.
3. “The Dawning of a Brighter Day,” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, May 2004, 84.
4. “How Great Thou Art,” *Hymns*, no. 86; emphasis added.



Become an Instrument in the Hands of God by Practicing Holiness



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.

What Is Practicing Holiness?

President James E.

Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency:

“Holiness is the strength of the soul. It comes by faith and through obedience to God’s laws and ordinances. God then purifies the heart by faith, and the heart becomes purged from that which is profane and unworthy. When holiness is achieved by conforming to God’s will, one knows intuitively that which is wrong. . . .

“ . . . We should go to the temple, among other reasons, to safeguard our personal holiness and that of our families.

“In addition to temples, surely another holy place on earth ought to be our homes. . . .

“ . . . May the Lord bless each and all of us in our special responsibility to find holiness to the Lord by standing in holy places. That is where we will find the spiritual protection we need for ourselves and our families” (“Standing

in Holy Places,” *Liabona and Ensign*, May 2005, 62, 67–68).

Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“Developing Christlike attributes in our lives is not an easy task. . . .

The reality check comes when

Christlike attributes

need to become

visible in our

lives—as husband

or wife, as father or

mother, as son or

daughter, in our

friendships, in our

employment, in our

business, and in our

recreation. We can recog-

nize our growth, as can

those around us, as we

gradually

increase our

capacity to ‘act

in all holiness

before [Him]’

(D&C 43:9)”

(“Christlike

Attributes—



the Wind beneath Our Wings,”

Liabona and Ensign, Nov. 2005, 102).

How Can I Practice Holiness and Be an Instrument in the Hands of God?

Kathleen H. Hughes, first counselor in the Relief Society general presidency: “Which one of us does

not long to be cherished, watched over, comforted, and instructed in the things of God? How does it happen? One kindness, one expression of love, one thoughtful gesture, one willing hand at a time. But my message is not to those who receive such acts of charity but to all of us who must practice such holiness every day. To become like Jesus Christ, the Prophet Joseph taught, ‘you must enlarge your souls toward others’” (“That We May All Sit Down in Heaven Together,” *Liabona and Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 110).

Bonnie D. Parkin, Relief Society

general president: “Covenants—or binding promises between us and Heavenly Father—are essential for our eternal progression. Step-by-step, He tutors us to become like Him by enlisting us in His work. At baptism we covenant to love Him with all our hearts and love our sisters and brothers as ourselves. In the temple we further covenant to be obedient, selfless, faithful, honorable, charitable. We covenant to make sacrifices and consecrate all that we have. . . .

“The Lord has called us to do all that we do with ‘holiness of heart’ [D&C 46:7]. And holiness is a product of covenant living. . . . Holiness prompts the words ‘Here am I; send me’” (“With Holiness of Heart,” *Liabona and Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 103, 105). ■



PARABLES OF THE

Master

Jesus taught in parables to veil their meaning. In this way, hearers of the parable learn religious truth in proportion to their faith and intelligence.



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Above: Parable of the Pounds,
by Henry Coller. *“His lord answered and said unto him [who buried his one talent], Thou wicked and slothful servant. . .*

“Take therefore the talent from him”
(Matthew 25:26, 28; see vv. 14–30).





Left: Parable of the Sower, by George Soper. *“Behold, a sower went forth to sow; . . .*

“And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, . . .

“Some fell upon stony places, . . .

“And some fell among thorns; . . .

“But other fell into good ground”

(Matthew 13:3-5, 7-8; see vv. 3-23).

Above: Rescue of the Lost Lamb, by Minerva K. Teichert. *“What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?*

“And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

“And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.

“I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance” (Luke 15:4-7).



Above: Five of Them Were Wise, by Walter Rane. *“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.*

“And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

“They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:

“But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. . . .

“And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh. . . .

“And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; . . .

“But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you” (Mathew 25:1–4, 6, 8–9; see vv. 1–13).

Right: The Enemy Sowing Tares, by James Tissot. *“The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:*

“But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat. . . .

“But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

“So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? . . .

“He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. . . .

“Let both grow together until the harvest: . . . Gather ye together first the tares . . . to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn” (Matthew 13:24–28, 30).



Right: The Pharisee and the Publican, by Robert T. Barrett. “The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. . . .
 “And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto

heaven, . . . saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.
 “I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted” (Luke 18:10–11, 13–14; see vv. 9–14).



Above: The Good Samaritan, by Gustave Doré. “But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,
 “And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him” (Luke 10:33–34; see vv. 25–37).

Left: Prodigal Son, by Clark Kelley Price. “And [the prodigal son] arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him” (Luke 15:20; see vv. 11–32). ■



vulgar

intelligent

Thy Speech Reveals Thee

The words you speak can classify and categorize you.

BY ELDER L. TOM PERRY

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

One of the great characters of the New Testament who has always held a special fascination for me is Peter. Peter had to struggle so hard to overcome the things of the world and to prepare himself to be a witness and teacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ. There is an interesting lesson to be learned in the relationship between the Savior and Peter during those final hours before the Savior's trial and Crucifixion.

"Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto

thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

"Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee" (Matthew 26:34-35).

Our Speech Reveals Who We Are

Then came those fateful hours when Peter did not identify himself with the Savior, but still his love for Him demanded that he be present at those trials to see what occurred.

"Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.

"But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.

"And when he was



sensitive

caring

rude



Peter's speech revealed who he was and where he had been reared. Our speech reflects the kind of person we are, exposing our background and our way of life. It describes our thinking as well as our inner feelings.

gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth.

"And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.

"And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth [reveals] thee.

"Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.

"And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly" (Matthew 26:69–75).

Just as a passport photo, a signature, or a thumbprint can identify individuals, Peter's speech revealed who he was and where he

had been reared. Just as surely are *you* classified and put in a special category by those who hear the words you speak. Our speech reflects the kind of person we are, exposing our background and our way of life. It describes our thinking as well as our inner feelings.

A Shocking Word

Today, probably more than in any other period of history, we find more profanity and vulgarity being used. I had a particular experience in my life that showed me how using the wrong word can shock those who do not expect such an utterance to come from you. I was in boot camp in the U.S. Marine Corps during World War II. Of course, the language among my fellow Marines was not of the caliber that you would want to repeat. Being a recently returned missionary, I determined I should keep my language above the level they were using. I tried consistently to keep from saying even the simplest and most common of swear words.

One day we were on the rifle range firing for our final qualification scores. I had done well in the 100-, 200-, and 300-yard positions. Now we were back at the 500-yard position. All I needed was a reasonable score—just hitting the target without even having to hit the bull's-eye—and I would make Expert Rifleman. We had been charged up with the desire to excel and be the top platoon in firing for qualifications. I tensed up at the 500-yard standing position and on my first shot threw my shoulder into the rifle. Of course, the flag waved—I had missed the target. And likewise I missed the opportunity of being named Expert Rifleman.

Out of my mouth came a little four-letter word that I had determined never to use.

Much to my shock and chagrin, suddenly the whole range stopped firing and everyone turned and looked at me with their mouths open. Any other Marine firing from that position that day could have used the word I used without anyone paying attention. But because I had determined that I would carry the standards of the mission field into the Marine Corps, everyone was shocked when I forgot myself.

The Savior Himself instructed us concerning the use of our speech. He said, “Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man” (Matthew 15:11).

Many times in our effort to refrain from improper speech, we find words to substitute. Sometimes they are so close to vulgar phrases everyone probably knows that we are substituting words and have not really improved our vocabulary.

I have been appalled at times as I have listened to returning missionaries speak in sacrament meeting. I have heard the words, phrases, or sentences they have picked up in the mission field that were really substitutes for vulgarity, demonstrating their inability to master a proper vocabulary and give the correct impression of what they had been doing on their missions.

How to Improve Your Speech

To anyone who has followed the practice of using profanity or vulgarity and would like to correct the habit, could I offer this suggestion?

1. Make the commitment to erase such words from your vocabulary.

2. If you slip and say a swear word or a substitute word, mentally reconstruct the sentence without the vulgarity or substitute word.
3. Repeat the new sentence aloud.

Eventually you will develop a nonvulgar speech habit.

I think the instructions Paul gave to the Ephesian Saints would be of value to all of us:

“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

“And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4:29–30).

Have the courage to keep your speech clean and wholesome. Improve your vocabulary—it will place you among those who will be found serving the Lord.

The Savior taught, “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh” (Luke 6:45).

May your mouth speak out of the abundance of that which is good in your heart is my prayer for all of you. ■

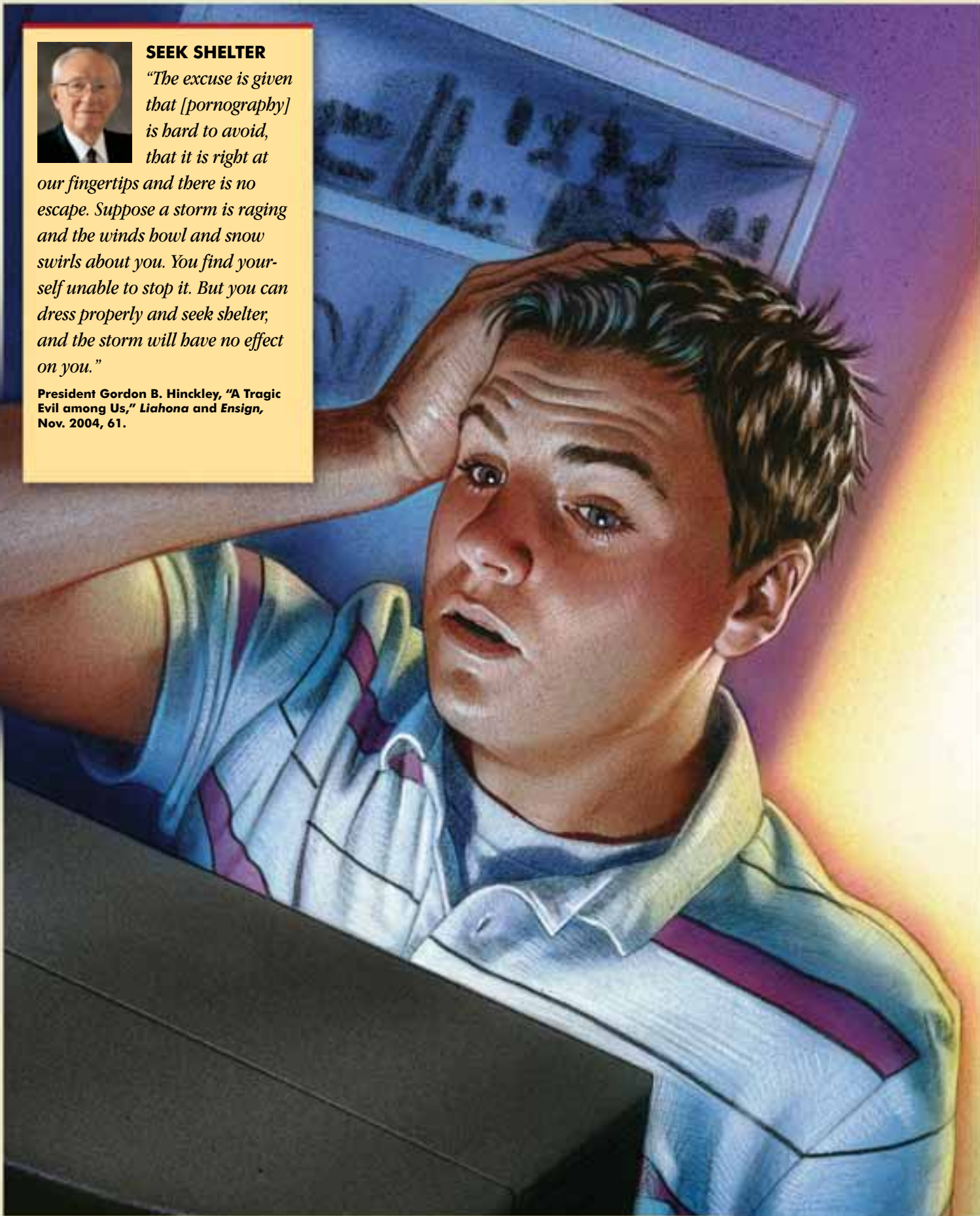




SEEK SHELTER

"The excuse is given that [pornography] is hard to avoid, that it is right at our fingertips and there is no escape. Suppose a storm is raging and the winds howl and snow swirls about you. You find yourself unable to stop it. But you can dress properly and seek shelter, and the storm will have no effect on you."

President Gordon B. Hinckley, "A Tragic Evil among Us," *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 61.



My Battle with Pornography

NAME WITHHELD

I was just 10 years old the first time I encountered pornography. I was at an older friend's house, and we were watching television. He turned to his computer and said he had something to show me. When I asked what it was, he said, "Hot pictures of girls." I told him it was against my religion to look at those kinds of things, but he said, "Yeah, right. Everyone looks at this stuff—it's natural." I refused to look at it and left.

Two years later I was at my friend's house again. The difference this time was that I let curiosity and temptation get the better of me, and I agreed to look at what he had to show me. It was the biggest mistake of my life. I wish on a daily basis that I had not gone down the path I did.

I continued to look at pornography on my home computer. It was in a private place, but if anyone walked in on me, I said it was a pop-up or made some other excuse. For the next year I silenced the guilt I felt and didn't even try to stop looking at pornography. I convinced myself that it was natural and ignored any counsel from the Church that told me otherwise. I didn't realize it at first, but I had become addicted to pornography.

The way I looked at girls started to change, and I was ashamed of the thoughts I had.

At a youth conference my stake president spoke to us about how looking at pornography makes young men unworthy to exercise the priesthood. His talk convinced me that I needed to stop. At first I thought I could do it on my own. I didn't want to tell the bishop because I didn't want him to judge me for what I was doing. Instead, I just resolved not to look at it anymore. Unfortunately, my resolves never lasted long. I promised myself every time was the last time, but the addiction was so ingrained in me that I would find myself looking at it again and again.

Many other sins came as a result of this one. I continued to go to church but didn't pay attention. I let Satan gain power over my life and lost the influence of the Spirit. I lied about scripture reading in seminary. I lied about Boy Scout records. I even cheated in school. I became everything I had been taught not to be.

Five years passed while I tried to overcome my addiction with prayer and self-control. But I couldn't beat the addiction by myself.

No matter how hard I tried to break free from my addiction, I kept losing the battle. I finally learned I couldn't do it on my own.



PREVENTION

The best defense against pornography is to avoid it. The following tips will prevent you from taking the first step toward addiction and all of its problems:

- Many people who struggle with pornography were introduced to it by a friend. If anyone offers to show you pornography, leave immediately. Choose carefully the people you spend time with.
- Have the courage to turn off any media that displays or talks about immorality, regardless of the rating.
- Place televisions and computers in busy areas of the house. Do not use the computer when you are home alone.
- Make sure that any computer you use to access the Internet has a filter that will block pornographic Web sites. Protect yourself against the storm of pornography (see the quote by President Hinckley on page 34).
- Never open e-mail from someone you don't know. If you accidentally encounter pornography on the Web, immediately turn off the computer and tell an adult.
- Listen to the promptings of the Holy Ghost. He will warn you when you are in a dangerous situation.



RECOVERY

If you are caught in the snare of pornography, you must repent *and* overcome the addiction. Work through your repentance with the help of your bishop or branch president. LDS Family Services gives the following suggestions for recovering from an addiction:

- *Stop rationalizing.* You must stop justifying your addictive behavior.

- *Disrupt the addictive cycle.* Prevent the following cycle of addiction from repeating itself:

Phase 1: Preoccupation—dwelling on mental images that are sexually stimulating.

Phase 2: Ritualization—engaging in routines that lead to the use of pornography.

Phase 3: Viewing or using pornography.

Phase 4: Despair.

You can overcome the temptation to look at pornography by breaking the cycle at any of the four points. Here are ways to stop one phase from leading to the next:


1. *Control your thoughts and desires.* Use faith, fasting, prayer, and scripture study to overcome impure thoughts. Replace unworthy thoughts as soon as they enter your mind by listening to inspirational music, reciting memorized scriptures, or thinking about wholesome things.

2. *Change your routines.* Do something different, like going for a walk, reading the scriptures, talking to a friend, or practicing a sport or musical instrument.

3. *Eliminate the opportunity.* Stop yourself from looking at pornography by preventing access to it.

4. *Pray for hope to replace your despair.* Do not allow setbacks to discourage you. Through repentance and forgiveness, you can feel hope instead of despair. Overcoming addiction is a process that takes time. Those who succeed are persistent.

- *Seek professional assistance.* Serious addictions may require professional counseling. In some areas, your bishop or branch president can refer you to the nearest LDS Family Services office, which has an addiction recovery program. Visit www.ldsfamilyservices.org for more information. The Church pamphlet *Let Virtue Garnish Thy Thoughts* (item no. 00460) also has helpful information on overcoming pornography.





AVOID THE TRAP

“Pornography brings a vicious wake of immorality, broken homes, and broken

lives. Pornography will sap spiritual strength to endure. Pornography is much like quicksand. You can become so easily trapped and overcome as soon as you step into it that you do not realize the severe danger. Most likely you will need assistance to get out of the quicksand of pornography. But how much better it is never to step into it.”

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Press On,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 103.

I finally admitted to my parents that I had a problem with pornography. I told them, “I need help. I can’t do this alone.” Even though it was hard on them, they understood and tried to help me. My parents encouraged me to meet with the bishop.

I knew my parents were right, but I was afraid to talk to my bishop. I considered him a friend, and I didn’t want him to know about all the sins I had kept hidden. When I finally gathered the courage to meet with him, I was surprised by how understanding he was. I didn’t feel like he was judging me at all; he just wanted to help.

As soon as I confessed fully to the bishop and started to repent, my life immediately got better. I understood that to repent fully of my addiction to pornography, I needed to repent of *all* my sins. I turned in all of my seminary awards and Scouting merit badges, admitting that I hadn’t earned them. I also confessed to my schoolteachers that I had cheated.

With the bishop’s help, I realized how important it is to confess both to the bishop and to the Lord (see D&C 58:43). Before, I was trying to fight this addiction all by myself, but now I have my parents, my bishop, and most important, the Lord on my side. These are strong defenses against temptation.

We got a parental lock on the computer, and I began to put pictures of the temple or the prophet nearby to keep my mind on sacred things. I discovered that daily

scripture study was one of the most helpful ways to build my spiritual defenses. When I was looking at pornography, I don’t think I even knew where my scriptures were. But now I know I need to read my scriptures every day in order to resist temptation.

I’ve also had to be more careful about what I watch and listen to. Many television shows and movies talk about immorality as if it were natural. I’ve realized it *is* natural to the natural man, an enemy to God (see Mosiah 3:19). Only through the Atonement of Jesus Christ have I been able to put off the natural man and be forgiven of my sins. I know that if anyone can understand the regret I have suffered for my sins, it is the Savior, who suffered all things.

I have now forsaken my addiction to pornography. I have come to understand that through the Atonement, there is eternal hope. Although I will have to be constantly on my guard, with the help of the Spirit in my life, I will win the war. I know the devil will still try to tempt me, but he will never prevail when I have the Savior on my side.

I learned the hard way that it takes only one time to spark the beginning of a long addiction that will bring nothing but misery. I let idle curiosity lead me to sin and despair, but I am motivated to stay away from this plague for the rest of my life. I look forward to serving a mission, marrying in the temple, and eventually living with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ again. ■



LEFT, FROM TOP: PHOTOGRAPHS BY JED CLARK, WELDEN C. ANDERSEN, JOHN LUKE, AND TAMARA PATIETA

Talking to Youth about Pornography



As parents and priesthood leaders speak openly with youth about intimacy, they will be able to help them understand and avoid the spiritual, emotional, and physical dangers of pornography.

BY DAN GRAY

Licensed clinical social worker

Today's youth are bombarded by explicit images—most of them carnal and lustful. But because of the complexity and delicate nature of sexual issues, many parents are reluctant or embarrassed to discuss the subject with their children. Consequently, many youth are schooled by misguided friends or corrupt media and often develop inaccurate views about sexuality. Those views may lead to inappropriate behaviors.

We want to teach our youth the law of chastity and help them avoid the pain of immorality. So what can parents and priesthood leaders do? We need to discuss with our youth the sacred nature of human intimacy and help them understand and bridle the feelings associated with that intimacy.

If we teach only about misused sexuality, our youth might become insecure and uncertain. We may inadvertently convey this confusing message: "Sexual thoughts and feelings are bad, sinful, and wrong—save them for someone you love." Youth who receive only negative messages about sexuality may conclude, "Since sexual feelings or urges are bad, and I feel them very strongly, I too must be bad." This kind of thinking can result in feelings of low self-worth, unworthiness, and shame, leaving the youth feeling distant from the Spirit.

Open conversation can prevent much of this confusion. As we talk to our youth about the sacred nature of our bodies and procreation, we'll be able to help them understand and avoid the spiritual, emotional, and physical dangers of pornography.

Our Bodies: Their Sacred Nature

The media often portray an unrealistic view of how our bodies should look and what they represent. This view leads people to see the body as an object rather than an essential part of a person's soul. Accepting this view can lead to near worship of the "perfect body" and, when one doesn't match up, to self-loathing.

Rather than let the media teach our youth this destructive worldly view, we can teach them that our bodies, in all their varieties, are wonderful, God-given gifts, created to provide joy and fulfillment. In 1913 Elder James E. Talmage (1862–1933) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles stated: "We have been taught . . . to look upon these bodies of ours as gifts from God. We Latter-day Saints do not regard the body as something to be condemned, something to be abhorred. . . . We regard [the body] as the sign of our royal birthright. . . . It is particular to the theology of the Latter-day Saints that we regard the body as an essential part of the soul."¹ This understanding can help youth look upon their own bodies and the bodies of others with deep respect.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles also articulated the sacred nature of our bodies:

"We simply must understand the revealed, restored Latter-day Saint doctrine of the soul, and the high and inextricable part the body plays in that doctrine.

"One of the 'plain and precious' truths restored to this dispensation is that 'the spirit *and* the body are the soul of man' [D&C 88:15; emphasis added]. . . .

". . . Exploitation of the body (please include the word *soul* there) is, in the last analysis, an exploitation of Him who is the Light and the Life of the world."²

Our Sexuality: A Gift

In addition to being blessed with physical bodies, we are also given the sacred power of procreation. Our Heavenly Father has sanctioned the act of sexual expression in marriage and allows married couples to experience pleasure, love, and fulfillment in that expression. President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) stated: "In the context of lawful marriage, the intimacy of sexual relations is right and

divinely approved. There is nothing unholy or degrading about sexuality in itself, for by that means men and women join in a process of creation and in an expression of love."³ Our sexual drives—when expressed appropriately—should therefore be seen as wonderful, sacred gifts.

President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, spoke to the youth of the Church on this topic. His powerful insights can help parents teach about the positive and sacred nature of these powers:

"There was provided in our bodies—and this is sacred—a power of creation, a light, so to speak, that has the power to kindle other lights. This gift was to be used only within the sacred bonds of marriage. Through the exercise of this power of creation, a mortal body may be conceived, a spirit entered into it, and a new soul born into this life.

"*This power is good.* It can create and sustain family life, and it is in family life that we find the fountains of happiness. It is given to virtually every individual who is born into mortality. It is a sacred and significant power, and I repeat, my young friends, that *this power is good.* . . .

"Much of the happiness that may come to you in life will depend on how you use this sacred power of creation."⁴

The Harmful Effects of Pornography

One of the things that can corrupt this sacred power is pornography. President Gordon B. Hinckley has said that through its use "the minds of youth become warped with false concepts. Continued exposure leads to addiction that is almost impossible to break."⁵

Many individuals, even some professional counselors, excuse or even condone viewing pornography as harmless behavior. They rationalize that it is "normal" and causes no harm when done in seclusion and privacy. This same rationale is used in excusing the accompanying practice of self-stimulation. So how do we respond when youth ask, "What is it about pornography and self-stimulation that is wrong?" The following four thoughts may be helpful in addressing this question.

It defiles souls—souls for which Jesus Christ atoned. The body is part of the soul; therefore, when we look upon the body of another person to satisfy our own lustful desires, we are disrespecting and defiling the very soul of that person as well as our own. Elder Holland warned us of the consequences of rationalizing or taking these things lightly: “In trivializing the soul of another (please include the word *body* there) we trivialize the atonement, which saved that soul and guaranteed its continued existence. And when one toys with the Son of Righteousness, the Day Star Himself, one toys with white heat and a flame hotter and holier than the noonday sun. You cannot do so and not be burned.”⁶ Pornography defiles and degrades the body and spirit. We need to respect the sacred nature of others and of ourselves.

It can keep us from reaching the fullest potential of our souls. Our Heavenly Father has created our bodies and our spirits. He knows how they work together best. He knows what will help us reach our potential and what will hinder our progress. He knows what we should take into our bodies and what we should leave out. Prophets have taught us that putting pornographic images into our minds is detrimental to our spirit and that in so doing, we jeopardize our ability to have happiness and joy. If, however, we follow the Lord’s directives from the scriptures and prophets, we will be able to experience the fullest potential of our souls.

It can become addictive. Repeatedly viewing pornography, especially when coupled with self-stimulation, can become habitual, even addictive. The addiction is established when a person becomes dependent on the “rush” of chemicals the body creates when one views pornography. He or she learns to depend on this activity to escape from or cope with life’s challenges and emotional stressors like hurt, anger, boredom, loneliness, or fatigue. This dependency becomes very difficult to break and sometimes escalates to sexual encounters outside the bonds of marriage.

It creates unhealthy expectations for marriage. When a person views pornography and becomes aroused, the body experiences the same arousal patterns as in a real

sexual encounter. When this behavior is repeated frequently, the body and the mind become conditioned to certain sexual images and behavior, which can create unrealistic and unhealthy expectations of what a sexual relationship should or will be. Such expectations carry over to marriage, creating pain, distrust, conflict, confusion, and betrayal of trust between spouses.

Unceasing Virtue

The Lord offers tremendous blessings to those who have clean and virtuous thoughts coupled with charity: “Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven. The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion” (D&C 121:45–46).

How does one maintain virtuous thoughts “unceasingly”? Those who succeed in overcoming inappropriate thoughts and behaviors are those who learn to engage in virtuous daily routines. These activities include the following:

- Listening to uplifting music.
- Enjoying God’s creations in nature.
- Keeping our bodies clean and healthy.
- Reading the scriptures and good literature.
- Delighting in laughter with good friends and family.
- Participating in conversation that is not demeaning or lewd.
- Giving thanks in prayer and pleading for power to resist temptation.
- Surrounding ourselves with virtuous things in our homes and workplaces, including pictures, paintings, gifts from loved ones, items that make us laugh, or things that help us recall meaningful memories.

All of these can become symbols of virtue, which can keep our minds focused and less susceptible to the cravings of the natural man. If youth can learn and implement these strategies in their lives, they will begin to experience the incredible blessings spoken of in Doctrine and Covenants 121.

It is also vital that they understand we all have weakness to overcome. Weakness does not make us unworthy of God's love. In fact, overcoming our weakness is part of the Lord's plan for us. When the Lord makes us aware of our weakness and we follow His directive to become humble and submissive (not distressed and hopeless), wonderful things



begin to happen. We can yield our hearts to the Lord in faith. Then, through His grace and power—not through our willpower alone—He will “make weak things become strong” (Ether 12:27) unto us.

We are not told that He will take our weakness away from us. We may continue to be tempted and troubled by our weakness, but as we are humble and maintain faith, the Lord will help us resist temptations.

When young people have problems with pornography, they need to know that they are not lost, that we and the Lord still love them, and that there is a way out. President Hinckley has said: “May you plead with the Lord out of the depths of your soul that He will remove from you the addiction which enslaves you. And may you have the courage to seek the

loving guidance of your bishop and, if necessary, the counsel of caring professionals.”⁷ Our youth should not feel ashamed of seeking parental, priesthood, and professional help.

As parents and leaders, we must be involved in our youths' lives, striving to create a safe environment for them. We need to be bold in our communication with them about these important issues, encouraging them to stay close to the principles of the gospel and to fortify themselves against the powers of the adversary. We need to be aware of and monitor our youths' activities—including their Internet use—and openly discuss the blessings and dangers of human sexuality, listening and giving sound direction and guidance.

Of course, we do not share personal accounts of our own intimate experiences. But using the principles discussed in this article, we can help our youth clearly understand the power and the potential of the sexual urges they have.

More important, we must set an example to our youth. They are watching how we cope with negative influences. Our youth need to know that *we* know the influence of the adversary is no match for the divine power and influence of the Lord, in whom we place our confidence. ■

NOTES

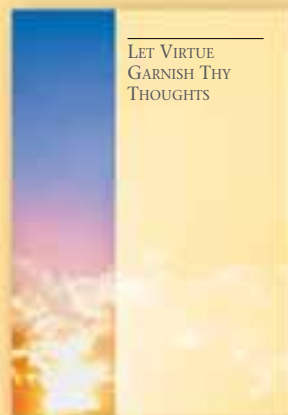
1. In Conference Report, Oct. 1913, 117.
2. *Of Souls, Symbols, and Sacraments* (2001), 11, 13.
3. *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball (1982), 311.
4. “Why Stay Morally Clean,” *Ensign*, July 1972, 111; emphasis added.
5. “A Tragic Evil among Us,” *Liabona and Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 61.
6. *Of Souls, Symbols, and Sacraments*, 13.
7. *Liabona and Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 62.

HELP IN OVERCOMING PORNOGRAPHY

Let Virtue Garnish Thy Thoughts is a new pamphlet designed to help those struggling with pornography. It discusses how to:

- Recognize destructive media.
- Resist and avoid the temptation of pornography.
- Abandon pornography addictions.

Let Virtue Garnish Thy Thoughts (item no. 00460) also lists scriptures and other Church resources on repentance, the sanctity of the body, and overcoming worldly influences. Church leaders and family members can share the pamphlet with loved ones struggling with pornography.



I Remembered the Pioneers

By Daniel Cisternas

When I was 19 I was called up to the Swedish army. As an artillery signalist, I served in the Eighth Company's staff and leading platoon.

At 4:00 one January morning, our officers ordered us to get dressed with full equipment and gather outside in 20 minutes. Tired and hungry from the previous day's activities, I felt like I had barely closed my eyes, and here I was again preparing to confront a new test. I still remember how it felt, stepping from the warmth of the barracks into an indescribable cold.

A huge military bus arrived to pick us up, and we were told we were going to Stockholm for a big test to see if we were qualified to continue our training. Arriving in the city, we were divided into three groups, with different maps and separate destinations.

We walked the streets of Stockholm, fully equipped with weapons, ammunition, and other gear. At each checkpoint we were required to perform a physical test, such as hostage confrontation, street battle, running through tunnels and buildings, and first aid treatment. After every test we barely had time

to rest before moving on to the next checkpoint.

The freezing asphalt made my feet numb, and my shoulders ached from the heavy equipment. But I kept going and tried not to complain. Our group experienced bitter weather and difficult trials, but we were still marching as brothers. Along the route, we encountered shocked civilians who laughed, pointed fingers, and shouted at us.

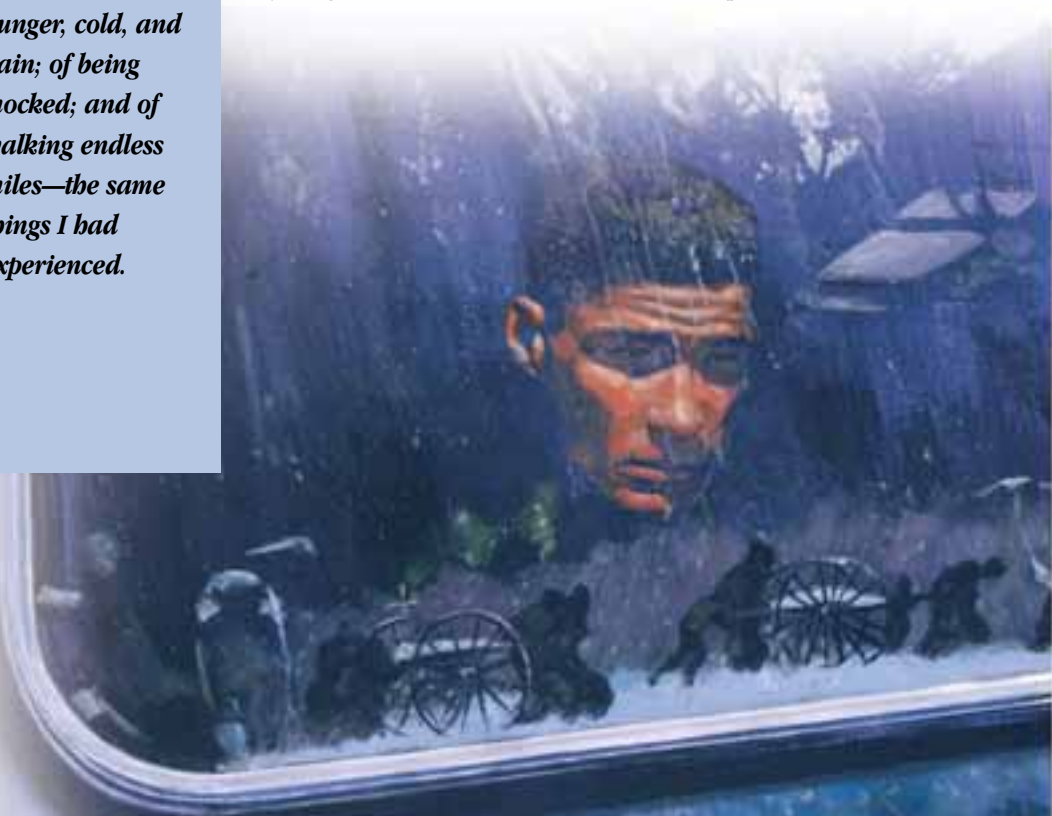
I was tired, cold, dirty, and in pain when we reached our final destination and the bus picked us up. During the trip back to the base, I reflected on the trials my platoon and

I had endured and asked myself if this training was worth anything besides the

medals awarded at the conclusion. I asked myself if anyone else besides us had gone through trials as we had that day.

Suddenly, I thought of the hardships and sacrifice of the pioneers of the early days of the Church. I recalled the stories of their hunger, cold, and pain; of being mocked; and of walking endless miles—the same things I had experienced that day. The big difference is that I had to endure this for only one day. The pioneers traveled in cold and snow, rain and heat, walking through mud and dust. They walked with little material security, having only faith that the Lord would protect them. The pioneers walked to find Zion because the Lord had a marvelous work for these members to perform.

I recalled the stories of the pioneers' hunger, cold, and pain; of being mocked; and of walking endless miles—the same things I had experienced.

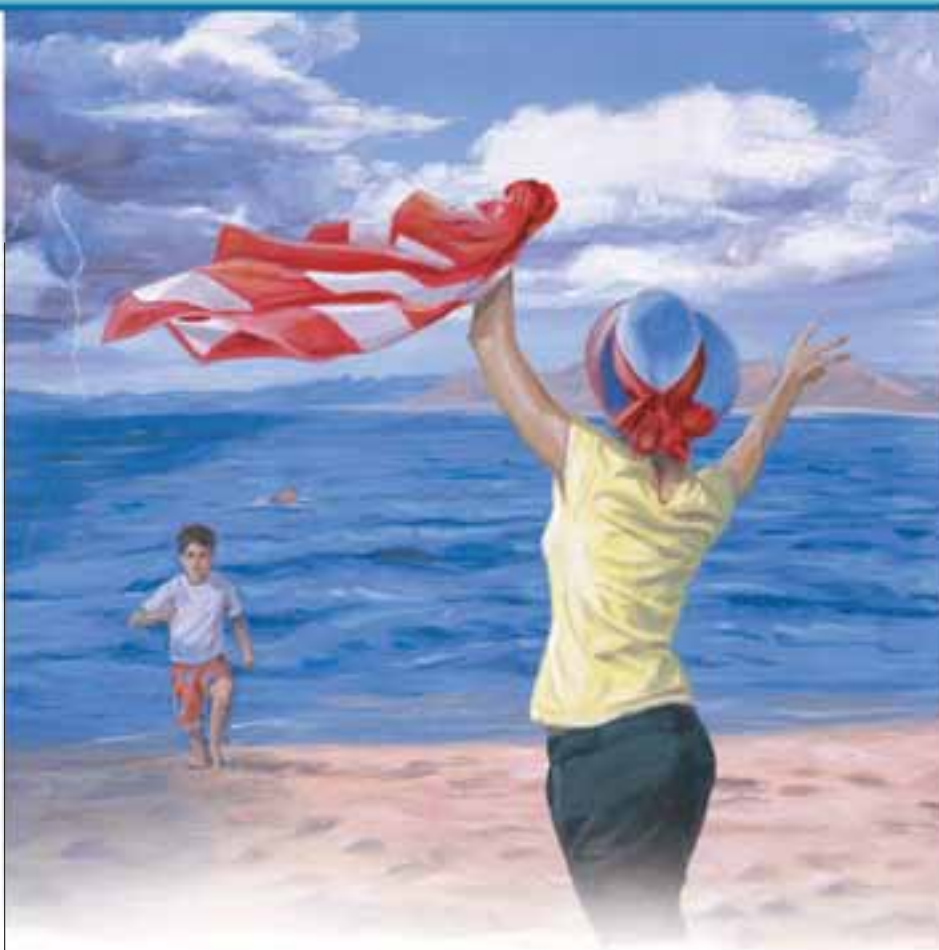


Suddenly, without thinking, I started to sing “Come, Come, Ye Saints” (*Hymns*, no. 30), and right there on the bus I started to feel a difference within me. A great warmth and happiness flowed through my body. I was not active in the Church at that time and I had thought I would never come back, but suddenly a feeling came over me saying, “Come back to church.”

When I got to the base, I called my parents and told them I loved them and wanted to go back to church. The following Sunday was a huge test for me to see if I had the courage to return because I had been away for so long. Going back wasn’t easy, but it was worth it. My family and the other members helped me feel welcome.

I began to prepare to serve a mission and two years later received a mission call to serve in the Cape Verde Praia Mission. When I arrived in Salt Lake City on my way to the Missionary Training Center, I saw the marvelous work performed by the pioneers in building a magnificent temple and planning a beautiful city. I said softly, “Thank you.”

Today, when I ask myself if that military test was worth anything, I answer that it was, in every way, because in that moment of great insight on a bus with a platoon of fellow soldiers, I realized how important the work of the Lord is. It was worth it because I came back to the Lord and am now doing His work and His will. ■



Get the Children Out of the Water!

By Janell Johnson

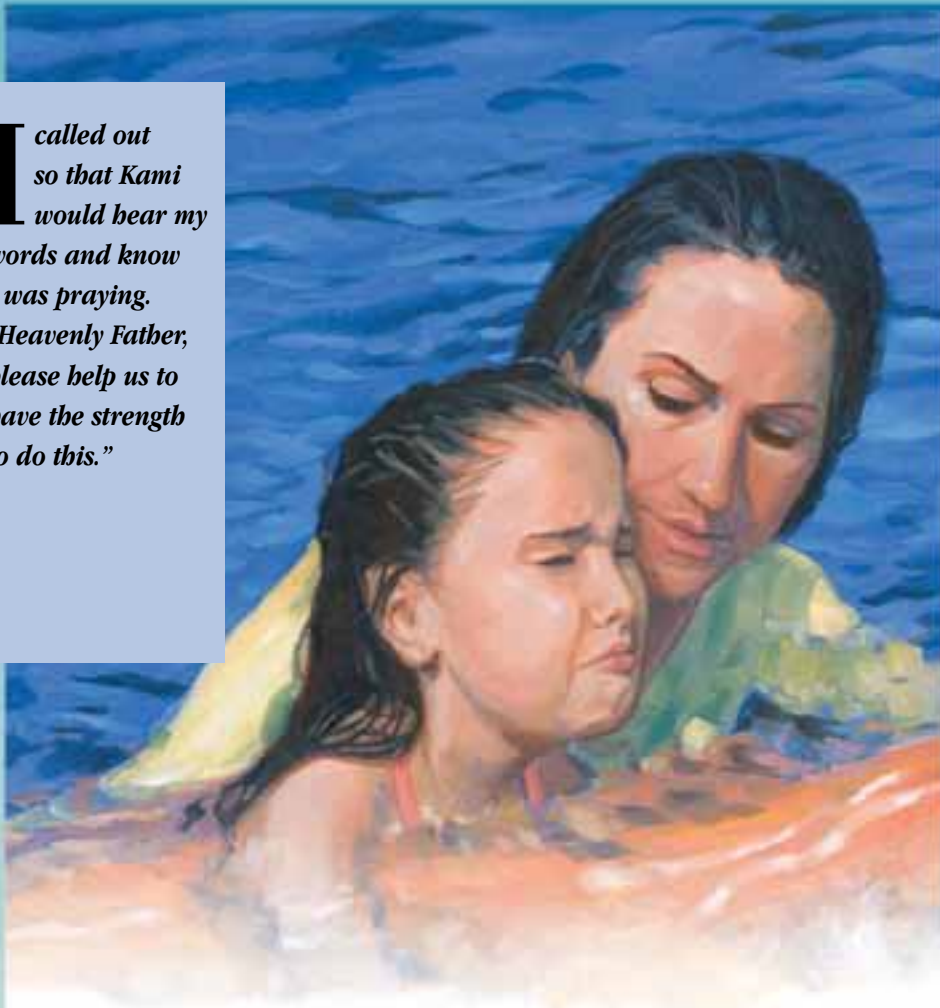
It was a pleasant day in June 2003. I drove my five children from our home in Logan, Utah, to Bear Lake to visit my sister’s family. Their home lies a few minutes’ walk from the water, and after visiting for a while I decided to take my children and their two cousins, Kami and Erin, to the beach to play.

The water near the edge was warm, and a gentle breeze stirred the air as I sat on a chair, reading and relaxing. I looked out toward the lake and noticed that Kami was about 50 yards (46 m) from shore,

floating on a high-density foam pad. Because the lake became very deep not far from shore, I waved to her and called for her to come closer, but she couldn’t hear my voice from that distance.

About that time I began to feel very uneasy and heard the Spirit whisper that the children needed to get out of the water. I called to them to come closer to shore, and reluctantly they wandered toward me. Suddenly the Spirit spoke loud and clear, “Get the children out of the water!” I turned toward the mountains behind

I called out so that Kami would hear my words and know I was praying. “Heavenly Father, please help us to have the strength to do this.”



us and saw dark clouds gathering. A bolt of lightning flashed brilliantly in the sky.

“Get out of the water,” I screamed. “There’s lightning coming!” I raced for Kami, who by now was floating about 75 yards (68 m) from shore. At that moment a blast of wind hit us. My eight-year-old son, Dallin, tried to carry another foam pad out of the water, but the wind hit it like a sail and threw him to the ground.

I tried to get to Kami as fast as I could, but the wind was driving her farther out on the water. I am not a strong swimmer, and with the waves rising around me, I continued to wade. I could see her kicking her feet as hard as she could while leaning over the side of the pad, but this

did little to combat the fierce wind. She was still being swept out to open water.

The water became deeper and deeper as I waded out, until it reached my shoulders. Then my feet came to a sharp drop-off in the lake bottom. I had to stop, but I was still 20 yards (18 m) from Kami. I opened my mouth to call her, but to my horror no sound came out. When it finally did, it was only choking gasps. It was then I realized how very cold the water was out this far. I realized that hypothermia was setting in. I wasn’t going to make it back either. We were both going to drown.

At that moment, using all the strength left in me, I called out so

that Kami would hear my words and know I was praying. “Heavenly Father, please help us to have the strength to do this.” In an instant a warmth flooded my body, and my energy returned. My voice became clear and strong, and I called to her, “Kami, paddle with your hands!” Her little 10-year-old arms dog-paddled on the water in front of the pad. She was hardly strong enough to make a difference in the terrible wind, but it was as though a giant hand were behind her, gently propelling her toward my outstretched hand. I continued to call encouraging words to her until our fingers touched, and at that moment I knew that because Heavenly Father had brought her to me, we would make it.

On shore Dallin cried as wind and sand beat him cruelly. It took all my strength to get him, the other children, and the pads and toys into the car. In the distance the mournful wail of a loud siren filled the air, signaling a fire started by the lightning on the hills. It seemed to add to the trauma of the moment, yet we knew we had been preserved by divine assistance.

I told the children what had happened out on the water, and the instant we reached the house we gave thanks in prayer for His saving our lives. As we did so, I felt the overwhelming love of our Father in Heaven. I know that He is aware of His children, and I am very grateful that He was with us that day. ■

Will I Be Able to Talk Again?

By Javier Gamarra Villena

I had been on my mission in my home country of Peru for several months when I met Santiago. He attended a Sunday School class for new members, but he had not been baptized. Nor had he taken the missionary discussions. I learned that he had a speech impediment that made him feel insecure because he had difficulty communicating.

For most of his life, Santiago had been able to speak clearly and had been blessed with a beautiful singing voice. But then he suffered a stroke. After a long time in a rehabilitation center, he had learned to walk again, but he still had trouble speaking.

We were thrilled when Santiago decided to meet with us. During our first visit, he tried to talk, and we tried to understand. He especially enjoyed reading aloud from the Book of Mormon. We loved and admired him.

One day while we were discussing gospel ordinances, Santiago said he was ready for baptism and confirmation. After we had finished the discussion, he stood up, eyes shining, and with great difficulty asked, “Elders, after I’m baptized, will I be able to talk normally again?”

I was taken aback for a moment and at first didn’t know how to

answer. But responding to the influence of the Spirit, I said confidently, “Yes, if you have enough faith, the Lord will grant your desire.”

On the day of his baptism, I remembered Santiago’s question when he was asked to bear his testimony. Realizing that some of the Lord’s promises aren’t fulfilled immediately, I wondered if Santiago would feel disappointed if his ability to speak didn’t immediately improve. In the days that followed, he still struggled to talk, but he didn’t seem to be concerned.

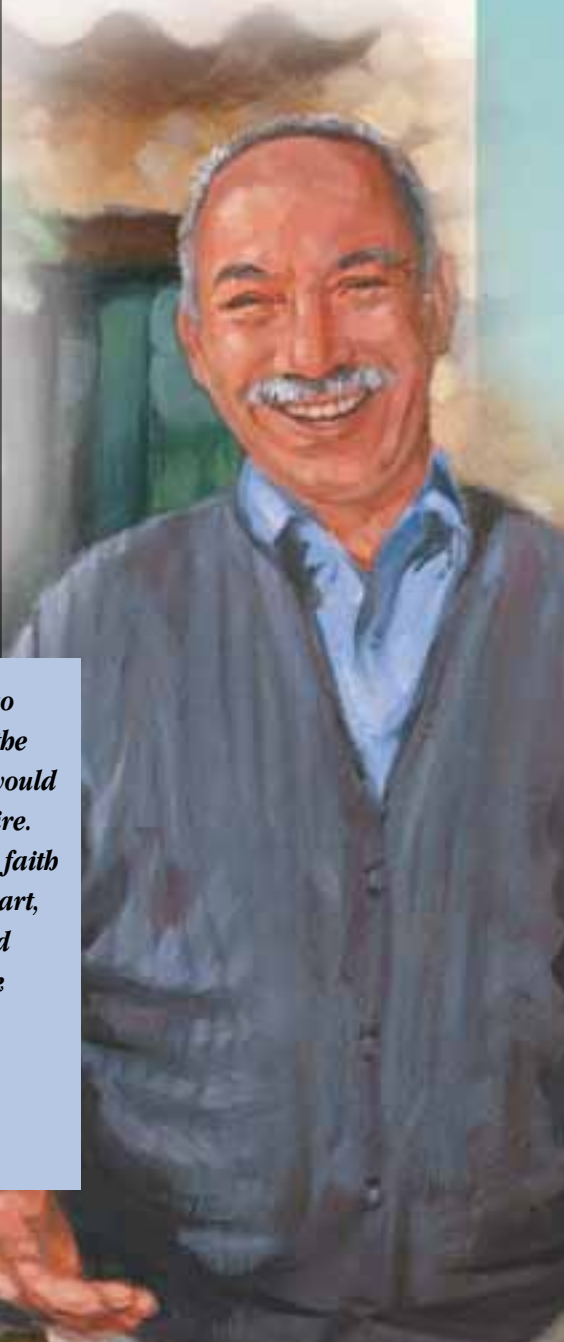
I was soon transferred and didn’t see Santiago again until the end of my mission, when I went to say goodbye before returning home. My companion and I didn’t find him home and started to leave, when suddenly we heard a strong voice calling to us. It was Santiago!

We entered his house, and he talked about how happy he had been as a member of the Church. After a few minutes I realized that he was speaking almost perfectly. Surprised, I said, “Santiago, you talk fine now!”

He said he knew the Lord would grant his desire. So he showed faith and did his part, reading aloud from the Book of Mormon and doing exercises his doctor

had recommended. “The Lord has seen my efforts and has given my voice back to me,” he said. “And it won’t be long before He blesses me with the ability to sing again.”

I could not hold back my tears. That day Santiago taught me a great lesson. The promises of the Lord aren’t always fulfilled quickly, but they are fulfilled nonetheless. ■



Santiago knew the Lord would grant his desire. So he showed faith and did his part, reading aloud from the Book of Mormon.

Did You Know?

It Happened in July

July 30, 1837: Outrunning other baptismal candidates to the River Ribble, George D. Watt became the first convert baptized in Great Britain. Elder Heber C. Kimball baptized him.

July 24, 1847: Brigham Young and other pioneers entered the Salt Lake Valley.

July 24, 1929: The Czechoslovak Mission was organized.

July 9, 1976: The Japan Okayama Mission was organized.

Leadership Tip

President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, taught: “When the Savior was giving Peter some leadership training he said, ‘When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren’ (Luke 22:32).

“It is interesting that he used the word *strengthen*.



It is very difficult to strengthen without being a good communicator. Often problems

develop, not because the plan is faulty, but because the communication is inadequate” (“These I Will Make My Leaders,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 36).

So when you are planning with your family, class, or quorum, remember to communicate. You will need not only to talk; you will need to listen. Listen to those you have a leadership responsibility over, listen to your parents and youth leaders, and most important, listen to the Spirit.

Recognizing the Power of God

The scripture passages below illustrate examples of the power of God and show what the priesthood can do. Read each passage, and match it to the correct picture.



1

___ Genesis 1:1

___ Mark 14:22–24

___ John 11:39–44

___ John 9:1–7

___ 3 Nephi 11:21

___ Helaman 12:9–17



6



2



3



4



5

AN EXEMPLARY PERFORMANCE

BY VIKTÓRIA MERÉNYI

In Hungary, when a class graduates from high school, we put on a grand ball. All teachers, parents, and friends are invited. The class members perform dances and give other presentations. When I graduated, I was asked to make such a presentation. I decided to play the piano. One of the two pieces I chose to play was a Church hymn. There are not many members of the Church in Hungary, so I didn't expect any Church members to hear my performance.

The Sunday after the ball, a sister at church excitedly approached me, congratulated me, and told me that she, other Church members, and some investigators had heard me perform. Less-active

members had also attended the ball and heard me play the hymn. The sister told me how wonderful it was to hear the hymn at an activity not sponsored by the Church and said that it had strengthened the testimonies of those who attended.

I learned that we never know when we are setting a good example and that even small actions can have a big impact on other people. ■



A Message for My Father

The September 2006 *Liabona* was extraordinary. I know that President James E. Faust was truly inspired to write his message “The Father Who Cares.” It seemed to concern my family and me directly. In my family there are six children, and we have lost our mother. After reading the article, I didn’t hesitate to pass it on to my father, who has become less active. I know that it will strengthen him.

*Tshibasu M. E. Baron,
Democratic Republic of the Congo*

A Blueprint for My Life

One evening I was reading the January 2006 issue of the *Liabona*. President Gordon B. Hinckley’s article in Come Listen to a Prophet’s Voice, titled “Walk the High Road,” immediately caught my attention. As I read this very inspiring message, every word enlightened my whole being. It has become a blueprint for me to follow in my journey through life.

Coleen Emily G. Mabilog, Philippines

A Missionary Learns

Upon returning to the university after my mission, I found that academic work was really tough for me. As a science and mathematics student, I seemed to have forgotten my basic knowledge of chemistry, physics, and mathematics while I was on my mission. Although my return to the university was hard initially, the things I had learned on my mission—such as researching to find answers—boosted my morale as I studied in school. I am glad that I placed the Lord first in my life and went on a mission. The article “On the Lord’s Team,” by R. Val Johnson in the March 2006 *Liabona*, confirmed these feelings.

Aristotle Kyeremanteng Fokuo, Ghana



Reminded of Others’ Needs

I think the October 2006 *Liabona* was one of the best ever published. I know there are many people who are investigating the Church who have felt that this issue speaks to them. I myself have been a member of the Church for many years. I find that longtime members can become blind to the worries, fears, and needs of those who have just joined the Church or who are about to join it. The October *Liabona* reminded me of their needs.

Volker P. Gebhard, Germany

True Explanations

I was fortunate enough to meet missionaries from your church. Thanks to these young men, I became acquainted with the *Liabona*. It is a marvelous magazine! It gives a complete view of the mission and principles of your church. It discusses problems as well as how to solve them. It also talks about the direction of the future path of your church.

I read the article “The Fall of Adam and Eve” in the June 2006 *Liabona*. I want to thank you for vindicating our first mother, Eve, and for your tireless search for true explanations of complex events described in the gospel.

Alla R. Muriseva, Russia

YOUR FEEDBACK

If you would like the opportunity to give feedback about the *Liabona* through occasional short surveys, please e-mail your name and ward and stake (or branch and district) to liabona@ldschurch.org. Please put “Reader Survey” in English in the subject line.



the Friend



Courage in a Cornfield

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

The light shining in your faces comes from the Lord. This same light led the way for 15-year-old Mary Elizabeth Rollins and her 13-year-old sister, Caroline, on a dark day in Independence, Missouri.

It was 1833, and an angry mob roared through the streets of Independence, wreaking havoc. In their path was the home of Brother William W. Phelps, where the printing press was kept. He had been printing revelations received by the Prophet Joseph Smith. The mob demolished the printing press and threw the wreckage into the street. However, they stacked up the printed pages in the yard so they could burn them later.



President Faust shares a true story of heroism and divine protection that can guide us today.

Mary Elizabeth and Caroline had been hiding by the fence, frightened spectators to all this destruction. Even though Mary Elizabeth was terrified, her eye was fixed on those precious pages. She and her sister ran out from their hiding place, gathered up the scriptures, and bolted. Some members of the mob saw them and ordered them to stop. But the brave girls ran into a large cornfield, where they dropped breathlessly to the ground. They carefully laid the pages of revelations between the tall rows of corn and then covered the pages by lying on them. The mobsters looked and looked for the girls, coming quite close at times, but never did

find them. Eventually they gave up their search.

I believe the light of the Lord directed Mary Elizabeth and Caroline as to what to do and where to go for safety. That light shines for you, and it will guide you as it did the Rollins girls. It will keep you safe even when danger lurks.

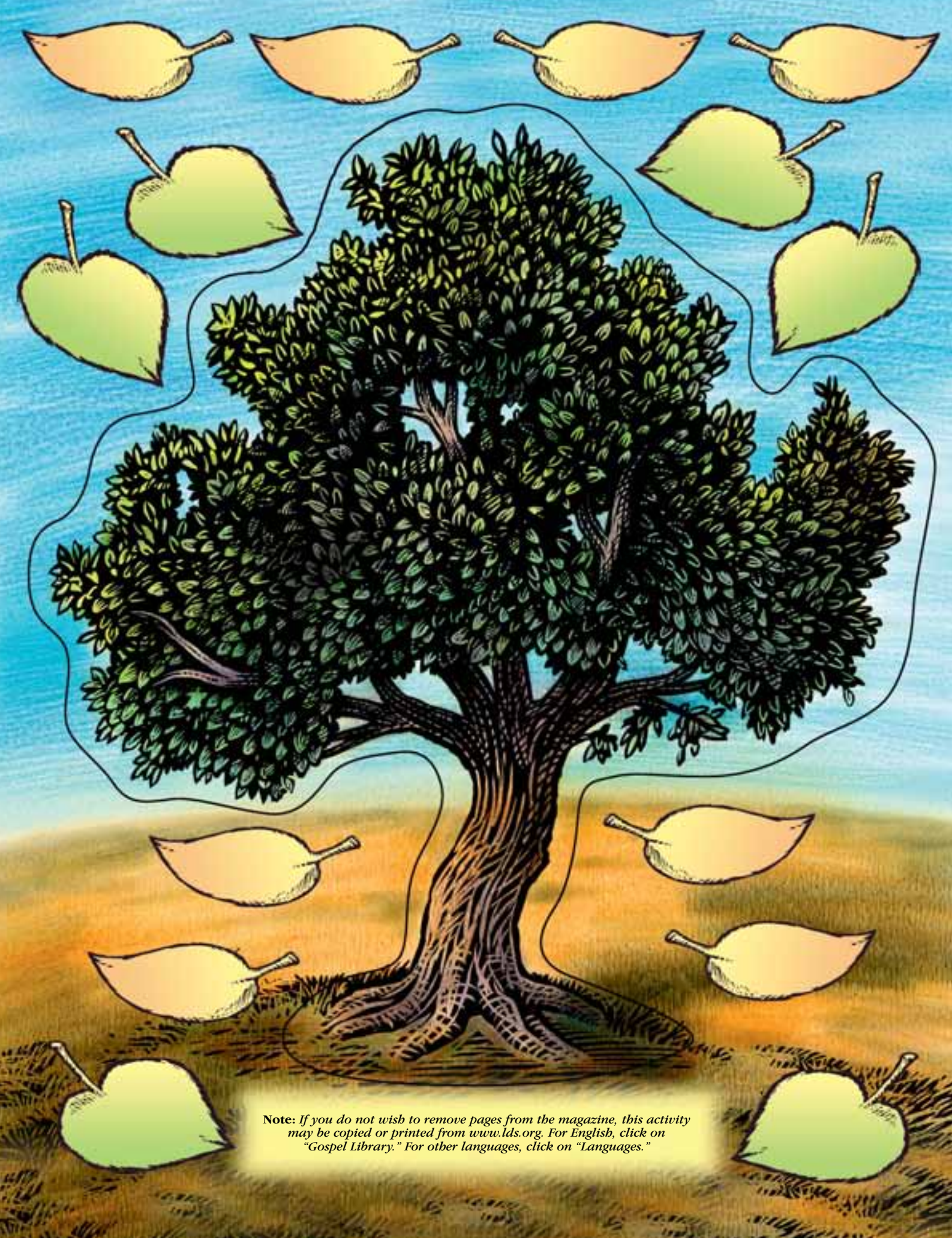
My dear young friends, you can stand apart from evil, just as the Rollins sisters did, if you will develop your own testimony of the Savior. As you do so, you will grow in spiritual strength. ●

From an April 2006 general Young Women meeting address.



THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

- 1. Although they were afraid, Mary Elizabeth and Caroline risked their lives to save revelations that became part of the Doctrine and Covenants. How can you show love for the scriptures today?**
- 2. Facing injury from a mob takes courage. What threats do you face today that require courage on your part?**
- 3. How can you develop a testimony of the Savior? How can your testimony help you stand apart from evil?**



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

Family Faith



“Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liahona*, Oct. 2004, 49; *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102).

BY ELIZABETH RICKS



When missionaries arrived in William Jarvis's town in Lancashire, England, some men tried to prevent the missionaries from preaching. But they continued anyway, and William and his wife, Jane, joined the Church.

William's family left England to travel to America in 1859. After 13 weeks in a sailing vessel and after many train rides, they joined other immigrants in the George Rowley handcart company. William pulled a handcart more than 1,000 miles (1,600 km).

Jane became sick and died. The company needed desperately to find food, so William stayed behind to bury his wife. Two Swedish converts stayed to help.

As the men started out again, they saw some Indians riding toward them. William was worried. Imagine his relief when the Indians were friendly. They laughed about the carts that the men were harnessed to. The Indians then harnessed *themselves* to the handcarts and pulled the carts until they caught up with the company! William's grandson later wrote, “Surely never was a small kindly deed more appreciated.” (See Jeston Jarvis, *A Short Sketch of the Life of William Jarvis*.)

In July we celebrate the coming of the pioneers to the Salt Lake Valley. The pioneers showed great faith. William Jarvis had faith. He was an example to his family. You have examples of faith in your family, and you can be an example of faith. As your family follows Jesus Christ in faith, you will be blessed.

Activity

Remove page F4, and cut out the leaves. Cut out the tree, and mount it on heavier paper. Write the name of a relative on each leaf. (You may need to trace and cut out more leaves.) Glue the leaves to your family tree. You might want to put relatives on your father's side of the family on one part of the tree and relatives on your mother's side on the other part. You will want your own leaf on the trunk because you belong to both sides of the family!

Sharing Time Ideas

1. Play a game of “Who Are We?” Have some children represent scripture families such as Adam and Eve, Lehi and Sariah, or Joseph and Mary. Help them answer yes-or-no questions about the family. A child might ask, “Is your family in the Book of Mormon?” When each family is identified, tell about the family, and show where this family is found in the scriptures. Ask the children to think of one good quality of the family that they would like to have in their own family. For example, “I would like my family to follow God's will like Lehi and Sariah's family.” From paragraph seven of “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” read, “Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ.” Testify of the importance of righteous families.

2. Several weeks before this sharing time, ask older children to prepare to tell about the first member of their family to join the Church. If possible, select children whose families have been members for several generations and also children whose families are recent converts. (Alternatively, present stories of Church leaders such as Brigham Young and Parley P. Pratt from lesson 13 of the Primary 5 manual.) Make a list of qualities that people needed in order to join the Church 150 years ago. Make another list of qualities people need today to join the Church. Point out the similarities. Testify of the blessings that come to a family through the gospel. ●



FROM THE LIFE OF PRESIDENT SPENCER W. KIMBALL

Resist Evil Influences

As a young missionary serving in the Central States Mission, Elder Kimball was traveling on a train to Chicago, Illinois, when a man approached him.

It was a vulgar book filled with obscene pictures. Spencer wouldn't touch it.

The man tried a different approach.

Come into the city with me. I'll show you where you can have a good time.

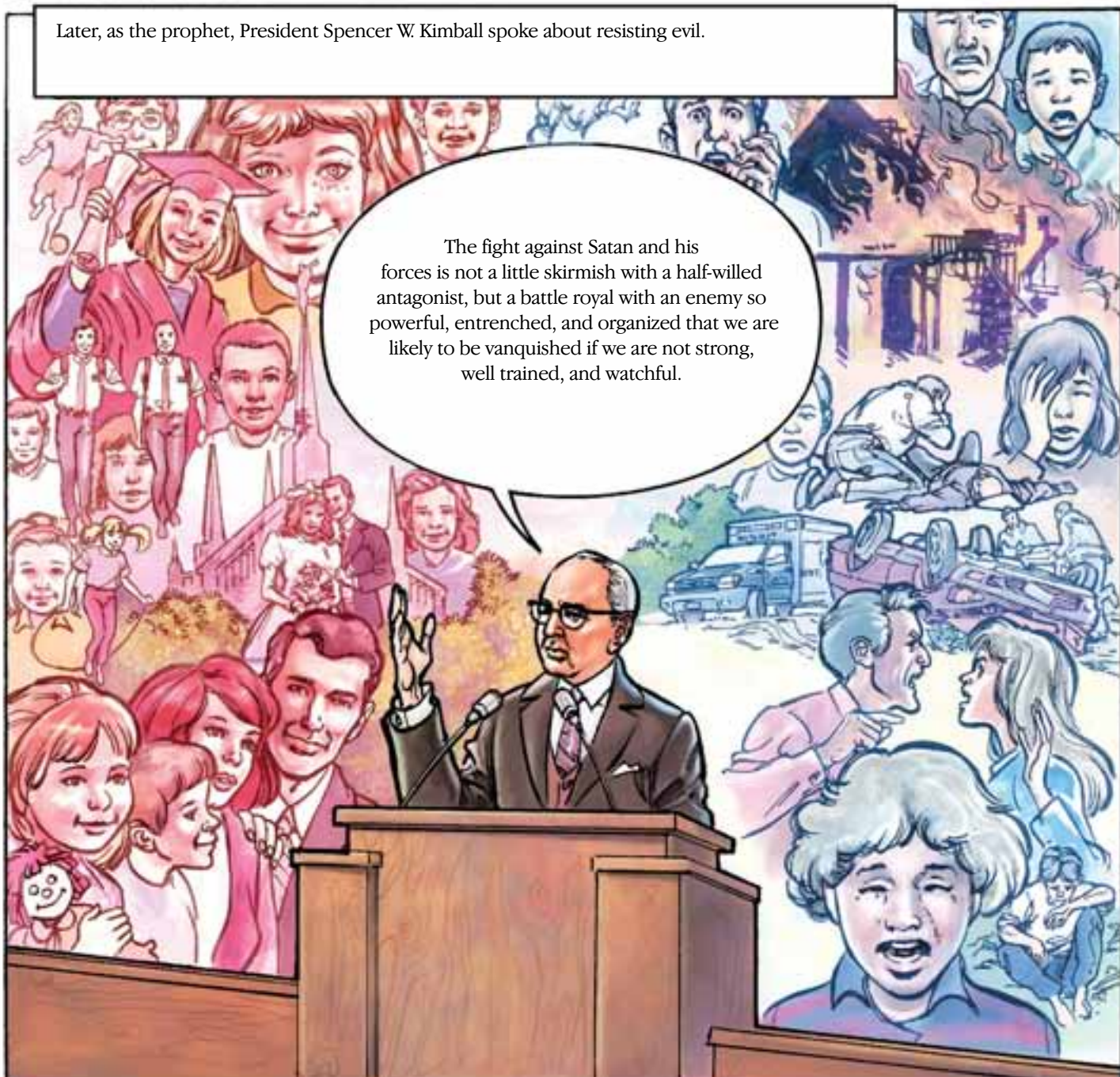
Hey there, young fellow. I have a book that I think you'll like.

You are wrong, sir. That book does not appeal to me.

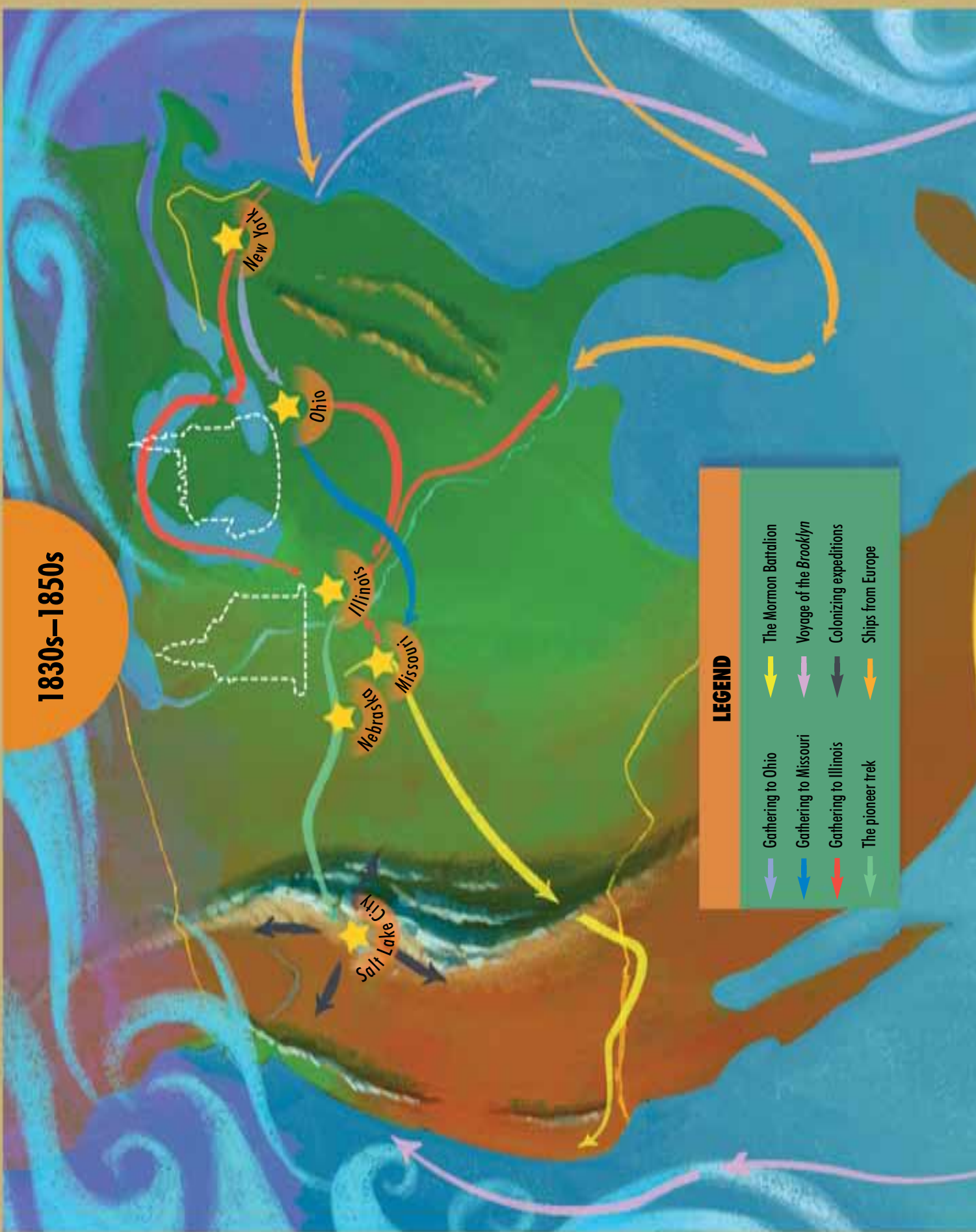
Absolutely not. I am a representative of Jesus Christ, and I will not follow where you go.











Later, as the prophet, President Spencer W. Kimball spoke about resisting evil.



1830s–1850s



LEGEND	
	Gathering to Ohio
	Gathering to Missouri
	Gathering to Illinois
	The pioneer trek
	The Mormon Battalion
	Voyage of the Brooklyn
	Colonizing expeditions
	Ships from Europe

Gathering to Zion

Today

Carlitos wiped the tears from his eyes. His mamá had been sick for many months. At last Papá had convinced her to go to the city, many kilometers from their small village in Chile, and see a doctor. After many tests, the doctor said that Carlitos's mamá had cancer.

Mamá refused to feel sorry for herself. "I still have much to do," she said.

One day, two young *norteamericanos* (North Americans) appeared at the door of their small home. "We are from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," one said in halting Spanish.

Mamá listened intently and occasionally asked questions. She accepted the young men's message immediately. "It is the truth," she said.

Despite the disease that caused her much pain, Mamá was determined to be baptized and confirmed.

On Saturday morning the family traveled to the small meetinghouse where Elder Metzger baptized her. She shivered as she stepped from the baptismal font.

"Mamá, you are cold," Carlitos said and wrapped his arms around her waist. "You must go home and get warm."

Mamá shook her head. "It is not enough. I will stay until I am confirmed. How can I be cold when the gospel warms me?" She was confirmed a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Mamá was not content with just that. She was determined that Papá and Carlitos learn of the restored gospel as she had. "If you will pray, you will know the truth of which the missionaries speak," she told them.

The elders taught them the gospel of Jesus Christ. Papá would have to give up his cigarettes. Carlitos listened to

It Is Enough

"Fam'lies can be together forever through Heav'nly Father's plan"

(Children's Songbook, 188).

BY JANE McBRIDE CHOATE

Based on a true story



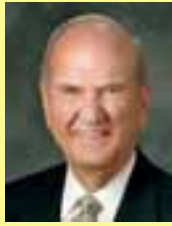
the elders' teachings and felt peace wrap around his heart. He began to understand the warmth that Mamá had described.

Within a month Papá had stopped smoking. Shortly afterward both Papá and Carlitos were baptized and confirmed. A few weeks later Papá received the Aaronic Priesthood.

Carlitos would have to wait three more years before he could receive the priesthood.

Mamá was very weak, but she always managed to go to church and visit those in the village who were sick.

"We are members of God's Church, but it is not enough," Mamá told Papá and Carlitos one night.



"I know that the earth was created and that the Lord's Church was restored so that families could be sealed and exalted."

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Nurturing Marriage," *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2006, 36.

"What must we do now?" Carlitos asked. He loved learning about the gospel and wanted to live it in every way.

"We must be sealed in the temple," Mamá said.

The temple in Santiago was the closest one to their home. But they did not have enough money to travel there. Any extra money Papá earned went to buy medicine for Mamá.

So Mamá started a temple jar. She placed it by the door. The coins she collected grew until the family had enough money to make the trip. In the temple their family was sealed for time and all eternity.

Mamá glowed with happiness. "It is enough," she said. ●



Gathering to Zion

In the early days of the restored Church, members were asked to gather to a central place in the United States. First it was Ohio, then Missouri, then Illinois. After the Latter-day Saints were driven from Nauvoo, Illinois, they began a great westward trek to the valley of the Great Salt Lake. For years afterward members from all over the world gathered there. Many crossed the ocean in sailing ships. Then they traveled to Winter Quarters (now in Nebraska) by whatever means they could, including riverboats or railroad trains. On the final trek across the Great Plains and the Rocky Mountains, the Saints came by wagon, handcart, horseback, and on foot. After their arrival thousands were

sent to settle in other areas of the western United States.

We are no longer asked to cross oceans or continents to gather in one place. All around the world gospel pioneers gather in their branches, wards, stakes, and holy temples. You are one such pioneer. Yours is a spiritual journey just as challenging as the pioneers' trek west.

Instructions: To honor pioneers of the past, cut out these pictures, and place them on the map, which is on pages F8–F9. Refer to the legend to decide where each picture should go. The Kirtland and Nauvoo Temples have been outlined to help you. To honor today's pioneers who gather in their own countries, place the four families on the world globe.

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Voyage of the *Brooklyn*

In 1846 (the year before the pioneers arrived in the Salt Lake Valley) some 220 Latter-day Saints sailed to California around the southern tip of South America on the *Brooklyn*. On the five-month, 17,000-mile (27,000-km) voyage they were hit by storms, and 12 died. After their arrival in Yerba Buena (now San Francisco), some stayed in California and others traveled to Utah.



The Mormon Battalion

In 1846 the United States government asked a group of Latter-day Saint men to fight in the Mexican War. They marched from Council Bluffs, Iowa, almost 2,000 miles (3,200 km) to California, earning much-needed money to help the Saints. They never had to fight a battle but completed one of the longest infantry marches in history.



Blessings of the Temple

“In the last days . . . the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established . . . and all nations shall flow unto it” (Isaiah 2:2).

I love the temple. When I was a child, my Primary teacher took my class to the Salt Lake Temple grounds. It was wonderful to walk through the grounds, admire the beautiful flowers, and feel Heavenly Father’s Spirit near the house of the Lord.

My teacher pointed out that the temple is made from granite stones. She talked about the sacrifice the pioneers made for those precious stones—how it took five days for them to bring one stone to the temple site. “Can you see all these stones?” she asked. “Think of how many days it would have taken the pioneers to bring them to build this beautiful temple.” I remember realizing the sacrifice that was made by our ancestors.

It was a memorable experience. It’s also an example of how you children can enjoy the blessings of the temple now. If you live near a temple, you can partake of the spiritual atmosphere at the temple grounds. After you are baptized and confirmed, you can participate in temple dedications. And there will be many more dedications; 11 are being planned right now! When you turn 12, you can perform baptisms for the dead. No matter how far you live from a



From an interview with Elder Paul E. Koelliker of the Seventy; by Heather Kirby, Church Magazines



At 18 months.

temple, it is important for you to prepare now for that sacred opportunity.

Children have a powerful influence for good on both adults and other children. Some of the Primary children of the Houston Texas Temple district wrote to the contractors who were building the temple there. The letter said: “We want you to know the temple is very important to us. Because the land was dedicated by an Apostle of the Lord, the building and land are sacred to us. The temple is where we will come to be married. We will come here to learn what we need to know to return to our Heavenly Father. May the Lord bless you for the work you are doing for us.”

The contractors then took this lovely letter and placed it in their office. They read it every day. When the temple was finished, the contractors brought their own children to tour the temple and to feel the spirit expressed by the Primary children in their letter.

Another blessing in my life has been working so closely with President Gordon B. Hinckley. Over the past nine years the Church has gone from having 51 temples to 124 temples. This miracle has strengthened my faith and helped me understand the importance of temples.

In 1998 we had 51 temples operating and 17 being built. Then in general conference, President Hinckley said that we needed to



have 100 temples by the end of the year 2000.¹ It meant 32 new temples would be built in addition to the 17 already in process. We thought it was an impossible task. But nothing is impossible when blessed by the Lord. It took many miracles to make it happen in that short time. Time and time again, things came together at just the right moment—miracles such as finding enough sod to lay on a temple property just hours before the dedication took place.

In the year 2000 there were 34 temples dedicated. That's the most that have ever been dedicated in one year in the history of this world. President Hinckley was inspired to build more temples. Then the Lord magnificently blessed us and helped that happen because He honors His prophets. I hope you honor the prophets too. And I hope you will always value and prepare for temple blessings. ●

NOTE
1. See "New Temples to Provide 'Crowning Blessings' of the Gospel," *Ensign*, May 1998, 88.



MY FAMILY CAN FOLLOW JESUS CHRIST IN FAITH

“Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liabona*, Oct. 2004, 49; *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102).



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Looking at Sarah, by Lee Udall Bennion

Of motherhood, President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95) said: “Surely we need not look far to see the unnoticed and forgotten heroes of daily life. . . . I am referring to the uncommon valor of the mother who—hour after hour, day and night—will stay with and care for a sick child. . . . I am speaking of those who are always there to love and nurture” (“True Greatness,” Ensign, May 1982, 19).



We must ever look back," President Gordon B. Hinckley told youth of the Iowa City Iowa Stake and others, "to those who paid so terrible a price in laying the foundations of this great latter-day work." See "Remembering Iowa," p. 8.