

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

LIAHONA



LIAHONA



ON THE COVER

Photographs by Eldon K. Linschoten, from the Church film *The Restoration of the Priesthood*. Inset: Photograph by John Luke. See "Joseph Smith, The Prophet," page 10.



THE FRIEND COVER

Jenneke cuddles her cat. Photograph by Shanna Ghaznavi. See "Amberley and Jenneke Kurtz of Wellington, New Zealand," page 14.

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"FINDING INNER PEACE"

The article "Finding Inner Peace" in
the June 2000 issue helped me a great deal.
I'm going through something similar, and
I'm very comforted to know that we can
find answers to our prayers and receive the
help we need. Thanks so much for your
beautiful articles.

Name withheld

AN INSPIRED CHALLENGE

When I was called as bishop, our
ward had nine subscribers to *A Liahona*
(Portuguese). The stake president asked
what my goal for increasing subscriptions
was, and I told him it was to have 15
subscriptions. He challenged me to double
that number to 30.

At first I believed it was an impossible
goal. But I soon called a ward magazine
representative, and I found that when an
inspired leader issues a challenge and we
work hard, we can meet the challenge (see
1 Nephi 3:7). One year and eight months
later, we have 29 subscriptions. I can now
see the joy of the people and the great
spirit *A Liahona* brings into their homes.

*Amarildo Martins,
Parque Dorotéia Ward,
Diadema Brazil Stake*

**QUESTIONS ANSWERED
BY DISCUSSING ARTICLES**

As a young convert I sometimes felt
uneasy with the members of my branch,
and I had questions that went unanswered.
But by reading and discussing articles in
Le Liahona (French) with members of my
branch, I got to know the members better.
And I found answers to my questions
through the magazine's messages. I am
truly grateful to Heavenly Father for
inspiring me with the desire to study
Le Liahona. I am happy to be a member of
the Church and to read the testimonies of
other members throughout the world.

*Sandrine Hantala,
Le Mans Branch,
Tours France District*

FIRM IN OUR IDEALS

I am 23 years old and was baptized two
years ago. I came in contact with the
Church during the most difficult time of
my life. Thanks to the gospel, I had a
chance for a new life.

I am grateful to be able to spend the
best times of each week with other young
members of the Church. Even though the
Church is not widespread in Italy, we are
firm in our commitment to our beliefs.
Our friendship is very important, and
we strengthen one another in our determi-
nation to follow the counsel of modern
prophets.

*Frankie Riili,
Palermo Second Branch,
Palermo Italy District*





“A Little Child Shall Lead Them”

By President Thomas S. Monson
First Counselor in the First Presidency



During the Galilean ministry of our Lord and Savior, the disciples came unto Him, saying: “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”

“And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,

the Savior’s declaration. In one column of the newspaper I read of a custody battle between the mother and father of a child. Accusations were made, threats hurled, and anger displayed as parents moved here and there on the international scene with the child spirited away from one continent to another.

“And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

“Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

“And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.

“But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matthew 18:1–6).

THE MANY FACES OF CHILD ABUSE

Some time ago, as I read the daily newspaper, my thoughts turned to this passage and the firm candor of

Jesus “took their little children, one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them.”

A second story told of a 12-year-old lad who was beaten and set on fire because he refused a neighborhood bully’s order to take drugs.

Still a third report told of a father’s sexual molestation of his small child.

A physician once revealed to me the large number of abused children who are being brought to the emergency rooms of local hospitals in your city and mine. In

many cases guilty parents provide fanciful accounts of the child falling from his high chair or stumbling over a toy and striking his head. Altogether too frequently it is discovered that the parent was the abuser and the innocent child the victim. Shame on the perpetrators of such vile deeds. God will hold such strictly accountable for their actions.

CHILDREN ARE PRECIOUS TO THE LORD

When we realize just how precious children are, we will not find it difficult to follow the pattern of the Master in our association with them. Not long ago, a sweet scene took place at the Salt Lake Temple. Children, who had been ever so tenderly cared for by faithful workers in the temple nursery, were now leaving in the arms of their mothers and fathers. One child turned to the lovely women who had been so kind to the children and, with a wave of her arm, spoke the feelings of her heart as she exclaimed, "Good night, angels."

The poet described a child so recently with its Heavenly Father as "a sweet new blossom of Humanity, fresh fallen from God's own home to flower on earth."¹

Who among us has not praised God and marveled at His powers when an infant is held in one's arms? That tiny hand, so small yet so perfect, instantly becomes the topic of conversation. No one can resist placing his little finger in the clutching hand of an infant. A smile comes to the lips, a certain glow to the eyes, and one appreciates the tender feelings which prompted the poet to pen the lines:

*Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar;
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home.²*



The poet described a child so recently with its Heavenly Father as "a sweet new blossom of Humanity, fresh fallen from God's own home to flower on earth."

When the disciples of Jesus attempted to restrain the children from approaching Him, He declared:

"Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

"Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

"And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them" (Mark 10:14-16).

What a magnificent pattern for us to follow.

WE CAN BLESS THE LIVES OF CHILDREN

Several years ago my heart burned warmly within me when the First Presidency approved the allocation of a substantial sum from some special fast-offering contributions to join with those funds from Rotary International that polio vaccine might be provided and the children living in Kenya immunized against this vicious crippler and killer of children.

I thank God for the work of our doctors who leave for a time their own private practices and journey to distant lands to minister to children. Cleft palates and other deformities which would leave a child impaired physically and damaged psychologically are skillfully repaired. Despair yields to hope. Gratitude replaces grief. These children can now look in the mirror and marvel at a miracle in their own lives.

In a meeting, I once told of a dentist in my ward who each year visited the Philippine Islands to work his skills without compensation to provide corrective dentistry for children. Smiles were restored, spirits lifted, and futures enhanced. I did not know the daughter of this dentist



I thank God for the work of our doctors who leave for a time their own private practices and journey to distant lands to minister to children.

was in the congregation to which I was speaking. At the conclusion of my remarks, she came forward and, with a broad smile of proper pride, said, “You have been speaking of my father. How I love him and what he is doing for children!”

In the faraway islands of the Pacific, hundreds who were near-blind now see because a missionary said to his physician brother-in-law, “Leave your wealthy clientele and the comforts of your palatial home and come to these special children of God who need your skills and need them now.” The ophthalmologist responded without a backward glance. He has commented quietly that this visit was the best service he ever rendered and the peace which came to his heart the greatest blessing of his life.

Tears came easily to me when I read of a father who donated one of his own kidneys in the hope that his son might have a more abundant life. I have dropped to my knees at night and have added my prayer of faith

in behalf of a mother in my community who journeyed to Chicago that she might provide part of her liver to her daughter in a delicate and potentially life-threatening surgery. She, who already had gone down into the valley of the shadow of death to bring forth this child into mortality, again put her hand in the hand of God and placed her own life in jeopardy for her child. Never a complaint, but ever a willing heart and a prayer of faith.

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles once shared the pitiable plight of many orphan children in Romania—perhaps 30,000 in the city of Bucharest alone. He visited one such orphanage and arranged that the Church might provide vaccine, medical dressings, and other urgently needed supplies. Certain couples were identified and called to fill special missions to these children. I can think of no more Christlike service than to hold a motherless child in one’s arms or to take a fatherless boy by the hand.



Tyler bolted from his mother and ran to the base of the *Christus*. As Mother attempted to restrain her son, Tyler looked back and said, “Don’t worry. He likes children.”

We need not be called to missionary service, however, in order to bless the lives of children. Our opportunities are limitless. They are everywhere to be found—sometimes very close to home.

HOW CHILDREN BLESS OUR LIVES

Several years ago I received a letter from a woman who had emerged from a long period of Church inactivity. She was ever so anxious for her husband, who as yet was not a member of the Church, to share the joy she felt.

She wrote of a trip which she, her husband, and their three sons made from the family home to Grandmother’s home in Idaho. While driving through Salt Lake City, they were attracted by the message which appeared on a billboard. The message invited them to visit Temple Square. Bob, the nonmember husband, made the suggestion that a visit would be pleasant. The family entered the visitors’ center, and Father took two sons up a ramp that one called “the ramp to heaven.” Mother and

three-year-old Tyler were a bit behind the others, they having paused to appreciate the beautiful paintings which adorned the walls. As they walked toward the magnificent sculpture of Thorvaldsen’s *Christus*, tiny Tyler bolted from his mother and ran to the base of the *Christus*, while exclaiming, “It’s Jesus! It’s Jesus!” As Mother attempted to restrain her son, Tyler looked back toward her and his father and said, “Don’t worry. He likes children.”

After departing the center and again making their way along the freeway toward Grandmother’s, Dad asked Tyler what he liked best about their adventure on Temple Square. Tyler smiled up at him and said, “Jesus.”

“How do you know that Jesus likes you, Tyler?”

Tyler, with a most serious expression on his face, looked up at his father’s eyes and answered, “Dad, didn’t you see His face?” Nothing else needed to be said.

As I read this account, I thought of the statement from the book of Isaiah, “And a little child shall lead them” (Isaiah 11:6).

The words of a Primary hymn express the feelings of a child's heart:

*Tell me the stories of Jesus I love to hear,
Things I would ask him to tell me if he were
here.*

*Scenes by the wayside, tales of the sea,
Stories of Jesus, tell them to me.*

*Oh, let me hear how the children stood
round his knee.*

*I shall imagine his blessings resting on me;
Words full of kindness, deeds full of
grace,*

All in the lovelight of Jesus' face.³

BLESSING THE NEPHITE CHILDREN

I know of no more touching passage in scripture than the account of the Savior blessing the children, as recorded in 3 Nephi. The Master spoke movingly to the vast multitude of men, women, and children. Then, responding to their faith and the desire that He tarry longer, He invited them to bring to Him their lame, their blind, and their sick, that He might heal them. With joy they accepted His invitation. The record reveals that “he did heal them every one” (3 Nephi 17:9). There followed His mighty prayer to His Father. The multitude bore record: “The eye hath never seen, neither hath the ear heard, before, so great and marvelous things as we saw and heard Jesus speak unto the Father” (3 Nephi 17:16).

Concluding this magnificent event, Jesus “wept, . . . and he took their little children, one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them. . . .

“And he spake unto the multitude, and said unto them: Behold your little ones.

“And as they looked to behold they cast their eyes towards heaven, and they saw the heavens open, and they saw angels descending out of heaven . . . ; and they came down and encircled those little ones . . . ; and the angels did minister unto them” (3 Nephi 17:21, 23–24).

Over and over in my mind I pondered the phrase, “Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein” (Mark 10:15).

THOMAS MICHAEL WILSON

One who fulfilled in his life this admonition of the Savior was a missionary, Thomas Michael Wilson. He is the son of Willie and Julia Wilson, Route 2, Box 12, Lafayette, Alabama. Elder Wilson completed his earthly mission on January 13, 1990. When he was but a teenager, and he and his family were not yet members of the Church, he was stricken with cancer, followed by painful radiation therapy, and then blessed remission. This illness caused his family to realize that not only is life

precious but that it can also be short. The family began to look to religion to help them through this time of tribulation. Subsequently they were introduced to the Church and baptized. After accepting the gospel, young Brother Wilson yearned for the opportunity of being a missionary. A mission call came for him to serve in the Utah Salt Lake City Mission. What a privilege to represent the family and the Lord as a missionary!

Elder Wilson's missionary companions described his faith as like that of a child—unquestioning, undeviating,



**“Whosoever
therefore shall
humble himself
as [a] little child,
the same is greatest
in the kingdom
of heaven.”**



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF WILLIE AND JULIA WILSON

The faith and example of Elder Thomas Michael Wilson (left) so inspired one of his investigators (seated) that she, with a few others, journeyed to Elder Wilson's bedside in the hospital. There, with his remaining hand resting upon her head, Elder Wilson confirmed her a member of the Church.

unyielding. He was an example to all. After 11 months, illness returned. Bone cancer now required the amputation of his arm and shoulder. Yet he persisted in his missionary labors.

Elder Wilson's courage and consuming desire to remain on his mission so touched his nonmember father that he investigated the teachings of the Church and also became a member.

An anonymous caller brought to my attention Elder Wilson's plight. She said she didn't want to leave her name and indicated she'd never before called a General Authority. However, she said, "You don't often meet someone of the caliber of Elder Wilson."

I learned that an investigator whom Elder Wilson had taught was baptized at the baptistry on Temple Square but then wanted to be confirmed by Elder Wilson, whom she respected so much. She, with a few others, journeyed to Elder Wilson's bedside in the hospital. There, with his

remaining hand resting upon her head, Elder Wilson confirmed her a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Elder Wilson continued month after month his precious but painful service as a missionary. Blessings were given; prayers were offered. The spirit of his fellow missionaries soared. Their hearts were full. They lived closer to God.

Elder Wilson's physical condition deteriorated. The end drew near. He was to return home. He asked to serve but one additional month. What a month this was! Like a child trusting implicitly its parents, Elder Wilson put his trust in God. He whom Thomas Michael Wilson silently trusted opened the windows of heaven and abundantly blessed him. His parents, Willie and Julia Wilson, and his brother Tony came to Salt Lake City to help their son and brother home to Alabama. However, there was yet a prayed-for, a yearned-for, blessing to be bestowed. The family invited me to come with them to

the Jordan River Utah Temple, where those sacred ordinances which bind families for eternity, as well as for time, were performed.

I said good-bye to the Wilson family. I can see Elder Wilson yet as he thanked me for being with him and his loved ones. He said, “It doesn’t matter what happens to us in this life as long as we have the gospel of Jesus Christ and live it.” What courage. What confidence. What love. The Wilson family made the long trek home to Lafayette, where Elder Thomas Michael Wilson slipped from here to eternity.

President Kevin K. Meadows, Elder Wilson’s branch president, presided at the funeral services. The words of his subsequent letter to me I share with you: “On the day of the funeral, I took the family aside and expressed to them, President Monson, the sentiments you sent to me. I reminded them of what Elder Wilson had told you that day in the temple, that it did not matter whether he taught the gospel on this or the other side of the veil, so long as he could teach the gospel. I gave to them the inspiration you provided from the writings of President Joseph F. Smith [1838–1918]—that Elder Wilson had completed his earthly mission and that he, as all ‘faithful elders of this dispensation, when they depart from mortal life, continue their labors in the preaching of the gospel of repentance and redemption, through the sacrifice of the Only Begotten Son of God, among those who are in darkness and under the bondage of sin in the great world of the spirits of the dead’ [D&C 138:57]. The Spirit bore record that this was the case. Elder Thomas Michael Wilson was buried with his missionary name tag in place.”

When Elder Wilson’s mother and his father visit that rural cemetery and place flowers of remembrance on the grave of their son, I feel certain they remember the day he was born, the pride they felt, and the genuine joy that was theirs. This tiny child became the mighty man who later brought to them the opportunity to achieve celestial glory. Perhaps on these pilgrimages, when emotions are close to the surface and tears cannot be restrained, they thank God for their missionary son, who never lost the faith of a child, and then ponder deep within their hearts the Master’s words, “And a little child shall lead them” (Isaiah 11:6).

Peace is their blessing. It will be our blessing, also, as we remember and follow the Prince of Peace. □



Like a child trusting implicitly its parents, Elder Wilson put his trust in God.

NOTES

1. Gerald Massey, “Wooed and Won,” in *The Home Book of Quotations*, selected by Burton Stevenson (1934), 121.
2. William Wordsworth, “Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood,” *The Complete Poetical Works of William Wordsworth* (1924), 359.
3. “Tell Me the Stories of Jesus,” *Children’s Songbook*, 57.

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

1. When we realize just how precious children are, we will not find it difficult to follow the pattern of the Master in our associations with them.
2. We need not be called to missionary service in order to bless the lives of children. Our opportunities are limitless. They are everywhere to be found.
3. There is perhaps no more touching passage in scripture than the account of the Savior blessing the children, as recorded in 3 Nephi 17.

JOSEPH SMITH

The Prophet

Young, unlearned, but humble, Joseph Smith was the instrument the Almighty used to reestablish His work in these, the latter days.



By Elder David B. Haight
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

The principles, doctrines, and ordinances of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ have been revealed anew, including a knowledge of the true nature of God—a personal, loving, Eternal Father—and of Jesus Christ, the literal Son of God, of whose divinity there has come another witness in the Book of Mormon. The words of Ezekiel that the stick of Judah (the Bible) shall be joined with the stick of Joseph (the Book of Mormon) as a testimony of two nations have found their fulfillment (see Ezekiel 37:15–22). This I solemnly declare.

The authority to act in the name of God, the holy priesthood, has been conferred upon men in our time by those same individuals who held it anciently—Peter, James, and John—Apostles of our Lord who were ordained by the Savior Himself when He was upon the earth.

The Church of Jesus Christ has been reestablished. The priesthood of God is again among men. God has revealed Himself anew for the blessing of His children.

These divine events—with all the characteristics of the Church of the early Apostles, including the personal direction of Jesus Christ, divinely revealed doctrine, divinely chosen leaders, continuous revelation, and the witness of the Holy Ghost to all who obey—are wonderful and joyous to contemplate. I testify that the

instrument through whom this divine revelation came was one foreordained—the youthful Joseph Smith—whose faith and desire brought about “one of the most significant religious events in the history of mankind” (Milton V. Backman Jr., “Joseph Smith’s Recitals of the First Vision,” *Ensign*, January 1985, 8).

Since my early youth I have believed and carried in my mind a vivid picture of the teenage Joseph finding a secluded spot, kneeling in the quiet grove, and in child-like faith asking the desire of his heart. He must have felt assured the Lord would hear and somehow answer him. There appeared to him two glorious personages, a description of whom, he said, was beyond his ability to express.

I have been blessed, as the years have passed, with unusual experiences with people, places, and personal events of an intimate, spiritual nature, and, through the power of the Holy Ghost, I have received an ever-deepening witness and knowledge of this heaven-directed restoration of the Lord’s plan of salvation. The events related by Joseph Smith of the Restoration are true.

THE VISION

Each of us can develop in our bosom an uplifting, sanctifying, and glorifying feeling of the Restoration’s

**I know that God did reveal Himself unto Joseph—
His witness of this final dispensation.**



truth. The Holy Ghost will reveal and seal upon each of our hearts this knowledge, if we truly desire. Our understanding, belief, and faith in “the Vision” (as we refer to it) of God the Father and His Only Begotten Son appearing to Joseph, thereby ushering in this final dispensation with its great and precious truths, is essential to our eternal salvation. Salvation comes only through Christ. Joseph Smith is the instrument or revealer of that knowledge, divinely called to teach of the terms and conditions of the Father’s plan and given the keys of salvation for all mankind.

I know that God did reveal Himself unto Joseph—His witness of this final dispensation. We know something of the form, features, and even character of that mighty intelligence whose wisdom, creation, and power control the affairs of the universe. God made it known that Jesus Christ is in the express image of the Father.

In Joseph’s own words, the brightness was above anything he had ever known. He looked up. Before him stood two glorious personages. One of them, pointing to the other, said, “*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*” (Joseph Smith—History 1:17; emphasis in original).

It might have seemed inconceivable to young Joseph that he was looking upon God our Heavenly Father and His Son—that the Lord had come to visit and instruct him.

The Son, bidden by the Father, spoke to the kneeling boy. Joseph was told that all the churches were wrong. They had corrupted the doctrine; they had broken the ordinances and had lost the authority of the priesthood of God. He was told that the leaders of the man-made

churches were displeasing to the Lord and that the time for the restoration of all truth and authority had come, including the organization of the Church. Then, to his infinite astonishment, he was told that *he*, Joseph Smith—young, unlearned, but humble—was to

be the instrument through whom the Almighty would reestablish His work in these, the latter days—the gospel never to be taken away again. Such was the glorious beginning of the Restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Some three years later, as he was beginning to mature, Joseph Smith had another heavenly visitation. This time an angel sent from the presence of God informed Joseph that he was Moroni and revealed to the young man the resting place of a set of gold plates, upon which certain ancient inhabitants of America had recorded the history of their peoples. In the course of time, these records were translated by the gift and power of God and published early in 1830.

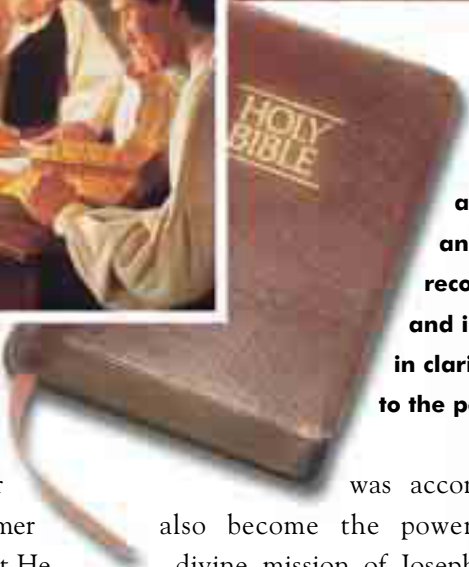
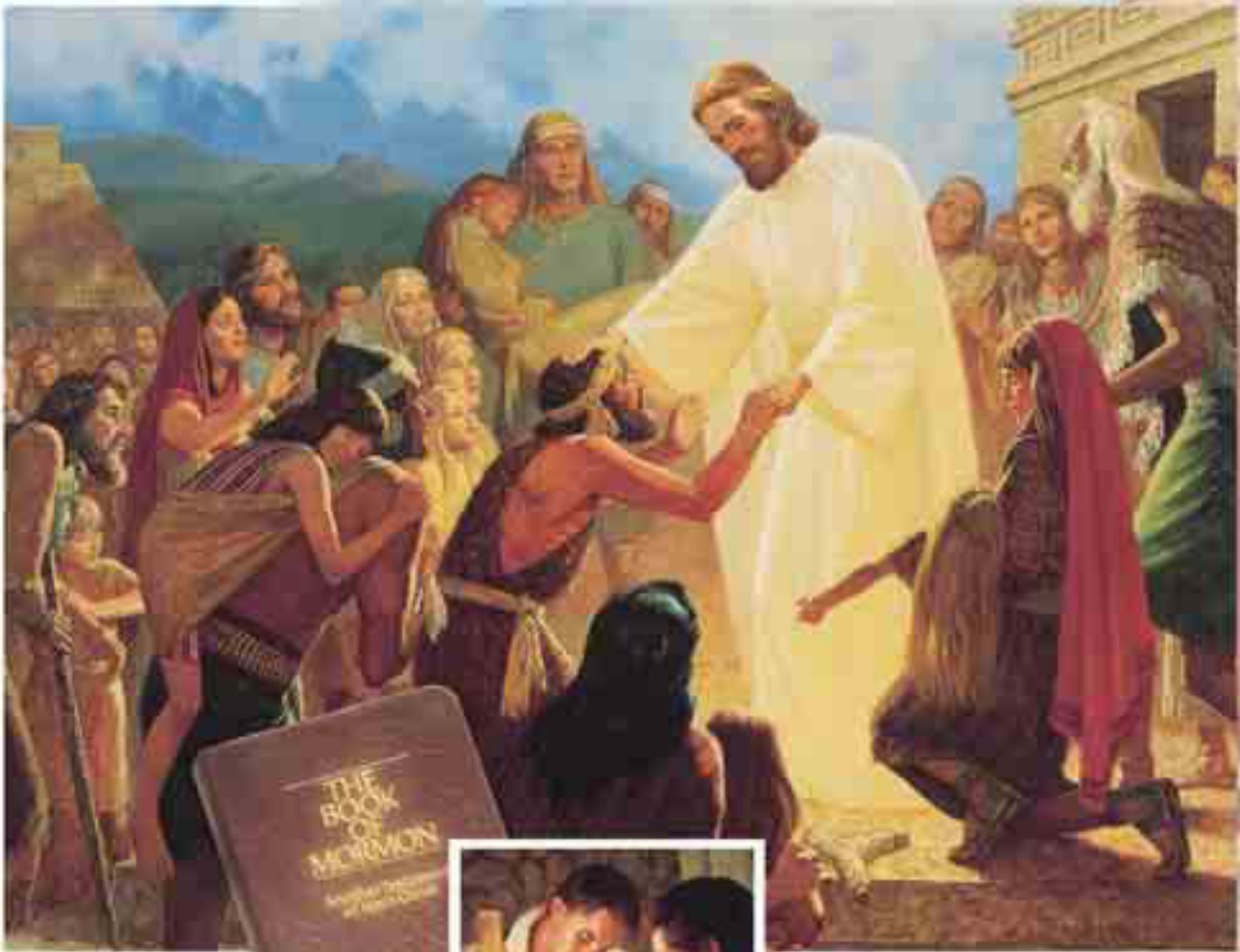
A DEFINITE PURPOSE

The Book of Mormon is the most remarkable book in the world from a doctrinal, historical, or philosophical point of view. Its integrity has been assailed with senseless fury for more than 170 years, yet its position and influence today are more impregnable than ever.

The Book of Mormon did not come forth as a curiosity. It was written with a definite purpose—a purpose to be felt by every reader. From the title page we read that it was written “to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that JESUS is the CHRIST, the ETERNAL GOD, manifesting himself unto all nations.” The message it contains is



Moroni revealed to the young man the resting place of a set of gold plates, upon which certain ancient inhabitants of America had recorded the history of their peoples.



a witness for Christ and teaches the love of God for all mankind. Its purpose is to bring people to accept Jesus as the Christ. The book tells of the actual visit of Christ to ancient America and records the teachings and instructions He gave in clarity and great power to the people. The Book of Mormon substantiates the Bible in its teachings of the Savior, speaks of Christ more than any other subject, and teaches that our Savior is the Redeemer and Atoner of mankind, constantly emphasizing that He is the central figure in God's plan of salvation. This divine record makes converts to its message and to His Church, which teaches it.

I have marveled at God's wisdom in bringing forth this ancient record in the manner in which it

The Book of Mormon tells of the actual visit of Christ to ancient America and records the teachings and instructions He gave in clarity and great power to the people.

was accomplished, for it has also become the powerful witness of the divine mission of Joseph Smith. Of Sunday, 28 November 1841, the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote: "I spent the day in the council with the Twelve Apostles at the house of President [Brigham] Young, conversing with them upon a variety of subjects. Brother Joseph Fielding was present, having been absent four years on

a mission to England. I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book” (*History of the Church*, 4:461).

Joseph Smith was foreordained to be the duly appointed leader of this, the greatest and final of all dispensations. After the angel Moroni’s visit, other heavenly messengers conferred upon Joseph holy priesthood authority, divine keys, power, and revelations from God.

Not only was the Church organized under inspiration and divine direction, but the necessary body of doctrine for guidance of the Church was revealed. Faith and light were again available to dispel the darkness that was upon the earth. Joseph Smith, after seeking and being taught by the Author of Truth, learned that:

1. God is in the form of a man whose glory defies description.
2. He has a voice; He speaks.
3. He is considerate and kind.
4. He answers prayers.
5. His Son is obedient to the Father and is the Mediator between God and man.
6. “The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit” (D&C 130:22).

Though ancient scriptures make references to temples and baptism for the deceased, Joseph Smith was the first to have revealed the purpose of temples and salvation for all—including those who have passed on without having received a knowledge of the

gospel—along with the eternal marriage covenant and sealing of man and woman as the foundation for exaltation.

Joseph Smith, writing about the first conference of the Church in June 1830, spoke of great happiness “to find ourselves engaged in the very same order of things as observed by the holy Apostles of old” (*History of the Church*, 1:85).



After the angel Moroni’s visit, other heavenly messengers conferred upon Joseph holy priesthood authority, divine keys, power, and revelations from God.

A PROPHET OF THE LORD

Under the inspiration of Almighty God, the Church began to flourish. The Lord’s promise that “a marvelous work is about to come forth” was being fulfilled in a miraculous way (see D&C 4:1). The gospel message spread rapidly. The missionary spirit was touching hearts. The Book of Mormon was being read. Tens, then hundreds, then thousands joined the Church. The Lord, speaking through Joseph, proclaimed:

“For verily the voice of the Lord is unto all men, and there is none to escape; and there is no eye that shall not see, neither ear that shall not hear, neither heart that shall not be penetrated. . . .

“The weak things of the world shall come forth and break down the mighty and strong ones, that man should not counsel his fellow man, neither trust in the arm of flesh—

“But that every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world; . . .

“That the fulness of my gospel might be proclaimed . . . unto the ends of the world, and before kings and rulers” (D&C 1:2, 19–20, 23).

Politicians began worrying over this new phenomenon. Enemies were organizing, and the Prophet’s life

was becoming endangered. After months of imprisonment in the dark, damp dungeon known as Liberty Jail, a discouraged Joseph cried out to the Lord:

“O God, where art thou? And where is the pavilion that covereth thy hiding place?

“How long shall thy hand be stayed, and thine eye . . . behold from the eternal heavens the wrongs of thy people and of thy servants . . . ?

“Yea, O Lord, how long shall they suffer these wrongs and unlawful oppressions, before thine heart shall be softened toward them?” (D&C 121:1–3).

Then a loving, answering Savior promised Joseph:

“The ends of the earth shall inquire after thy name, and fools shall have thee in derision, and hell shall rage against thee;

“While the pure in heart, and the wise, and the noble, and the virtuous, shall seek counsel, and authority, and blessings constantly from under thy hand.

“And thy people shall never be turned against thee by the testimony of traitors.

“. . . Thou shalt be had in honor; . . . and thy voice shall be more terrible in the midst of thine enemies than the fierce lion, because of thy righteousness; and thy God shall stand by thee forever and ever” (D&C 122:1–4).

In his last public address to a large congregation in Nauvoo, Joseph said:

“I do not regard my own life. I am ready to be offered a sacrifice for this people; for what can our enemies do? Only kill the body, and their power is then at an end. Stand firm, my friends; never flinch. Do not seek to save your lives, for he that is afraid to die for the truth, will lose eternal life. . . .

“God has tried you. You are a good people; therefore I love you with all my heart. Greater love hath no man than that he should lay down his life for his friends. You have stood by me in the hour of trouble, and I am willing to sacrifice my life for your preservation” (*History of the Church*, 6:500).

This statement is all the more remarkable as the Prophet was still in the morning of life—only 38 years old—and great as he had already become, the zenith of his mental and spiritual powers had not yet been reached. Life was precious to him with all its possibilities of future achievements. Yet he was willing to give it up.

“A Prophet,” wrote Truman Madsen, “is one who, in fulfillment of his mission, undergoes great suffering, yet through it all, is radiant. A Prophet, in short, is a saint” (*Joseph Smith Among the Prophets* [1965], 21).

“Had he [Joseph Smith] been spared a martyr’s fate till mature manhood . . .,” said Elder Parley P. Pratt of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “he was certainly endowed with powers and ability to have [influenced] the world in many respects” (*Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt* [1985], 32).

One may pick up the thread of Joseph Smith’s life and find suffering, both his own and the disciples’ around him.

“BE PATIENT IN AFFLICTIONS”

The Church was appearing to become, as the scripture says, as a stone cut out of a mountain without hands and rolling forth to fill the whole earth (see Daniel 2:44–45; D&C 65:2). Political officials worried about its moving outward and abroad from the immediate locale, illegal charges were leveled, court documents and summonses were issued, and vigilantes gathered at Carthage, the county seat. Joseph and Hyrum were to appear to answer charges against them.

As Joseph Smith left Nauvoo for Carthage that 24th day of June, he would have looked for the last time on the city and the magnificent temple that was nearly completed. He knew he would never look upon it again.

“Be patient in afflictions,” he was told, “for thou shalt have many” (D&C 24:8). Later, he said adversity had become “second nature” (see D&C 127:2) but had

only “wafted me that much nearer to Deity” (quoted in B. H. Roberts, *The Gospel and Man’s Relationship to Deity* [1965], 279). President Brigham Young (1801–77) said that if Joseph had lived 1,000 years without persecution he would not have been as perfected as he was in his 38 years (see *Deseret News*, 3 August 1854, 72).

To his companions who were accompanying him to Carthage, the Prophet Joseph gave these prophetic words: “I am going like a lamb to the slaughter; but I am calm as a summer’s morning; I have a conscience void of offense towards God, and towards all men. . . . AND IT SHALL YET BE SAID OF ME—HE WAS MURDERED IN COLD BLOOD” (D&C 135:4).

Why did he not turn back? There was time to escape. He was not yet in the hands of his enemies. Friends were at his side who would die for him if necessary. Some suggested he flee across the Mississippi where he would be safe. But he continued to Carthage.

Joseph must have recalled some of the dangers through which he had passed—like the winter night when a mob broke into his home and with curses and profanity tore him from the bedside of his wife and sick children and carried him outside, strangling him until he was unconscious. When he regained consciousness, they stripped him of his clothing and covered his naked body from head to foot with a coat of tar and feathers, forcing open his mouth to fill it with the same substance, then left him on the frozen ground to die of cold and exposure.

Riding to Carthage, he might have recalled the time in Missouri when he and some of his brethren had been betrayed into the hands of their enemies. The leader of

the mob convened a court; Joseph and his associates were placed on trial for their lives. They were convicted and all sentenced to be shot the next morning at eight o’clock in the public square in Far West. A dispute among the mob saved them.

They were taken from place to place and exhibited to jeering crowds, while the Saints were told they would never see their leaders again. But Joseph cheered his fellow prisoners by announcing that none of them would suffer death.

“Be of good cheer, brethren,” he said; “*the word of the Lord came to me last night that our lives should be given us. . . . Not one of our lives should be taken*” (quoted in *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, 164; emphasis in original).

As Joseph contemplated those dreary months of imprisonment in Missouri, he must have recalled the night when, confined in a dungeon, he rebuked the guards. He and his brethren were trying to get a little sleep but were kept awake by the awful blasphemies and obscene jests of their jailers, who were recounting the dreadful deeds of robbery and murder they had committed among the Mormons. These were no idle boasts, for

these awful atrocities had actually been committed. Suddenly, Joseph rose to his feet and, in a voice that seemed to shake the very building, cried out: “*SILENCE, ye fiends of the infernal pit! In the name of Jesus Christ I rebuke you, and command you to be still; I will not live another minute and bear such language. Cease such talk, or you or I die THIS INSTANT!*” (quoted in *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, 180; emphasis in original).

The effect must have been electric in its suddenness. Some begged his pardon, while others slunk into



After months of imprisonment, a discouraged Joseph cried out to the Lord: “O God, where art thou? And where is the pavilion that covereth thy hiding place?”



One winter night a mob broke into Joseph's home and with curses and profanity tore him from the bedside of his wife and sick children and carried him outside, strangling him until he was unconscious.

the dark corners of the jail to hide their shame.

The power of Jesus Christ, whose name he had invoked in his rebuke, was upon him. His hands and feet were in chains, but these the guards did not see. They saw only the righteous anger in his shining face and felt the divine power in his voice as he rebuked them.

But if Joseph's voice was terrible as the roaring lion in his rebuke of the wicked, it was soothing as a mother's voice in comfort to the righteous. In that same name and by the same authority with which he silenced the blasphemies of the guards, he had blessed little children, baptized repentant sinners, conferred the Holy Ghost, healed the sick, and spoken words of comfort and consolation to thousands.

"ARE YOU AFRAID TO DIE?"

It was midnight when the journey from Nauvoo ended. Joseph and his brethren entered Carthage, and his fate was sealed. His enemies had awaited their

coming with great anxiety. The governor, who was present, persuaded the mob to disperse that night by promising them that they should have full satisfaction.

The next day, after a hearing, Joseph was released on bail but rearrested on a trumped-up charge of treason. Bail was refused, and Joseph and Hyrum were placed in Carthage Jail.

The last night of Joseph's life on earth he bore a powerful testimony to the guards and others who assembled at the door of the jail of the divinity of the Book of Mormon, also declaring that the gospel had been restored and the kingdom of God established on the earth. It was for this reason that he was incarcerated in prison, not for violating any law of God or man.

It was late at night when the prisoners tried to get some rest. At first Joseph and Hyrum occupied the only bed in the jail room, but a gunshot during the night and a disturbance led Joseph's friends to insist that he take a place between the two of them on the floor. They would protect him with their own bodies. Joseph asked John S. Fullmer to use his arm for a pillow while they conversed; then he turned to Dan Jones, on the other side, and whispered, "Are you afraid to die?" And this staunch



The Prophet requested Elder John Taylor to sing the words of “A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief.” Only a person who loved his Savior and his fellowmen would have requested to hear these words at such a time.

friend answered, “Has that time come, think you? Engaged in such a cause I do not think that death would have many terrors.”

Joseph replied, “You will yet see Wales, and fulfill the mission appointed you before you die” (*History of the Church*, 6:601).

The next day, the fateful 27th of June 1844, all but two of Joseph’s friends were made to leave the prison, so that now only four brethren remained—Joseph and Hyrum and two of the Apostles, both of whom during the day offered to die for him. The day was spent in writing letters to their wives, conversing on principles of the gospel, and singing. Between three and four o’clock in the afternoon the Prophet requested Elder John Taylor to sing the words of “A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief.”

This comforting song breathes in every line the very spirit and message of Christ. Only a person who loved his Savior and his fellowmen would have requested to hear these words at such a time.

When Elder Taylor had finished the song, the Prophet’s eyes were wet with tears, and he said, “Sing that song again, will you, John?” (quoted in Claire Noall, *Intimate Disciple: A Portrait of Willard Richards, Apostle to Joseph Smith—Cousin of Brigham Young* [1957], 440).

John “replied that he did not feel like singing. He was oppressed with a sense of coming disaster” (George Q. Cannon, *Life of Joseph Smith the Prophet* [1986], 524).

“You’ll feel better once you begin, and so will I,” replied Joseph (quoted in Noall, *Intimate Disciple*, 440).

Hyrum also pleaded with him to repeat the song. And Elder Taylor did.

This time his voice was even sadder and more tender than at first, and when he concluded, all were hushed, but four hearts beat faster, for they had carefully listened to the fateful words:

*My friendship's utmost zeal to try,
He asked if I for him would die.
The flesh was weak; my blood ran chill,
But my free spirit cried, "I will!"*
(Hymns, number 29)

The other three heard Joseph murmur as an echo to the song, "I will!"

The love of Christ was in the song; the love of man was there in that room in the Carthage Jail.

While this spirit of love and service for men expressed in song and prayer filled the hearts of all within the jail, the mob was gathering. The final details you know.

ONLY LOVE BEGETS LOVE

When the news of the awful crime reached Nauvoo, the citizens were overcome with grief and horror. Such sorrow had not been known in Nauvoo before. The warm summer sun left them cold and chill. Their prophet and their patriarch were dead. What else mattered?

When the wagons carrying the bodies were still a long way off, the entire population of Nauvoo went out to meet them. No greater tribute could be paid than was paid that day to Joseph and Hyrum Smith. Such universal love from those who knew them best could never have been won by selfish and designing men. Only love begets love. Once when Joseph had been asked how he had acquired so many followers and retained them, he replied, "It is because I possess the principle of love. All I can offer the world is a good heart and a good hand" (*History of the Church*, 5:498).

Sariah Workman, an early immigrant, wrote, "I always felt a divine influence whenever I was in his presence"

(in "Joseph Smith, the Prophet," *Young Woman's Journal*, December 1906, 542).

John Taylor, who was wounded at Carthage and later became prophet, said of him: "Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it. In the short space of twenty years, he has brought forth the Book of Mormon, which he translated by the gift and power of God, and has been the means of

publishing it on two continents; has sent the fulness of the everlasting gospel, which it contained, to the four quarters of the earth; has brought forth the revelations and commandments which compose this book of Doctrine and Covenants, and many other wise documents and instructions for the benefit of the children of men; gathered many thousands of the Latter-day Saints, founded a great city, and left a fame and name that cannot be slain. He lived great, and he died great in the eyes of God and his people; and like most of the Lord's anointed in ancient times, has sealed his mission and his works with his own blood" (D&C 135:3).

I give my love and testament that God our Father lives, that Jesus is the Christ, the

Son of the living God, crucified for the sins of the world "to cleanse it from all unrighteousness; that through him all might be saved" (D&C 76:41–42). He is our Redeemer, our Lord, our King. His kingdom is again established on the earth. In the year 1820 God our Eternal Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, appeared to Joseph Smith, who was fore-ordained to be the instrument of the Restoration, which is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This Church, by divine direction, is preparing the world for His Second Coming—for He will come again. This I humbly declare in His holy name. □



Elder John Taylor said of the Prophet, "Like most of the Lord's anointed in ancient times, [he] has sealed his mission and his works with his own blood."

Three

Three centavos might not sound like much, but finding them added up to a very big change in my life.

By Joel B. Macariola

“**N**o, bishop, I don’t think I’m going on a mission,” I said each time my bishop invited me to consider going on a mission.

When my family joined the Church, there were many things we had to learn and unlearn. As first-generation Church members, we had never before considered or discussed going on missions. The sacrifice seemed to be too great.

Still, I was an active member of the Church. I attended all my meetings and accepted responsibilities as they were extended. I was in my second year of studying accounting when the bishop called me to be the financial clerk.

One Wednesday I was faced with trying to find an error in the records. I felt helpless as I labored to find the three centavos’ difference between the Church’s and the bank’s records. The report was due the next day, and that deadline compounded my distress. I realized the only sensible thing to do was to ask for help.

I explained my predicament to the bishop. It surprised

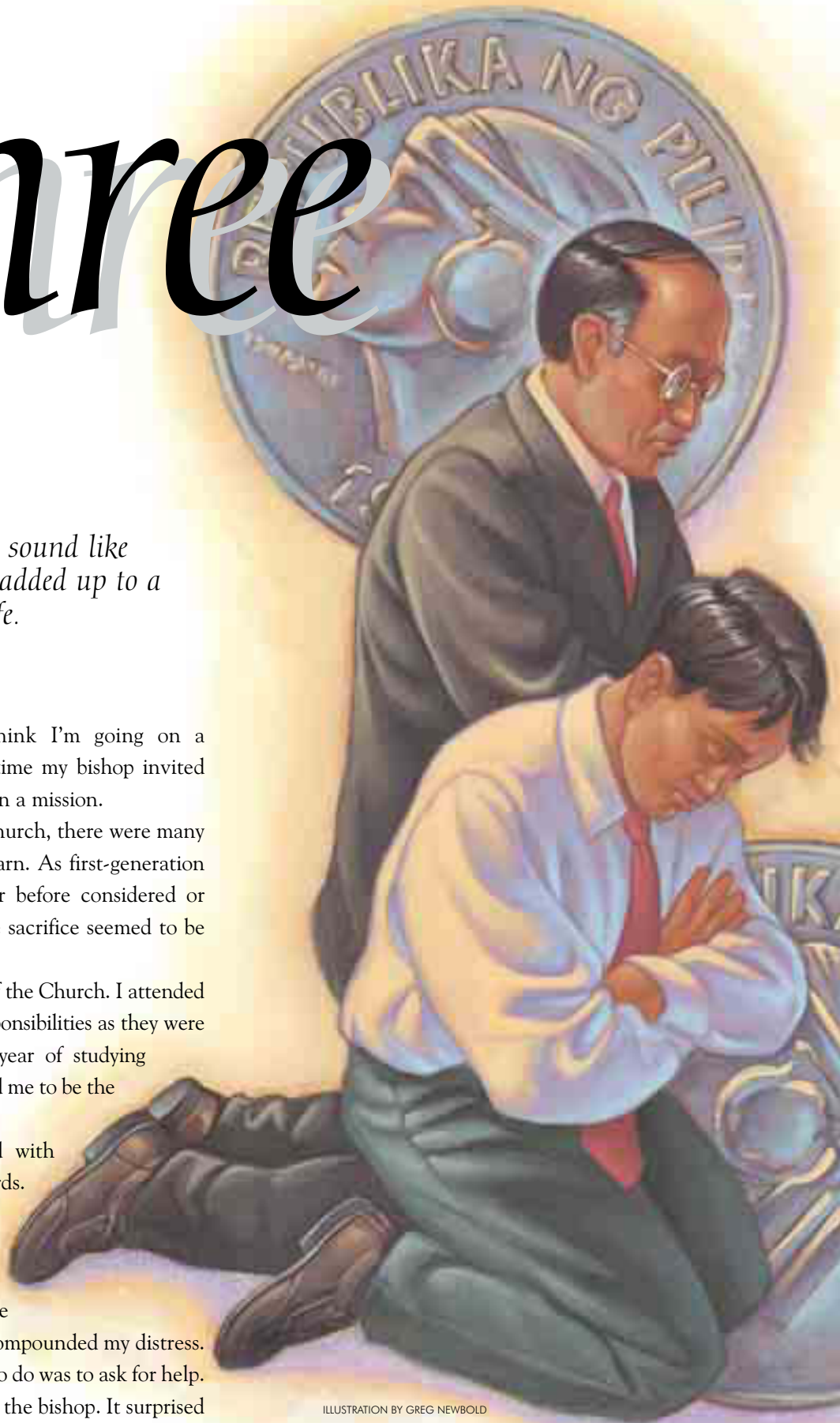
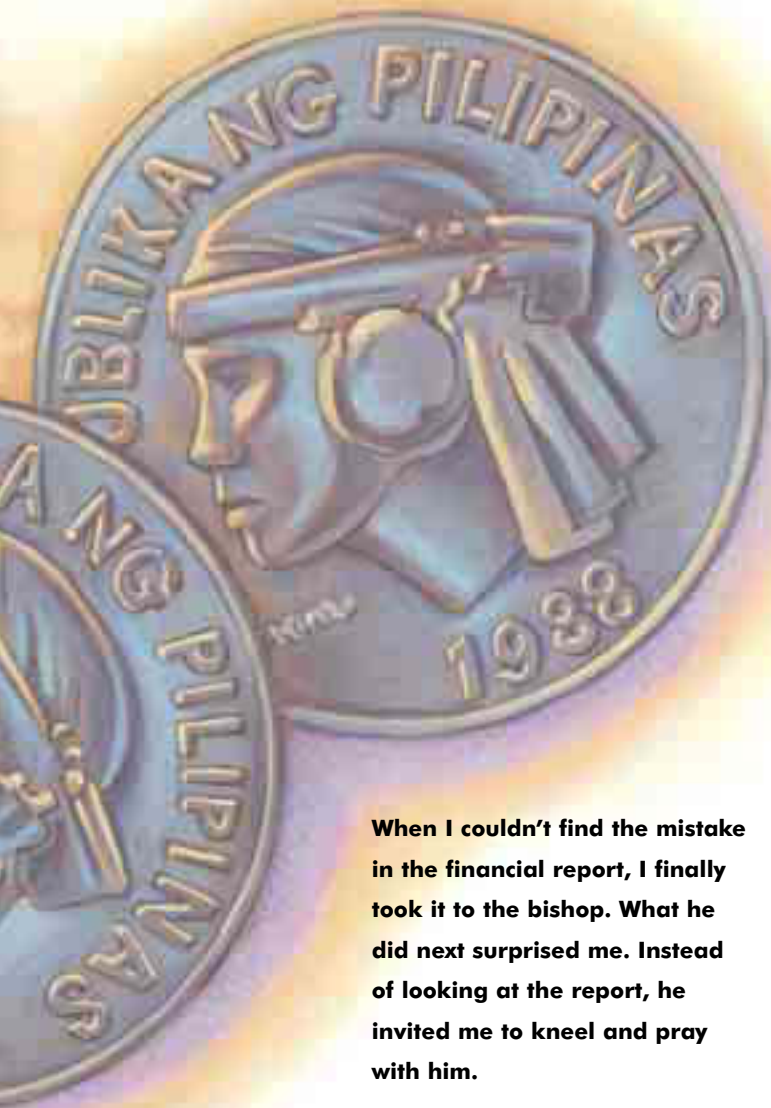


ILLUSTRATION BY GREG NEWBOLD

Centavos



When I couldn't find the mistake in the financial report, I finally took it to the bishop. What he did next surprised me. Instead of looking at the report, he invited me to kneel and pray with him.

me when instead of immediately reviewing the report, he invited me to kneel and pray with him as we explained our problem to the Lord. When we got up from our knees, the bishop asked to see the report. Almost immediately and without using a calculator, he pointed to a column and said, "This is where your problem is."

I totaled the numbers, and he was right. I felt I had just witnessed a miracle. My young and feeble testimony of the Church and Church leaders was strengthened.

While I was still caught up in this experience, the bishop asked, "Now are you going on a mission?"

This time, I said, "Yes."

As I left the meetinghouse that night, I had with me all the missionary papers I needed to fill out. I was soon called to serve full time in the Philippines Baguio Mission.

It has been many years since that night and that answered prayer. After completing a two-year mission, I returned to school and obtained my college degree, four years behind most people my age. But if I had to do it over again, I would still choose to serve.

I'm thankful for a bishop who set a good example and obeyed a prompting to ask the right question at the right time. I'm also thankful to Heavenly Father. He not only helped me find the three centavos to reconcile my report, but He also blessed me with a wealth of missionary experiences without price. □

Joel B. Macariola is a member of the Tangub Ward, Bacolod Philippines South Stake.

Questions & Answers

How Can I Make Friends with Youth in My Ward When It Is Easier to Spend Time with Nonmember Friends?

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

At school the few Church members my age either make fun of me or avoid me. At church they pretend I don't exist. My only good friends are nonmembers. How can I make friends with youth in my ward when it is easier to spend my time with nonmember friends who seem to be more Christlike?

LIAHONA'S ANSWER

This question really has two parts: What should I do about the Latter-day Saint youth in my ward or branch? And what should I do about my nonmember friends?

Unfortunately, Latter-day Saints do not always live exemplary lives. Youth in particular sometimes struggle with kindness and love. Consequently, young people are sometimes ignored or ridiculed by those who should be their friends.

If you find yourself in these circumstances, try to remember one very important point: You are a child of God. Your Heavenly Father loves you and is grateful for your every effort to live the gospel and to be active in your ward or branch. While Heavenly Father won't force others to live the gospel, He will sustain you in your attempts to be patient and not to give up.

While you can't make others' decisions for them, you can choose how you react to those decisions. The most



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY MATTHEW REER

important thing you can do is try to be Christlike in your response when others tease or ignore you. Be friendly and try to set an example without being self-righteous. Sometimes your kind behavior may make the situation worse. If that is the case, pray for hearts to be softened—yours that you may not be bitter, and theirs that they may see you for the person you are. If you treat others as children of Heavenly Father, perhaps they will eventually remember who they are and act accordingly.

You may not be able to handle the situation alone, so seek appropriate counsel and assistance from parents or Church leaders. The bishop or branch president is responsible for the spiritual welfare of the members he presides over, and he can seek guidance to know what to do.

But above all, don't let others determine your activity in the Church. If you give up trying to have Latter-day Saint friends, you will give up opportunities to serve and to grow. Look around your ward and branch for others—perhaps older or younger than you—who need your friendship. Is there a Primary child you could help? A widow? A mother with small children? You may find that many ward or branch members are grateful for your friendship.

The other question—what to do about your nonmember friends—is an easier one. If they are Christlike and treat you well, then spend time with them. Good friends are an asset—and

if they really are your friends, they will respect your beliefs and will not ask you to do anything against your standards. And if you live your religion around them, they will likely be interested to know more about it. But even if they never show any interest in the Church, you probably share many positive values and can be a strength to each other in avoiding the world's temptations and evils.

READERS' ANSWERS

I try not to pay attention if someone teases me. It hurts to be treated in such a way, but when I think of Jesus Christ, I realize my hardships are insignificant in comparison, and I continue trying to be kind. It is important for me to go to church not because of friends but to obey the law of the Sabbath and to worship the Lord.



*Sri Martini Wardoko,
Jakarta South Branch,
Jakarta Indonesia District*

We need to have friends both in and out of the Church, and we need to break any barrier that keeps us from being friends with Church members. We need to spend time with members because they can help us as we walk the path to eternal life.



*David Cristóbal
Vallejo Domínguez,
Choloma Ward,
Fesitranh Honduras Stake*



“Treat Everyone with Kindness and Dignity”

“Everyone needs good friends. Your circle of friends will greatly influence your thinking and behavior, just as you will theirs. When you share common values with your friends, you can strengthen and encourage each other. Treat everyone with kindness and dignity. Many nonmembers have come into the Church through friends who have involved them in Church activities.”—President Thomas S. Monson, First Counselor in the First Presidency (“That We May Touch Heaven,” *Ensign*, November 1990, 46)

“Be a Good Friend”

“To have good friends, be a good friend yourself. Show interest in others and let them know you care about them. Treat everyone with kindness and respect. Go out of your way to be a friend to those who are shy or do not feel included” (*For the Strength of Youth: Fulfilling Our Duty to God* [2001], 12).

I am helped by two questions: Should I love others? Or should I try to be loved? I try always to love others. This choice has obligated me to love those who are unkind. It helps me concentrate on their positive points and prevents me from avoiding them.



*Elder François Ngindu Ngindu,
Democratic Republic of Congo
Kinshasa Mission*

If we find that some people who should be our friends turn against us, our obligation is not to retreat from them. We should show them that we love and care for them. Sometimes all we need to do is go to our knees. Our Heavenly Father will make us strong.



*Elder Ihuoma
Chidiebere Loveday,
Nigeria Port Harcourt Mission*

Some members haven't accepted the idea that we are to do unto others as we would have others do unto us. Nonetheless, we should treat them with love in return. Base your behavior on the principle that "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matthew 5:39).



*Catherine Slight,
Mascouche Ward,
Montréal Québec Stake*

We should never forget that the best friends we have are God, Jesus Christ, our parents, and our family members. Continue to endure in faith, for this may be a trial you have to pass through.



*Cristiano Sölla,
Porto Velho Ward,
Rio Grande Brazil Stake*

We are on earth to be tested and proven (see Abraham 3:25), and some tests may come through family members, friends, or neighbors. No matter how hard the test, we can press forward with an eye single to the glory of God (see D&C 88:67–68).



*Simboe Doe,
Logan Town Ward,
Monrovia Liberia Stake*

If the members your age are making fun of you or ignoring you, you must take the initiative to greet them and get to know them better. Make every effort to invite your nonmember friends to Church activities, and take this opportunity to share the gospel. It is possible that these friends will become members of the Church.



*Chen Yu-chuan,
Dyker Heights Fourth
(Chinese) Branch,
Brooklyn New York Stake*

The easiest step toward gaining a friend is to conjure up a smile,

even if it is hard to do. If ward members don't want to be your friend, forgive them for acting as they do, put a smile on your face, and try again. Maybe they will change when they see that you won't give up trying to win their friendship. This difficult situation will be easier if you approach it with patience, a good attitude, faith, and prayer.



*Bianca Borchardt,
Halberstadt Branch,
Hannover Germany Stake*

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS is a youth feature, and we hope to print a wide selection of youth answers from a variety of countries. Please mail your answer to arrive no later than 1 July 2002. Send it to QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS 07/02, Liahona, Floor 24, 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3223, USA; or e-mail to CUR-Liahona-IMag@ldschurch.org. Your answer may be typed or clearly written in your own language. For your answer to be considered, it must include your full name, age, home address, and ward and stake (or branch and district). Please include a photograph of yourself; this photograph will not be returned.

QUESTION: My brother isolates himself from the rest of my family. He spends most of his time with friends, and he never goes to church with us. How can I reach out to him? □

STRENGTHENING OUR MARRIAGES, FAMILIES, AND HOMES

Read the following with the sisters you visit, and discuss the questions, the scriptures, and the teachings from our Church leaders. Share your experiences and testimony, and invite those you teach to do the same.

WHAT IS THE LORD'S VIEW OF MARRIAGE, FAMILY, AND HOME?

Mark 10:6–8: “From the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh.”

The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “Marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God. . . . Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liahona*, October 1998, 24).

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “What if you are single or have not been blessed with children? Do you need to be concerned about the counsel regarding families? Yes. It is something we all need to learn in

earth life. Unmarried adult members can often lend a special kind of strength to the family, becoming a tremendous source of support, acceptance, and love to their families and the families of those around them” (“Strengthening Families: Our Sacred Duty,” *Liahona*, July 1999, 40).

WHAT SIMPLE THINGS CAN BUILD STRONG FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS?

Mosiah 4:15: “Ye will teach them to love one another, and to serve one another.”

The First Presidency: “We counsel parents and children to give highest priority to family prayer, family home evening, gospel study and instruction, and wholesome family activities. However worthy and appropriate other demands or activities may be, they must not be permitted to displace the divinely-appointed duties that only parents and families can adequately perform” (First Presidency letter,

11 February 1999; see *Liahona*, December 1999, 1).

President Gordon B. Hinckley: “A good marriage requires time. It requires effort. You have to work at it. You have to cultivate it. You have to forgive and forget. You have to be absolutely loyal” (“Life’s Obligations,” *Liahona*, May 1999, 4).

“I know of no single practice that will have a more salutary effect upon your lives than the practice of kneeling together as you begin and close each day. Somehow the little storms that seem to afflict every marriage are dissipated when, kneeling before the Lord, you thank him for one another, . . . then together invoke his blessings upon your lives” (“Except the Lord Build the House . . .,” *Ensign*, June 1971, 72).

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “If you are single and haven’t identified a solid prospect for celestial marriage, live for it. Pray for it. Expect it in the timetable of the Lord. Do not compromise your standards in any way that would rule out that blessing on this or the other side of the veil” (“Receive the Temple Blessings,” *Liahona*, July 1999, 31). □



Friends in Vava'u

By Janet Thomas PHOTOGRAPHY BY THE AUTHOR



I foni Tapueluelu was a little lonely. He was the only boy in a family of sisters. His sisters were growing up and developing other friends and interests. He needed a friend.

One day Ifoni, then about age 13, was swimming near the bridge on the beautiful island of Vava'u, one of a group of northern islands in the nation of Tonga. Other children were swimming there too, and Ifoni noticed a boy—Peter—who was alone and looking just about as lonely as Ifoni felt. Ifoni saw Peter and thought, *He doesn't have a friend, but he needs one. And I need a friend.* Soon they were inseparable—except when Ifoni went to church.

The island of Vava'u has three stakes and dozens of wards and branches. Ifoni is one of many members in Tonga who have grown up in the Church. He was baptized at age eight, and as a deacon he faithfully attended his ward meetings, performed his duties, and attended activities.

His new friend, Peter McLean, had already had some hard things happen to him. His father had died, lost at sea while fishing. Peter; his sisters, Lilika and Lei; and his mother, Hainite, were left alone. Peter admits that he struggled. His aunt had persuaded him to attend Saineha High School, the LDS-sponsored school, but he felt out of place and skipped classes regularly. The principal and teachers were patient and kept encouraging him to return. Then he met Ifoni, and his life began to change.

As Peter and Ifoni became closer, Ifoni naturally invited Peter to do everything he was doing—going to Mutual, participating in seminary, and

Peter McLean (left) found a great friend in Ifoni Tapueluelu. Their friendship has led both to strong testimonies of the gospel.





Left: Ifoni is dressed in his uniform from Saineha High School. Right: Both Peter and Ifoni serve as assistant ward clerks.

attending Sunday meetings. At first Peter knew virtually nothing about the Church. But he had a good friend who was eager to teach him.

Ifoni had a solid testimony reinforced by some rather miraculous events in his childhood. At eight, while he was playing at sword fighting with a very real and very sharp machete, Ifoni's eye was cut and damaged. The doctor said he would never see with that eye again. His father and his bishop gave him a priesthood blessing, asking, if it was the Lord's will, that his eye be healed. Three months later, sight returned to his eye, even though the scar remains. He was also nearly electrocuted when electricity was first brought to his family's village. Again he was given a priesthood blessing, and his life was preserved.

Peter and his mother, Hainite, on the porch of their home.



Now, as a teen, he has no doubts about the power of the priesthood. "When I received the Atonic Priesthood," Ifoni says, "my mother encouraged me to stay faithful to the Lord's power. It's so important to stay clean and be worthy of the Atonic Priesthood."

And Ifoni knew that Peter needed the same blessings in his life.

Peter liked going to Mutual activities, but he didn't always want to go to church on Sundays. "Every Sunday Ifoni would stand outside the house and wait for me," Peter says. "He didn't give up."

Then Peter's testimony began to grow. Seminary was a great help. "One day the teacher explained about how to resist Satan and endure the trials that come every day," Peter says. "Doctrine and Covenants 10:5 talks about praying hard so you can resist temptation. That scripture always stays in my mind."

Now, as 17-year-olds, Ifoni and Peter are looking forward to serving missions. And they will be great missionaries. They see possibilities where others see difficulties. For example, more than half the 15,000 people in Vava'u are Church members, Peter points out. Then he asks, "Don't you think it is possible to help the other half join the Church?" Immediately, there seem to be obstacles to such a widespread conversion. But one look at the faces of Peter and Ifoni stops such doubts. They have faith. And with such faith, anything is possible.

While they prepare to serve missions, their bishop has called them both to be assistant ward clerks in the Neiafu Fourth Ward, Neiafu Vava'u Tonga West Stake. In that calling they are asked to spend 15 hours each week at the meetinghouse updating records and taking care of the grounds.

Peter and Ifoni see the gospel as a great force in their

Peter (right), Ifoni (middle), and their good friend Lopeti stop for a moment on the dock in the beautiful harbor of Vava'u.

lives and in the lives of the people of Vava'u. And they look forward to the day when, dressed in missionary attire, they will spend their time spreading the gospel.

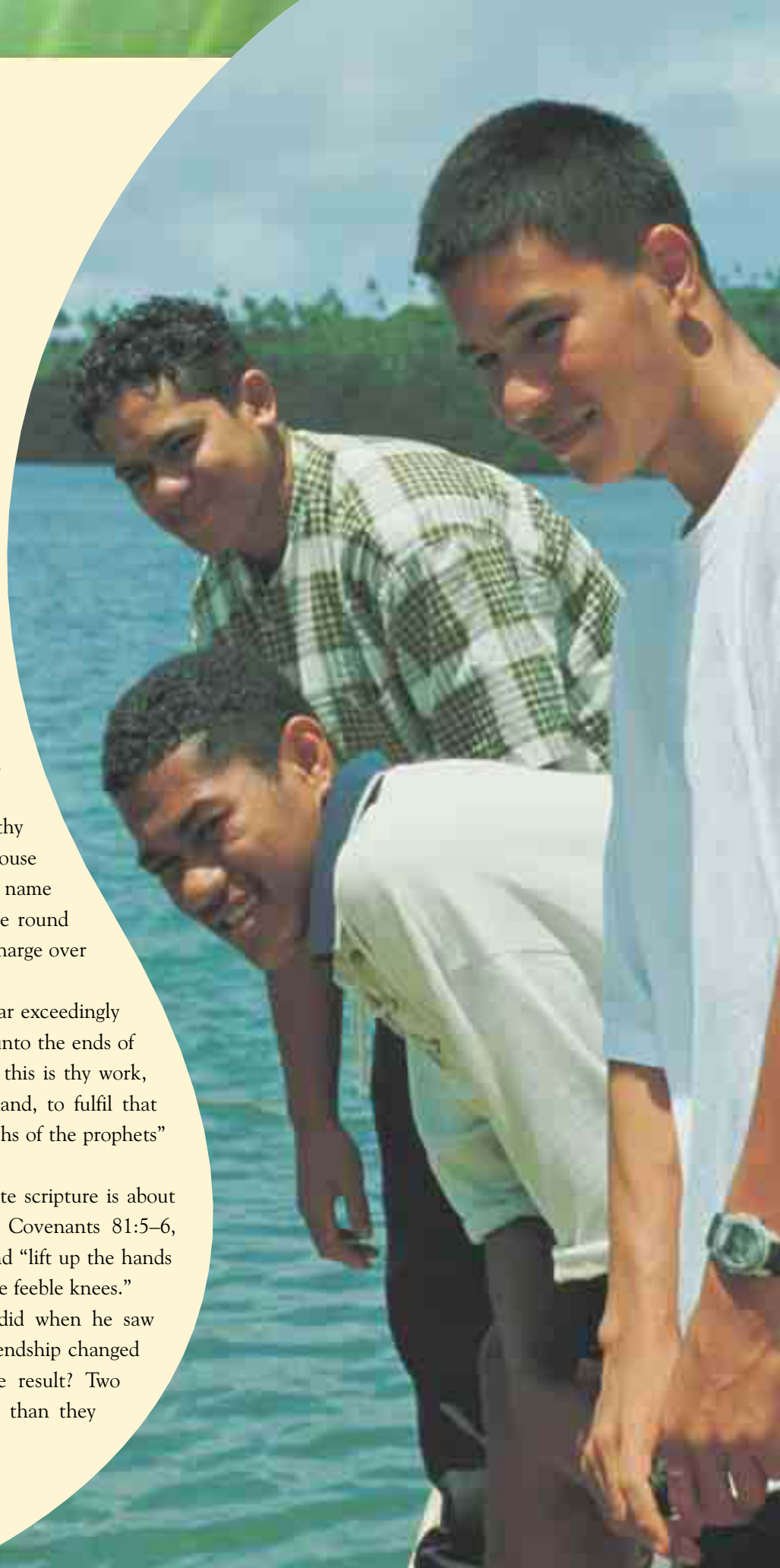
Peter explains that a scripture he learned in seminary has become his own prayer:

“We ask thee, Holy Father, that thy servants may go forth from this house armed with thy power, and that thy name may be upon them, and thy glory be round about them, and thine angels have charge over them;

“And from this place they may bear exceedingly great and glorious tidings, in truth, unto the ends of the earth, that they may know that this is thy work, and that thou hast put forth thy hand, to fulfil that which thou hast spoken by the mouths of the prophets” (D&C 109:22–23).

Not too surprisingly, Ifoni's favorite scripture is about helping others. It is Doctrine and Covenants 81:5–6, where the Lord says to be faithful and “lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees.”

And that is exactly what Ifoni did when he saw someone in need of a friend. His friendship changed the course of Peter's life. And the result? Two friends, both stronger in the gospel than they would have been separately. □





Left: Muhammad said that he was called by Allah (God) through the angel Gabriel, depicted here by a 14th-century Muslim artist. Below: Muslims believe that the Ka'ba in Mecca is the house of God. It is the sacred sanctuary toward which Muslims from all over the world pray five times daily.



A Latter-day Saint Perspective on MUHAMMAD

Viewing Muhammad from the understanding of the restored gospel provides greater knowledge of Heavenly Father's love for His children in all nations.

By James A. Toronto

A few years ago I received a phone call from two Church members in the United States who had become acquainted with a Muslim neighbor from Pakistan. When they shared with him the story of Joseph Smith's First Vision, his response surprised them. After stating that Muslims accept no prophets after Muhammad, he said that Joseph Smith's story shared similarities with Muhammad's. He said, "We believe Muhammad encountered a divine messenger who informed him of his new calling as prophet. He received revelations of new scripture that contains God's word to mankind, and he established a community of believers that developed into a major world religion." Knowing little about Muslims and Islam* or about Muhammad, the members were unsure in their responses.

The issues raised by this experience allude to a broader question that is relevant for all Latter-day Saints in view

*Muslims are followers of the religion Islam (meaning "submission to God"). Islamic scripture is contained in the Qur'an (Koran).



of the Church's global presence and the increasingly pluralistic societies in which we all live: What is an appropriate Latter-day Saint attitude toward other religions' claims of divinely inspired prophets, scriptures, visions, and miracles? The following may be helpful and is based on gospel insights I have gained over the years while studying and living in Muslim societies. Seeing Muhammad's role in religious

history from the perspective of the restored gospel provides great understanding of one of history's most influential spiritual leaders. It also helps us appreciate Heavenly Father's love for His children in all nations and gives principles to guide us in building positive relations with friends and neighbors of other faiths.

Above: Instead of depicting Allah or Muhammad in human form, Muslim religious art employs geometric and written forms that represent the divine and prophetic teachings of Islam. Here we see the name of God (Allah) written in Arabic, the original language of the Qur'an.

THOUGHTS ON INTERFAITH RELATIONS

President Gordon B. Hinckley has consistently advocated dialogue and mutual respect in interfaith relations. He has admonished members of the Church to “cultivate a spirit of affirmative gratitude” for those of differing religious, political, and philosophical persuasions, adding that “we do not in any way have to compromise our theology” in the process. He gave this counsel: “Be respectful of the opinions and feelings of other people. Recognize their

virtues; don’t look for their faults. Look for their strengths and their virtues, and you will find strength and virtues that will be helpful in your own life.”¹

President Hinckley’s emphasis on building interfaith understanding is rooted in fundamental gospel principles—humility, charity, respect for eternal truth, and recognition of God’s love for all—taught by Jesus Christ and by ancient and modern prophets. The Savior repeatedly affirmed Heavenly Father’s boundless

***Inset:* One of the five pillars of Islam is the pilgrimage to Mecca. This 13th-century illustration shows pilgrims traveling to Mecca. *Below:* A present-day view of the Great Mosque in Mecca and the Ka’ba (located in the center). Muslims consider Mecca the holiest city in the world.**



concern for the well-being of each of His sons and daughters, as in the parable of the lost sheep (see Luke 15). In the parable of the good Samaritan, He taught that one of the keys to true discipleship is to treat others kindly and compassionately in spite of political, racial, or religious differences (see Luke 10:25–37). He denounced intolerance and rivalry among religious groups and the tendency to extol one’s own virtues and deprecate the spiritual status of others. Addressing a parable to those who “trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others,” Jesus condemned the pride of the Pharisee who prayed, “God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are” and commended the humility of the publican who implored, “God be merciful to me a sinner” (see Luke 18:9–14).

The Book of Mormon teaches that Heavenly Father “is mindful of every people, whatsoever land they may be in; . . . and his bowels of mercy are over all the earth” (Alma 26:37; see also 1 Nephi 1:14). Because of His love for all His children, the Lord has provided spiritual light to guide and enrich their lives. Elder Orson F. Whitney (1855–1931) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles observed that God “is using not only his covenant people, but other peoples as well, to consummate a work, stupendous, magnificent, and altogether too arduous for this little handful of Saints to accomplish by and of themselves.”²

Elder B. H. Roberts (1857–1933) of the Seventy also spoke on this doctrine: “While the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is established for the instruction of men; and it is one of God’s instrumentalities for making known the truth yet he is not limited to that institution for such purposes, neither in time nor place. God raises up wise men and prophets here and there among all the children of men, of their own tongue and nationality, speaking to them through means that they can comprehend. . . . All the great teachers are servants of God; among all nations and in all ages. They are inspired men,



Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (far right) and Brigham Young University professor Daniel C. Peterson (far left) with Muslim dignitaries at a reception held on 10 February 2000 at the United Nations building in New York City to honor the Islamic Translation Series.

appointed to instruct God’s children according to the conditions in the midst of which he finds them.”³

The Prophet Joseph Smith (1805–44) often expounded on this theme of the universality of God’s love and the related need to remain open to all available sources of divine light and knowledge. “One of the grand fundamental principles of ‘Mormonism,’” he said, “is to receive truth, let it come from whence it may.”⁴ The Prophet exhorted Church members to “gather all the good and true principles in the world and treasure them.”⁵

Church leaders have continually encouraged members to foster positive relations with people of other faiths by acknowledging the spiritual truth others possess, emphasizing the similarities in belief and lifestyle. Church leaders teach us to disagree agreeably. Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles spoke on this theme to Latter-day Saints and members of other faiths during an area conference in Tahiti: “Keep all the truth and all the good that you have. Do not abandon any sound or proper principle. Do not forsake any standard of the past which is good, righteous, and true. Every truth found in every church in all the world we believe. But we also say this to all men—Come and take the added light and truth that God has restored

LEFT (INSET): ILLUSTRATION FROM MAQAMAT BY AL-HARIRI, COURTESY OF BIBLIOTHEQUE NATIONALE, PARIS;
LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH BY MOHAMMED AMIN, CAMEROPIX, NAIROBI

in our day. The more truth we have, the greater is our joy here and now; the more truth we receive, the greater is our reward in eternity.”⁶

During October 1991 general conference, President Howard W. Hunter, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said: “As members of the Church of Jesus Christ, we seek to bring all truth together. We seek to enlarge the circle of love and understanding among all the people of the earth. Thus we strive to establish peace and happiness, not only within Christianity but among all mankind.”⁷

Likewise, Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles quoted a public statement issued by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in October 1992, calling “upon all people everywhere to recommit themselves to the time-honored ideals of tolerance and mutual respect. We sincerely believe that as we acknowledge one another with consideration and compassion we will discover that we can all peacefully coexist despite our deepest differences.” He then added: “That pronouncement is a contemporary confirmation of the Prophet Joseph’s earlier entreaty for tolerance. Unitedly we may respond. Together we may stand,

Fasting during the daylight hours of the month of Ramadan is another of Islam’s five pillars. Here a family in Bahrain enjoys a predawn breakfast.



intolerant of transgression but tolerant of neighbors with differences they hold sacred. Our beloved brothers and sisters throughout the world are *all* children of God.”⁸

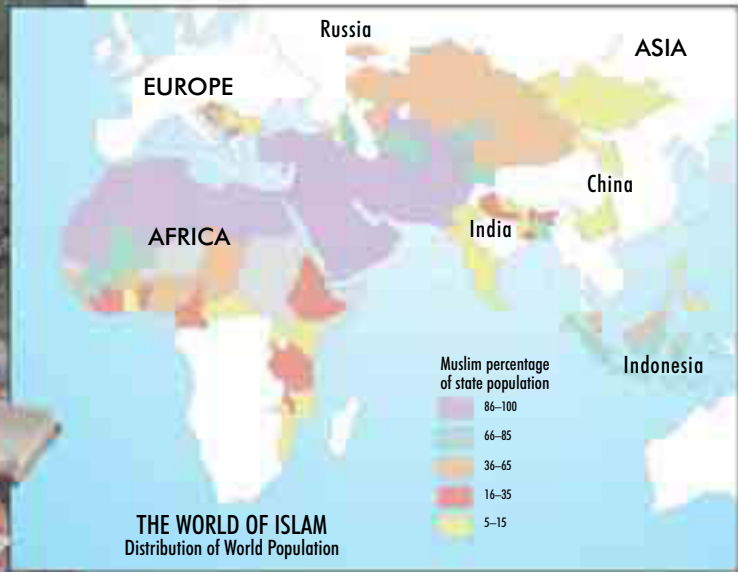
LATTER-DAY SAINT INTEREST IN MUHAMMAD

One of the noteworthy examples of the Latter-day Saint commitment to treasure up true principles is the admiration that Church leaders have expressed over the years for the spiritual contributions of Muhammad.

As early as 1855, at a time when Christian literature generally ridiculed Muhammad, Elders George A. Smith (1817–75) and Parley P. Pratt (1807–57) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles delivered lengthy sermons demonstrating an accurate and balanced understanding of Islamic history and speaking highly of Muhammad’s leadership. Elder Smith observed that Muhammad was “descended from Abraham and was no doubt raised up by God on purpose” to preach against idolatry. He sympathized with the plight of Muslims, who, like Latter-day Saints, found it difficult “to get an honest history” written about them. Speaking next, Elder Pratt went on to express his admiration for Muhammad’s teachings, asserting that “upon the whole, . . . [Muslims] have better morals and better institutions than many Christian nations.”⁹

Latter-day Saint appreciation of Muhammad’s role in history can also be found in the 1978 First Presidency statement regarding God’s love for all mankind. This declaration specifically mentions Muhammad as one of “the great religious leaders of the world” who received “a portion of God’s light” and affirms that “moral truths were given to [these leaders] by God to enlighten whole nations and to bring a higher level of understanding to individuals.”¹⁰

In recent years, respect for the spiritual legacy of Muhammad and for the religious values of the Islamic community has led to increasing contact and cooperation between Latter-day Saints and Muslims around the world. This cooperation is due in part to the presence of



Not shown are North America and South America. North America has approximately 7 million Muslims, or 2.3 percent of the population. South America has approximately 1 million Muslims, or 2 percent of the population. Left: Malaysian children study the Qur'an.

Latter-day Saint congregations in areas such as the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, North Africa, the Persian Gulf, and Southeast Asia. The Church has respected Islamic laws and traditions that prohibit conversion of Muslims to other faiths by adopting a policy of nonproselyting in Islamic countries of the Middle East.

Yet examples of dialogue and cooperation abound, including visits of Muslim dignitaries at Church headquarters in Salt Lake City; Muslim use of Church canning facilities to produce *halal* (ritually clean) food products; Church humanitarian aid and disaster relief sent to predominantly Muslim areas, including Jordan, Kosovo, and Turkey; academic agreements between Brigham Young University and various educational and governmental institutions in the Islamic world; the existence of the Muslim Student Association at BYU; and expanding collaboration between the Church and Islamic organizations to safeguard traditional family values worldwide.¹¹

The recent initiation of the Islamic Translation Series, cosponsored by BYU and the Church, has resulted in several significant exchanges between Muslim officials and Latter-day Saint Church leaders. A Muslim ambassador to the United Nations predicted that this translation series “will play a positive role in the West’s quest for a better understanding of Islam.”¹²

These examples of Latter-day Saint–Muslim interaction, together with the Church’s establishment in 1989 of two major centers for educational and cultural exchange in the Middle East (Jerusalem and Amman), reflect the traditional respect for Islam that Church leaders have exhibited from earliest times. These activities represent tangible evidence of Latter-day Saint commitment to promote greater understanding of the Muslim world and witness an emerging role for the Church in helping to bridge the gap that has existed historically between Muslims and Christians. A cabinet minister in Egypt, aware of the common ground shared by Muslims and Latter-day Saints, once remarked to Elder Howard W. Hunter of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles that “if a

bridge is ever built between Christianity and Islam it must be built by the Mormon Church.”¹³

THE LIFE OF MUHAMMAD

Who, then, was Muhammad, and what in his life and teachings has attracted the interest and admiration of Church leaders? What strength and virtues can we find in Muslim experience that, as President Hinckley has suggested, will be helpful in our own spiritual lives?

At the dawn of the 21st century, Islam is one of the largest and fastest-growing religions in the world. Muslims currently number more than one billion (almost one-fifth of the world’s population). Muslims live primarily in Southeast Asia, the Indian Subcontinent, the Middle East, and North Africa, and there are significant populations in Europe and North America. Some projections indicate that Islam will become the most populous religion in the world during the first half of this new century. The roots of this dynamic and, for some people, misunderstood religious movement can be traced back 14 centuries to the

humble beginnings and founding work of Muhammad, whom Muslims consider to be the last of a long line of prophets sent by God to teach Islam to the world.

Muhammad (Arabic, “praised”) was born in 570 C.E.¹⁴ in Mecca, a prosperous city that was a center of caravan trade and religious pilgrimage in the northwest Arabian peninsula. Orphaned in early childhood, he lived a life of poverty as a youth, working as a herdsman for his family and neighbors, an occupation that gave him ample time and solitude to contemplate the deeper questions of life. Muhammad gained a reputation in the community as a trusted arbiter and peacemaker as indicated in the following account:

“At one time the Quraish [Muhammad’s tribe] decided to rebuild the Ka`ba [sacred shrine], to re-set the stones above the foundations. In one of the corners they wanted to put the black stone, but could not decide who should have the honour of placing it there. They would have quarrelled violently if [Muhammad] the young man they all admired and trusted had not

Islam is growing rapidly throughout the world, as evidenced by this large new congregational mosque in Rome, Italy.



PHOTOGRAPH © FOTO WASARI

come by. They asked [him] . . . to settle the dispute. He told them to spread a large cloak and place the black stone in the middle. They did so. Then, he asked a man from each of the four clans who were in dispute to take hold of a corner of the cloak. In this way they all shared the honour of carrying the stone.”¹⁵

At the age of 25, Muhammad married a widow, Khadija, who was 15 years his senior and a prosperous caravan merchant. She knew of his reputation for honesty and hard work, and she made the proposal of marriage that turned out to be a successful and happy one, producing four daughters and two sons. For the next 15 years Muhammad was engaged with Khadija in running the family business and raising their family. During this period he retreated often into the solitude of the desert to pray, meditate, and worship. He had become dissatisfied with the corruption, idolatry, and social inequities plaguing Mecca; he sought for a higher truth that would provide peace, justice, and spiritual fulfillment for him and his people.

In 610 C.E., when he was 40, his spiritual seeking and preparation reached a culmination. According to Islamic history, one night while Muhammad was on Mount Hira near Mecca praying and meditating, the angel Gabriel appeared to him to deliver a message from God (Arabic, *Allah*).¹⁶ Three times the angel commanded that Muhammad “Recite: In the Name of thy Lord who created, created Man of a blood-clot. Recite: And thy Lord is the Most Generous, who taught by the Pen, taught Man that he knew not” (Qur’an 96:1–5).¹⁷

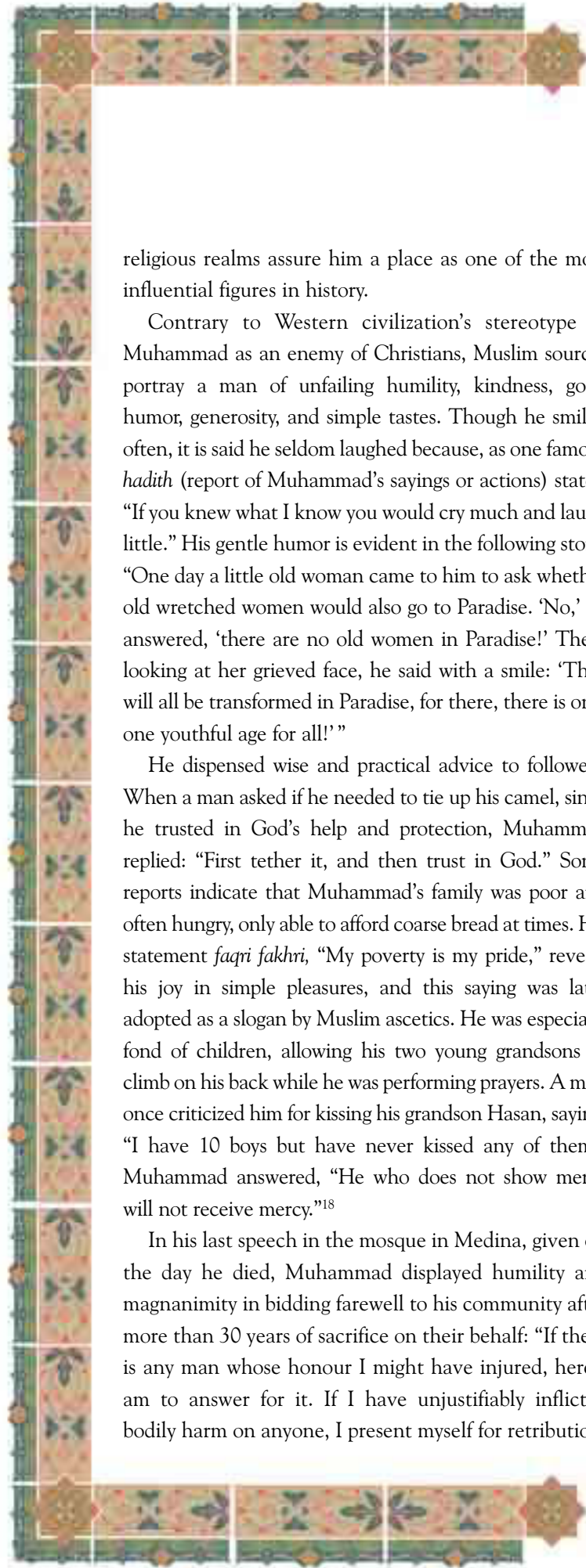
For a period of 22 years, from 610 C.E. to his death in 632, Muhammad received communications that he said were from Allah, by way of the angel Gabriel, and that he memorized and recited orally to his disciples. These oral recitations of Allah’s mind and will are collectively referred to as *al-Qur’an* (“recitation”) by Muslims. However, Muhammad’s preaching against idolatry, polytheism, female infanticide, and other religious and

social corruptions met fierce opposition in Mecca. His message was rejected in this early period in Mecca, and he and his fledgling community of converts, mostly a few family members and close friends, were shunned, persecuted, and even tortured.

Then a group of men came from the town Yathrib and asked Muhammad to act as an arbiter in the squabbles ruining their town. Muhammad saw an opportunity to alleviate the suffering of his followers, and he agreed to leave Mecca. First he sent his followers, and then he himself went to the town, which would thereafter be known as *Madinat an-Nabi* (“City of the Prophet”), or simply Medina. This emigration (Arabic, *hijra*), from Mecca to Medina, took place in 622 C.E., the year commemorated as the starting point of the Muslim Hijri calendar. Muslims saw in the Hijra a turning point in the life of the prophet and in the nature of the Muslim community. From being a rejected preacher, Muhammad became a statesman, legislator, judge, educator, and military leader. In Medina, Muslims had freedom to establish themselves securely, develop institutions for governance and education, and become a prosperous community, in contrast to their status in Mecca as a persecuted religious minority.

A few years after the Hijra, Muhammad was able to return to Mecca, where his teachings were gradually adopted. Today Mecca is considered by Muslims to be the spiritual center of Islam and the holiest of cities, with Medina as the second and Jerusalem the third holiest cities.

In 632, at the age of 62, Muhammad died unexpectedly after a short fever. By any measure Muhammad was phenomenally successful, even though his name and achievements have been the subject of controversy in Western civilization. During the last half of the 20th century, however, non-Muslim historians have become more objective and complimentary, acknowledging that Muhammad’s achievements in both political and



religious realms assure him a place as one of the most influential figures in history.

Contrary to Western civilization's stereotype of Muhammad as an enemy of Christians, Muslim sources portray a man of unflinching humility, kindness, good humor, generosity, and simple tastes. Though he smiled often, it is said he seldom laughed because, as one famous *hadith* (report of Muhammad's sayings or actions) states, "If you knew what I know you would cry much and laugh little." His gentle humor is evident in the following story: "One day a little old woman came to him to ask whether old wretched women would also go to Paradise. 'No,' he answered, 'there are no old women in Paradise!' Then, looking at her grieved face, he said with a smile: 'They will all be transformed in Paradise, for there, there is only one youthful age for all!'"

He dispensed wise and practical advice to followers. When a man asked if he needed to tie up his camel, since he trusted in God's help and protection, Muhammad replied: "First tether it, and then trust in God." Some reports indicate that Muhammad's family was poor and often hungry, only able to afford coarse bread at times. His statement *faqri fakhri*, "My poverty is my pride," reveals his joy in simple pleasures, and this saying was later adopted as a slogan by Muslim ascetics. He was especially fond of children, allowing his two young grandsons to climb on his back while he was performing prayers. A man once criticized him for kissing his grandson Hasan, saying, "I have 10 boys but have never kissed any of them." Muhammad answered, "He who does not show mercy will not receive mercy."¹⁸

In his last speech in the mosque in Medina, given on the day he died, Muhammad displayed humility and magnanimity in bidding farewell to his community after more than 30 years of sacrifice on their behalf: "If there is any man whose honour I might have injured, here I am to answer for it. If I have unjustifiably inflicted bodily harm on anyone, I present myself for retribution.

If I owe anything to anyone, here is my property and he may help himself to it. . . . Nobody should say: 'I fear enmity and rancor of the Messenger of God.' I nurse no grudge towards anyone. These things are repugnant to my nature and temperament. I abhor them so."¹⁹

With this view of Muhammad in mind, we can understand why Muslims commonly bless his name, invoke his name in conversations, and celebrate his birthday. Pious Muslims strive to emulate his example in every aspect of life: mode of dress, style of grooming, table manners, religious rituals, and benevolence toward others.

THE TEACHINGS OF MUHAMMAD

Islamic life revolves around five basic principles that are outlined in general terms in the Qur'an and expounded in the teachings and customs (Arabic, *sunna*) of Muhammad. These five pillars are the witness of faith, prayer, almsgiving, fasting, and pilgrimage to Mecca. Some examples of Muhammad's teachings on charitable giving and fasting will illustrate his manner of teaching and his central role in Muslim life.

The principle of almsgiving is designed to care for the poor and to foster empathy in the community of believers. The Qur'an states that charity and compassion, not mechanical observance of rituals, define one's worthiness in God's sight (2:177). Muhammad's sayings clearly teach the practice of charity:

"None of you [truly] believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself."

"Each person's every joint must perform a charity every day the sun comes up: to act justly between two people is a charity; to help a man with his mount, lifting him onto it or hoisting up his belongings onto it is a charity; a good word is a charity; every step you take to prayers is a charity; and removing a harmful thing from the road is charity."

"Charity extinguishes sin as water extinguishes fire."

"Smiling to another person is an act of charity."

“He who sleeps with a full stomach knowing that his neighbor is hungry [is not a believer].”²⁰

Muslims view fasting as having a dual purpose: to bring about a state of humility and surrender of one’s soul to God, and to foster compassion and care for the poor in the community. Thus, fasting and almsgiving go hand in hand: denying of oneself cannot be complete without giving of oneself.

I was reminded of this principle among Muslims, and the profound influence of Muhammad’s example in their lives, while living in Cairo, Egypt, during the holy

month of fasting, Ramadan.²¹ My family and I were invited by a Muslim friend, Nabil, to participate in his family’s evening meal in which they broke their fast. As we entered their modest apartment in one of the most impoverished quarters of Cairo, I noticed that one of the rooms was occupied by numerous women and their children. They were all sitting on the floor with food spread out before them on a cloth, quietly waiting for the call to prayer that marks the end of fasting each day. When I asked if they were his relatives, Nabil replied: “No, I don’t know any of them. It is our habit to invite

The most important religious holiday in the Islamic world is the Feast of Sacrifice, which marks the conclusion of the pilgrimage. Here thousands of Muslims gather for communal worship at the Badshahi Mosque in Lahore, Pakistan, to celebrate this feast.



strangers off the street who cannot afford good food to share our Ramadan meal. We do this because it was one of the customs of our prophet, Muhammad.”

I was deeply moved by my Muslim friend’s unselfishness and compassion for the poor and humbled by his good example in practicing a principle I had learned from the Bible years before but had rarely observed: “When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; . . . but when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee” (Luke 14:12–14).

A LATTER-DAY SAINT PERSPECTIVE

How, then, might Latter-day Saints regard the Muslim community? The most helpful approach is to recognize the truths and values we share with our Muslim brothers and sisters, even while politely acknowledging that theological differences exist. Certainly Latter-day Saints do not agree with Islamic teachings that deny the divinity of Jesus Christ, the need for modern prophets, or the principle of eternal progression. But by being humble and open to spiritual light wherever it may be found, we benefit from the religious insights of Muslims and affirm similarities such as belief in faith, prayer, fasting, repentance, compassion, modesty, and strong families as cornerstones of individual spirituality and community life.²²

In a meeting with Muslim dignitaries, Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles focused on the common spiritual heritage of Mormons and Muslims. After quoting a verse from the Qur’an, he

observed: “God is the source of light in heaven and on earth. We share the belief with you. We resist the secular world. We believe with you that life has meaning and purpose. . . . We revere the institution of the family. . . . We salute you for your concern for the

institution of the family. . . . Mutual respect, friendship, and love are precious things in today’s world. We feel those emotions for our Islamic brothers and sisters. Love never needs a visa. It crosses over all borders and links generations and cultures.”²³

The Prophet Joseph Smith, in one of his most eloquent pronouncements on tolerance and compassion, encouraged the Saints to expand their vision of the human family, to view people of other faiths and cultures as our Heavenly Father does and not according to the “narrow, contracted notions of men.” He taught that the Father will take complex personal, political, and social circumstances into account at the last day and render final judgment based on a divine, merciful perspective that surpasses our limited human understanding:

“While one portion of the human race is judging and condemning the other without mercy, the Great Parent of the universe looks upon the whole of the human family with a fatherly care and paternal regard; He views them as His offspring, and without any of those contracted feelings that influence the children of men, causes ‘His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.’ He holds the reins of judgment in His hands; He is a wise Lawgiver, and will judge all men, not according to the narrow, contracted notions of men, but, ‘according to the deeds done in the body whether they be good or evil,’ or



The nationality and dress of this pilgrim, one of two million from throughout the world, reflect the cultural diversity in Islam.

whether these deeds were done in England, America, Spain, Turkey, or India. He will judge them, 'not according to what they have not, but according to what they have,' those who have lived without law, will be judged without law, and those who have a law, will be judged by that law. We need not doubt the wisdom and intelligence of the Great Jehovah; He will award judgment or mercy to all nations according to their several deserts, their means of obtaining intelligence, the laws by which they are governed, the facilities afforded them of obtaining correct information, and His inscrutable designs in relation to the human family; and when the designs of God shall be made manifest, and the curtain of futurity be withdrawn, we shall all of us eventually have to confess that the Judge of all the earth has done right."²⁴

In response to questions concerning interfaith relations in the Church, I am grateful to state that we belong to a church that affirms the truths taught by Muhammad and other great teachers, reformers, and religious founders. We recognize the goodness reflected in the lives of those in other religious communities. While we do not compromise revealed eternal truths of the restored gospel, we avoid an adversarial relationship with other faiths. Rather, in accordance with modern prophetic counsel, we seek to treasure up that which is virtuous and praiseworthy in other faiths and to cultivate an attitude of "affirmative gratitude" toward them. As Latter-day Saints, we can respect and benefit from the spiritual light found in other religions, while seeking humbly to share the additional measure of eternal truth provided by latter-day revelation. □

James A. Toronto is an associate professor of Islamic studies and comparative religion at Brigham Young University.

NOTES

1. Quoted in Sheri L. Dew, *Go Forward with Faith: The Biography of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1996), 536, 576.
2. In Conference Report, April 1921, 32–33.
3. *Defense of the Faith and the Saints*, 2 volumes (1907), 1:512–13.

4. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, selected by Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 313.
5. *Teachings*, 316.
6. Quoted in Russell M. Nelson, "Teach Us Tolerance and Love," *Ensign*, May 1994, 70.
7. "The Gospel—A Global Faith," *Ensign*, November 1991, 18.
8. *Ensign*, May 1994, 71; emphasis in original.
9. See *Deseret News*, 10 October 1855, 242, 245.
10. First Presidency statement, 15 February 1978.
11. The activities dealing with the family are coordinated by the World Family Policy Center at Brigham Young University. The center cosponsors an international interfaith coalition, the World Congress of Families, which includes representatives from many Muslim countries.
12. See Michael R. Leonard, "Islamic diplomats hosted in New York," *Church News*, 3 April 1999, 6.
13. Howard W. Hunter, "All Are Alike unto God," *Ensign*, June 1979, 74.
14. C.E. means Common Era, equivalent in time to the Christian A.D.
15. Iqbal Ahmad Azami, *Muhammad the Beloved Prophet* (1990), 14–15. The Ka`ba is the holy shrine in Mecca thought by Muslims to have been built by Abraham and his son Ishmael.
16. *Allah* is a contraction of *al-ilah*, meaning "the God." It is the word used by all Muslim and Christian Arabs to refer to God, and it is also employed in Latter-day Saint scripture and practice in the Arabic-speaking world.
17. A. J. Arberry, translator, *The Koran Interpreted* (1955), 344.
18. These anecdotes about Muhammad's personality are found in Annemarie Schimmel, *And Muhammad Is His Messenger: The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety* (1985), 46–49.
19. Ja`far Qasimi, "The Life of the Prophet," in *Islamic Spirituality*, edited by Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1991), 92.
20. The first three *hadith* cited here are from *al-Arba`in al-Nawawiyya [Nawawi's Forty Hadith]* (1976), 56, 88, 98. The last two *hadith* were recorded by the author during conversations with Muslim friends and acquaintances.
21. During Ramadan, Muslims fast from dawn to sunset for 30 consecutive days, abstaining from food, drink, tobacco, and other physical gratifications.
22. For more about the Muslim world or doctrinal similarities and differences, see Daniel C. Peterson, *Abraham Divided: An LDS Perspective on the Middle East* (1995), or James A. Toronto, "Islam," in Spencer J. Palmer and Roger R. Keller, *Religions of the World: A Latter-day Saint View* (1997), 213–41.
23. *Church News*, 3 April 1999, 6, and author's personal observation and notes.
24. *Teachings*, 218.

“SALVATION FOR ALL”

“Salvation comes only through Christ,” says Elder David B. Haight of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “Joseph Smith is the instrument or revealer of that knowledge, divinely called to teach of the terms and conditions of the Father’s plan and given the keys of salvation for all mankind” (see this issue, page 12). People all across the world are searching for



the knowledge revealed through the Prophet Joseph Smith. When they find that knowledge, it brings such joy to their hearts that they wish to share it with others—particularly their own families. The following accounts illustrate how that gospel joy turns the hearts of those who find it to their families—those who have passed beyond the veil as well as those in mortality.

.....

A Trial of My Faith

By Aurelia S. Diezon

During a spiritually low moment in my life as a member of the Church, a particular incident renewed my faith.

I was on a boat in the Philippines, traveling to visit my mother. The boat was filled with passengers, some enjoying the beauty of the blue horizon, others laughing and chatting with friends and acquaintances. I felt alone and lost amid the crowd of people. The anticipation of seeing my mother after a few years of separation was coupled with hesitancy.

I belong to a very religious family. When their daily religious rituals began to seem endless and without meaning, I investigated other churches until I eventually joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Because of the Church’s strong programs, sound doctrines, relevant gospel teachings, and friendly atmosphere, I felt a lot happier than I was before I embraced the gospel. My family, however, was not pleased with my choice.

But then after my baptism, in

what I later recognized as a test of faith, I began to doubt, and I gradually lost my firm grasp on the iron rod. I didn’t commit any major sins, but I wasn’t as diligent as I should have been. Then I remembered my mother, a pious, gentle, and understanding woman who, despite the

A man seemed to be forcing some tenets of his church onto an uninterested lady sitting next to me. Sensing her discomfort, I tried to help.



many trials in her life, remained steadfast to her faith. When I had told her of my decision to join another church, she said with a look of sadness, “The religion we belong to is a legacy from our ancestors, but if you think you will be better off with that new church, then go ahead. But make sure you will be true to it and will defend the truth you uphold.”

These thoughts sent a surge of embarrassment through me. How can I face my mother with my now flickering flame of faith? What if she asks me how I am faring with my newfound religion? Will I be able to meet her gaze without blushing?

As I struggled with these questions, I heard the words *church* and *religion*. A man, probably in his mid-40s, seemed to be forcing some tenets of his church onto an uninterested lady sitting next to me. Sensing her discomfort, I tried to help.

Looking straight into his eyes, I asked, “What church do you belong to?” For a split second, his eyes glowed with excitement and pleasure, as if to say, “Here’s a soul willing to open her ears to my preaching.” He sprang to his feet and moved close to me. He introduced himself as a minister. I recognized the name of his church; it is well known for religious debates.

An alarmed feeling crept into my heart, but I tried not to show it. I

thought, *Not now when I’m losing my spiritual equilibrium. How am I supposed to defend my faith when mists of doubt lurk in my mind?* A quick glance at the lady I had rescued made me secretly wish I had not intruded. But she met my gaze with a reassuring look, encouraging me to defend my beliefs. I gathered courage and prayed silently and earnestly for assistance in this unexpected confrontation.

A feeling of confidence enveloped my whole being. I told him, “I am a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.” Without giving me a chance to say more, he interrupted, “I know all about your church and your founder.” He went on to make offensive remarks about the Prophet Joseph Smith, the gold plates, and the Book of Mormon. He said they were all fallacies.

What I felt next surprised me. I felt a strong desire to defend my religion. But hadn’t I been drifting slowly from the Church?

What surprised me most were the firm declarations that came from my mouth, attesting to the truthfulness and reality of the Prophet Joseph Smith, the First Vision, and the Book of Mormon. I added that people’s negative opinions of Joseph Smith would not change my testimony that he was chosen by God to restore His Church in this last dispensation.

I could hardly believe how confidently those truths flowed from my

lips. At that moment I knew with a surety that the Spirit was there to testify in my trial of faith.

With renewed faith, I remembered the statement in Ether 12:6: “Ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith.” I offered a silent prayer of gratitude to my Heavenly Father as that verse sank into my heart. Peace filled me, and I realized I was ready to face my mother and to share with her the blessings of joy and peace that the gospel brings into my life.

Aurelia S. Diezon is a member of the Calape Branch, Calape Philippines District.

Why Was My Life Preserved?

By **María MacPherson**

As I looked back on my earliest experiences growing up in Cuba, one memory always stood out. I could vividly picture my beloved little brother Raúl being sick. I could see my mother caring for him, periodically crying desperately, and my grandmother frantically seeking help. I could see the whole family bending over his bed, weeping. I always seemed to witness my brother’s pain and my family’s tears from some high perch. For some reason, that scene remained in my memory, but I never talked about it.

When I was 10 years old, my mother died, leaving five children. I grieved over her death, but it was even



When I learned that my life had been preserved, I began asking questions that eventually led me to the truth: What was I to do? What did it all mean?

answers I needed. I prayed that God would help me come to know the truth.

Then one day in the spring of 1986, Latter-day Saint missionaries came to my house. They answered every question I had. And when I studied the Book of Mormon, I was moved to tears by the testimony I gained of its truthfulness. I was baptized in July. A little more than a year later, I arranged for Raúl's vicarious baptism in the temple. Then he and I were sealed to our parents forever.

Finding the gospel has changed my life. Surrounded by my brothers and sisters in the gospel, I have never felt lonely since. I understand that my life has a purpose and that, as long as we rely on the Lord, pain can teach and strengthen us.

I find joy in the expectation that members of my family are waiting for me beyond the veil of mortality. I know that someday my spirit will leave my body again. But I know that because of Jesus Christ my spirit and my body will one day be forever reunited, and I can live with Him and with my family eternally.

María MacPherson is a member of the Elkhorn Ward, Milwaukee Wisconsin Stake.

more painful to watch as my brothers and sisters and I were split up. No one wanted to take all five of us, so each set of grandparents took two children, and my father's sister took my youngest brother, Orlando. Because of my rebelliousness, I was eventually sent to a school for orphans, where I grew up sad, alone, and bitter.

When I turned 16 I began looking for my brothers and sisters. I found only three of them because Orlando had moved with my aunt to the United States. Then, not long after I had located him, Raúl was electrocuted while learning to work as an electrician.

Shaken by the loss, I confided to my grandmother my memory of Raúl's sickness. My grandmother

asked, "What are you talking about? Raúl was not ill. That was you. One night you became so sick the doctor gave you up for dead. We were in despair and wept over your bed. We never knew why your heart started beating again."

I was so shocked I didn't ask my grandmother for more information, but questions about the meaning of life began to torment me: Why had my life been preserved? What was I to do? What did it all mean?

Ten years later, I moved to the United States. There I found my brother Orlando. But I had yet to find the answers to my questions. I began seeking answers in various churches. But though each contributed bits and pieces, none of them had all the



My Search by Postcard

By Bobi Morgan

Years ago I spent quite a bit of time gathering information for my four-generation family group records. The information on one of my group records was eventually complete, with the exception of a great-uncle named Edward. I had searched extensively for his birth and death dates without ever finding a real lead. Every time I glanced at this record, the white space where Edward's information should have been stared out at me.

Several times I despaired of ever finding his information, but I prayed for inspiration to know what I should do. I asked Heavenly Father to help

me find a record or a person who would be able to help. After praying I felt that I must not give up.

One day, after having tried every other source I could think of, I picked up a postcard and addressed it to the "Rector of the City Cemetery" of a town where Edward's family had lived for a while. On the back I simply asked if there was a grave with Edward Oren Tarbutton's name on it. I wasn't even sure a cemetery existed in that town, yet as I sent the postcard I suddenly felt free of frustration.

A few weeks went by without any answer to my postcard, and I did not expect one. Then one day I felt unusually excited. At the normal mail delivery time, I ran out to pick up the mail. The stack was big that

The postmaster had taken it upon himself to find not only the cemetery but also the date I needed.

day, but I stood at the open box and looked carefully at every piece. In the stack was my postcard, and on it was Edward's missing information!

As I gazed at the long-sought-for dates on the postcard, a warm feeling embraced me. I felt that Edward was somehow close to me in that moment, and I could feel his great joy.

I will never forget the prompting to send the postcard and the circumstances of its return. Later I learned that the town I had sent the postcard to had no rector and no official cemetery. Realizing no one in the town would know about my ancestor, the postmaster almost stamped the card *Return to Sender*. Then, on second thought, he decided to search for the grave himself. He remembered once seeing headstones in a field near a small church. It was there he found Edward's headstone and copied the inscription.

This experience deepened my love for my ancestors and helped me understand how much they long to be linked permanently to their families. And as I have encountered disappointments in the following years of family history research, I have thought of the postcard and kept going. □

Bobi Morgan is a member of the Olive Ward, Mesa Arizona Stake.

Did You Know?



IT HAPPENED IN JUNE

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

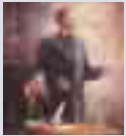
9 June 1830. Twenty-seven members attended the Church's first conference, held in Fayette, New York.

6 June 1840. Forty-one Church members left Liverpool, England,

for the United States. They were the first of many Saints to cross the sea to Zion.

27 June 1844. The Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum were martyred in Carthage, Illinois.

27 June 2002. The Nauvoo Illinois Temple is dedicated (see news insert in this issue).



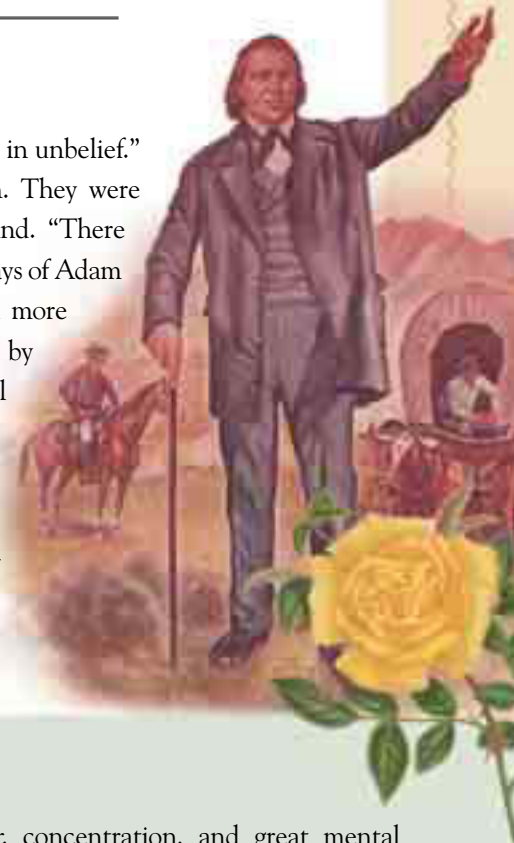
PIONEER FAITH

“We have faith, we live by faith; we came to these mountains by faith.” President Brigham Young spoke these words after entering the Salt Lake Valley in July 1847. The valley was barren, but President Young believed the desert could blossom as a rose.

President Young said: “We had not the least encouragement—from natural reasoning and all that we could learn of this country. . . . We had faith that we could raise grain; was there any harm in this? Not at all. If we had not had faith, what would have become

of us? We would have gone down in unbelief.”

But the Saints did have faith. They were greatly blessed in that barren land. “There never has been a land, from the days of Adam until now, that has been blessed more than this land has been blessed by our Father in Heaven; and it will still be blessed more and more, if we are faithful and humble, and thankful to God” (see *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* [1997], 104–6).



LEADERSHIP TIP

Listen effectively. This means listening attentively to others as the Savior did. Listening with full and sincere attention also helps convey a leader's love and concern. While a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Elder Thomas S. Monson explained: “A good leader must learn to listen. Listening is not a passive activity. To actively listen to another person requires

willpower, concentration, and great mental effort. Its rewards are many, because only then do we really learn to understand” (“Building Bridges,” *New Era*, November 1985, 66).

Effective listening also means listening attentively to the whisperings of the still, small voice (see D&C 84:88). Listening for the promptings of the Spirit conveys a leader's willingness to follow the Lord. □

Using the June 2002 *Liahona*

DISCUSSION IDEAS

■ “A Little Child Shall Lead Them,” page 2: President Thomas S. Monson tells the story of Tyler, a little boy who visited Temple Square. How do you, like Tyler, know that Jesus Christ loves you? What experiences have shown you His love?

■ “Joseph Smith, The Prophet,” page 10: Elder David B. Haight recounts that the Prophet Joseph Smith was willing to give his life for the Savior and the members of the Church. In what ways has the mission of Joseph Smith affected your life? How can you prepare to answer any request from the Lord with “I will”?

■ “Faith of Our Fathers,” page F2: “Let us remember those pioneering Saints as we strive to be valiant servants,” says Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin. In what ways can you honor the faith of the pioneers? How can you be a valiant servant?

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PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY CRAIG DIMOND
AND STEVE BUNDERSON

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

- Which latter-day prophet was the nephew of a prophet?
- Which temple is the largest? Which is the smallest?
- In how many languages is the Book of Mormon printed?
 - Fewer than 50.
 - Between 50 and 75.
 - Between 76 and 100.
 - More than 100.

Answers: (1) Joseph F. Smith was a nephew of Joseph Smith; (2) the Salt Lake Temple is the largest, and the Monticello Utah Temple and Colonia Juárez Chihuahua Mexico Temple are the smallest; (3) d.



The Friend

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





SPECIAL WITNESS

FAITH OF OUR



By Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

As we look to the future with optimism, we should pause and look back on the faith of our humble pioneer forefathers. Fearing more of the mob

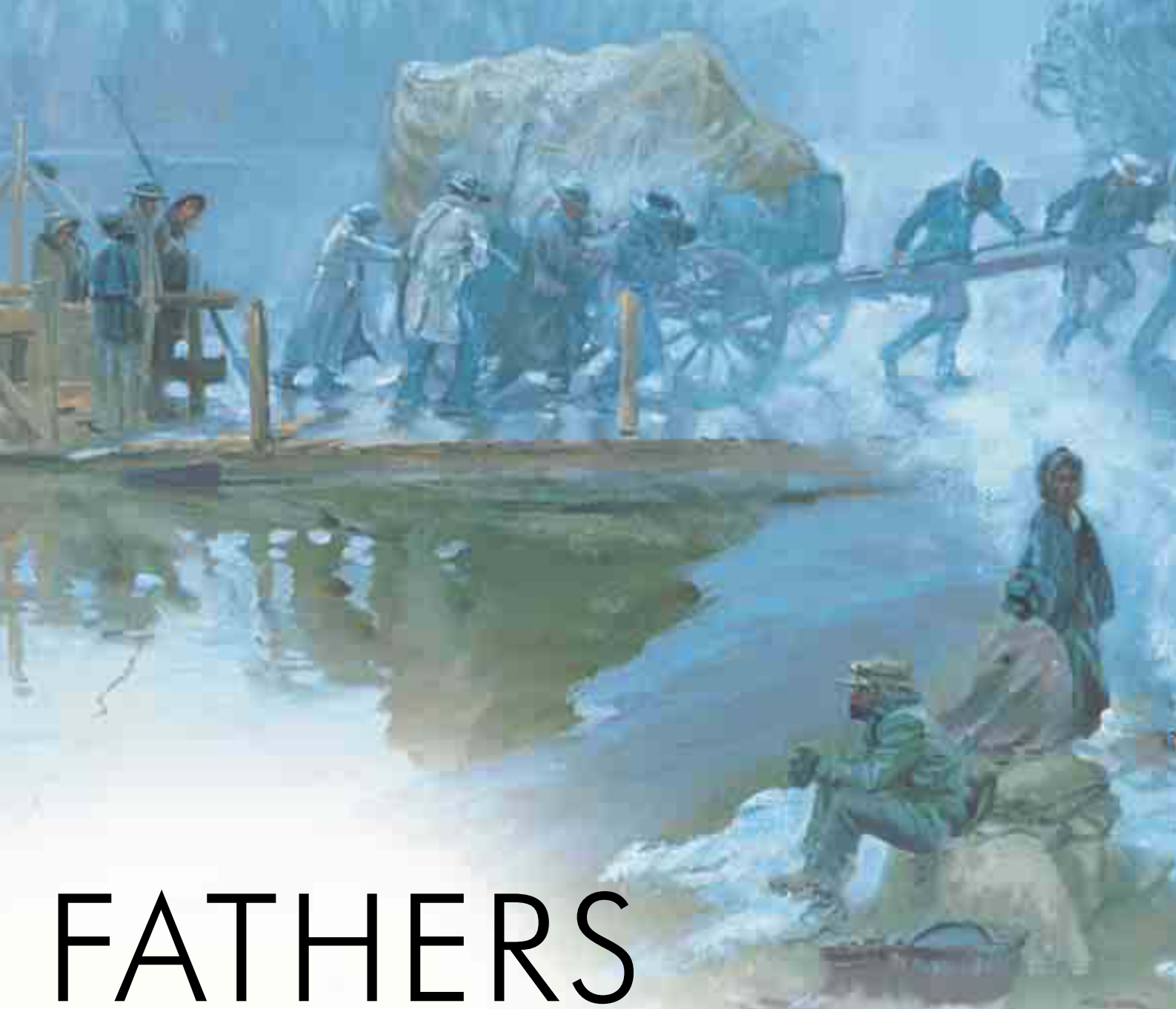
violence that had claimed the lives of the Prophet Joseph and his brother Hyrum, Brigham Young announced that the Saints would leave Nauvoo, Illinois, in the spring of 1846. Most of those in Nauvoo believed that was what the Lord wanted them to do.

In 1846, more than 10,000 Saints left their “City

Beautiful” and struck off into the wilderness of the American frontier. They did not know exactly where they were going, precisely how much distance lay ahead, how long the journey would take, or what the future held in store for them. But they *did* know that they were led by the Lord and His servants.

When Newel Knight informed his wife, Lydia, that the Saints would have to leave, she responded with great faith, saying, “Well, there’s nothing to discuss. Our place is with the Kingdom of God. Let us at once set about making preparations to leave.”

Lydia Knight’s devoted submission to what she



FATHERS

knew was God’s will typifies powerfully the faith of those heroic early Saints.

The first company of pioneer families to leave Nauvoo drove their loaded wagons and their livestock down Parley Street—a street that became known as the “Street of Tears”—to a landing where they were ferried across the river to the state of Iowa. Chunks of ice floating in the river crunched against the sides of the flatboats and barges that carried the wagons across the Mississippi. A few weeks later, temperatures dropped even farther, and wagons could cross the river more easily over a bridge of ice.

On the first of March, the advance company began its

push westward across Iowa. Hardships caused by cold, snow, rain, mud, sickness, hunger, and death challenged the faith of these hardy pioneers. But they were determined to follow their leaders and to do, no matter the cost, what they believed fervently to be the will of God.

Let us remember those pioneering Saints as we strive to be valiant servants. May we honor the faith of our fathers by giving our own faithful service to this great cause. May we “follow the prophet” (*Children’s Songbook*, 110–11) and by so doing “come unto Christ, and partake of the goodness of God” (Jacob 1:7). □

From an April 1996 general conference address.

TO THE LAST FRONTIER

As retold by Sheryl Zimmerman

A true story

The October dawn was cool as I helped load our belongings into the covered wagon. The weight in my 10-year-old heart was heavier than the bundles of clothes and food I carried. *It just isn't fair, I thought. I don't want to leave our home and my friends and travel to an unknown place.*

It was 1877, and our home near St. George, Utah Territory, was already far away from Salt Lake City.

Now we were moving even farther away.

Mother called, "Mary Agnes, please make sure everything is cleared from the back porch before we leave."

As I made my way around the house, I thought back to the day six months before when my father had returned from the dedication of the St. George Temple. Mother and I had stayed home because my baby brother was ill. One look at Father told us something serious had happened.

Mother spoke first. "William, what is the matter?"

Father took her in his arms, and with tears streaming down his face he said, "We must leave our beautiful home." He could say no more.

Leave? How could we leave? After years of saving we had finally been able to buy farmland and build a comfortable home for the 10 of us. We had horses, cattle, and other farm animals. We lived near my grandmother and my cousins. I was able to attend the school in town. Who would ask us to sacrifice all this?

Later I heard my parents discussing what was happening. Families were needed to extend Church settlements farther south. President Brigham Young had asked our family to move. He counseled my father to sell all we had so we would not be tempted to return to Utah. We were needed in Arizona.

Arizona was a place where there was very little water and nothing to see. The prophet had called



people there last year. Many had returned to Utah because they could not endure the hardships. Father said almost no greater sacrifice could be asked of him.

Mother's voice brought me back to the present. "It is hard to leave, isn't it, Mary Agnes? Do you know the real reason we are moving?"

I shook my head.

"We are going to Arizona because the prophet called us to go," Mother explained. "Remember my telling you about when I was your age and my family lived in Nauvoo? After the Prophet Joseph Smith was killed, there were contentions with our neighbors. The Brethren told us to leave our homes and move west. There our lives would be spared, and we could worship in peace.

"It was terrible to leave our home, but there was nothing else to do unless we turned away from God, the Brethren, and the Church. We made the long, hard journey to Salt Lake. We sacrificed again when we followed President Young's direction to leave there and settle here.

"Now we have been asked to go to Arizona. We do not *have* to go. No one is forcing us. We are not fleeing for our lives. We could find reasons not to go. This time the struggle to obey comes from within."

Mother hugged me as she continued. "The Lord said that when we receive a commandment 'whether by [His] own voice or by the voice of [His] servants, it is the same' (D&C 1:38). Our prophet has spoken to us. I know he speaks for God. Your father and I decided



"We have been promised that the President of the Church, as the revelator for the Church, will receive guidance for all of us. Our safety lies in paying heed

to that which he says and following his counsel."—President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency ("Continuing Revelation," *Liahona*, August 1996, 6)



long ago to follow the prophet, no matter what the sacrifice."

The Spirit warmed me as I listened to Mother's testimony. I felt strengthened for the uncertainties ahead.

As I climbed into the loaded wagon, I took one last look at our old home, then turned to face the trail to Arizona. I realized that I, too, had a testimony of God's representative on earth. Like my parents, I decided I would follow the prophet—even to the last frontier. □

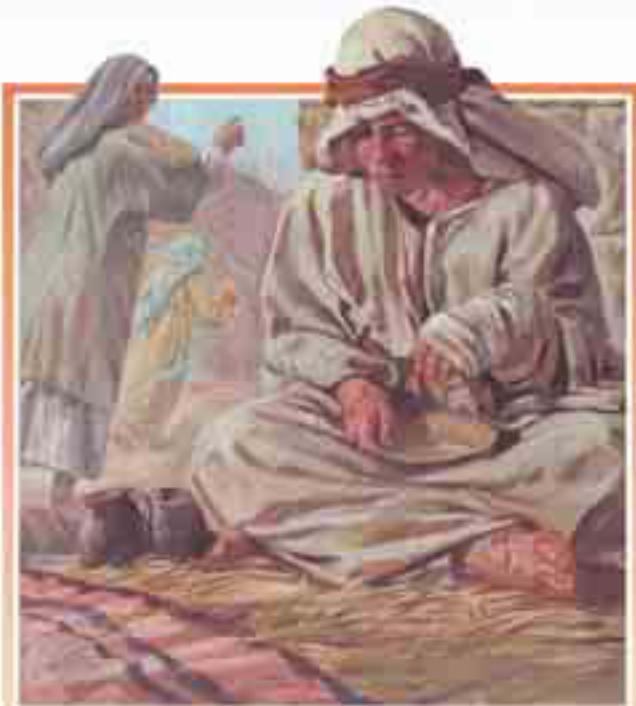
THE TEN LEPERS



ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROBERT T. BARRETT

Jesus went to a small town, where He saw ten lepers. These men had sores all over their bodies. Their skin was falling off.

Luke 17:12



Doctors could not help the lepers, and other people were afraid to go near them. The other people thought they would get sick too.

Luke 17:12



The lepers asked Jesus to heal them. They knew He could make their sores go away.

Luke 17:13



Jesus wanted them to be well. He told them to go to the priests, so they did.

Luke 17:14



On their way to the priests, the ten lepers were healed. Their sores were gone. Jesus had healed them.

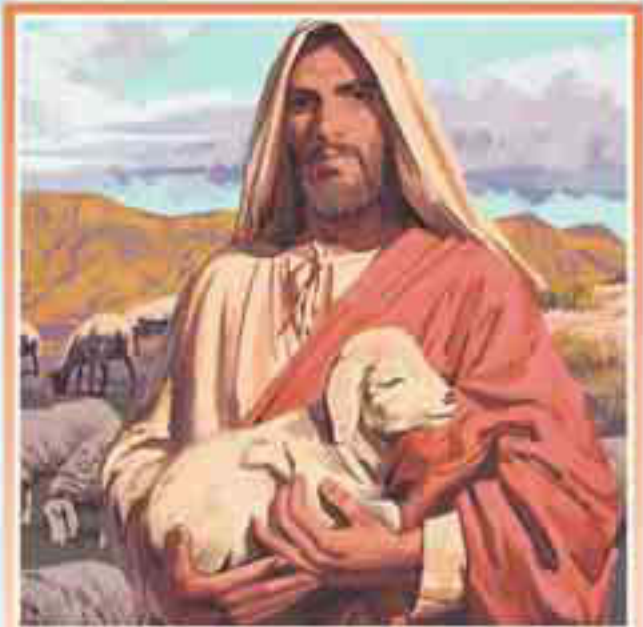
Luke 17:14



Knowing that Jesus had healed them, one of the lepers went back to thank Jesus. Jesus asked where the other nine lepers were. They had not come back to thank Him. He told the leper who had thanked Him that his faith had made him well.

Luke 17:15-19

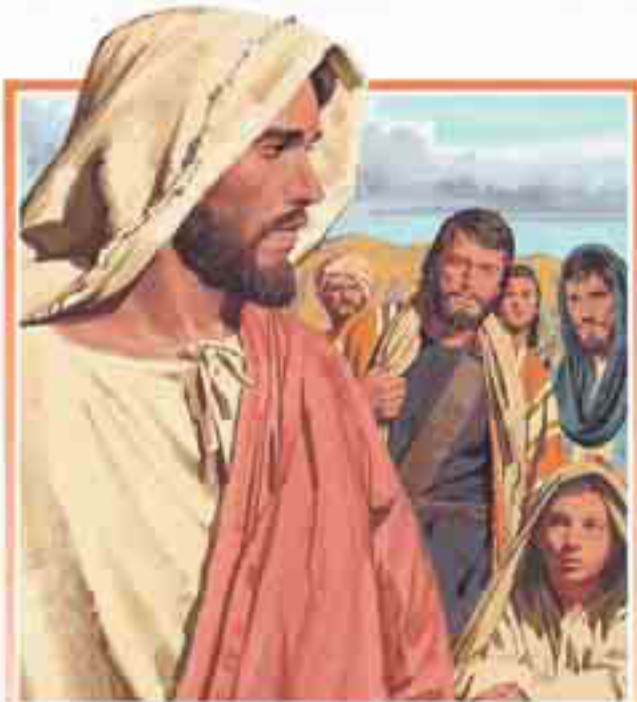
THE GOOD SHEPHERD



ILLUSTRATIONS BY PAUL MANN

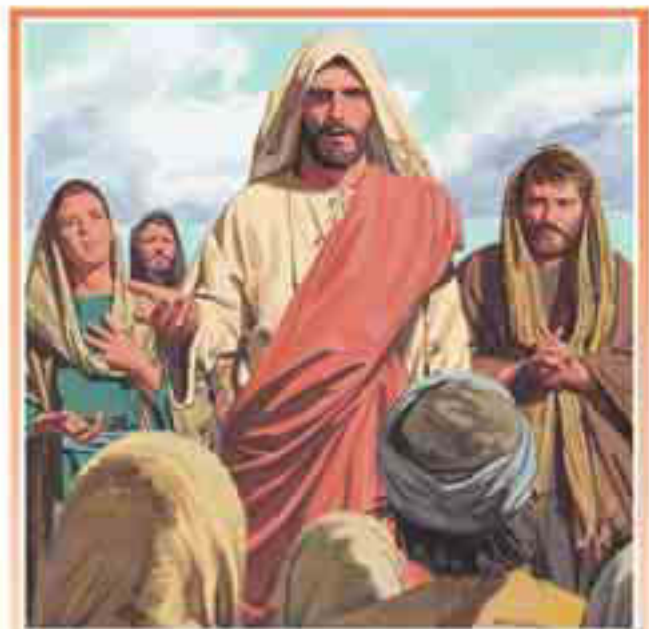
Jesus called Himself the Good Shepherd. A shepherd takes care of sheep. He helps them find food and water and does not let them get hurt or lost. He knows them and loves them and would give his life to save them.

John 10:11–15



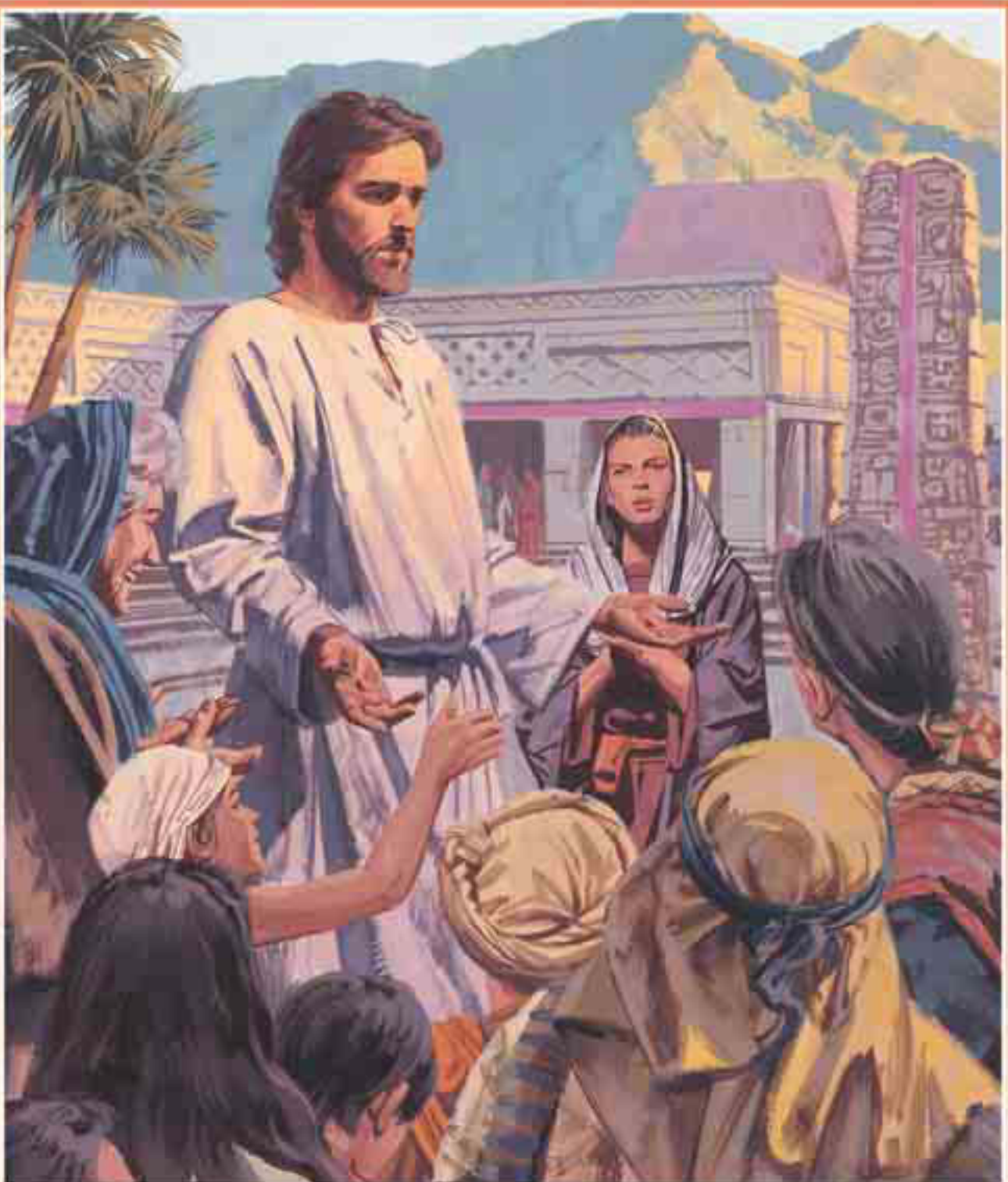
Jesus is like a shepherd to us. He loves us. He helps us learn the truth. He shows us how to live so we can return to Heavenly Father. Jesus called us His sheep. He gave His life for us.

John 10:11–15



The Savior told the people in Jerusalem that He had other sheep. The people there did not know what He meant. Jesus meant that He had disciples, or followers, in the Americas too. He said He would visit them.

John 10:16; 3 Nephi 15:21



After Jesus was resurrected, He visited His people in the Americas. The Book of Mormon tells about His visit there. He stayed many days, healing the sick and blessing all the people. He gave them the priesthood and organized His Church there. He taught them the same things He had taught the people in Jerusalem. Then He went back to Heavenly Father.

3 Nephi 11–28

TEMPLES IN ALL TIMES

By Vicki F. Matsumori

“I command you, all ye my saints, to build a house unto me” (D&C 124:31).



Do you remember the story of the children of Israel? Moses led them out of Egypt, and they wandered for 40 years in the wilderness.

Have you heard of King Solomon’s great wisdom? He settled an argument between two women claiming to be the mother of the same little baby.

Do you recall that Nephi willingly returned to Jerusalem to get the brass plates? His older brothers went with him, but they did not want to.

Can you remember the account of Joseph Smith’s First Vision? He prayed, and Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ appeared to him.

What do Moses, King Solomon, Nephi, and Joseph Smith have in common? They were all commanded to build a temple. In ancient and modern times, the Lord’s chosen people have built temples. Temples are places for sacred worship and for making sacred covenants.

The temple the children of Israel built was called a tabernacle. They carried it with them. It included the ark of the covenant, which held the Ten Commandments (see Exodus 25–26; 1 Kings 8:9).

King David collected material to build a great temple. But Heavenly Father wanted Solomon, King David’s son, to build this important temple in Jerusalem (see 1 Chronicles 28:2–3, 6).

The Nephites were blessed because of temples. Nephi built a temple in the promised land. King Benjamin delivered his great sermon at the temple. The Savior appeared at the temple in the land Bountiful (see 2 Nephi 5:16; Mosiah 1:18; 3 Nephi 11:1–10).

Through Joseph Smith, Heavenly Father restored all parts of the Church to earth, including temple

ordinances. The Prophet Joseph was commanded to build the Kirtland Temple (see D&C 95:8). Now more than 100 temples have been built. More are being built so we can have the blessings Heavenly Father’s covenant people have had throughout history.

Instructions

Draw a modern temple in the blank space. Mount page 11 on heavy paper, and cut out the temple pieces and the title piece. Punch holes on the circles. Hang each temple piece from the title piece with a different length of string or yarn (see illustration). Display the mobile where it can remind you to be worthy to enter the temple.

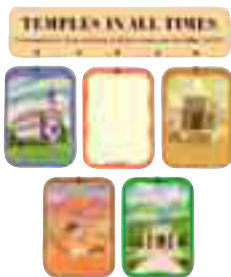
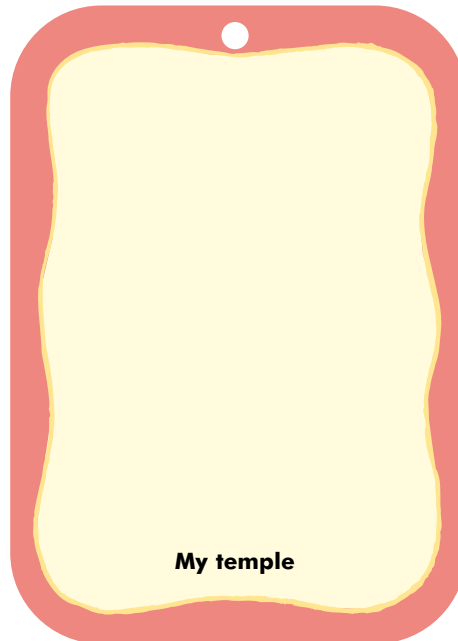
Sharing Time Ideas

1. Explain that when the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years, the temple was a visual reminder that Heavenly Father would bless His people if they were obedient. Have each class choose one of the following scripture references: Exodus 13:17–21 (the children of Israel are led by a pillar of a cloud); Exodus 14:9, 15–22, 26–28 (Moses parts the Red Sea); Exodus 17:8–12 (Amalek is defeated while Moses’ hands are up); Numbers 21:4–9 (the children of Israel are saved from fiery serpents). Have the classes read the scriptures. Then have them pantomime the event. Bear your testimony that we are blessed for our obedience.

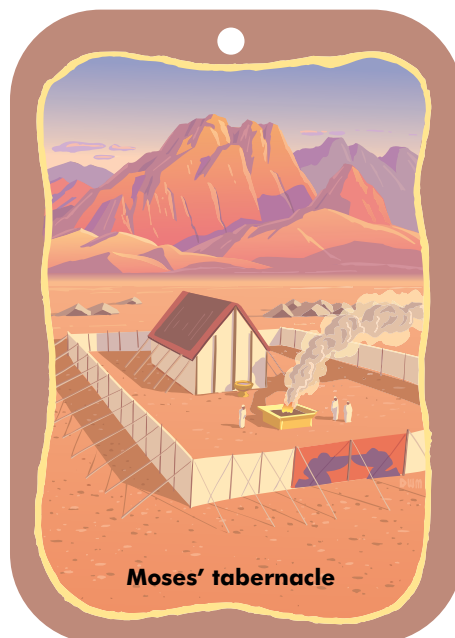
2. Discuss temples in the Book of Mormon by having each class read one of the following scripture references: 2 Nephi 5:16 (Nephi builds a temple); Jacob 1:17 (Jacob teaches at the temple); Mosiah 2:1 (King Benjamin teaches at the temple); Mosiah 7:17 (King Limhi gathers his people at the temple); Alma 16:13 (Alma and Amulek teach at the temples); Helaman 3:3, 9 (the Nephites build temples); 3 Nephi 11:1–10 (Jesus Christ appears at the temple in the land Bountiful). Testify of the blessings that have come to Church members today because of temples. □

TEMPLES IN ALL TIMES

“I command you, all ye my saints, to build a house unto me” (D&C 124:31).



Illustration



Elder John M. Madsen

Of the Seventy

From an interview by Rebecca Todd Archibald



Very early in my childhood, I became aware of the importance of prayer and the awesome power of the holy priesthood. During the fall of 1942, the United States was involved in a war. My father was trying to finish building our house. He couldn't get a furnace because all building materials were needed for the war. As the weather became colder, my little sister, Patricia, and I became very ill. She had bronchitis, and I had double pneumonia. The doctor offered little hope that I would live through the night.

Speaking of that "awful night of nights," my mother

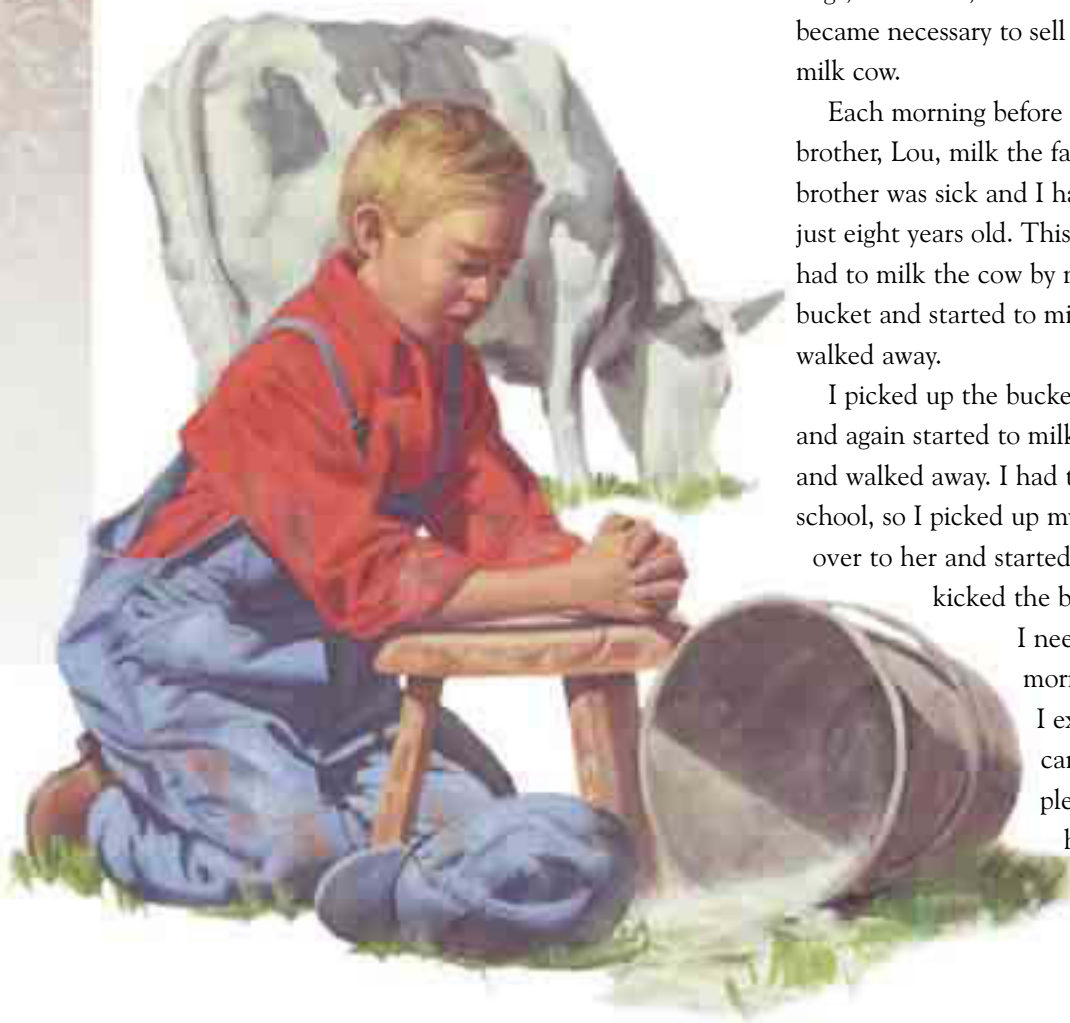
said she became desperate as she felt for my pulse and could find none. She said I looked like a little statue lying there on my bed. She fervently prayed to the Lord, promising if I should live, she would give me back to the Lord for His service. During the night, my father gave me a priesthood blessing. As he laid his hands upon my head, I opened my eyes, and from that time on, I began to feel better. I know that through the prayers of my parents and the power of the priesthood, my life was spared.

After some time, my family moved from Maryland to Utah, where we lived on a farm in North Logan. We had some horses, some cows, some pigs, some chickens, two dogs, a few cats, and we even had a pet pig. Though it became necessary to sell the cows, my father kept one milk cow.

Each morning before school, I helped my older brother, Lou, milk the family cow. One morning, my brother was sick and I had to milk the cow alone. I was just eight years old. This was the first time I had ever had to milk the cow by myself. I set up my stool and bucket and started to milk. She kicked the bucket and walked away.

I picked up the bucket and stool, walked over to her, and again started to milk. Again, she kicked the bucket and walked away. I had to milk the cow before I went to school, so I picked up my stool and bucket and walked over to her and started to milk. A third time, she kicked the bucket and walked away.

I needed help! I knelt down in the morning sunlight and began to pray. I explained to Heavenly Father, "I can't do this by myself. Please, please help me!" Without any hesitation, I picked up the bucket and my stool and





walked over to the cow and began to milk. She did not move. She stood still until I finished milking. I quickly carried the bucket to the house, gave it to my mother, and was able to run to school and arrive on time, knowing that Heavenly Father had answered my prayer.

Sometime later, I was home one evening with my brothers and sisters. We heard a whining noise coming from outside. We went to the window and peered out into the darkness. Soon, Major, our large German shepherd, passed through the light from the window. We could see something was terribly wrong! Fearfully my older brother and I went outside and were able to get Major back into the light and see why he was trembling in pain. He had had an encounter with a porcupine, and countless quills had been thrust into his nose, mouth, tongue, and chest.

Immediately we called for my father to come home. He had been working late at the college. He came quickly and sadly announced, "We will probably have to put him to sleep." We understood what that meant, and, through our tears, we said, "If you are going to put Major to sleep, you will have to put us to sleep first."

Dad had no choice but to pull out the quills one by one. We watched in agony as Major winced and howled in pain as each quill tore away some of his flesh.

It was not long until he had fully recovered and was back on duty, faithfully protecting us and our farm from all intruders. Unfortunately, some months later, he had another encounter with a porcupine and had to suffer all that pain again.

From these and other experiences, I have learned and know for myself that Heavenly Father hears and answers prayers. I have also learned that

porcupine quills can be likened to sin or to Satan's fiery darts. Sin or poor choices can cause us pain and suffering, and if we do not repent, our sins can result in spiritual death.

I am thankful for our Savior, who was willing to suffer and die for us and make it possible for all of us to repent and escape the fiery darts of the adversary.

Let us always be prayerful and remember the words of Nephi: "Whoso would hearken unto the word of God, and would hold fast unto it, they would never perish; neither could the temptations and the fiery darts of the adversary overpower them unto blindness, to lead them away to destruction" (1 Nephi 15:24). □

Above: Elder Madsen; his wife, Diane; and their five living children gather at the wedding reception of their second daughter. Below, from left: At age three; as a one-year-old with his mother, Edith Louise Madsen; and as a college football player.





MAKING FRIENDS

Amberley and Jenneke Kurtz of Wellington, New Zealand

By Shanna Ghaznavi

PHOTOGRAPHY BY THE AUTHOR



Above: The Kurtz family playing Family History Bingo. Right: Amberley and Jenneke practice a duet together.

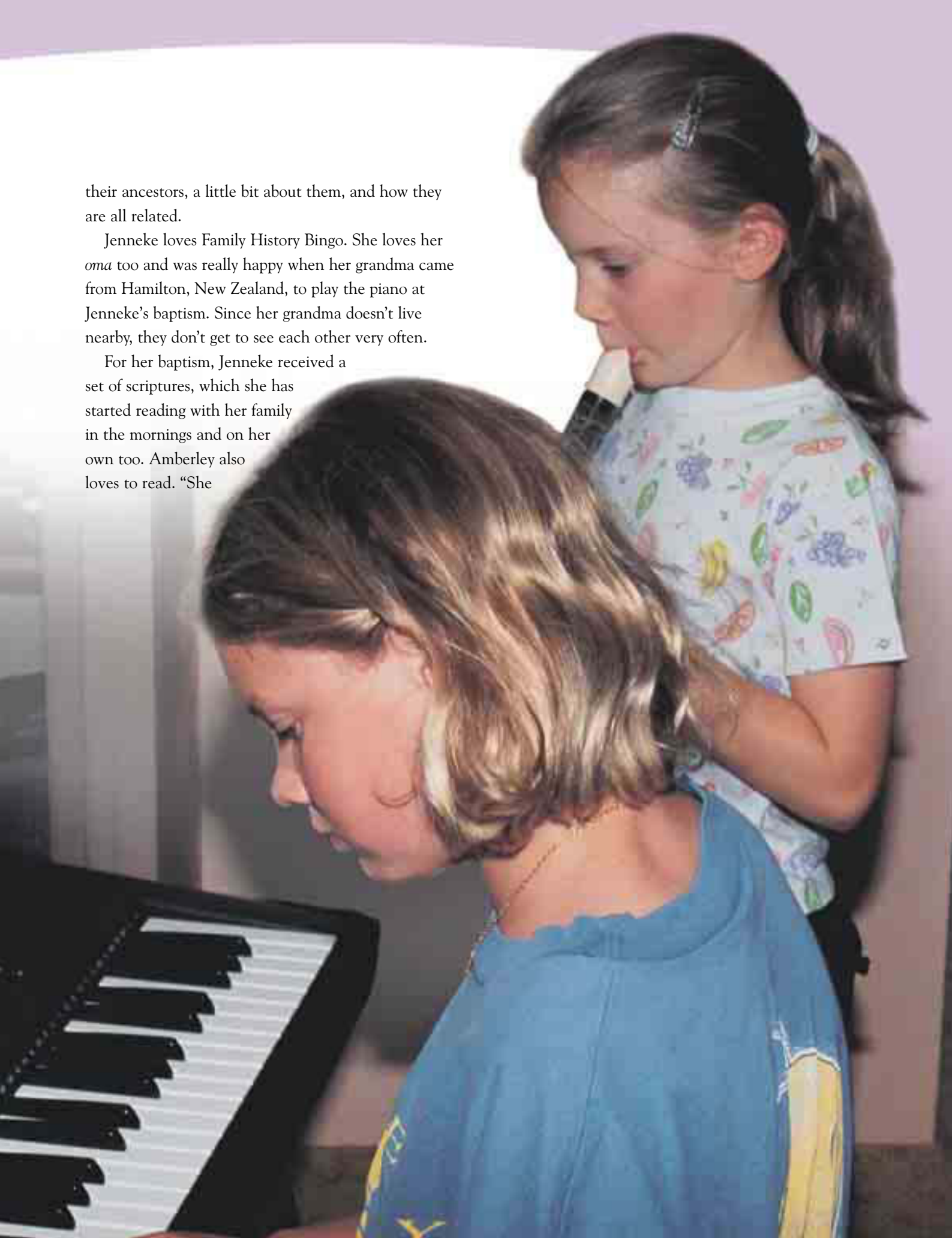
Do you know what an *oma* and an *opa* are? Jenneke and Amberley Kurtz do. *Oma* and *opa* are Dutch for “grandma” and “grandpa.” Jenneke, age 8, and Amberley, age 10, know even more than this about their family history, including their Dutch ancestors.

They live in the Tawa Ward of the Wellington New Zealand Stake with their parents, Julie and Dick. They have an older brother, Ben, age 15, and an older sister, Desiree, age 13. The Kurtz family’s favorite game to play is Family History Bingo. You have probably never heard of that game before, because the Kurtz family made it up. Playing it helps them learn the names of

their ancestors, a little bit about them, and how they are all related.

Jenneke loves Family History Bingo. She loves her *oma* too and was really happy when her grandma came from Hamilton, New Zealand, to play the piano at Jenneke's baptism. Since her grandma doesn't live nearby, they don't get to see each other very often.

For her baptism, Jenneke received a set of scriptures, which she has started reading with her family in the mornings and on her own too. Amberley also loves to read. "She



could read books all day,” her dad says. Actually, she could read a book a day for 150 days! That’s how many books she has collected so far.

Amberley likes to cook too. Her mom says she should have been born in Italy instead of New Zealand because she loves to cook pasta so much.

Both girls love doing things with their family, such as going on walks, going on vacation, and fishing.

There are some things the girls like to do by themselves too. Jenneke loves to take care of plants. She grows sunflowers in the garden and likes to work outside. Last year some of her sunflowers grew to be even taller than she is!

Besides gardening, Jenneke also likes to spend time with animals—especially her orange cat. With Desiree’s

help, Jenneke runs a cat-feeding business. She visits many cats in the neighborhood to feed them for other families.

Amberley likes animals too—especially rabbits. She wants to be a veterinarian



Above: Amberley with two of her rabbits. Right: Jenneke standing next to one of her sunflowers.



The Kurtz family. From left: Jenneke, Ben, Mom, Desiree, Dad, and Amberley.

when she grows up. She has two rabbits that she tends in large cages behind her house. She got the first one nearly two years ago. She takes good care of them and feeds and cleans them regularly. “Amberley is really kind,” Ben says—and not just to her animals. Desiree says Amberley is generous with everyone.

Amberley likes to play cricket with Ben. She also enjoys shooting a netball outside her house. She is a good netball player and has been player of the month at her school three times. When she first started playing, she was having trouble catching the ball. But as she kept trying and listening to her coaches, she became a lot better at it.

Both Jenneke and Amberley play musical instruments. Amberley is in her fifth year of piano lessons, and Jenneke is learning to play the recorder. Sometimes they play duets.

Jenneke and Amberley have a lot in common. They are different in many ways too. Amberley is quieter and likes sports; Jenneke is more outgoing and likes to garden. But even though they are different—as different as a piano and a recorder—they play together in harmony. They both hope that someday their descendants will learn about them and about how much they love their family and the gospel. Maybe their descendants will learn those things in a game like Family History Bingo. □



Nauvoo the Beautiful, by Larry Winborg

In April 1999 general conference, President Gordon B. Hinckley announced the rebuilding of the temple in Nauvoo to “stand as a memorial to those who built the first such structure there on the banks of the Mississippi” (“Thanks to the Lord for His Blessings,” *Liahona*, July 1999, 105). The new building, built to closely resemble the architecture of the original as seen above, will be dedicated in June 2002.



The Book of Mormon, which the Prophet Joseph Smith translated from gold plates he received from the angel Moroni, “is the most remarkable book in the world from a doctrinal, historical, or philosophical point of view. Its integrity has been assailed with senseless fury for more than 170 years, yet its position and influence today are more impregnable than ever.” See Elder David B. Haight, “Joseph Smith, The Prophet,” page 10.

