

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS • MAY 2001

LIAHONA



LIAHONA



ON THE COVER

Front: Sabrina Reis (left) of Rio de Janeiro reaches out to youth at a homeless shelter. Back: Young women of the Botafogo Ward, Rio de Janeiro Brazil Andarai Stake. (Photography by Barbara Jean Jones.)



THE FRIEND COVER

Photo illustration by Craig Dimond.

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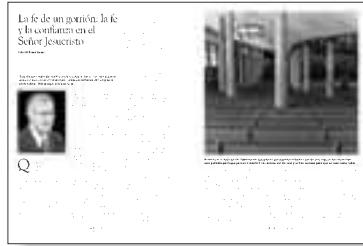
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"THE FAITH OF A SPARROW"

I have never before read such a prof-
itable and edifying publication as the
Liahona (Spanish). I'm a young person who
has never really cared to read. And when I
started to read the magazine, I didn't think
I would find anything that would motivate
me to search the scriptures and help me
understand the message of the Lord Jesus
Christ. But as I read the January 2000
issue, the talk "The Faith of a Sparrow:
Faith and Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ" by
Elder H. Bruce Stucki of the Seventy had a
real impact on my life—so much so that I
have continued to study the scriptures.

Thanks to our Heavenly Father and
His missionaries, I have found the truth,
and I am going to be baptized. Thank you
for preparing missionaries to teach people
like me.

Alexi Antonio López López,
Oriental Ward,
San Miguel El Salvador Stake

Note: *Brother López was baptized on
18 March 2000, shortly after this letter
was written.*

SUCCESS IN MISSIONARY WORK

The work of the Lord is going very well
in the Democratic Republic of Congo in
spite of the war in certain provinces of the
country.

One day my companion and I knocked
on the door of Sister Sylvie. Two days later
we met her husband, Brother Antoine. He
asked us the name of our church. We
answered that we were from The Church
of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

"That is the church I have been looking
for," he cried with joy. "I have an old Book
of Mormon, several pages of which I have
lost. I am very happy to have found you."

Three weeks later Brother Antoine was
baptized. I know with all my heart that the
Spirit leads those who want to be led to the
work of the Lord.

Elder Mahongo Ruffin,
*Democratic Republic of Congo Kinshasa
Mission*

ATONEMENT MOTIVATES CHANGE

I feel very happy each time I receive the
Liahona (Spanish). I read and ponder the
articles and talks and try to put them into
practice. This magazine strengthens me
greatly in times of trial. I often give *Liahona*
subscriptions to friends who are not
members of the Church.

I have been a member of the Church
for 27 years, and I am still learning new
things every day. I am always edified
to read anything about the Savior's
Atonement. I am truly grateful for the
sacrifice He made for us. His example has
motivated me to change and to work to
live as He wants me to live.

Bertha Barrera de Pulido,
Kennedy First Ward,
Bogotá Colombia Kennedy Stake



The Lighthouse of the Lord

A Message to the Youth of the Church

By President Thomas S. Monson

First Counselor in the First Presidency

You, the youth of the Church, are a glorious group, a chosen generation. You bring to mind the words penned by the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow:

*How beautiful is youth! how bright it gleams
With its illusions, aspirations, dreams!
Book of Beginnings, Story without End,
Each maid a heroine, and each man a friend!*¹

Just 20 years ago, many of you had not yet commenced your journey through mortality. Your abode was a heavenly home. We know relatively little concerning the details of our existence there—only that we were among those who loved us and were concerned for our eternal well-being. Then there arrived the period where earth life became necessary to our progress. Farewells were no doubt spoken, expressions of confidence given, and graduation to mortality achieved.

What a commencement service awaited each of us! Loving parents joyously welcomed us to our earthly home. Tender care and affectionate embraces awaited our every whim. Someone described a newborn child as



**Look to the lighthouse
of the Lord. There is no fog
so dense, no night so dark,
no gale so strong, no
mariner so lost but what its
beacon light can rescue.**

“a sweet, new blossom of Humanity, fresh fallen from God’s own home to flower on earth.”²

Those first years were precious, special years. Satan had no power to tempt us. We had not yet become accountable but were innocent before God. They were learning years.

Soon we entered that period some have labeled “the terrible teens.” I prefer “the terrific teens.” What a time of opportunity, a season of growth, a semester of development, marked by the acquisition of knowledge and the quest for truth.

No one has described these years as being easy. Indeed, they have become increasingly more difficult. The world seems to have slipped from the moorings of safety and drifted from the harbor of peace. Permissiveness, immorality, pornography, and the power of peer pressure cause many to be tossed about on a sea of sin and crushed on the jagged reefs of lost opportunities, forfeited blessings, and shattered dreams.

Anxiously we ask, “Is there a way to safety? Can someone guide us? Is there an escape from threatened destruction?”

The answer is a resounding yes! I counsel you: Look to the lighthouse of the Lord. There is no fog so dense, no night so dark, no gale so strong, no mariner so lost but what its beacon light can rescue. It calls, “This way to safety; this way to home.”

The lighthouse of the Lord sends forth signals readily recognized and never failing. May I suggest three such signals which—if heeded—will help guide us through the storms of life:

1. **Choose your friends with caution.**
2. **Plan your future with purpose.**
3. **Frame your life with faith.**

FIRST, CHOOSE YOUR FRIENDS WITH CAUTION.

In a survey which was made in selected wards and stakes of the Church some years ago, we learned a most significant fact. Those persons whose friends married in the temple



Associate with those who, like you, are planning not for temporary convenience, shallow goals, or narrow ambition, but rather for those things that matter most—even eternal objectives.

usually married in the temple, while those persons whose friends did not marry in the temple usually did not marry in the temple. The influence of one’s friends appeared to be equal to parental urging and more influential than classroom instruction or proximity to a temple.

We tend to become like those whom we admire. Just as in Nathaniel Hawthorne’s classic account “The Great Stone Face,” we adopt the mannerisms, the attitudes, even the conduct of those whom we admire—and they are usually our friends. Associate with those who, like you, are planning not for temporary convenience, shallow goals, or narrow ambition, but rather for those things that matter most—even eternal objectives.

Not only will your circle of friends greatly influence your thinking and behavior, but you will also influence theirs. Many nonmembers have come into the Church through friends who have involved them in Church activities. I share with you a treasured family experience which had its beginning back in 1959, when I was called to preside over the Canadian Mission, headquartered in Toronto.

Our daughter, Ann, turned five shortly after we arrived in Canada. She saw the missionaries going about their work, and she, too, wanted to be a missionary. My wife demonstrated understanding by permitting Ann to take to

class a few copies of the *Children's Friend*. That wasn't sufficient for Ann. She also wanted to take with her a copy of the Book of Mormon so that she might talk to her teacher, Miss Pepper, about the Church. I think it rather thrilling that just a few years ago, long years after our return from Toronto, we came home from a vacation and found in our mailbox a note from Miss Pepper which read:

"Dear Ann:

"Think back many years ago. I was your schoolteacher in Toronto, Canada. I was impressed by the copies of the *Children's Friend* which you brought to school. I was impressed by your dedication to a book called the Book of Mormon.

"I made a commitment that one day I would come to Salt Lake City and see why you talked as you did and why you believed in the manner you believed. Today I had the privilege of going through your visitors' center on Temple Square. Thanks to a five-year-old girl who had an understanding of that which she believed, I now have a better understanding of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."

Miss Pepper died not too long after that visit. How happy our daughter, Ann, was when she attended the Jordan River Utah Temple and performed the temple work for her beloved teacher whom she had friendshipped long ago.

SECOND, PLAN YOUR FUTURE WITH PURPOSE.

In Lewis Carroll's classic *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Alice finds herself coming to a crossroads with two paths before her, each stretching onward but in opposite

directions. She is confronted by the Cheshire Cat, of whom Alice asks, "Which path shall I take?"

The cat answers, "That depends where you want to go. If you do not know where you want to go, it doesn't really matter which path you take."³

Unlike Alice, each of us knows where he or she wants to go. It does matter which way we go, for the path we follow in this life surely leads to the path we shall follow in the next.

I plead with you, my young brothers and sisters, to remember who you are. You are sons and daughters of Almighty God. You have a destiny to fulfill, a life to live, a contribution to make, a goal to achieve. The future of the kingdom of God upon the earth will, in part, be aided by your devotion.

Let us remember that the wisdom of God may appear as foolishness to men, but the greatest single lesson we can learn in mortality is that when God speaks and we obey, we will always be right. Some foolish persons turn their backs on the wisdom of God and follow the allurements of fickle fashion, the attraction of false popularity, and the thrill of the moment.

Their course of conduct so resembles the disastrous experience of Esau, who exchanged his birthright for a mess of pottage.⁴

And what are the results of such action? I testify to you that turning away from God brings broken covenants, shattered dreams, vanished ambitions, evaporated plans, unfulfilled expectations, crushed hopes, misused drives, warped character, and wrecked lives.

Such a quagmire of quicksand I plead with you to avoid. You are of a

**Each lesson in church,
each prayer, each date, each
friend, each dance all precede the
goal of temple marriage—that
giant step toward an A grade on
the report card of life.**



noble birthright. Exaltation in the celestial kingdom is your goal.

Such a goal is not achieved in one glorious attempt but rather is the result of a lifetime of righteousness, an accumulation of wise choices, even a constancy of purpose. Like the coveted A grade on the report card, the reward of eternal life requires effort. The A grade is the result of each theme, each quiz, each class, each examination, each library project, each term paper. So each lesson in church, each prayer, each date, each friend, each dance all precede the goal of temple marriage—that giant step toward an A grade on the report card of life.

Our goal is to achieve, to excel, to strive for perfection. Remember, however, that our business in life is not to get ahead of others but to get ahead of ourselves. To break our own record, to outstrip our yesterdays by today, to bear our trials more beautifully than we ever dreamed we could, to give as we never have given, to do our work with more force and a finer finish than ever—this is the true objective. And to accomplish this task, our attitude is reflected in a determination to make the most of our opportunities. We turn from the tempting allurements and eventual snare so cunningly and carefully offered us by “old man procrastination.” Two centuries ago, Edward Young said that “procrastination is the thief of time.”⁵ Actually, procrastination is much more. It is the thief of our self-respect. It nags at us and spoils our fun. It deprives us of the fullest realization of our ambitions and hopes. Knowing this, we jar ourselves back to reality with the sure knowledge that “this is my day of opportunity. I will not waste it.”

Perhaps the Apostle Paul had our day and age in mind when he taught the Corinthian Saints that life is very much like a race. He said: “Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.”⁶

The writer of the book of Ecclesiastes also wrote of this subject: “The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong,”⁷ but to those who endure to the end.

The race of life is not optional. We are on the track and running, whether we like it or not. Some see dimly the goal ahead and take costly detours which lead to disappointment and frustration. Others view clearly the prize for running well and remain steadfast in pursuit. This prize, this lofty and desirable goal, is none other than eternal life in the presence of God.

Unlocked for you will be the treasure chest of knowledge and inspiration as you plan with purpose your future.

THIRD, FRAME YOUR LIFE WITH FAITH.

Amidst the confusion of our age, the conflicts of conscience, and the turmoil of daily living, an abiding faith becomes an anchor to our lives.

By seeking Heavenly Father in personal and family prayer, we and our loved ones will develop the fulfillment of what the great English statesman William E. Gladstone described as the world’s greatest need: “A living faith in a personal God.” Such faith will illuminate our way as the lighthouse of the Lord.

When you have an abiding faith in the living God, when your outward actions reflect your inner convictions, you have the composite strength of exposed and hidden virtues. They combine to give safe passage through whatever rough seas might arise.

Wherever we may be, our Heavenly Father can hear and answer the prayer offered in faith.

Many years ago, on my first visit to the fabled village of Sauniatu in Samoa, so loved by President David O. McKay, my wife and I met with a large gathering of small children—nearly 200 in number. At the conclusion of our messages to these shy yet beautiful youngsters, I suggested to the native Samoan teacher that we go forward with the closing exercises. As he announced the final hymn, I suddenly felt compelled to greet personally each of these children. My watch revealed that the time was too short for such a privilege, for we were scheduled on a flight out of the country, so I discounted the impression. Before the



Amidst the confusion of our age, the conflicts of conscience, and the turmoil of daily living, an abiding faith becomes an anchor to our lives.

benediction was to be spoken, I again felt that I should shake the hand of each child. I made the desire known to the instructor, who displayed a broad and beautiful Samoan smile. In Samoan, he announced this to the children. They beamed their approval.

The instructor then revealed to me the reason for his and their joy. He said, “When we learned that a member of the Council of the Twelve was to visit us here in Samoa, so far away from Church headquarters, I told the children if they would earnestly and sincerely pray and exert faith like the Bible accounts of old, that the Apostle would visit our tiny village at Sauniatu and through their faith he would be impressed to greet each child with a personal handclasp.” Tears could not be restrained as the precious boys and girls walked shyly by and whispered softly to us the sweet Samoan greeting “talofa lava.” A profound expression of faith had been evidenced.

Remember that faith and doubt cannot exist in the same mind at the same time, for one will dispel the other.

Should doubt knock at your doorway, just say to those skeptical, disturbing, rebellious thoughts: “I propose to stay with my faith, with the faith of my people. I know that happiness and contentment are there, and I forbid you, agnostic, doubting thoughts, to destroy the house of my faith. I acknowledge that I do not understand the processes of creation, but I accept the fact of it. I grant that I cannot

explain the miracles of the Bible, and I do not attempt to do so, but I accept God’s word. I wasn’t with Joseph, but I believe him. My faith did not come to me through science, and I will not permit so-called science to destroy it.”

May you ever frame your life with faith.

When you, my dear young friends, choose your friends with caution, plan your future with purpose, and frame your life with faith, you will merit the companionship of the Holy Spirit. You will have “a perfect brightness of hope.”⁸ You will testify through your own experience to the truth of the Lord’s promise: “I, the Lord, am merciful and gracious unto those who fear me, and delight to honor those who serve me in righteousness and in truth unto the end. Great shall be their reward and eternal shall be their glory.”⁹

The lighthouse of the Lord provides the unfailing way. May we follow the guiding signals it sends to you and to me, that we may find our way safely home. □

NOTES

1. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, “Morituri Salutamus.”
2. Gerald Massey, in *The Home Book of Quotations*, selected by Burton Stevenson (1934), 121.
3. See Lewis Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1992), 89.
4. See Genesis 25:29–34.
5. In John Bartlett, *Familiar Quotations*, 14th edition (1968), 399.
6. 1 Corinthians 9:24.
7. Ecclesiastes 9:11.
8. 2 Nephi 31:20.
9. D&C 76:5–6.

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

1. Our circle of friends greatly influences our thinking and behavior, just as we also influence theirs.
2. Some see dimly the goal ahead and take costly detours which lead to disappointment and frustration. Others view clearly the prize—eternal life in the presence of God—and remain steadfast in pursuit.
3. When we have an abiding faith in the living God, when our outward actions reflect our inner convictions, we will find safe passage through whatever rough seas arise.



TOO OLD TO PASS THE SACRAMENT?

By Wayne B. Lynn

He knew they would be looking for him, so David scrunched down in his seat on the bench behind Brother Johnson. He figured the deacons quorum adviser wouldn't be able to find him way back there, even though the chapel wasn't very crowded and it would be difficult to remain unseen.

He knew if they found him he would be asked to pass the sacrament, and he didn't want to. He was a priest now and tall enough to play on the high school basketball team. It was embarrassing to stand at the front of the chapel with the little 12-year-old deacons, who all seemed half his size.

His father had been watching him from the stand, and David felt his disapproval. Much to David's surprise, however, he wasn't asked to assist the deacons. Before anyone could ask him, Brother Hensley volunteered.

Brother Hensley was a new



member of the Church, not much older than David, and recently ordained to the Aaronic Priesthood. Everyone had been excited to learn that he was taking the missionary discussions. He had been very popular in high school and was now attending college.

He stood tall alongside the deacons. He walked proudly and passed the sacred emblems with dignity.

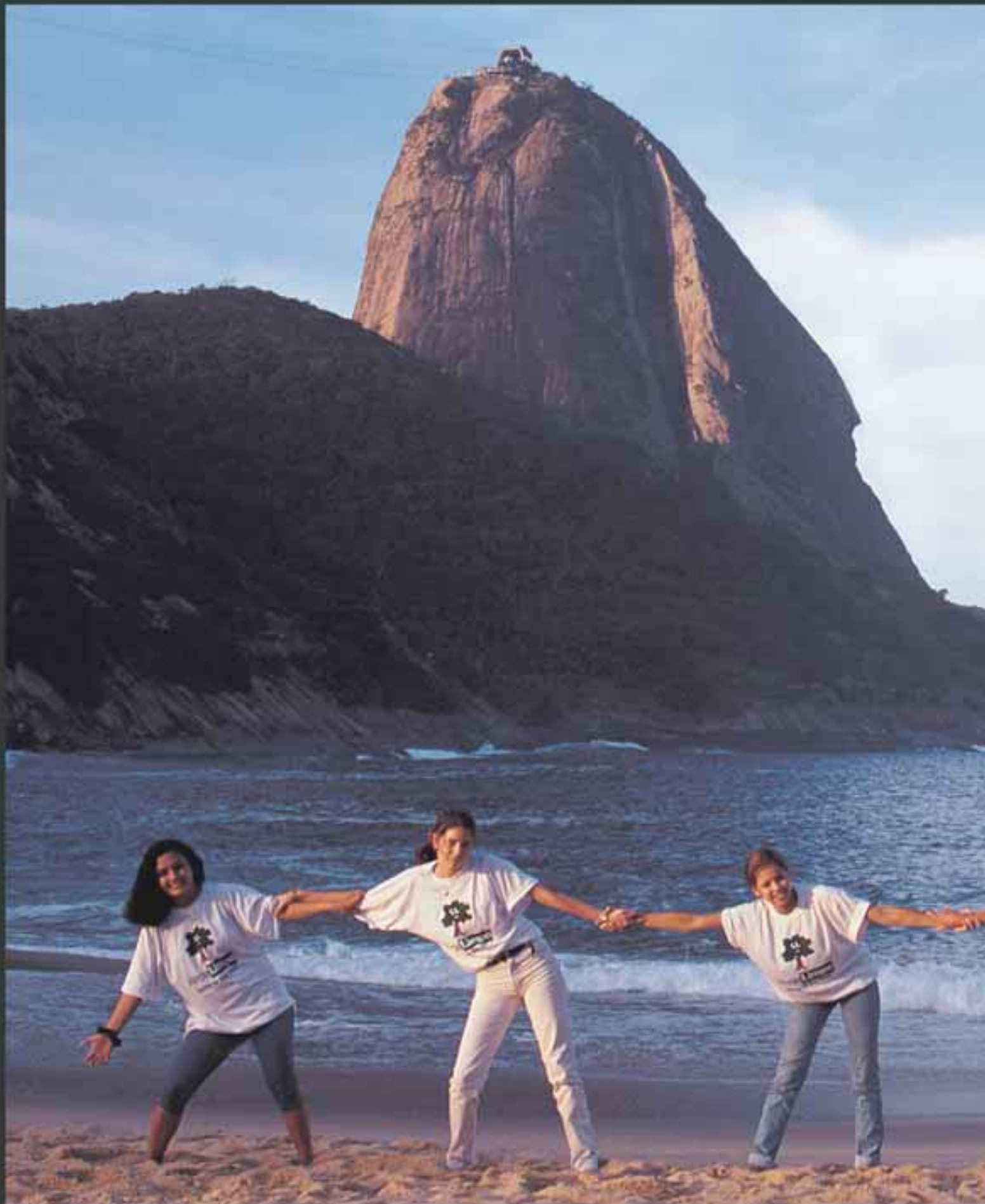
Several members were talking to Brother Hensley in the foyer after the meeting. David couldn't help overhearing their conversation, especially when he moved closer.

"Thanks for helping us out today," someone was saying. "I hope it didn't bother you to work with the young deacons."

"Not at all," David was surprised to hear him say. "I consider it a great honor. You know who the first person to ever pass the sacrament was, don't you?" Then answering his own question, he continued. "It was Jesus Christ—when He passed the sacrament of the Last Supper to His Apostles. It is my understanding that our apostles and prophets today administer and pass the sacrament to one another just as we did today. I guess if they consider passing the sacrament a privilege, well, so do I."

David moved on quietly as he reflected upon what he had just heard. He decided he would sit in plain sight the following Sunday. He would sit where they could find him. □

Wayne B. Lynn is a member of the Centerville 19th Ward, Centerville Utah South Stake.



▲ YOUNG WOMEN OF THE BOTAFOGO WARD, RIO DE JANEIRO BRAZIL ANDARAI STAKE

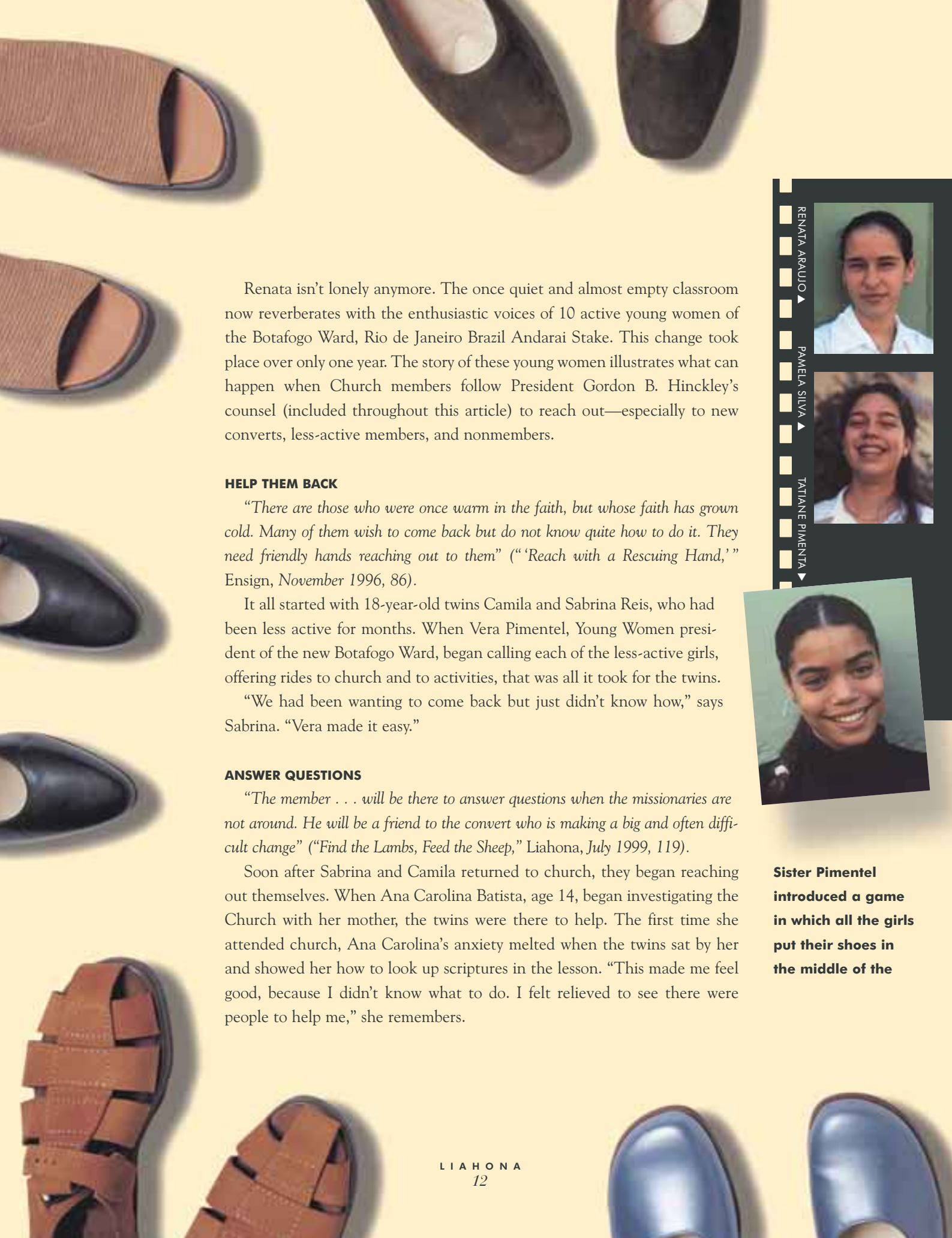
REACHING OUT IN

Rio

"Let us reach out to . . . people! Let us befriend them! Let us be kind to them! Let us encourage them! Let us add to their faith and their knowledge of this, the work of the Lord."—President Gordon B. Hinckley ("Words of the Living Prophet," Liahona, August 1999, 15)

Fifteen-year-old Renata Araujo's footsteps echoed forlornly as she walked down the cold tile floor. Renata knew that when she reached the end of the hallway and entered her Young Women class, she would be the only one there. The formation of her new ward had made her the only active girl in the Young Women program. "I felt very lonely," she remembers.





Renata isn't lonely anymore. The once quiet and almost empty classroom now reverberates with the enthusiastic voices of 10 active young women of the Botafogo Ward, Rio de Janeiro Brazil Andarai Stake. This change took place over only one year. The story of these young women illustrates what can happen when Church members follow President Gordon B. Hinckley's counsel (included throughout this article) to reach out—especially to new converts, less-active members, and nonmembers.

HELP THEM BACK

“There are those who were once warm in the faith, but whose faith has grown cold. Many of them wish to come back but do not know quite how to do it. They need friendly hands reaching out to them” (“Reach with a Rescuing Hand,” Ensign, November 1996, 86).

It all started with 18-year-old twins Camila and Sabrina Reis, who had been less active for months. When Vera Pimentel, Young Women president of the new Botafogo Ward, began calling each of the less-active girls, offering rides to church and to activities, that was all it took for the twins.

“We had been wanting to come back but just didn't know how,” says Sabrina. “Vera made it easy.”

ANSWER QUESTIONS

“The member . . . will be there to answer questions when the missionaries are not around. He will be a friend to the convert who is making a big and often difficult change” (“Find the Lambs, Feed the Sheep,” Liahona, July 1999, 119).

Soon after Sabrina and Camila returned to church, they began reaching out themselves. When Ana Carolina Batista, age 14, began investigating the Church with her mother, the twins were there to help. The first time she attended church, Ana Carolina's anxiety melted when the twins sat by her and showed her how to look up scriptures in the lesson. “This made me feel good, because I didn't know what to do. I felt relieved to see there were people to help me,” she remembers.



Sister Pimentel introduced a game in which all the girls put their shoes in the middle of the



▲ CAMILA AND SABRINA REIS



▲ DANIELE RAMALINO



▲ ANA CAROLINA BATISTA

floor, put on someone else's, then got to know the owner of the shoes they had picked.

Ana Carolina says the twins' friendship made her decision to join the Church much easier. Sabrina and Camila were also happy; their little class was growing.

GREET WITH LOVE AND CONCERN

"Coming into the Church can be a perilous experience. Unless there are warm and strong hands to greet the convert, unless there is an outreach of love and concern, . . . he may drop by the side" (Liahona, July 1999, 122).

The chain reaction continued as Ana Carolina reached out to a new investigator. Tatiane Pimenta, age 16, began attending church when she and her family were introduced to the Church by Sister Pimentel. "I felt very timid because I didn't know anyone," Tatiane says. "I quietly stayed in the corner."

But soon things began to change for Tatiane. "I started feeling good because I made a friend." In one class, Sister Pimentel introduced a game in which all the girls put their shoes in the middle of the floor, put on someone else's, then got to know the owner of the shoes they had picked. "That's how I started talking to Ana Carolina," remembers Tatiane. "She became my first friend, a friend who encouraged me a lot. Because of her, I felt able to join the Church."

SHARE THE GOSPEL; BE A FRIEND

"Every new convert needs . . . a friend. . . . Every convert must be 'nourished by the good word of God' (Moro. 6:4)" (Liahona, July 1999, 122–23).

Carolina Caetano began coming to Young Women class when her parents returned to church after years of inactivity. Although she had enjoyed Primary as a child, Carolina had never been baptized and was now unfamiliar with the Church and its members. "When you come back, you feel really shy because you don't know anyone anymore. So at first I didn't go much," she says.

But soon the missionaries and Sister Pimentel began to visit Carolina's home to teach her the gospel. "Whenever [Sister Pimentel] prepared a



PHOTOGRAPH OF SHOES BY TAMARA H. BATEIA



Within one year the number of active young women in the Botafogo Ward increased from 1 to 10.

lesson, she came to my house to explain it to me. And she always helped me read the Book of Mormon,” says Carolina.

Carolina also started making friends. “The thing that helped me come back the most and what helped me want to get baptized was the strong friendships I made here. The girls were always around me, always calling me to say, ‘Hey, come to the activities. Come this Sunday.’ They were always reminding me.”

GIVE ASSIGNMENTS

“Every convert deserves a responsibility. . . . Of course the new convert will not know everything. He likely will make some mistakes. So what? . . . The important thing is the growth that will come” (Liahona, July 1999, 122).

Like Carolina, 16-year-old Katarina Echaniz quickly made friends after being introduced to the Church by a ward member. Through the missionary discussions and her friends’ example, she also quickly gained a testimony. Shortly after her baptism, she was called to the Mia Maid presidency. “I felt responsible because there were girls depending on me to do my calling,” she says. “I wanted to do everything well.” Katarina says the assignment has helped keep her strong in the gospel.

NEVER GIVE UP

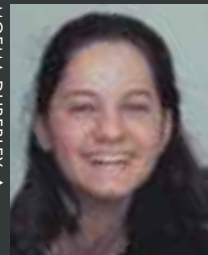
“I am making a plea for us to reach out to our brethren and sisters who have known the beauty and the wonder of this restored gospel for a brief season and then for some reason have left it. . . .

“If [members] respond to this challenge, I honestly believe that they will taste the sweet and wonderful feeling which comes of being an instrument in the hands of the Lord in leading someone back into activity in His Church and kingdom” (“Becoming a Better Home Teacher or Visiting Teacher,” Liahona, September 1998, 37).

From the first time she came to church, 16-year-old Moema Duberley loved it. “The girls were very receptive and tried to help me get to know everybody,” she says. “It made me feel like the Church was my second home.”

But it became difficult for Moema to come to church when her mother stopped attending a few months after their baptism. Partly because of her calling but mostly because of their friendship, Katarina began calling Moema.

“Sometimes I felt like I was bothering Moema,” says Katarina, “but I kept



MOEMA DUBERLEY ▼



KATARINA ECHANIZ ▼

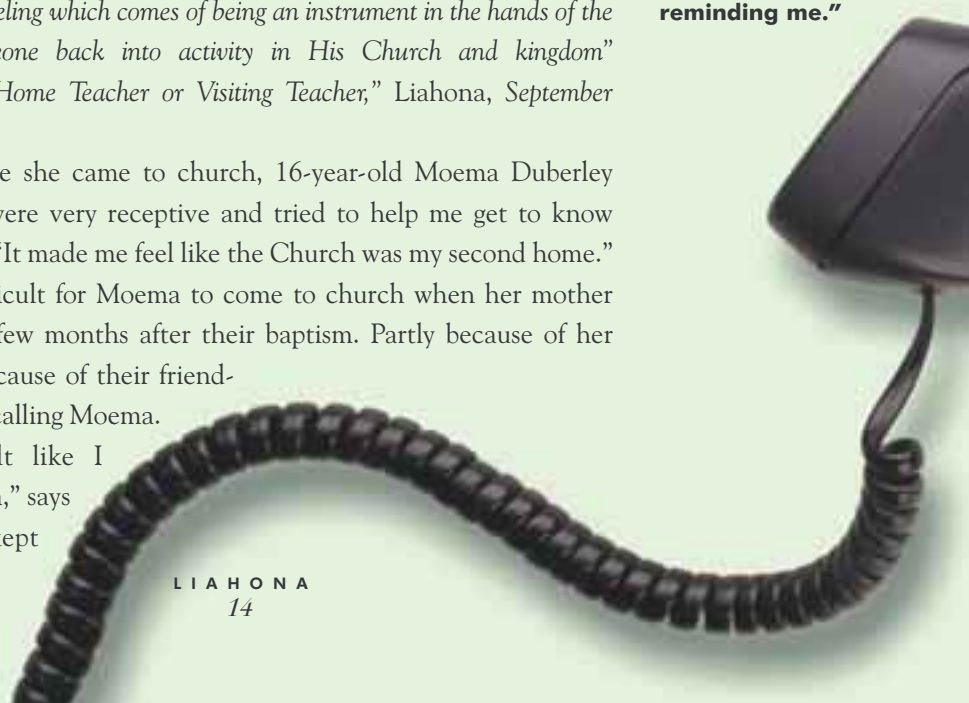


▼ CAROLINA CAETANO AND HER MOTHER

“The girls were always around me,” says Carolina, “always calling me to say, ‘Hey, come to the activities. Come this Sunday.’ They were always reminding me.”



The young women reach out to members and nonmembers alike. Here they serve at a homeless shelter.



trying because I felt it was important, and I knew God was going to help because I was also praying.”

After months of Katarina’s and other girls’ fellowshipping, Moema returned to full activity. “I came back because I was missing everything I had been learning at church and my relationship with God and the members.”

Now Moema and Katarina share a special bond. “I’m really grateful because I needed a friend when I was less active,” says Moema. “I’m very thankful for Katarina being like this for me. When you spend time away from the Church, you begin to feel that maybe you won’t be accepted. But when people call, it feels good to know you’re not forgotten.”

As for Katarina, “I feel really happy and thankful that Moema came back,” she says. “And it worked! I prayed and it worked.”

GIVE SUPPORT

“Every convert is a son or daughter of God. Every convert is a great and serious responsibility. It is an absolute imperative that we look after those who have become a part of us” (Liahona, July 1999, 122).

Their seminary friends helped recent converts Daniele Ramalno, age 14, and Pamela Silva, age 16, after they moved into the ward.

“When we’re around nonmembers, some guys will start making fun of us. But the boys from seminary always look after us and treat us nice,” says Daniele. “They encourage us, too.”

“They are very good friends to me,” says Pamela. “They always give us rides to seminary and to activities.”

UNITE IN SERVICE

“It is our obligation to reach out in helpfulness, not only to our own but to all others as well” (“Thanks to the Lord for His Blessings,” Liahona, July 1999, 105).

Not only are the young women of the Botafogo Ward helping each other, they also continue to reach out to others who are not yet active, as well as to members of their community. Whether they are serving in a city park or a shelter for homeless teens, whether they are writing cards to or calling less-active girls, whether they are talking with each other or standing together as they repeat the Young Women theme—there is a singular bond among these girls as they strive to be living examples of the prophet’s words.

“You young men and young women, . . . I plead with every one of you . . . to find out about the converts to the Church and put your arms around them and make friends of them. . . . Please, please, reach out to every convert in the Church and help him or her to become established in the faith” (meeting, Guadalajara, México, 10 March 1998). □

“The boys from seminary always look after us and treat us nice,” says Daniele. “They encourage us, too.”





Words of the Living Prophet

Insight and Counsel from President Gordon B. Hinckley



IMPORTANCE OF TEMPLES

“Every temple that this Church has built has in effect stood as a monument to our belief in the immortality of the human soul, that this phase of mortal life through which we pass is part of a continuous upward climb, so to speak, and that as certain as there is life here, there will be life there. That is our firm belief. It comes about through the Atonement of the Savior, and the temple becomes, as I have indicated, the bridge from this life to the next. The temple is concerned with things of immortality. We wouldn’t have to build a temple for marriages if we didn’t believe in the

eternity of the family. We build it so that family may be eternal. All of the ordinances which take place in the house of the Lord become expressions of our belief in that fundamental and basic doctrine. The temple therefore becomes the ultimate in our system of worship and therefore is of great and significant importance to us.”¹

BE TRUE TO THE LORD

“Be true to the Lord. He is your strength. He is your salvation. It is He who can bless you. It is He who desires to bless you. Look to Him for every gift and grace and blessing. Get on your knees and pray and stand on your feet and do His will and put your trust and faith in Him, and God will bless you. I make that promise as His servant.”²

DO NOT BECOME A WEAK LINK

“You are a part of the great processes of God under which men and women have gone before you. All that you have of body and mind will be transmitted through you to



the generations yet to come, and it is so important, so everlastingly important, my brothers and sisters, that you do not become a weak link in that chain of your generations.”³

CATASTROPHES ACROSS THE WORLD

“I don’t know the reason for many of the catastrophes [across the world], but I do know this, that the God of Heaven has imposed upon us as Christians the responsibility to look after those who become the victims of these terrible disasters. . . . If we are followers of the Christ, we will follow Him in doing what He would have us do as His followers in our daily living.”⁴

REVELATION IS A PROCESS

“The things of God are understood by the Spirit of God. That is the premise on which you start. You don’t get revelation when you are denying the power of God. The Lord said, ‘If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of

God, or whether I speak of myself’ (John 7:17). Those are His words. Revelation is a process that comes . . . in various forms and in various ways. I can say without any hesitation, not the slightest, that I know within my heart that the Lord has made known His will in many things. . . . In all of the tremendous numbers of things with which we constantly deal, hundreds of them, thousands of them really, across the Church, we pray about them. We ponder them. We consult with one another. We reach a decision. We act. There isn’t any doubt in my mind that that decision is inspired. That is revelation in one of its forms.”⁵

PRIESTHOOD OF GOD

“In this Church every worthy man may hold the priesthood of God. Every worthy man may speak in the name of God, the Lord, even the Savior of the world. Every man may serve in the governance of the Church. Every man may place his

hands upon the heads of his wife and children and bless them. What a marvelous thing it is. What a great thing we have to offer the world.”⁶

MOVE FORWARD

“You are on the fast track of a great church that’s moving forward, and you’ve got to keep up with it. You’ve got to live up to it, to its teachings, and help it move forward. Your obligation in terms of your responsibility in this Church is as great as is my obligation in terms of my responsibility in moving this work forward.”⁷ □

NOTES

1. Interview with Vern Anderson of the *Associated Press*, 20 April 1999.
2. Regional conference, Santiago, Chile, 26 April 1999.
3. Regional conference, Oahu, Hawaii, 23 January 2000.
4. Sacrament meeting, East Mill Creek 12th Ward, 26 December 1999.
5. Interview with *Deseret News*, 25 February 2000.
6. Meeting, Singapore, 30 January 2000.
7. Regional conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 28 February 1999.



THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST

A Light amid Darkness

“YE SHOULD SEARCH DILIGENTLY IN THE LIGHT OF CHRIST THAT YE MAY KNOW GOOD FROM EVIL” (MORONI 7:19).

By Daniel K. Judd

Latter-day scriptures help us understand that the Spirit of Christ is not merely a source of truth; it is the means by which God assists us in all aspects of our lives. Learning the doctrine of the Spirit of Christ helps us understand it as a gift from a loving Heavenly Father to lead and direct all of His children.

The prophet Mormon described the Spirit of Christ as one of the most fundamental means God uses to sustain and guide us:

“For behold, the *Spirit of Christ* is given to every man, that he may know good from evil; wherefore, I show unto you the way to judge; for every thing which inviteth to do good, and to

persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ; wherefore ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of God.

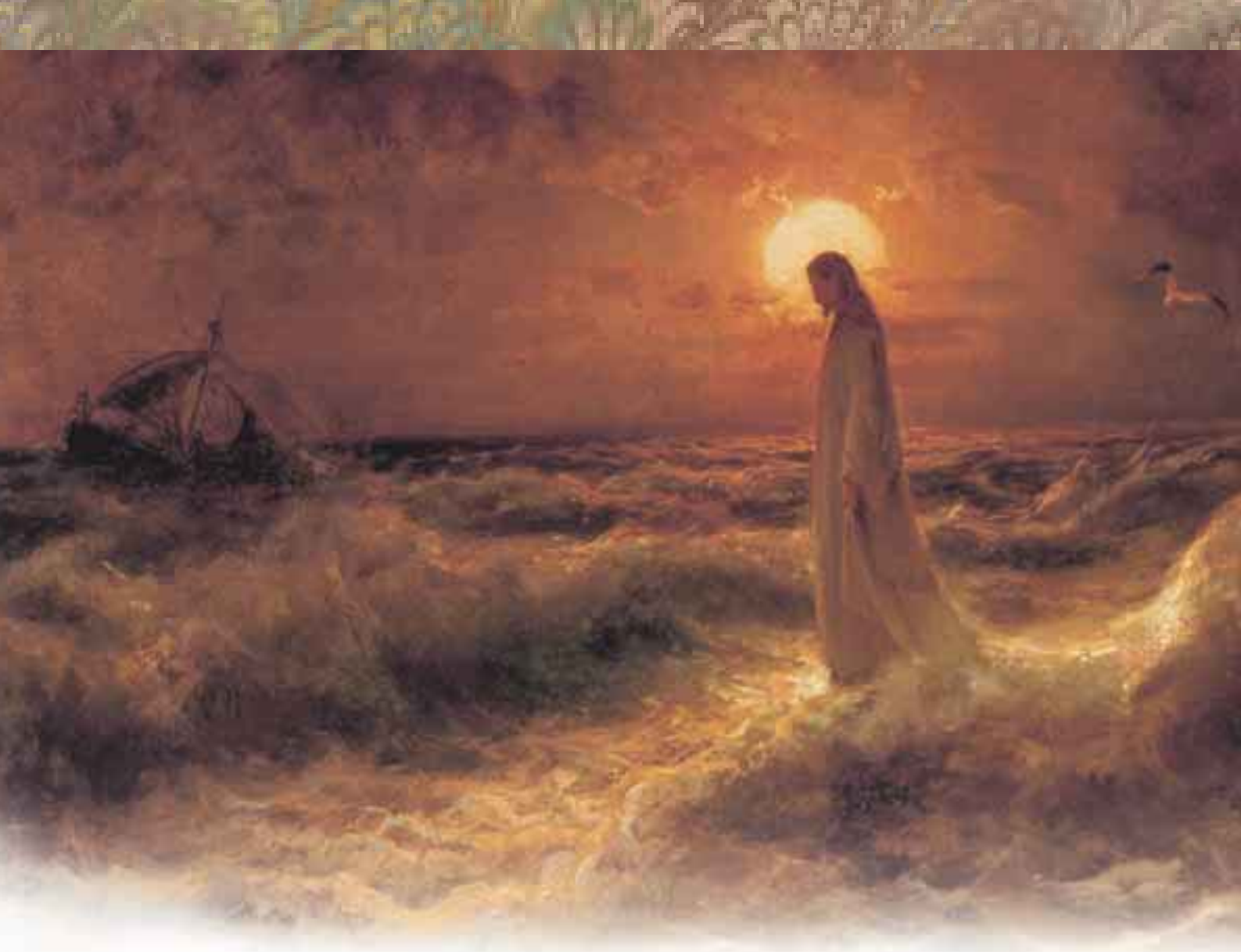
“But whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do evil, and believe not in Christ, and deny him, and serve not God, then ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of the devil; for after this manner doth the devil work, for he persuadeth no man to do good, no, not one; neither do his angels; neither do they who subject themselves unto him” (Moroni 7:16–17; emphasis added here and in other quoted material).

DESCRIPTION OF THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST

While our latter-day scriptures do not provide detailed information about *how* the Spirit of Christ works, they do describe its purposes and influence. From the Doctrine and Covenants we learn that the Spirit

The Spirit of Christ invites all people to do good, persuades them to believe in Christ, and teaches them that they must pray.





of Christ “proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space” (D&C 88:12). It is the *light* of the sun, the moon, and the stars and the *power* by which all things were made (see D&C 88:7–10). It “giveth life to all things” and “is the law by which all things are governed” (D&C 88:13). The Spirit of Christ is also appropriately called the Light of Christ because it “giveth light to every man that cometh into the world” (D&C 84:46).

THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST AND THE HOLY GHOST

The Spirit of Christ is often confused with the Holy Ghost, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the spirit personage of Jesus Christ. Some of the confusion obviously comes because terms such as *Spirit of the Lord*, *Spirit of God*, and *Spirit of Christ* are often used interchangeably

in both scripture and conversation, and it is often difficult to determine to which personage or gift the passage refers. It is from the prophets of this dispensation that we learn the Spirit of Christ is neither the Holy Ghost, the gift of the Holy Ghost, nor the spirit personage of Jesus Christ, but it is the primary means by which these entities operate.

President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) taught: “We often say the Spirit of God when we mean the Holy Ghost; we likewise say the Holy Ghost when we mean the Spirit of God. The Holy Ghost is a personage in the Godhead, and is not that which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. It is the Spirit of God which proceeds through Christ to the world, that enlightens every man that comes into the world, and that strives with the children of men, and will continue to strive with them, until it brings them to a knowledge of the truth and the possession of the

greater light and testimony of the Holy Ghost.”¹

Elder James E. Talmage (1862–1933) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that the Spirit of Christ is the “divine essence” by which the Godhead operates upon people and in nature.²

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles added, “Before and after baptism, all men are endowed to one degree or another with that Spirit which is the light of Christ.” He said that a “testimony before baptism, speaking by way of analogy, comes as a flash of lightning blazing forth in a dark and stormy night . . . to light the path.” Then he compared the gift of the Holy Ghost to “the continuing blaze of the sun at noonday, shedding its rays on the path of life and on all that surrounds it.”³

Prophets, both ancient and modern, have taught that the Spirit of Christ is *preparatory* in purpose. It prepares God’s children to receive the temporary witness of the Holy Ghost, followed by the more constant gift of the Holy Ghost, which is bestowed upon those who are baptized. An example of this progression can be identified in the Book of Mormon account of the conversion of King Lamoni. Even though Lamoni had the authority of a king and had been taught that “whatsoever [he] did was right,” the text suggests that he still knew it was wrong to slay his servants whom he judged not to have served him well: “Notwithstanding [King Lamoni and his father] believed in a Great Spirit, they supposed that whatsoever they did was right; nevertheless, Lamoni began to fear exceedingly, with fear lest he had done wrong in slaying his servants” (Alma 18:5).

We may conclude from this verse that as sons and daughters of God we all have a conscience (see Romans 2:14–15). Though the truth in King Lamoni’s heart was eclipsed by tradition and sin, a spirit was working upon him that revived his sense of right and wrong. King Lamoni’s experience continued and intensified as “he fell unto the earth, as if he were dead” (Alma 18:42).

Note the description of King Lamoni’s experience

during the time he was overcome: “Ammon . . . knew that king Lamoni was under the power of God; he knew that the dark veil of unbelief was being cast away from his mind, and the *light* which did *light* up his mind, which was the *light* of the glory of God, which was a marvelous *light* of his goodness—yea, this *light* had infused such joy into his soul, the cloud of darkness having been dispelled, and that the *light* of everlasting life was lit up in his soul, yea, he knew that this had overcome his natural frame, and he was carried away in God” (Alma 19:6).

Ammon seems to be describing the Light of Christ that was working on the king to prepare him to receive the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost. King Lamoni and his servants were then baptized, and while it is not detailed in this scriptural account, we can be confident that the divine order was followed and that they were then given the gift of the Holy Ghost (see 2 Nephi 31:14).

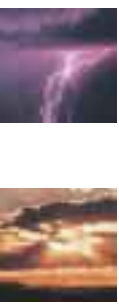
The additional light that comes with the reception of the gift of the Holy Ghost is demonstrated by Ammon’s experiences. He demonstrated great power in defending the king’s flocks (see Alma 17:36–37; 18:2), and he was later “filled with the *Spirit of God*, therefore he *perceived the thoughts of the king*” (Alma 18:16).

Ammon described additional blessings in these words: “I am called by his *Holy Spirit* to teach these things unto this people, that they may be brought to a knowledge of that which is just and true;

“And a portion of that *Spirit* dwelleth in me, which giveth me knowledge, and also power according to my faith and desires which are in God” (Alma 18:34–35).

THE LIGHT OF DISCOVERY AND INTELLECT

The Spirit of Christ is the power that enlightens our intellect as we seek to discover the mysteries of heaven and earth (see D&C 88:11). Nephi tells us that “the *Spirit of God* . . . wrought upon the man” we recognize as Columbus and that “the *Spirit of God* . . . wrought upon other Gentiles [for example, Pilgrims, Puritans, and so on]; and they went forth out of captivity, upon the many



waters” (1 Nephi 13:12–13). We also read of the Lord’s promise to Nephi to be his “*light* in the wilderness” as he sought the promised land (1 Nephi 17:13).

Alma wrote of hearts being changed and souls being “illuminated by the *light* of the everlasting word” (Alma 5:7). He also described the “discernible” nature of light in the following passage: “O then, is not this real? I say unto you, Yea, because it is *light*; and whatsoever is *light*, is good, because it is discernible, therefore ye must know that it is good” (Alma 32:35).

Many of the world’s great leaders, scientists, artists, and philosophers have been blessed by the influence of the Light of Christ. In 1978 the First Presidency stated that great religious leaders “such as Mohammed, Confucius, and the Reformers, as well as the philosophers including Socrates, Plato, and others, received a portion of God’s light . . . to enlighten whole nations.”⁴

President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1970) wrote: “Those who make these discoveries are inspired of God or they would never make them. The Lord gave inspiration to Edison, to Franklin, to Morse, to Whitney and to all of the inventors and discoverers, and through their inspiration they obtained the necessary knowledge and were able to manufacture and invent as they have done for the benefit of the world. Without the help of the Lord they would have been just as helpless as the people were in other ages.”⁵

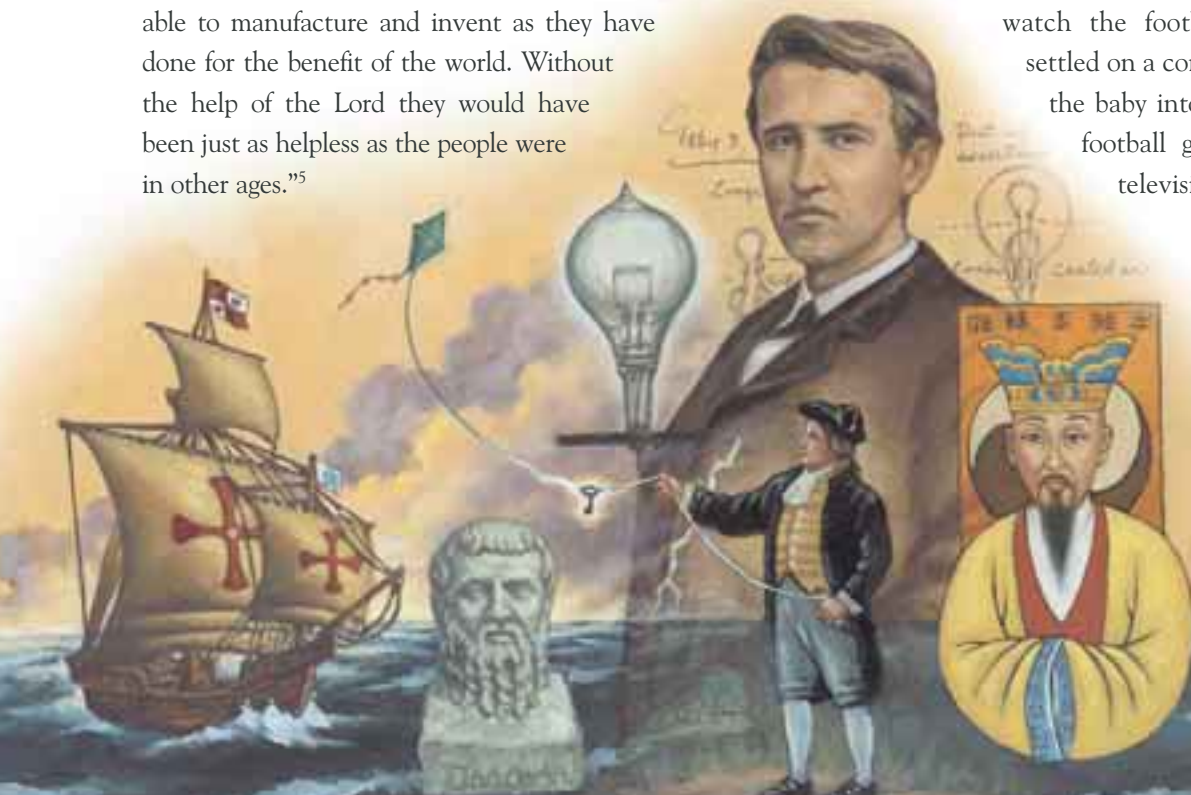
THE LIGHT OF CONSCIENCE

While the Spirit of Christ is manifest in a multitude of ways, perhaps the most personal and the most important of its dimensions is expressed as our conscience, or knowing “good from evil” (Moroni 7:16). It is through our conscience we first come to perceive the love of a Father in Heaven who does “all things for the welfare and happiness of his people” (Helaman 12:2).

Though it can be distorted, we can experience our conscience, the Light of Christ or Spirit of Christ, in different ways. If we are living truthfully, we will experience our conscience as a gentle invitation persuading us to do good. When we are not living truthfully, we will experience our conscience as a source of guilt.

Following the Light of Christ can lead us to peace and greater understanding, while acting against what we know to be right leads us to distress and confusion and is often the beginning of greater problems. Large, ominous problems typically begin as small, simple ones. Note the following example of a prompting of conscience, a situation most of us can identify with:

My wife had asked if I would rock our baby Rachel to sleep. I knew I should, but I really wanted to watch the football game. I quickly settled on a compromise: I could take the baby into my room, watch the football game on the portable television, and rock her to



Many of the world’s great leaders, scientists, artists, and philosophers have been blessed by the influence of the Light of Christ.



sleep at the same time. A real win-win situation! I would miss the color screen, but what a small price to pay for being a good dad!

The problem came after about two minutes of watching the game. Rachel began to fuss. The thought came to my mind that if I turned the television off, walked with her, and sang to her, she might be soothed. I knew it was the right thing to do, but did I do it? No, I spent the next 30 minutes struggling to watch the game and rock Rachel, all the while resenting the fact that I couldn't do what I wanted to!

One of the characteristics of those of us who go against the light and knowledge we have is that we attempt to justify our actions. These justifications come in the form of thoughts, feelings, and in some cases physical symptoms. In Proverbs we read, "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes" (12:15). In my experience with my daughter Rachel, my self-justifications were: (1) I've been working with difficult situations all day, so I need some time to myself; (2) My wife is much better suited to deal with babies than I am, and she should be doing this; (3) My wife doesn't appreciate all I do, so it's really unfair she would have me do this; and (4) I'm so tired; I need to sit down and relax.

We often think of "sin" as being something grievous like murder, adultery, or some other form of gross immorality. Although these actions are among the most serious of sins, the scriptures teach that any time we know "to do good, and [do] it not, . . . it is sin" (James 4:17). While it is a little uncomfortable to admit, when I didn't get up and walk with my child, I went against that which I knew was right, and that, in a word, is sin.⁶

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) stated: "There are many causes for human suffering—including war, disease, and poverty—and the suffering

that proceeds from each of these is very real, but I would not be true to my trust if I did not say that the most *persistent cause of human suffering, that suffering which causes the deepest pain, is sin*—the violation of the commandments given to us by God. . . . If any of us wish to have more precise prescriptions for ourselves in terms of what we can do to have more abundant lives, all we usually need to do is to consult our conscience."⁷

A RICH BLESSING

How blessed we are that the Spirit of Christ has been given to us, that we may know good from evil. Our Father in Heaven has promised, "That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day" (D&C 50:24). It is my prayer that each of us will heed Mormon's invitation to understand and obey that light within: "Wherefore, I beseech of you . . . , that ye should search diligently in the light of Christ that ye may know good from evil; and if ye will lay hold upon every good thing, and condemn it not, ye certainly will be a child of Christ" (Moroni 7:19). □

Daniel K. Judd is a member of the Canyon View Fifth Ward, Orem Utah Canyon View Stake.

NOTES

1. *Gospel Doctrine*, 5th edition (1939), 67–68.
2. See *Articles of Faith*, 12th edition (1924), 488, note 3.
3. *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* (1984), 262.
4. Statement of the First Presidency, 15 February 1978.
5. *Doctrines of Salvation*, compiled by Bruce R. McConkie, 3 volumes (1954–56), 1:147.
6. I am grateful to my colleague C. Terry Warner for helping me come to a better understanding of the terms *conscience* and *sin*.
7. *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, edited by Edward L. Kimball (1982), 155.

A NOTE FROM MICHAEL

By Camielle Call-Tarbet

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY MATT REIER

I determined that no one in our family would ever feel that way again.

I'm not sure why my mom showed me the note that afternoon. The oldest of six children and a junior in high school, I couldn't wait to graduate and move out on my own. I was tired of having to be the example and of baby-sitting my siblings whenever my parents wanted to go out.

Perhaps my mother knew, somehow, that sharing the note from Michael was the best thing she could have done for me that day. I arrived home from school earlier than my three brothers and two sisters. I confess I was impatient when my mom said, "I want to show you something."

I followed her into my brother's room, where she picked up a note from his pillow. In his 11-year-old scrawl, Michael had written, "I'm not coming home today. I'm not part of this family."

I could feel the tears spill over onto my cheeks. Mom said, "Let's pick him up from school today."

I was too choked up to say

anything. I nodded to my mother and resolved to myself, *No one in our family will ever feel this way again.*

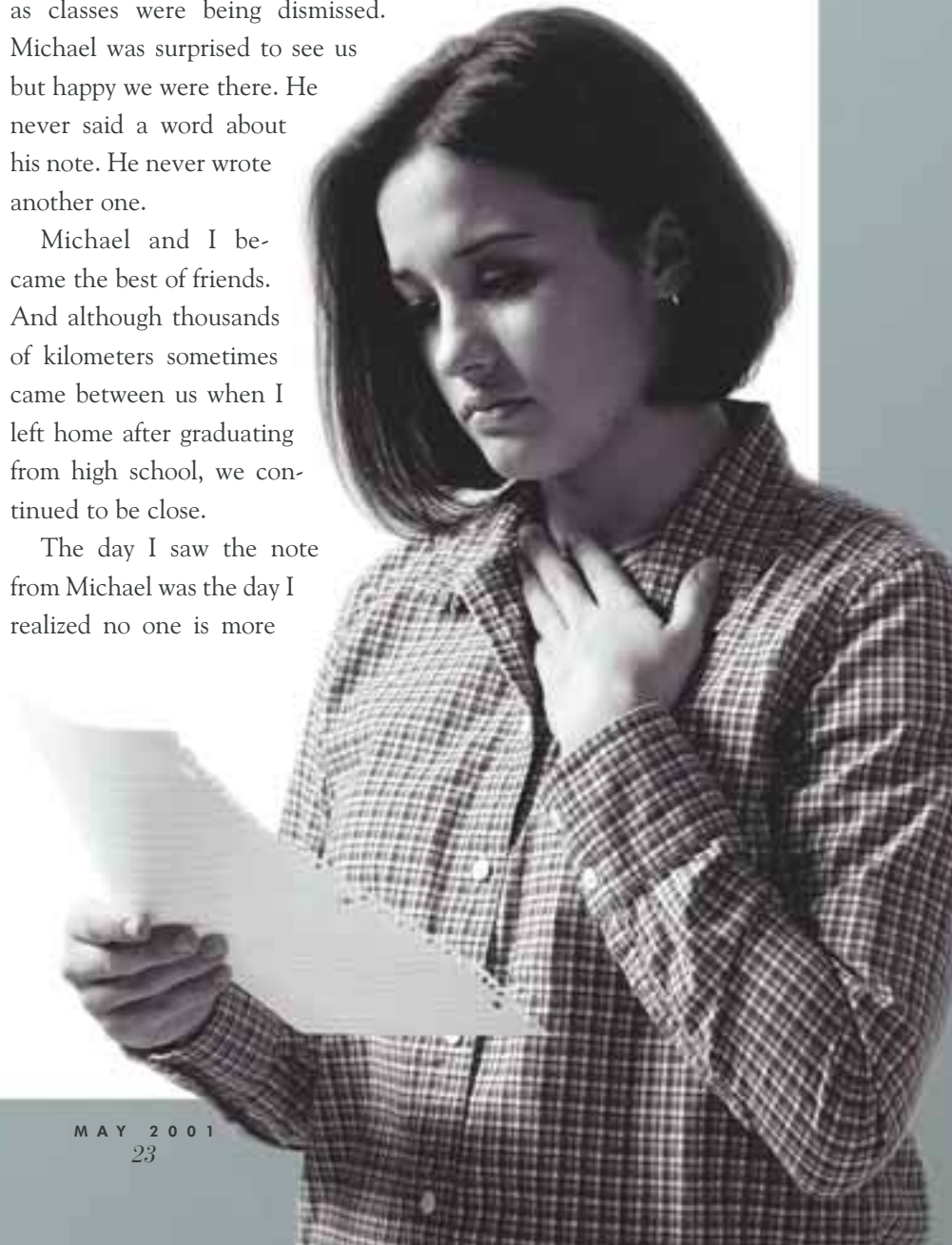
We got to the school just as classes were being dismissed. Michael was surprised to see us but happy we were there. He never said a word about his note. He never wrote another one.

Michael and I became the best of friends. And although thousands of kilometers sometimes came between us when I left home after graduating from high school, we continued to be close.

The day I saw the note from Michael was the day I realized no one is more

important than those we call "family." □

Camielle Call-Tarbet is a member of the Smithfield 12th Ward, Smithfield Utah North Stake.



DON'T LIVE ON THE
EDGE



**The boundary of
righteousness is also
the brink of sin.
Don't risk a tragic fall.
(See D&C 1:31.)**

LIVING WITHIN OUR MEANS

Although the earth and everything in it belong to the Lord, He entrusts a portion of His wealth to each of us. Elder Joe J. Christensen, then of the Presidency of the Seventy, explained: “Our resources are a stewardship, not our possessions. I am confident that we will literally be called upon to make an accounting before God concerning how we have used them to bless lives and build the kingdom” (“Greed, Selfishness, and Overindulgence,” *Liahona*, July 1999, 12). Whether our portion is great or small, we can be responsible caretakers as we apply righteous principles.

USE A BUDGET

Many families find it helpful to develop a budget (see Marvin J. Ashton, “Guide to Family Finance,” *Liahona*, April 2000, 42–47). The first considerations when budgeting are tithing and Church contributions. These contributions help us fulfill our obligation to “impart of [our] substance . . . to the poor and afflicted” (D&C 105:3). Paying an honest tithe is crucial to helping build the kingdom and is our greatest financial protection, for the Lord has promised that when we keep this commandment, He will “open you the windows of heaven” (Malachi 3:10).

The Lord may open these windows in many ways. President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) explained, “He can give us better salaries . . . more judgment in the spending of our money . . . better health . . . [and] greater understanding so that we can get better positions” (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, edited by Edward L. Kimball [1982], 212).

After budgeting for necessities, including savings, the next considerations are the nonessentials the family has deemed desirable.

SHARE WITH OTHERS

One of the most valuable uses of resources is sharing them with others. C. S. Lewis wrote: “If our charities do not at all pinch or hamper us, . . . they are too small. There ought to be things we should like to do and cannot do because our charitable expenditure excludes them” (*Mere Christianity* [1952], 67; quoted in *Liahona*, July 1999, 12).

AVOID DEBT

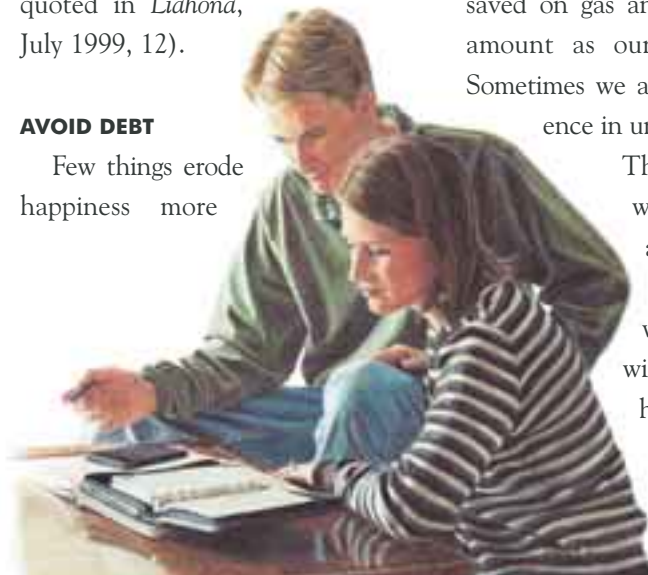
Few things erode happiness more

quickly than debt. In some cultures, debt is becoming both more available and more accepted. But as Church members, we have long been advised to avoid unnecessary debt. The hunger for worldly goods must be bridled just as any other appetite. Applying the pioneer motto “Fix it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without” can help us live within our means.

BLESSINGS OF WISE STEWARDSHIP

Jill Johnson of Sandy, Utah, tells how the Lord blessed her family: “As newly married college students, we had carefully budgeted our meager monthly income. Then the landlord raised our rent. We prayed for a blessing. The next day our old car broke down beyond repair. We wondered why we had these trials all at once, but the loss of the car turned out to be a blessing. With help from family and friends, we found we could manage without a car. The money saved on gas and oil was the same amount as our increase in rent. Sometimes we are blessed for obedience in unexpected ways.”

The Lord is concerned with our temporal and spiritual welfare and will help us as we strive to care wisely for the gifts He has given us. □



“Look to Him for Every Gift”

We are blessed daily with divine gifts. Blessings come to us because our loving Heavenly Father wants to provide for His children. Many of these gifts—those primarily spiritual in nature—may come to us unrecognized or unappreciated, at least for a time. ❧ Such is the case in the stories that follow. A man with disabilities blesses others through his devoted service. A mother is prompted to visit her young daughter at school for no apparent reason. A young mother finds the strength to raise her children alone. The Lord’s gentle

hand guides a young man through a chance encounter that eventually leads him to the Church. Each story bears witness of our Father’s desire to bless us. ❧ From the Lord’s living prophet come these words of testimony and promise: “[The Lord] is your strength. . . . Look to Him for every gift and grace and blessing. Get on your knees and pray and stand on your feet and do His will and put your trust and faith in Him, and God will bless you. I make that promise as His servant” (“Words of the Living Prophet,” *Liahona*, May 2001, 16).



The Will to Soar

By Jorge Flores

Carlos Yépez Yong of Lima, Perú, cannot move his legs or right arm, and he has difficulty speaking. But he is one of the strongest people I know. What makes him strong is the Spirit of the Lord. Whenever he speaks or teaches, his words are beautiful to the ear because they touch the heart.

Brother Yépez’s paralysis is the result of damage he received at birth. For most of his first five years he remained in a vegetative state,

receiving nourishment through his veins. Some of the doctors treating him wondered if it was worthwhile keeping him alive. They did not know the Lord had a mission for him.

When Carlos was six years old, to everyone’s surprise he began to move part of his body. Medical treatments began, and his mental abilities developed to such a degree that in a few years he surpassed his classmates. His physical progress slowed somewhat

after age 12. When he was about 18, his parents divorced, and his treatments stopped.

Carlos felt frustrated and was depressed, but he did not sink into despair. When he was 20 years of age, a neighbor invited him to hear the missionary discussions. Carlos received all of them, and after praying and pondering in his heart, he received a spiritual witness that what he had learned was true. He decided to be baptized.

Carlos says that when he was immersed at baptism, his life changed

completely. “In my mind, I felt as though my useless arm and legs had become strong and vigorous,” he says. “I decided on that day that I would serve the Lord in any calling He gave me, that I would ‘run and not be weary, and . . . walk and not faint’” (D&C 89:20).

Although his physical paralysis remained, Carlos’s spirit soared, and the Lord blessed him. He was

punctual at his meetings and attended adult religion classes sponsored by the Church Educational System. He was called to serve as the second counselor in the Young Men presidency of the Caja de Agua Ward, Lima Perú Las Flores Stake. Every day of the

We would often see Carlos going from one house to another, inviting the youth to Mutual.

week, we would see him going from one house to another in his wheelchair, inviting the youth to Mutual.

Years have passed since then. He is now a member of Los Jardines Ward. He still has a firm testimony of the



Lord and His gospel, attends the Lima Perú Temple regularly, does his home teaching, and helps the missionaries teach investigators. Because of his perseverance, testimony, and trust in the Lord, seven of his nieces and nephews and some of his friends are now members of the Church. Other members, both youth and adults, have returned to Church activity because of his influence. He never misses a meeting, he frequently attends fire-sides, and he goes to ward activities. Though some might think he is hampered by his disabilities, the youth in the stake admire him as one whose spirit soars.

Jorge Flores is a member of the Laderas Ward, Lima Perú Las Palmeras Stake.

“Go Check on Wendi”

By Darlene Joy Nichols

When our oldest daughter, Wendi, was age five, she attended kindergarten class each morning. One day I sent her to school, then readied our two younger children to go shopping. I felt rushed because I wanted to finish shopping in time to pick up Wendi from school. So with my shopping list in one hand and my two younger children in the other, I set off for the store.

About 20 minutes later a clear thought interrupted me: *Darlene,*

go check on Wendi. I thought, *How silly! Wendi is fine at school.* I dismissed the thought and went about my shopping. A short time later the thought came back again. *Darlene, go check on Wendi.* The thought came so clearly I stopped in the middle of a grocery store aisle.

Looking at my shopping list and at my two young children, who would not be patient much longer, I reasoned to myself, *This is silly!*

I'm sure Wendi is fine. I continued down the aisle, but the words came forcefully yet again: *Darlene, go check on Wendi!*

I told a clerk I would be back for my groceries and rushed from the store. As we left, I noticed a severe thunderstorm had come up. Wendi

Go check on Wendi. The thought came so clearly I stopped in the middle of a grocery store aisle.



was terrified of thunderstorms, but I knew she was safe at school. Nevertheless, I began to worry that something terrible might have happened. I hurried to the school. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary, and even the storm was passing. I thought perhaps I wouldn't go inside after all. But after making the effort to get there, I decided I should at least walk to the classroom and reassure myself that all was well.

I turned the corner to Wendi's classroom and saw the door was open and Wendi was standing in the doorway. How odd! Why wasn't she at her desk? As I approached she smiled. I didn't know what to say, so I just hugged her.

"Mommy, I knew you'd come!" she said.

With that, her teacher came over and said, "How did you know to come?" Then she explained that the thunder and lightning had upset the class. As she tried to gather the children to sit together, she noticed Wendi at her seat praying. When Wendi finished, she told her teacher that she was all right and that she had asked Heavenly Father to send her mommy to her. She asked if she could please wait by the door.

I could not stop my tears as I realized the prayer of faith of a five-year-old had literally moved me from a grocery store several kilometers

away to be at her side. I am deeply grateful to Heavenly Father for this experience, for Wendi and I both learned divine lessons about faith and trust that day.

Darlene Joy Nichols is a member of the Burnsville Ward, Burnsville Minnesota Stake.

Strong for the Sake of My Children

By Eliza M. Torres

After 12 years of marriage and with six young children, I found myself separated from my husband. My husband's mother continued to live with our family, but with one exception, my children never saw their father again.

The children were too young to understand fully what was happening to our family, and I tried to shelter them as much as I could from the pain I was feeling. But within a few weeks of separating from my husband, I felt vulnerable, empty, and alone. Although I was surrounded by people in my Philippine hometown, I often found myself weeping, longing for the comfort of someone to confide in. Assailed by doubts, I felt as though I were living in a haze. I couldn't think or plan clearly. And yet I knew I had to be strong for the sake of my children. I felt that the burden of their welfare rested solely upon my shoulders.

Humbled and desperate, I knelt and asked Heavenly Father for three favors: good health, a clear mind, and emotional strength devoid of self-pity and selfishness.

My prayers were answered. In spite of difficult economic conditions in the Philippines, I was blessed with a good income. The harder I was able to work, the more money I earned. Our temporal needs were met, and I found the clarity of mind and the emotional strength I needed to be both mother and father to my children.

I gave my children love and affection and as much attention as possible. I devoted Sundays and holidays solely to them. I taught them not to look back in anger, nor forward in fear, but to look around in awareness. They learned not to hate anyone, especially their absent father.

They also learned to share with one another and build family solidarity. We exchanged ideas and valued each other's differing points of view. We rejoiced in one another's victories and comforted each other in our defeats. We were a united family—cooking, cleaning, laughing, sharing, and above all praying together.

Seven years after my separation, four of my children and I became members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The

teachings of the Church honed and polished my children, further cultivating their talents. They learned more patience and understanding. As they grew older they also discovered leadership skills and other abilities they did not know they had. They enjoyed peace and a sense of belonging. My children often turned to Church leaders for educational, emotional, and spiritual counsel. They were devoted to their callings and eagerly engaged in Church activities. I watched them thrive as they grew spiritually and developed social skills.

My son and three daughters served as full-time missionaries. They have continued to grow and develop into wonderful people.

My trials have helped me to become stronger and grow in ways I may not have otherwise. Many times I was weary, but in those times of great need my Heavenly Father gave me rest, guided my footsteps, and filled my soul with His love.

I have been abundantly blessed. I cherish my beautiful family. Out of our great adversity, we have emerged triumphant. But we owe everything to our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. For Their influence in our lives we are eternally grateful.

Eliza M. Torres is a member of the Milpitas Ward, San Jose California East Stake.

The Lost Pamphlet

By Wenceslao Salguero

I was born and raised in El Progreso, a small town in Guatemala. When I was about 10 years old, an unusual pamphlet came into my hands. It contained the story of Joseph Smith, a young boy who saw a vision of God the Eternal Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

I was deeply impressed by this story. Unsatisfied with the training I was receiving in the religion of my parents, I wanted to know more about the boy in the pamphlet. But I didn't know where to get information. In time I lost the pamphlet, but I never forgot about it. I wondered if I would ever find another like it.

As a teenager and young adult, I investigated several religious denominations. I even took classes in their doctrine and received diplomas. But there were aspects of these religions that troubled me, and I felt uncomfortable with the criticism that clergy of different faiths sometimes directed at one another. By this time I had started reading the Bible, and as I compared the Bible with what I saw in the religions I had studied, I became convinced those religions lacked God's authority.

I knelt many times in prayer, pleading with God to guide me to His true Church. I promised that if He did, I would be faithful in keeping

His commandments and I would always serve Him.

I had dreams, too, in which I told God I was willing to do anything to receive forgiveness for my sins. I would wake up and find my pillow wet with tears. I also asked God to help me find the pamphlet about Joseph Smith again.

By 1968 I had a wife and a son. We moved to Guatemala City so I could find better employment. On 20 November 1975, two young American women, simply dressed, knocked on our door. They said they had a message for my family. We made an appointment for them to come back at a later time.

I remember the first discussion clearly. One of the young women said a prayer, and then the other one began to talk about Joseph Smith. In her hands was a copy of the pamphlet I had read as a boy! My search for the truth had come to an end in my own living room.

No words can express what I felt at that moment. I wanted to snatch the pamphlet out of her hands. The sisters noticed the way I was looking at it and said they would leave it with me. When they gave me that precious pamphlet, I could hardly believe it. I put it in my shirt pocket to keep it near my heart.

Two days later the missionaries returned. When they saw the

pamphlet in my pocket, they asked if I had read it. I told them they didn't realize what it meant to me. I explained I had read it as a boy and had prayed to find it again.

On Sunday our family went to church. We arrived very early, and the sisters were surprised to see us. They hadn't really invited us, just told us where the building was.

The sisters continued to teach us. Although they didn't speak Spanish very well, they taught by the Holy Ghost. When they taught us about

One of the young women began to talk about Joseph Smith, and in her hands was a copy of the pamphlet I had read as a boy.

repentance, I felt something I had never felt before and started to cry. Then I realized we were all crying. I was convinced I had found the true Church.

My wife, Rosa Élica, had a similar experience. It happened when the sisters invited us to be baptized. "Sister Salguero," they asked, "do you want to follow the Savior?" She realized right then that she did.

When I asked the Lord to help me find His Church, I promised I would serve Him. From the first time I went to church, I have faithfully attended and have tried to serve diligently. I have had many wonderful Church callings,

including serving twice as bishop. My wife has served in the Primary and Relief Society and in the family history program. My eldest son served a full-time mission, and now his younger brother is preparing to serve. We have two daughters who are also active in the Church.

Whenever I am asked to speak in church, I try to communicate the joy I feel as a member of the Lord's Church. I know that God lives and that through the Prophet Joseph Smith He has restored to us His gospel, His Church, and the authority of His priesthood. □

Wenceslao Salguero is a member of the Tierra Nueva Ward, Guatemala City Guatemala Bosques de San Nicolás Stake.



MAKING FAMILY HOME EVENING EVEN BETTER



At the heart of our efforts to “teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom” (D&C 88:77) is family home evening. This time together as a family serves as a refuge from the chatter and confusion of the world—an hour or two when family members can learn from, strengthen, and serve one another. Our challenge is to make sure family home evening is effective.

Following are ways in which three families have improved their family home evenings.

PLANNING FAMILY HOME EVENING TOGETHER

Lisa H. Fernelius of the Chamberburg First Ward, York Pennsylvania Stake, reports how her family learned to prevent those last-minute panic attacks when someone assigned to give the lesson comes to family home evening unprepared. They decided to regularly set aside one family home evening to prepare their lessons in advance. They begin with prayer, asking for the Holy Ghost to help in the preparation. Then everyone is given the following sample lesson plan:

1. *Topic:* Decide what you want the family to learn.
2. *Attention-getter:* Choose an object lesson, quiz, word search, picture, or puzzle to introduce the topic.
3. *Story:* Choose a story to illustrate the lesson’s topic.
4. *Scripture for the week:* Select a verse that supports the lesson. The family will study this verse during the week following the lesson.
5. *Testimony:* Express your feelings about what you have taught.
6. *Activity:* Choose a game or art project that will reinforce the lesson.

Church magazines, scriptures, hymnbooks, and other materials are placed nearby for the family to use in preparing their lessons. Older children work independently. Parents help younger children. By the end of the evening, each member of the family has a lesson prepared, complete with visual aids.

MOM’S MESSAGE

Jarolyn Ballard Stout of the Hurricane Fourth Ward, Hurricane Utah Stake, has 10 children. With everyone

taking a turn to give a lesson, Mom and Dad had an opportunity to teach only once every two or three months. Jarolyn and her husband wanted to have more involvement in family home evening than that, so they created a new assignment called Mom's message.

Each week after the lesson, Dad asks Mom for her message, which might be a short thought or a longer discussion. She might highlight a conference talk or deal with a family need. Occasionally Mom's remarks relate to the lesson given by another family member that evening, especially if it is one she helped a child prepare.

"Mom's message has been a real success at our house," Sister Stout reports. "The children enjoy it, and as parents we get a chance for extra input in the instruction portion of our family home evening."

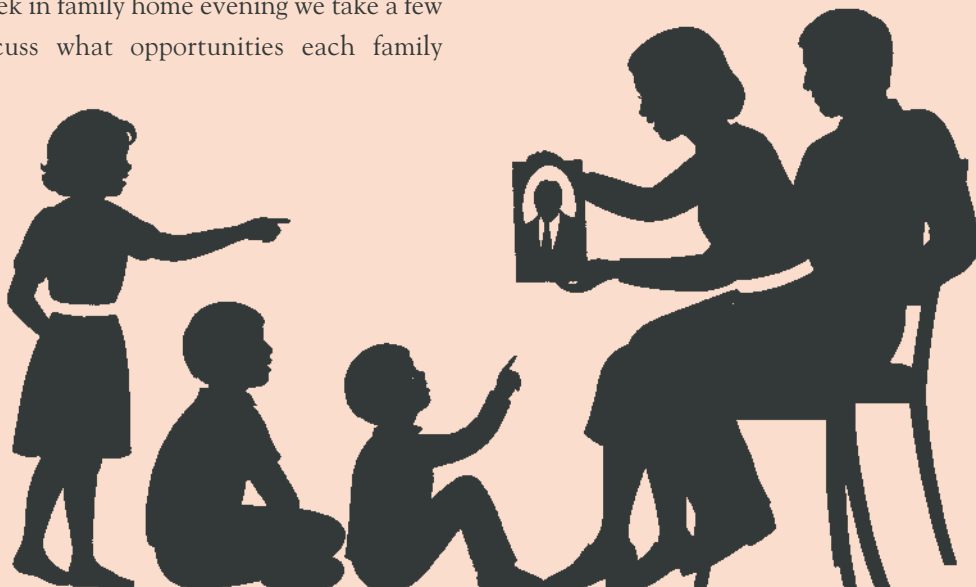
HELPING CHILDREN BE MISSIONARIES

"As parents of five, we are teaching our children to recognize their missionary opportunities," says Laura F. Nielsen of the Cupertino Ward, Saratoga California Stake. "Every week in family home evening we take a few minutes to discuss what opportunities each family

member had during the previous seven days to be a missionary and how each person responded to them." As a family, the Niensens discuss different options for handling those situations.

As a result, family members are learning what constitutes a missionary opportunity. For example, they have learned to refer to the Church by its full name rather than a nickname. One of the children gave a school report on Church history. Another shared his excitement about being baptized when schoolteachers wished him a happy eighth birthday.

Occasionally a family member will admit that he or she missed or ignored a missionary opportunity, and this gives the family a chance to talk about what happened and learn to take better advantage of a similar opportunity in the future. "Family enthusiasm helps us overcome embarrassment or laziness," Sister Nielsen says. "Our children now actively look for opportunities on their own and eagerly report to the family for feedback. By helping each other this way, we are growing in our own capacity to share the gospel." □





Lessons Learned in the

Journey of Life

Some of the happiest people I know have none of the things the world insists are necessary for satisfaction and joy.



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

It is not hard for me to remember when I was in college. I loved many things about college life: I loved learning. I loved the comradery. And I loved football.

I had always dreamed of playing football at the university level, and during my freshman, sophomore, and junior years, I wore a crimson uniform and played running back.

At that time, the world tottered on the brink of chaos. Opposing political forces roiled and ground against each other. Tension mushroomed. Nations chafed against each other. It was as though the entire world groaned in a burgeoning rumble, a volcano that had to erupt, that ultimately would erupt. Before it was over, every nation, every people felt the effects of those dark days.

I remember the day my father came to me. It was just after the 1936 football season had ended.

“Joseph,” he said, “do you want to go on a mission?”

I told him I did.

“Then you must go now,” he said. “If you wait any longer, you’ll never go.”

I didn’t want to believe him. I wanted to pursue my dream of continuing to play football and graduating from

***O*n a crisp, clear Christmas Eve in Austria many years ago, my mission companion and I talked of our goals and what we wanted to have happen in our lives.**

the university. If I were to accept a mission call, I would have to give up everything. In those days a mission call was 30 months long, and I knew if I accepted, there was a good chance I would never play football again—perhaps I would not even be able to graduate.

But I also knew what my father had said was true. My bishop was Marion G. Romney (1897–1988), who later became a member of the First Presidency of the Church. He had spoken with me before about serving a mission, and I went to tell him that now was the time.

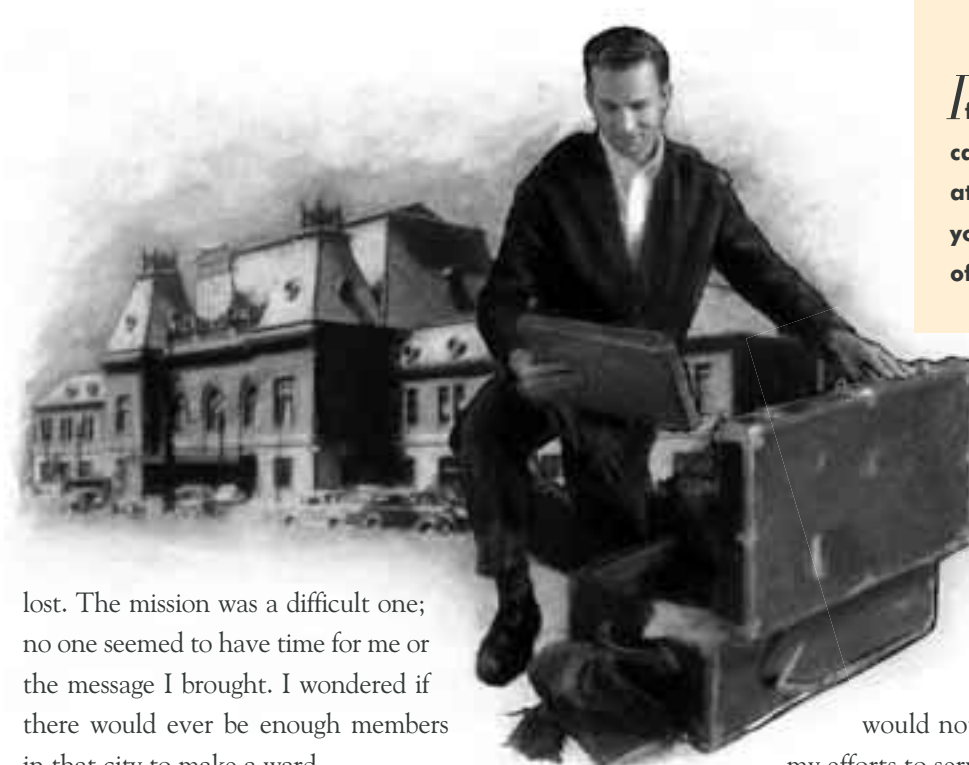
A few months later I stepped aboard the SS *Manhattan* and began a long voyage that would take me into the heart of the world crisis. My mission call was to the German-Austrian Mission.

My first field of labor was in Salzburg, Austria. The mission was shorthanded, and not long after I arrived, my companion was transferred to another district in the mission. Soon I found myself alone in Salzburg, a young missionary in a strange, new country.

One other thing was happening that I haven’t mentioned: a large army of Hitler’s Third Reich was gathering just over the border, not 30 kilometers from Salzburg. Everywhere you went you could sense a mounting tension in the air. No one knew if tomorrow would be the day the panzer tanks would flood across the border.

I remember those days well. I don’t suppose there has been a time in my life when I felt more discouraged, more

ILLUSTRATED BY PATRIC GERBER; PHOTOGRAPHIC SUPPORT BY LANA LEISHMAN



***If* saving a book from seawater can be worthy of heavenly attention, how much more will your Heavenly Father be aware of your life and your needs?**

lost. The mission was a difficult one; no one seemed to have time for me or the message I brought. I wondered if there would ever be enough members in that city to make a ward.

Six weeks I was alone. Six weeks I waited for a companion. Six weeks I wondered about what I might be doing had I stayed in Salt Lake City and continued my studies.

Even though the days and nights seemed at the time to be never ending, they eventually passed. A senior companion arrived, and we did the best we could under the circumstances to serve the Lord.

That year as Christmas Day approached, my companion and I decided we would walk to Oberndorf, a little village nestled in the beautiful Bavarian Alps. You may know that the beauty and majesty of this little village are what inspired Joseph Mohr in 1818 to write the wonderful hymn “Silent Night” (*Hymns*, number 204).

On Christmas Eve we walked to the village and sat quietly for a while in a small, humble church, listening to the beautiful organ music. A crisp, clear winter night enveloped us as we began our return trip. We walked under a canopy of stars and across the smooth stillness of new-fallen snow. Perhaps it was a night not unlike the one that inspired an assistant priest to write the lyrics to one of the most beloved hymns in all of Christendom more than a hundred years earlier.

As we walked, my companion and I talked of our hopes and dreams. We talked of our goals and what we wanted to have happen in our lives. The more we talked, the more

serious we became about achieving the things we talked about. As we walked under the light of a full moon, we both made serious resolutions.

I committed that night that I would not waste my time. I would renew my efforts to serve the Lord. I made up my mind that I would magnify any callings I received in the Lord’s kingdom.

That was also the evening I made up my mind about whom I would marry. I didn’t know her name, but I had in my mind the type of person she would be—one who lived the gospel and who was strong spiritually. I even described her to my companion—that she would be 1.65 meters tall, that she would have blue eyes, and that she would have blond hair. Sister Wirthlin fits all of the description that I made of her at that time without knowing her. And so that night was important to me.

Two and one-half years passed, and before I knew it, I was home again. I remember hearing someone mention a name: Elisa Rogers, a young woman who was in charge of a university dance at the Hotel Utah. There was something special about that name. I decided I ought to meet her.

I remember the first time I saw her. As a favor for a friend of mine, I had gone to her home to pick up her sister. Elisa opened the door, and I stared. There she was, beautiful, 1.65 meters tall, blue eyes, blond hair.

She must have had a feeling also, because she said to me, “I know who you was.”

She quickly realized she had made a grammatical error. To fully appreciate that, you have to remember that she was an English major.

Even after all of these years, she has remembered the

embarrassment of that moment. Of course, my retelling this story doesn't make matters better, but I trust she will forgive me.

Six decades have intervened since that Christmas Eve in Oberndorf when I made those resolutions. Much has happened in the intervening years. My premonitions about playing football were right; I never played again. But I did graduate from the university. Even so, I've never regretted serving a mission and committing myself to serving the Lord. By doing so, my life has been filled with adventure, spiritual experiences, and joy that surpasses understanding.

Many of you may be at a time in your lives when perhaps you are feeling a little discouraged or alone. Perhaps you feel a little lost, maybe even a little afraid. Everyone has felt this way at one time or another. Everyone has wondered if his or her life will ultimately be a happy one.

More than two millennia ago, Aristotle suggested that everyone who lives has the same basic objective: to be happy (see *Nicomachean Ethics*, book 1, chapters 4, 7). After 80 years of living, I've begun to pick up a few ideas about what it is that makes people happy and successful. I'd like to tell you five things that, if you will take them seriously and apply them to your own life, will bring you happiness, success, fulfillment, and the obtaining of an inheritance in the celestial kingdom.

HAVE FAITH IN HEAVENLY FATHER

First, have faith in your Heavenly Father. He knows who you are. He listens to you when you pray. He loves you. He is mindful of you. He wants the best for you.

After serving for a time in Salzburg, I was transferred to Zürich, Switzerland. While I was there, Brother Julius Billeter, a member of the Church, approached me. He was a professional genealogist, and he told me he had seen quite a

few Wirthlin names in his work. He offered to research my family lines. I wrote home, and my father thought it was a wonderful opportunity, so we hired him to begin.

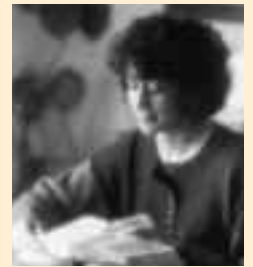
A year later he handed me a book. It was 36 centimeters long, 46 centimeters wide, and weighed 6.2 kilograms. It was filled with nearly 6,000 names of my ancestors. It was a priceless volume that I treasured. Just before my missionary release, I packed the precious book in a steamer trunk along with some of my other possessions and shipped it home. I prayed that it would arrive safely and that the precious family history would not be lost.

I arrived home before the trunk. Weeks passed. Still no trunk. I began to worry that the irreplaceable book had been lost. Six months after I had arrived in Salt Lake City, I received a call from the Union Pacific depot. A trunk had arrived for me. I rushed down to retrieve it, but when I saw it, my heart sank. The lock on the trunk had been broken.

I pried up the lid, and when I looked inside, my heart fell further. Everything had been soaked with seawater. What is more, I could tell someone had rifled through my belongings. Some things were missing.

I gingerly removed the layers of clothing, searching for my precious book. When I reached it, my heart overflowed with joy. Not only was it there, but the papers were completely dry! I know the book was preserved through divine intervention.

The Savior asked: "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.



***P*ut your Heavenly Father first in your life. Commit to follow Him and obey His commandments and strive every day to become more Christlike.**

“But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

“Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows” (Matthew 10:29–31).



President Hinckley said: “It is work that spells the difference in life. It is stretching our minds and utilizing the skills of our hands that lift us from mediocrity.”

By the same token, if saving a book from seawater can be worthy of heavenly attention, how much more will your Heavenly Father be aware of your life and your needs?

On one occasion President Thomas S. Monson, now First Counselor in the First Presidency, made this statement to me: “There is a guiding hand above all things. Often when things happen, it’s not by accident. One day, when we look back at the seeming coincidences of our lives, we will realize that perhaps they weren’t so coincidental after all.”

The Lord knows your trials. He knows your victories. And if you will “trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own under-

standing [but] in all thy ways acknowledge him, . . . he shall direct thy paths” (Proverbs 3:5–6).

SET RIGHTEOUS GOALS

Second, set righteous goals. Many things will compete for your attention as you pursue your course through life. There will be endless distractions. People and things will call to you, singing the siren songs of wealth, pleasure, and power.

Success is a seductive word. Thousands of books have been written on the subject. They promise money, freedom, leisure, and luxury. Thousands of people have provided as many surefire formulas for building wealth.

For example, a three-step process for getting rich is attributed to J. Paul Getty: “Get up early. Work hard. Strike oil.”

Other perhaps more utilitarian formulas advocate variations on a singular theme: You must focus all your thoughts, feelings, and actions on your goals. You must want your goal with all the passion of your heart. You must focus every thought on your goal. You must concentrate all your energy into achieving your goal.

Of course, when applied to righteous ends, these methods may be of great worth. The problem is that in most cases the search for wealth, pleasure, and power leads to a place that may seem at first glance to be desirable, but the closer you get, the more you see it for what it is. The price for worldly success too often comes at the price of your birthright. Those who make that bargain will one day feel as Esau, who, after realizing what he had lost, “cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry” (Genesis 27:34).

Another trap we often fall into when we become obsessed with success is that we credit the strength of our arm and power of our thought and forget the Lord, who has blessed and prospered us.

Moses told the children of Israel that one day, “when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, . . .

“And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; . . .

“And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. . . .

“And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish” (Deuteronomy 8:12–13, 17, 19).

Do you think you can use the money you have earned



***I* began to understand that I was in control, that I could go anywhere I wanted to go, and that I could do anything I wanted to do,” said Dr. Ben Carson. “The only person who really determined or limited my success was me.”**

in this life as currency in the next? Put your Heavenly Father first in your life. Commit to follow Him and obey His commandments and strive every day to become more Christlike. Focus your efforts on obtaining heavenly riches. To do otherwise will ultimately end in disappointment and sorrow.

I am reminded of the Savior’s parable of the man who worked hard to build wealth. He had so many goods that he did not have a place big enough to hold them. So he built great barns where he could store them. His idea was that as soon as he had a safe place for all his resources, he could then retire and lead a life of leisure—eating, drinking, and being merry.

But just as he finished his buildings, “God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?” (Luke 12:20).

A sobering question the Savior asked those of His day echoes through the centuries to ours: “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Matthew 16:26).

Is money necessarily evil? The Book of Mormon prophet Jacob answered this question. He taught his people to “think of your brethren like unto yourselves, and be familiar with all and free with your substance,

that they may be rich like unto you.

“But before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God.

“And after ye have obtained a hope in Christ ye shall obtain riches, if ye seek them; and ye will seek them for the intent to do good—to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry, and to liberate the captive, and administer relief to the sick and the afflicted” (Jacob 2:17–19).

Moses told people of his day, “If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land . . . , thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother” (Deuteronomy 15:7).

WORK TO ACCOMPLISH YOUR GOALS

Third, once you have established righteous goals, work with all your might to accomplish them. In the words of Elder David O. McKay (1873–1970) when he was in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “Let us . . . realize that the *privilege to work* is a gift, that *power to work* is a blessing, that *love to work* is success” (in Conference Report, October 1909, 94; emphasis in original).

Work is therapy for the soul. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the gospel of work. I believe that much idleness we experience comes from misunderstanding the Atonement of the Lord. We cannot simply sit around and do nothing and expect to be successful in spiritual or temporal things. We need to do all that is in our power to accomplish our goals, and the Lord will make up the difference.

Remember the words of President Gordon B. Hinckley: “The major work of the world is not done by geniuses. It is done by ordinary people, with balance in their lives, who have learned to work in an extraordinary manner” (“Our Fading Civility,” Brigham Young University commencement address, 25 April 1996, 15).



The Church is a place where imperfect people gather to help and strengthen each other.

Let me tell you about a remarkable individual who took responsibility for his life and made something of himself, despite humble beginnings. His name is Dr. Ben Carson. Dr. Carson was born and raised in the poor slums of Detroit. He grew up in a home that had no father. His mother took the responsibility on her shoulders of raising a family, and she passed this sense of responsibility on to her son.

Dr. Carson said his mother would often say to her children, “Do you have a brain?” If they answered yes, she would follow up with, “Then you could have thought your way out of that situation. It doesn’t matter what Johnny or Mary or anybody else did. You have a brain, so think your way out of problems.”

Dr. Carson related: “I began to understand that I was in control, that I could go anywhere I wanted to go, and that I could do anything I wanted to do. The only person who really determined or limited my success was me. Once I understood that, the whole victim mentality went right out the window. I realized I didn’t have to sit around and wait for anybody to do anything for me” (“Seeing the Big Picture: An Interview with Ben Carson, M.D.,” *Saturday Evening Post*, July/August 1999, 50–51).

Dr. Carson didn’t sit around and wait for somebody

else to do something for him. He took control of his life. He studied hard in school and did well—well enough to go on and become a doctor. He eventually rose to become the director of pediatric neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins Children’s Center in Baltimore, a world-famous hospital. In 1987 Dr. Carson performed the first successful operation to separate congenitally united twins who were attached at the back of the head.

Socrates said, “The gods sell us all good things at the price of our labor” (Xenophon, *Recollections of Socrates*, book 2, chapter 1, section 20).

President Gordon B. Hinckley echoed that sentiment: “There is no substitute under the heavens for productive labor. It is the process by which dreams become realities. It is the process by which idle visions become dynamic achievements.

“It is work that spells the difference in life. It is stretching our minds and utilizing the skills of our hands that lift us from mediocrity” (quoted in “Pres. Hinckley Shares 10 Beliefs with Chamber,” *Church News*, 31 January 1998, 3).

MAGNIFY YOUR CALLINGS

Fourth, magnify your callings and be faithful members of the Church. When we go to church, we surround ourselves with others who share our commitment to obey the commandments and follow the Savior.

Some mistake the Church for a place where perfect people gather to say perfect things, think perfect thoughts, and feel perfect feelings. May I quickly dispel such a thought? The Church is a place where imperfect people gather to help and strengthen each other as we strive to return to our Heavenly Father. Every one of us will travel a different road in mortality. We will each progress at different rates. Temptations that afflict your brother may not trouble you at all.

Joseph Millett knew that the Lord trusted him enough to use him in blessing the lives of Newton Hall's family.

Never look down on those who are less perfect than you. Never be upset because someone can't speak as well as you, can't lead as well as you, can't serve as well as you, can't sew or hoe or glow as well as you.

The Church is a mutual improvement society with the goal to help every son and daughter of God to return to His presence. One way you can measure your value in the kingdom of God is to ask yourself, "How well am I doing in helping others reach their potential? Do I support others in the Church, or do I tear them down?" If you're tearing others down, you are tearing down the kingdom of God. If you are building others, you are building the kingdom.

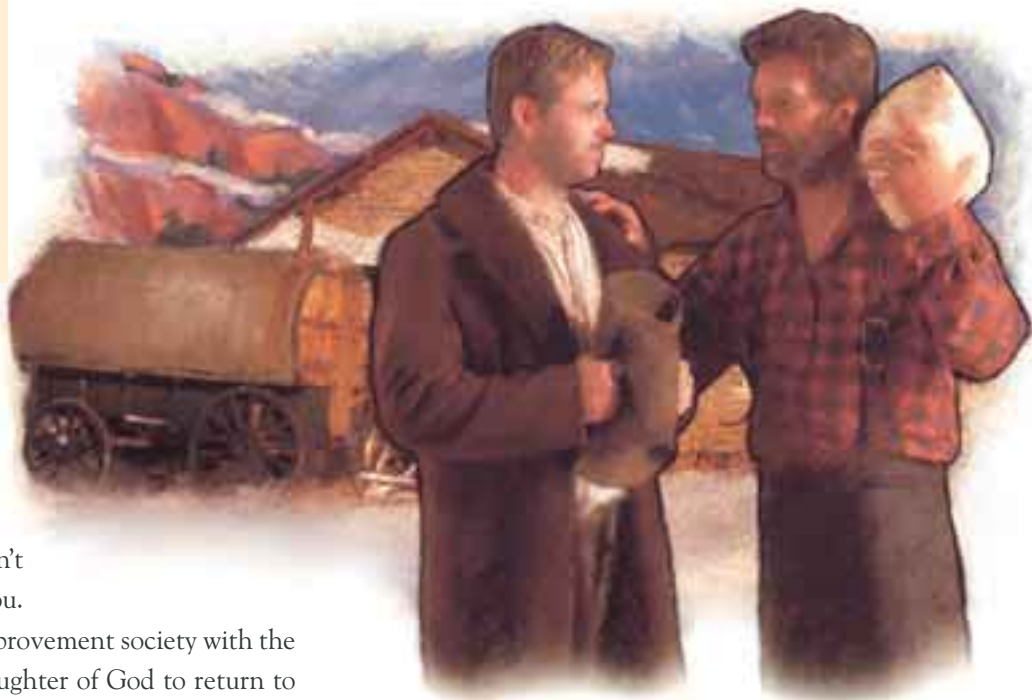
Another test of your worth in the kingdom is to ask yourself if you are actively engaged in magnifying your calling in the Church. When you magnify your calling, you don't merely go through the motions; you challenge yourself to serve in the place you are called with all your heart, might, mind, and strength.

If you do not have a calling in the Church, will you go to your bishop and tell him you are anxious to serve, willing to put your shoulder to the wheel?

As you faithfully serve, the Lord will be with you, and you will feel His Spirit and sense His guiding hand.

A number of years ago in general conference, Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles told the story of Joseph Millett, a little-known member of the Church.

He lived in the early days of the Church and came across the plains with other faithful members to tame a desert and to find a new home. In those first years, food was often scarce. Winters were particularly difficult, and often the days stretched further than the food that was stored.



Joseph Millett wrote in his journal: "One of my children came in and said that Brother Newton Hall's folks was out of bread, had none that day.

"I divided our flour in a sack to send up to Brother Hall. Just then Brother Hall came.

"Says I, 'Brother Hall, are you out of flour?'"

"Brother Millett, we have none."

"Well, Brother Hall, there is some in that sack. I have divided and was going to send it to you. Your children told mine that you was out."

"Brother Hall began to cry. He said he had tried others, but could not get any. He went to the cedars and prayed to the Lord, and the Lord told him to go to Joseph Millett.

"Well Brother Hall, you needn't bring this back. If the Lord sent you for it you don't owe me for it."

That night Joseph Millett recorded a remarkable sentence in his journal: "You can't tell me how good it made me feel to know that the Lord knew there was such a person as Joseph Millett" (Diary of Joseph Millett, holograph, Historical Department Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; cited in Boyd K. Packer, "A Tribute to the Rank and File of the Church," *Ensign*, May 1980, 63).

This is a wonderful feeling—to know that the Lord trusts and loves you enough to want to use you in

Don't worry about searching for who you are; focus your energies on creating the kind of person you want to be! Every moment is precious. Determine now that you will make of your lives something remarkable!



blessing the lives of others. Brothers and sisters, your Heavenly Father wants to use you for the same purpose. As you magnify your callings and go about doing good, I promise you the Lord will shower upon your heads blessings of satisfaction and joy so great that you will not have room enough to receive them.

ENJOY THE JOURNEY

Fifth, enjoy the journey. The people of God are a joyful people. We understand there are times for sobriety, reverence, and devotion; we also understand that we possess the joyful principles of eternal life.

We have so much to smile about, be happy about, yes, even to laugh about.

So many of us are always waiting to be happy. “If only I could graduate, if only I could afford a car, if only I could get married . . .” For too many, happiness is just over the horizon, never reachable. Every time we climb one hill, happiness beckons just beyond the next.

It is a terrible thing always to be waiting for tomorrow, always depending on tomorrow, always excusing our todays because we are sure that only in the future will we possess the things that will fulfill us.

Don't wait for tomorrow. Don't wait for the right job, the right house, the right salary, the right dress size. Be happy today. Be happy now.

Abraham Lincoln said, “Most folks are about as happy as they make their minds up to be” (in John Cook, compiler, *The Book of Positive Quotations* [1997], 7).

Make up your mind to be happy—even when you don't have money, even when you don't have a clear complexion, even when you don't have the Nobel Prize.

Some of the happiest people I know have none of these things the world insists are necessary for satisfaction and joy. Why are they happy? I suppose it is because they don't listen very well. Or they listen too well—to the things their hearts tell them. They glory in the beauty of the earth. They glory in the rivers and the canyons and the call of the meadowlark. They glory in the love of their families, the stumbling steps of a toddler, the wise and tender smile of the elderly.

They glory in honest labor. They glory in the scriptures. They glory in the presence of the Holy Ghost.

One thing I know for certain: the time we have here goes by far too quickly. Don't waste any more time sitting on the bench watching life pass you by.

Can I give you one other piece of advice? Be willing to laugh at yourself. When Elder Matthew Cowley (1897–1953) was first called into the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, President J. Reuben Clark (1871–1961) invited him into his office and counseled with him about his new assignment. President Clark was one of the great leaders and thinkers of the Church. He left a post as the United States ambassador to México to accept a position in the First Presidency of the Church. He was a man long accustomed to bearing the weight of heavy responsibility.

As the meeting between Elder Cowley and President Clark drew to a close, President Clark said, “Now, my boy, kid [President Clark called all the members of the Quorum of the Twelve ‘kid’]—Now, kid, don't forget rule

six.” Elder Cowley asked, “What’s rule six?” President Clark said, “Don’t take yourself too darn seriously.” Elder Cowley asked, “What are the other five?” President Clark said, “There aren’t any” (*Matthew Cowley Speaks* [1954], 132–33).

Some people take themselves so seriously that they think they cannot feel complete until they find themselves. Some abandon family, occupation, and education in this quest to discover who they are.

George Bernard Shaw said: “Life isn’t about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself.” Don’t worry about searching for who you are; focus your energies on creating the kind of person you want to be! You will discover that as you pursue that journey you will not only find yourself, but chances are you will be pleasantly surprised and proud of the person you find along the way.

Do not procrastinate a minute longer. Every moment is precious. Determine now that you will make of your lives something remarkable!

Not long ago I had the opportunity to return with Sister Wirthlin to the place where I began my mission. My assignment was to organize the Salzburg Austria Stake. In a way it was a coming home for me. I remembered the days that I walked those cobblestone streets and wondered if there ever would be enough members to form a small ward. And here I was, years later, organizing a stake. My heart filled to overflowing as I looked over that congregation of faithful members and as I remembered the time I spent there.

As I look back on it now, I wonder if those times of trial and loneliness weren’t instrumental in strengthening my character and heightening my desire to succeed. Those times of seeming failure may have been some of the most instrumental of my life, because they prepared me for greater things to come.

While there, I traveled with my wife to Oberndorf.

We walked the same road my companion and I had walked so many years before. And there, before the majestic mountains and pristine beauty of that small Bavarian village, I related to her once again of the silent night when I described to my companion the woman I would marry.

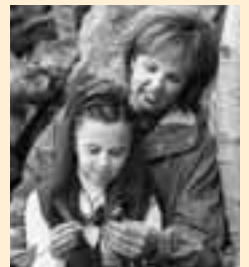
The resolutions I made on that holy night in Oberndorf, Austria, have been a guiding force throughout my life. Although I still have much to learn and to accomplish, I’ve done my best to have faith in God; I’ve done my best to focus on the things that are important in life; I’ve done my best to work hard at righteous tasks; I’ve done my best to magnify the callings I’ve received in the Church; and I’ve done my best to enjoy the journey.

May you do the same as you create of your lives something worthy of your divine heritage.

I testify that the purpose of my mission in far-off Europe is the same now as it was then: to testify that we have a loving Heavenly Father and also His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, who gave us the great Atonement. I testify that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God who received the fulness of the everlasting gospel and who established the Lord’s Church on the earth in these latter days. I bear witness that Gordon B. Hinckley is our prophet, seer, and revelator today.

As you pursue righteous desires, the Lord will be with you and will direct your paths. He wants you to be happy and successful. He wants you to come unto Him. May you find peace and joy in your journey throughout life. □

From a Church Educational System fireside talk given at Brigham Young University on 7 November 1999.



***T*he people of God are a joyful people. We have so much to smile about, be happy about, yes, even to laugh about.**



Pulling Together

By Dane M. Mullen

Our lives and our family seemed to be coming apart. Then Mom reached into her past and found the solution.

My brothers, sister, and I were taught to believe in God, and we said prayers at dinnertime. But that was the extent of our religious education. My mother was raised in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but my father was not. I guess over the years they found it easier to avoid discussing religion than to quarrel over it.

I am the youngest in the family. My brothers and sister are much older and very protective. I believed everything would always be easy.

In my early years at school, my grades were pretty good. But as the years went by, my grades began to drop. My parents often discussed “what to do about Dane.”

They tried to get me to do my assignments, but nothing worked. Teachers, counselors, school administrators, and my parents threatened punishments, but my grades got worse each year. By the time I was in seventh grade, everything was falling apart.

That was also the year our family fell apart. Two weeks after Christmas my parents separated, and later they divorced. My two oldest brothers and my sister had



graduated and moved away. That left my brother Lee and me at home with our mother, and Lee was a senior in high school. To make matters worse, we had big financial problems. My mother believed we had hit rock bottom. But that's when things began to look up.

One day my mom and I had a serious talk. We talked about her upbringing in the Church, and she said she knew she could turn to God for help. She also said she believed if I went

to church, it might turn me around in school. I had attended church a few times with a Latter-day Saint friend and had also attended Bible classes at other churches, but my family had not been to church since before I was born. Since my mom was suffering because of the divorce and the loss of income, I didn't want to add to her problems. I decided to listen to the missionary lessons.

My mother invited Lee to sit in on the lessons too, but he was caught up in his school activities. He sat in on the first discussion, but then he always seemed to have something else to do when the elders visited. My mom and I began attending church together, and things started to feel



right. I was baptized that spring. I started studying harder at school, too. And that also helped me feel good inside.

Before joining the Church, I had experimented with cigarettes and alcohol and hung around with kids who made me feel comfortable—kids who were doing poorly in school and who were often with me in the detention class. But when the bishop interviewed me and I made the commitment to get baptized, I promised to obey the Word of Wisdom. I found I liked holding the priesthood, passing the sacrament, and getting praise for doing good things instead of always being in trouble. These positive feelings started to influence my life outside of church. And as I shared my testimony with my friends, I started to see who my true friends really were.

Lee went into the army the summer after he graduated. He soon found out what homesickness is all about. He wrote home every day, and Mom cried when she read his letters. She asked him to find out if there was an LDS ward he could attend. We prayed for him and encouraged him to pray too. My grandmother had given Lee a Bible as a graduation present, and for some reason he had packed it when he left. It turned out that religious books were the only reading material allowed on base. When Lee told my mother that, she sent him a copy of the Book of Mormon. Shortly after that, we started getting letters from Lee saying how much he enjoyed the scriptures and that he was reading them aloud to other soldiers. Of course my mother cried some more. Mom asked Lee if

he wanted to take the missionary discussions. But Lee wrote and told us he had already asked the bishop to set up the discussions. He was baptized when he came home on leave. Mom cried then too.

Now, a couple of years after my baptism, I have served as deacons quorum president and as teachers quorum president. I'm on the school's academic team and have

high enough grades to be allowed to play sports. I've tried to remain friends with the guys I used to hang around with, but I don't go out with them much anymore. We're still on good terms, but we have different interests now. I'm involved in Mutual and have been concentrating on my schoolwork.

My mom has made big changes too. She quit smoking and drinking and started paying tithing. I can't say all our financial problems have been solved, but our bills have always been paid. My mom and I have become great friends, and now she's my seminary teacher. She went to the temple last summer. Last year she developed a life-threatening illness, and she has had a long, slow recovery. It was scary and hard on us both, but the elders gave her a blessing, and we pulled through it together.

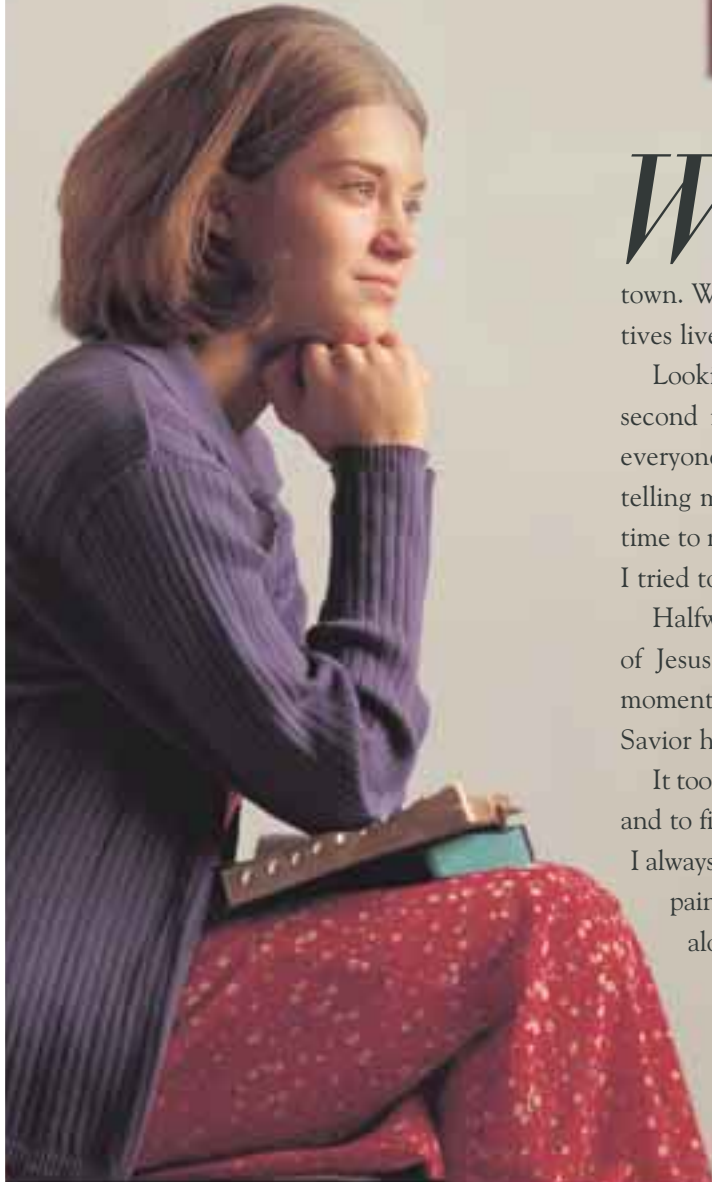
The changes that have come over me, my mother, and my brother didn't come easily. But they have definitely been worth it. My mom still cries sometimes, but now it's because she's so happy. And I'm happy too. □

Dane M. Mullen is a member of the Boise Third Ward, Boise Idaho South Stake.

Always My Friend

By Becky Prescott

*I felt very much alone in those
new surroundings until I looked up
at that picture on the wall.*



Walking into my Young Women class on Sunday, I felt alone. My family had just moved across the country to a small town. We knew no one in our new area; all our relatives lived thousands of kilometers away.

Looking for a place to sit, I saw a chair on the second row by the wall. As I sat down, I noticed everyone except me had someone to sit by. I kept telling myself things would change after I had some time to make friends. But no matter how many times I tried to convince myself, I still felt very alone.

Halfway through the lesson, I noticed a painting of Jesus Christ on the wall next to me. At that moment I realized I wasn't alone. It was as if the Savior had been sitting next to me the whole time.

It took a while to get used to living in our new town and to find new friends. At times I did feel alone, but I always remembered that Sunday when I noticed the painting of the Savior and realized I was never alone. Jesus Christ will always be my friend. □

Becky Prescott is a member of the Santaquin First Ward, Santaquin Utah Stake.

Using the May 2001 *Liahona*

You might find some helpful ideas for teaching and discussion in this issue of the *Liahona*. (The numbers below refer to pages in this issue. F=*The Friend*.)

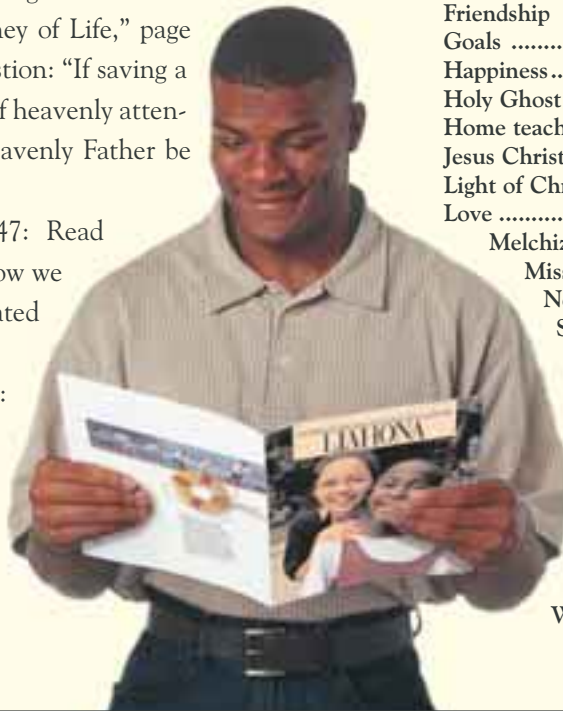
DISCUSSION IDEAS

■ “The Lighthouse of the Lord,” page 2: President Monson suggests that we plan our future with purpose. Have family or class members write down goals that will help them achieve their purposes here in mortality. If appropriate, have them share these goals.

■ “Lessons Learned in the Journey of Life,” page 34: Talk about Elder Wirthlin’s question: “If saving a book from seawater can be worthy of heavenly attention, how much more will your Heavenly Father be aware of your life and your needs?”

■ “Always My Friend,” page 47: Read Romans 8:35, 37–39, and discuss how we can ensure that we never feel separated from the Savior.

■ “You Can’t Give Up,” page F7: How do you think Tracy’s enduring in bearing her testimony is related to her gaining permission to be baptized?



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CALL FOR YOUTH ARTICLES

We invite our youth readers to tell us how they are applying President Gordon B. Hinckley’s six B’s in their lives and how they are being blessed for doing so (see “A Prophet’s Counsel and Prayer for Youth,” *Liahona*, April 2001, 30–41). Send articles to *Liahona*, Floor 24, 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3223, USA; or e-mail to CUR-Liahona-IMag@ldschurch.org. Please include your complete name, address, telephone number, and ward and stake (or branch and district).

The Friend

FOR CHILDREN OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS ■ MAY 2001



Obedience Brings Blessings

By Diane S. Nichols

“I will . . . open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (3 Nephi 24:10).



One night a family watched a terrible storm from their home near a beach. Huge waves crashed against the shore, breaking apart the family’s wooden boat dock. The next morning the family found pieces of the dock along the shoreline. But their boat was floating unharmed in the water. It was held in place by a strong anchor. The anchor had kept the boat from crashing into the shore and being destroyed.

Just as the boat was safe in the storm because it was held by an anchor, we can be kept safe when we listen to and follow the prophet. Obeying his counsel is like an anchor in our lives. The prophet tells us the things Heavenly Father wants us to do. He tells us how we can have peace, even during times of fear and worry.

For example, the Lord told the Prophet Joseph Smith to warn the people about eating and drinking things that would harm them. We call this counsel the Word of Wisdom (see D&C 89). If we obey it, we will be blessed.

President Gordon B. Hinckley has asked us to study the scriptures and to pray daily. As we do so, we will feel great peace. The Spirit will testify to us that Heavenly Father loves us and answers our prayers.

Listen to the prophet. He speaks for Heavenly Father. If we are obedient, we will feel peace. And like the boat tied to the anchor, we will be safe even though there are storms all around us.



Sharing Time Ideas

1. Tell the story of the Prophet Joseph Smith and Jacob Haun (see Primary 5 manual, lesson 31). Explain that the Prophet counseled Jacob Haun to tell the people to leave Haun’s Mill. Brother Haun did not deliver the Prophet’s message, and many lives were lost. Whenever we follow the prophet’s counsel, we move toward safety. Cut out several paper circles. Draw a smiling face on half the circles and a frowning face on the other half. Display pictures of people doing things prophets have told us to do. Also display pictures cut out of magazines or newspapers of people doing things prophets have told us not to do (arguing; stealing; smoking; drinking coffee, tea, or alcohol; and so on). Have the children place a smiling or frowning face by each picture, depending on whether it is something the prophet wants us to do or not do. Sing songs or hymns related to the pictures with smiling faces.

2. Explain that President Brigham Young led the first pioneers to the Salt Lake Valley. As the pioneers followed the prophet to the valley, they marked the trail for other Saints to follow. The prophet leads us today by teaching us what we should do in order to return to our Father in Heaven. Thread a button onto a long piece of string, and tie the ends together. Have the children sit in a circle, each holding onto the string with both hands. Have one child hide the button in his or her hand. Sing “We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet” (Hymns, number 19). Have the children move their hands back and forth along the string, secretly passing the button in either direction until the leader stops the singing. Have the child with the button tell one way to follow the prophet. Continue singing and moving the button. Bear testimony of how following the prophet has guided your life. □



Instructions

1. Mount this page on heavy paper, and cut out the picture frames.
2. Color the pictures of children following the prophet.
3. Under each picture, write how you can follow the prophet as the child in the picture is doing.
4. Hang the pictures where they will be a daily reminder of some of the things you can do to follow the prophet.



Let's Make a Deal

By T. S. Hettinger

Kate looked at the kitchen table covered with dirty dishes, trying to decide where to start. "It's hard to believe our school vacation is almost over," she sighed as she started to stack the plates.

"I know what you mean," Becky said. "It's our last week of vacation, and we still haven't gone to the new water park. Do you think Mom will take us there if we ask?"

"Maybe," Kate said as she carried the plates to the sink. "But I know Mom's really busy this week. And we've done a lot of fun things during our vacation. We just didn't go to the water park."

Becky followed Kate back to the table. She watched her sister gather up the glasses and utensils. "Yes—if you call driving all day to get to a family reunion fun," she muttered.

"It *was* fun," said Kate. "You're just being ornery." She picked up four glasses and headed back to the sink. Becky followed.

"It was all right," Becky agreed, "but I bet we're the only kids in our

whole school who haven't gone to the water park."

Losing patience, Kate turned to Becky. "Will you please stop complaining and help me with the dishes?"

Rolling her eyes, Becky started to fill the sink as their mom came in.

"Thank you for doing the dishes," Mom said. "I appreciate all the work the two of you do."

"No problem, Mom." Kate smiled.

"Yeah," Becky agreed. "We were just saying it's too bad we never made it to the new water park."

"That is a shame," Mom said. She thought for a moment, then said, "I'll make you a deal. I have some errands to run tomorrow morning. If you two will clean your rooms while I'm gone, I'll stop and buy tickets to the water park, and we can go when I get home."

"That would be great!" Becky exclaimed.

"It's a deal," Kate said.

The next morning Kate jumped out of bed. Mom had already left.

"Good morning," Kate greeted her grandmother.

"Good morning. Are you ready for breakfast?" Grandma asked.

Kate nodded. "Becky and I are going to clean our rooms. Then Mom is going to take us to the new water park."

"That's what your mother told me," said Grandma. "Would you go wake Becky?"

"What's the big hurry?" Becky grumped when Kate tried to talk her into getting up.

"We need to eat breakfast and start cleaning."

"No, we don't. You heard what Mom said. She's picking up the tickets while she's out. After she has already bought the tickets, she won't tell us we can't go. So we really don't need to clean our rooms."

Kate frowned. "But we made a deal."

"If you're so worried, *you* go clean your room. Tell Grandma I'll have breakfast later. Right now I need to sleep."

Kate trudged back to the kitchen.

“What’s wrong?” Grandma asked.

“Becky says she’s not going to clean. She thinks Mom will let us go even if we don’t clean our rooms,” Kate explained.

“What do you think?” Grandma asked.

“We said we would clean our

rooms,” said Kate, “so that’s what I’m going to do.”

“Well,” said Grandma, “you’ve made your decision, and you’ll have to let Becky make hers. Sometimes we want to make other people’s decisions for them, but we can’t.”

After breakfast Kate marched to her room. She decided to start by moving everything off the floor. At

first she was angry at Becky for not cleaning, but soon her thoughts turned to the job she was doing.

When Mom arrived home, Kate was organizing books on a shelf.

“Where’s your sister?” Mom asked.

“Watching television,” Kate answered.

“Isn’t she cleaning?”



ILLUSTRATED BY SHALINA MOONEY KAWASAKI

Kate shook her head.

Just then Becky appeared in the doorway. "Hi, Mom," she said cheerfully. "Did you get the tickets?"

"Yes I did," said Mom. "Did you clean?"

"I was just coming to start."

Mom shook her head. "Don't worry about it."

Becky looked at Kate and smiled an I-told-you-so smile. Her smile disappeared when Mom added, "You can clean while Kate and I are at the water park."

Becky's mouth dropped open. "What do you mean?"

"You didn't keep your end of the bargain, so you may not come with us."

Becky couldn't believe her ears. "But didn't you already buy me a ticket?"

"I bought tickets for the girls who kept their promises. Did you keep your promise?"

Becky hung her head. "No."

"Why not?"

"I thought you would let me go anyway."

"You made a choice. You'll have to live with the consequences."

Tears streamed down Becky's face. "That's not fair."

Mom put her arms around Becky. "I know it isn't what you want," Mom said, "but it *is* fair."

Becky watched as Mom and

Kate left. "I really wanted to go," she said.

Grandma nodded. "You made a bad choice. What you need to do is learn from your mistake. If your mom had taken you to the water park, you would have thought it's all right to make promises you don't intend to keep. And it isn't. Does that make sense?"

"I guess so."

"Now, I have a deal for you, if you are interested."

Becky looked up. "What is it?"

"If you'll go clean your room, when you're done, we'll bake some cookies for the family."

"It's a deal," Becky said, heading toward her room. "And this time I mean it." □



“You Can’t Give Up”

By Charlene Germaine Meyer

I had given our third-row seats to the missionaries and their investigators and resettled my little family in the very last row. I didn’t know my nine-year-old daughter, Tracy, was planning to bear her testimony that fast Sunday for the first time.

Three times during the meeting, Tracy stood up and began to walk toward the pulpit. Each time, someone else also arose and Tracy rushed back to her seat. The hour was growing late. I told her, “Honey, you have to keep going. You can’t give up.”

After the next testimony, she took a deep breath and began the long walk. But the next person to stand up was the first counselor in the bishopric, who thanked the congregation for sharing their testimonies. Tracy kept walking.

The organist began the introduction to the closing hymn. Tracy kept walking.

As the congregation sang, Tracy kept walking.

Tears streamed down my face as she took a seat beside the bishop’s counselor. He put his arm around her and whispered in her ear. Then, before the benediction, the counselor announced that one



more testimony would be borne that day.

Tracy bore a sweet testimony—that of a child who had not been baptized, even though all her Primary classmates had. She alone had not entered the waters of baptism, because her father—who was not a member of the Church—had not given his permission.

Tracy remained steadfast. Praying that she would be granted the desire of her heart, she “kept walking.” She never gave up.

That same bishop’s counselor who put his arm around her at the testimony meeting later conducted the baptismal service for Tracy and her younger sister. Never have I seen children more aglow.

But that baptismal service was not the end of the story. In June 1999, Tracy’s father was baptized and confirmed a member of the Church. One year later, Tracy’s smile glowed brighter than ever when her family was sealed for all eternity in the temple. □

Charlene Germaine Meyer is a member of the Loomis First Ward, Rocklin California Stake.

RENEW

Your Baptismal Covenants





When you take the sacrament, you remind the Lord—and yourself—of your commitment to be obedient. Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “We make mistakes even after baptism. The Lord has, therefore, provided a way for us to renew our baptismal covenants through partaking of the sacrament each week” (*Ensign*, November 1984, 19).

ELDER LYNN G. ROBBINS OF THE SEVENTY

From an interview by Kellene Ricks Adams

When I was three, my Uncle Jim was serving a mission. Uncle Jim was impressive to me. He was two meters tall and a good man. I wanted to be just like him.

I decided I would serve a mission so I could be like Uncle Jim. There was never a question in my mind about serving a mission after that. And that single decision had a great impact on my life. Once I knew the direction I was headed in, I took advantage of opportunities that came along to help me prepare myself. With a future mission in mind, I had a greater desire to learn the gospel throughout my Primary years and my youth, and I enjoyed many experiences that helped me prepare.

My grandfathers served missions at a time in Church history when not all young men were urged to do so. That has always impressed me and made me proud of my heritage. My whole family was interested in missionary work. When I was very young, my parents helped instill in me a desire to serve a mission, and other people helped me toward that goal as I grew up.

However, as a young teenager, I began to question whether I would be allowed to serve a mission. World War II had kept my father from serving as a missionary, which he had badly wanted to do. In my case, the Vietnam War was raging; only two young men from each ward in the United States were given exemptions from military duty to serve missions. The rest had to hope for high draft lottery numbers in order to serve missions. I worried and wondered if I would actually be able to fulfill my childhood dream.

A few years before I was old enough to serve a mission, I attended a stake conference in which Elder Thomas S. Monson was the visiting General Authority. After one session, my mother and I went to meet him. I shook his hand, and we talked. I don't remember any of the conversation except for one sentence. He looked right into my eyes and said, "You will be going on a mission." I never worried after that; all my doubts were removed.

Throughout my teenage years, I prepared for my mission. When a loving priests quorum adviser, David Poulsen, offered to teach any of the priests the missionary discussions, a few of us took him up on his offer. We faithfully attended 7:00 A.M. classes each Sunday.



Left: The Robbins family. Right: Ready for dinner at about age 2.



We studied the missionary discussions, and I had most of them memorized before I ever entered the mission home. We even went out a few times and taught ward members who pretended to be investigators. Most of them were a lot tougher than any real investigators with whom I worked! In 1971 I was thrilled to accept a call to serve in the Argentina North Mission.

A mission brands the gospel on your heart. I like the way President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) described a mission as the “university of the Lord,” as an opportunity to serve others and to learn many valuable principles the Lord wants His disciples to learn. These are principles that will help us in everything we do from then on, whether in building His kingdom or in improving our personal lives.

After I returned from Argentina, missionary service remained very important to me. As I earned both a bachelor’s degree and a master’s degree, I looked for chances to share the gospel. I married Jan Nielson, and we have taught our seven children the importance of missionary work.



Left: In his Scout uniform at age 14. **Right:** As a missionary, in front of a meetinghouse in Argentina in 1973.

My whole family had an opportunity to put those teachings into practice in 1994, when my wife and I received a call to preside over the Uruguay Montevideo Mission. During that time, our son Jason served in the Portland Oregon Mission and our son Andy in the Brazil Recife Mission. The rest of the family enjoyed our missionary work in Uruguay.

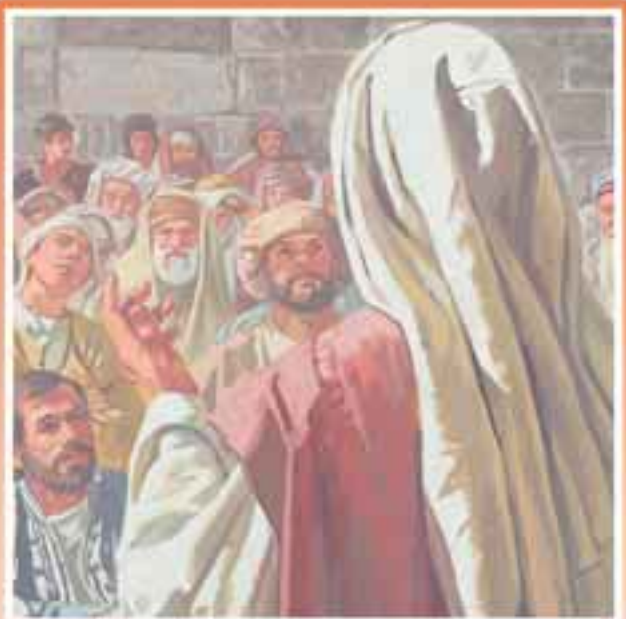
We are definitely a missionary family. We have learned that there is no greater work, no greater joy, than sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ.

One of my favorite things to do even now as a member of the Seventy is meet with missionaries and experience the joy that comes from serving the Lord and working with others who are also serving Him.

This interest in missionary work, this commitment to share the gospel, began when I was Primary age. That’s the age at which all boys should decide to serve a mission. That most important decision will then be a guiding influence on all that they do throughout their growing-up years. □



THE MAN WHO COULD NOT WALK



ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT T. BARRETT

One time when Jesus was teaching the gospel, He was in a house with many people.

Luke 5:17



A few men carried a friend on a bed to see Him. The friend could not walk. The men could not get him into the house because of all the people there.

Luke 5:18-19



The men took their friend up onto the roof and let him down through it on his bed.

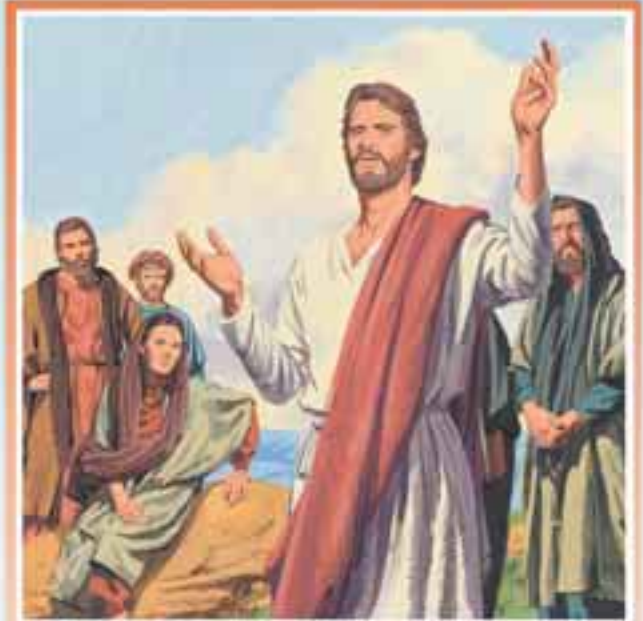
Luke 5:19



Knowing the great faith of these men, Jesus told the sick man to pick up his bed and go home. Healed, the man stood up! He picked up his bed and walked home, praising God.

Luke 5:20, 24-25

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT



ILLUSTRATED BY PAUL MANN

One day Jesus taught His disciples the gospel on a mountainside by the Sea of Galilee.

Matthew 5:1



He told them how to live so they could be happy and live with Heavenly Father again. The things He taught them will make us happy, too.

Matthew 5-7



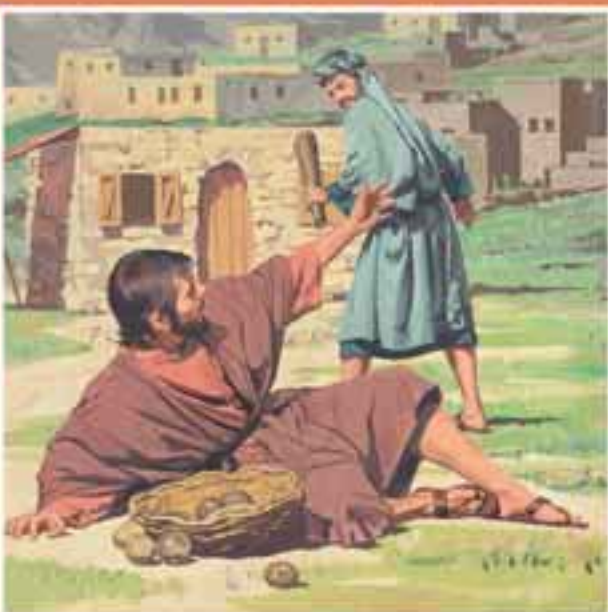
We should be gentle, patient, and willing to follow the Lord.

Matthew 5:5



We should try as hard as we can to be righteous.

Matthew 5:6



We should forgive people who hurt us or make us feel bad. If we forgive them, Heavenly Father will forgive us.

Matthew 5:7



We should be peacemakers, love other people, and help them love each other.

Matthew 5:9



We should not be afraid to tell people about the gospel or to tell them that we love Heavenly Father. We should be righteous. When other people see us doing righteous things, they might believe in God, too.

Matthew 5:14–16



We should always keep our promises.

Matthew 5:33–37



And just as we want others to be nice to us, we should be nice to them.

Matthew 7:12



Jesus said if we do these things, we will be happy, God will bless us, and we will live with Heavenly Father again.

Matthew 5:2–12



Joseph's First Vision, by David Lindsley

"When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air" (Joseph Smith—History 1:17).



Young women in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, are taking President Gordon B. Hinckley seriously when he asks Church members to “reach out to . . . people! Let us befriend them! Let us be kind to them! Let us encourage them! Let us add to their faith and their knowledge of this, the work of the Lord.” See “Reaching Out in Rio,” page 10.